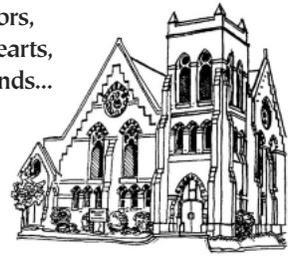


The Kindred Spirit Connection

Open doors,
Open hearts,
Open minds...



Wesley-Knox United Church • 91 Askin Street, London, Ontario N6C 1E7 • 673-4803 • www.wesleyknox.org

Advent and Christmas 2011

From the Vestry

Beauty and the Beast! It has been insightful to me, and I hope to you, to think of Wesley-Knox as an animal. Such creative thinking outside the box is helpful in times of transition as we imagine what the future might look like. I want to thank those of you who put a lot of thought into this playful exercise and shared your ideas with me. Several see Wesley-Knox as the friendly neighbourhood tabby cat, purring contentedly and basically happy with life. Some see us as a reliable old work horse, able and willing to pull its weight, dependable and responsible. Others see Wesley-Knox as a peacock displaying all the colours of the rainbow, accepting and affirming of all people, while others see us as a giraffe, able to look ahead, visionary and alert to what is going on in the community or coming our way.

Several regard Wesley-Knox as the family dog, welcoming, always glad to see us, unconditionally accepting and faithful while another sees us as a duck-



billed platypus, equally at ease on water or on land, adaptable and unique in whatever environment. Yet another sees us as a race horse in a paddock, well fed and at ease but raised for the track, not the paddock, and raised to run into the future with purpose and commitment, filled with potential yet to be unleashed.

These are interesting images. Each one of them captures something of the diversity of this community but also something of the gifts that Wesley-Knox possesses, open and welcoming, affirming and accountable, challenging

and forward-reaching, full of potential and promise.

Congregations that see themselves in such a positive light are faith-filled and future-oriented, a challenge to any new minister but also a place in which to grow and explore, to stretch and be stretched. They affirm the words that often appear with our logo: "Open doors, Open hearts, Open minds.."

They also beg the question of what might happen if the comfort level of the tabby cat were disturbed, the work horse put out to pasture or the paddock gate left open for the race horse to stretch its legs. As for the platypus it would have to be female as the males are venomous (interesting) and I will not even consider that the eggs it lays are duck eggs. Nonetheless such images and such imaginings help us move from the Letting Go to the Letting Be stage of our transitioning.

Keep dreaming! It is the only path worth travelling!—*David McKane*

Mary was pregnant. It so happened while they were there that the time came for her to give birth; and she gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough because there was no space for them in the lodge.

Now in the same area there were shepherds living outdoors. They were keeping watch over their sheep at night when a messenger of the Lord stood near them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They became terrified. But the messenger said to them, "Don't be afraid: I bring you good news of great joy which is to benefit the whole nation. Today in the city of David, a Savior is born to you—he is the Anointed, the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a feeding trough.

And suddenly there appeared with the messenger a whole troop of the heavenly army praising God: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people whom he has favored.—*Luke 2:5a-14, Scholars translation*



In Memoriam

We thank God for the
life and witness of

David Campbell Phelps
October 2

Baptisms

Jaeden Allen Almeda Gignac
son of
Dan and Nicole

Join us in the SACK!*

***Salvation Army**
Christmas Kettle
Drive

December 12–17
and
December 19–20
at Cherryhill Mall



Contact Richard Yake,
519.438.1597
to book your time

“Make it a Family
Outing”

From the Music Department



Our fall is in full swing! On Dedication Sunday, members of all our choirs—100 choristers in all—came together to sing the anthem, *We Are Called*. What a thrill that was!

Primary Choir Director Barb McGill has a full group of lively young singers. Add in the Singing Games Group, she has almost 50 little ones learning important musical and vocal skills

The Boys and Girls choirs have exciting plans this season. They will be singing in the Christmas Concert on December 3 and at another church in the spring. They will also sing before 1000 pediatricians at the opening ceremonies of the Canadian Pediatric Society's national convention to be held here in London in June!

Mysterium, our youth choir, has really taken off. To fulfill its motto, “Creating a song for life”, they have already graced the worship of two rural United churches. Mysterium has also adopted L'Arche as its local mission partner. In L'Arche, people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them share their lives and activities in family-like settings integrated into local neighbourhoods. L'Arche is committed to helping create an open, inclusive and compassionate Canadian society where every person is valued and able to make a contribution. I am proud of our fine young people who have so much to share and who want to make our world a better place. Other exciting plans include a carolling party and an exchange with the youth choir of Richmond Hill United Church near Toronto in the spring.

The Senior Choir is enthusiastically rehearsing for its Christmas concert with Denise Pelley, Steve Holowitz and the band. After our first rehearsal, choristers said, again and again, “I love the music this year!” So do I and so will you! Be sure to get your tickets early! Blessings to all of you!—*Karen Schuessler, Director of Music*

Sunday School



We are now into our Firelight II “Celebrate the Seasons” curriculum and even though it is early we are already “Anticipating Advent”, so our children will enter the season open and prepared.

At our first session, the angel Gabriel visited both the primary and intermediate groups. One group met Gabriel in the chapel. He was dressed in a dark suit. The others met her upstairs. She was dressed in full white, wearing sparkly wings! It was quite a magical morning and there was certainly some interesting follow-up discussion at our house after that Sunday!

Dedication Sunday was morning at the movies. Our younger children watched some Veggie Tales and *The Toy that Saved Christmas* while the older children uncovered the Advent story in the movie *Chicken Run*. I was sorry I missed that one! It was a wonderful way to welcome the many visitors who had come to hear their children sing. A special thank-you to all of our teachers who so graciously and so easily accommodated all of the young people in our midst.

“Anticipating Advent” continues with art, baking, music and drama until the first Sunday of Advent, November 27. By then, preparation for our children's pageant and party will be well under way. As always, our Children's Christmas Service is on the third Sunday of Advent which falls on December 11 this year. Rehearsal and Sunday School party will be at 3:30–5 pm the day before, Saturday, December 10. Be sure to mark these times and dates in your calendars!

Moving into 2012, Christmas and Epiphany will be the hot topic. We also have several exciting projects simmering and will tell you more soon! Blessings.—*Barbara McGill, Sunday School Coordinator*

Group and Committee Reports

UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

This fall, Wesley-Knox UCW had another very successful Harvest to Holiday Festival. Thank you to all the women who participated and made this festival so successful, and to all those who came to it and brought family and friends. This festival is one of our largest fundraisers and helps us raise money for the many charities that we support.

Upcoming Events

On November 26 we are going to the One-of-a-Kind arts and crafts show in Toronto. We have rented a bus and are ready for a fun day. This year we have a few gentlemen coming too, which is great! This trip is always fun.

Our annual UCW Sunday is January 15. We have a great speaker lined up for the service. This service will be followed by a luncheon and a general meeting.

UCW Meeting Times

Wesley-Knox has one of the largest United Church Women's groups in Middlesex Presbytery. Many exciting events are being planned for the New Year. Why not come and join us?

Unit 1: first Monday of the month,
7 pm, Centennial Parlour

Unit 2: first Tuesday of the Month.
1:30 pm, Centennial Parlour

Unit 4: second Tuesday of the month,
7 pm, Centennial Parlour

Please contact me if you need more information.—*Mary Anne van de Vooren, UCW president, 519.690.2284, Mav_misty@hotmail.com*

MEN'S GROUP

Our Men's Group is well into its usual fall activities: the monthly community breakfasts, coffee time after church, and our own breakfasts at a nearby restaurant. The number of participants coming to our community breakfasts varies, but we do see a general increase, probably a reflection of the current economic situation in our country. That is why the physical

and financial support which our congregation provides is so very much appreciated by everyone.

At our December 10 community breakfast, we will distribute the knitted work that has been prepared by some members of our congregation. Sincere thanks for the contributions.—*Neil Eadie, 519.471.2160*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We have had an amazing fall! A busy, happy Sunday School, lots of activities and lots of fun events—especially our Hallowe'en parties.

Our Sunday School is thriving under the guidance of Barb McGill and her eager team of teachers. She has implemented a rotation model of curriculum that is popular with both the children and their teachers.

Our next big Sunday School event will be the annual Christmas pageant. This year's date: Sunday, December 11. Our committee will be helping during rehearsal and also hosting the pre-pageant party. Stay tuned for details!

The Youth Group has had a super fall. We camped at KeeMoKee, went to a city-wide games night, mini-golfed, baked dog biscuits and had lots of fun! In October, 26 of us participated in a Rainbow Movie Marathon and raised \$1100 for United Way. Our Hallowe'en party was a triple-header, starting with Family Movie Night (60 in attendance) followed by the Junior Youth Group party until 10 pm, ending with a sleepover for the 24 members of the Senior Youth Group.

We helped take up the collection at the Sudan Concert, and plan to end 2011 with a Knights' hockey game followed by an early New Year's Eve party and sleepover on December 30. Whew!

This year's Fall Movie Series had a mystery theme. On November 25, the series will wind up with the original black-and-white version of Gaslight. Dave Lumley is now working on a brochure for our Winter Movie Series.

Harry MacLean has been running a DVD-based Marcus Borg discussion group on Sunday afternoons. This group provides participants with an opportunity to ask questions and gain a broader understanding of our faith. Sessions have been helpful and well attended.

This year's **Parents' Night Out and Children's Party** happens at 5:30–9 pm, Friday, December 2. This is a free event sponsored by the Senior Youth Group. The children enjoy dinner together and then watch a holiday movie in the Centennial Parlour. Younger children watch cartoons in the nursery. Registration forms will be available mid-November.

This year's **Swell Christmas Service** will be held at 7 pm on Saturday, December 17. This is a loud, lively multimedia service by and for youth, but enjoyed by all! Come and check out the amazing energy of hundreds of teens worshipping together. Then join them for snacks and fellowship in the Social Hall after the service.—*Jane Walker, chair, 519.438.6252*

JOINT SEARCH

Members of the Wesley-Knox Joint Search Committee are Jacob Baynham, David Cooper, Margaret Eadie (corresponding secretary), Ian Hardie (chair), Karlene Kimber, Tara LeClair, John McFall, Cindy Milne-Wren, Linda Olson, Bob Read, Cindy Stewart and Alex Walker. Presbytery representatives are Rev. Herbert Summers and Joyce Payne.

Your Joint Search Committee has been meeting on a regular basis since June. As a result of an advertisement in the United Church Observer, we heard from a number of applicants. After an initial screening, committee members, in small groups, visited churches to hear five of these applicants.

This is a very slow process but the committee is committed to finding the very best minister for Wesley-Knox.

We do not know how long this

might take, but we do know that it will not happen by January 2012.—*Ian Hardie, chair*

WORSHIP

Members of the Worship Committee would like to take this opportunity to wish every member and visitor of Wesley-Knox United Church a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2012.

We have been busy planning all of our services for Advent and Christmas and are pleased with how things are looking. We are especially pleased to be unveiling a new-to-Wesley-Knox Advent wreath—a gift from the congregation of the former and now-closed Hyatt Avenue United Church.

On behalf of all of you, I would like to thank Jason Taylor for his help with the sound system every Sunday.

At this time, your Worship Committee needs your help. We are looking for people interested in becoming worship leaders, and additional people interested in becoming part of a team that will know how to operate the sound system. Training will be provided for both positions. If you are interested, please contact me at the telephone number or e-mail address listed below.

I would like to thank the members of the Worship Committee—Cathie Banks, Eileen Cook, Sandra Fox, Alex Walker and Chris Webb—for their hard work this year. Without their dedication, our worship experiences would be much less fulfilling.

As always, if you have questions, concerns or comments about Worship at Wesley-Knox, feel free to contact any member of the Worship Committee.—*Chris Mortlock, chair, 519.681.2275, cdmortlock@rogers.com*

SENIOR CHOIR

What's happening in Senior Choir Land? Obvious to churchgoers, we have done some big music this fall.

What an amazing experience to sing, sharing in live music-making with

Trustee Board Update

Askin/Teresa Construction and Water, Sewer and Storm Drains

The Askin Street/Teresa Street reconstruction is drawing to a close as winter fast approaches. Many of us probably wish it, the construction that is, would conclude faster – but it will be worth the hardships in the end when we enjoy the finished product.

The water lines to the church have been reconnected and turned on by the City. The main water system which enters the church via a storage room in the basement has been replaced from the property line on Teresa Street to the church. This old water service served us well. but was definitely in need of replacement. The best time to do it was in conjunction with the Teresa Street reconstruction. The other water service which serves the gym, the Centennial Parlour kitchen and the Sunday School washrooms did not need replacing as it had been done in recent years.

The sewer connections were completed without fanfare as was the Askin Street storm drain connection which drains the parking lot.

The Teresa Street storm drain issue is a major financial project for Wesley-Knox United Church. We were contacted by the City and encouraged to connect the five downspouts on the Teresa Street side of the church to the new storm drain now installed on Teresa Street. Since each connection would cost \$4000, we engaged a contractor to combine some of the downspouts and reduce our costs. This resulted in advising the City that we needed only two connections to the storm drain. The three downspouts closest to Askin Street would be connected underground to one City storm drain, and the other two downspouts to a second drain.

All was going well until we were advised by the City that an engineer's drawing would be required for our proposed connections, Our connections could then be approved by the Building Inspection Division of the City. We had not been advised of this procedure, but apparently it has to do with the church falling under a different section of the building code than a residence. The church is classed as an institution.

To make a long story short, an engineering firm has been engaged. Drawings will be done and hopefully, once approved, the work will continue. In the meantime, please be tolerant of the mud and construction materials at our Teresa Street entrance. It will be well worth the wait, as we may alleviate some basement water woes as well as the ice buildup on the sidewalks in the winter months. We do strive to make our church home comfortable and welcoming. Please bear with us.—*Ross Rowe, chair*

timpani, brass and organ. We hope you have shared in that experience too.

This year, our September Make a Joyful Noise retreat was a one-day event at Wesley-Knox rather than a weekend at Five Oaks. This retreat was an opportunity to begin learning the music for our Christmas concert.

Throughout November, we will be lunching together at Sunday Coffee Hour. Then it's off to the sanctuary for

1.5-hour rehearsals of our Christmas music with particular emphasis on learning "the fiddley bits". In between, we also have our regular Thursday rehearsals, sectional rehearsals and practice at home using mp3s that Karen sends us over the internet.

Every rehearsal becomes a singing lesson. No matter what difficulties arise, Karen finds the right "tools" for success. As well, she continually ►

Much Ado about Websites

First, a new feature on our current website: **mp3 audio files** of recent sermons are now available! To access these, go to www.wesleyknox.org and click on the button labelled "Listen to Recent Sermons". It does take a moment to load this page, so be patient. The new page shows date, scripture of the day, speaker (usually Rev. David but there will be guest speakers) and title of each sermon. Click on an mp3 player, sit back and listen!

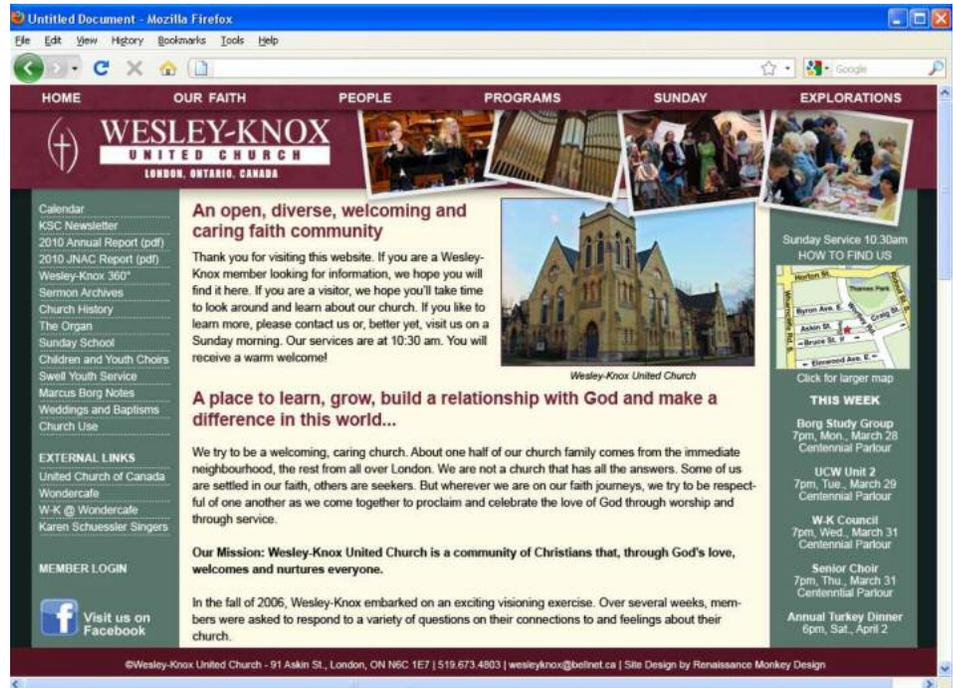
You can also save a sermon to your computer. On a PC, simply hold down the command key as you click on the mp3 player. On a Mac, hold down the option key instead.

Our New Website

Our new website is several stages closer to completion. We have settled on a banner, colours, overall architecture and most of the content. Our web designer, Lionel Morise (you can see his work on the Karen Schuessler Singers website and in *The Beat* magazine) has supplied us with a mockup of a typical page. We will be adjusting size and spacing of the elements—this is only a starting point—but the mockup shows most of the essential features:

- no pull-down menus; everything only one or two clicks away.
- colours: taken from our sanctuary walls, chairs, carpet and front doors.
- banner: taken from our front lawn sign; the collage of photos will showcase our church and some of its people and activities.
- only six main headings:

Home: an introduction to Wesley-Knox plus everything you might want to know about what's



An initial mockup of our new Wesley-Knox website, www.wesleyknox.com.

happening at our church right now.

Our Faith: our general approach to God, Jesus and the Bible.

People: our congregation and staff plus a word about governance.

Programs: our various groups and committees and summaries of the work they do.

Sunday: what to expect when you visit Wesley-Knox on a Sunday morning.

Explorations: a place to share ideas and inspirational material.

- a left-hand column that travels from page to page allowing the user to access almost anything extra with a single additional click.

- a right-hand column unique to each page: on the Home Page, a map and weekly calendar; elsewhere,

scripture or thought-provoking quotes

- a password-protected members' portal allowing access to the non-public part of the website where Wesley-Knox committees and groups can stash their stuff.

One of the problems with church websites is that they are often created by volunteers. When a volunteer moves or tires of looking after a website, no one else understands how it was put together and the website dies. Our new website will be created using industry-standard techniques and Lionel will train at least four people re how to update the content. The result should be a website that will not only be attractive, up-to-date and useful, but a website that will last.—*Harry MacLean, chair, Communications Committee*

inspires us with her love of music and deep spirituality.

We do hope that you will come to our Christmas concert on December 3 to hear the results of all this hard work! Blessings to all!—*Richard Yake, president*

A Note from Merry Wester

I would like to thank the members of UCW Unit 2 who came out to help me make jam. I had decided instead of strawberries and ice cream this year, we would go with strawberry jam. We made \$197 which was given to the bus fund. If you bought jam, we hope that you enjoyed it and that you will bring your empty jars back to the church to be reused. Thanks again to all, and enjoy the jam!—*MW*

Some Questions and Answers about Progressive Christianity...

On October 21–23, the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity held its national conference at First-St. Andrews United Church, London. Speakers included Gretta Vosper, Ian Lawton, David Galston, John Shelby Spong and a host of others. Among the 180 participants, three from Wesley-Knox: Rev. David McKane, Barbara McGill and Harry MacLean.

Q: So what is Progressive Christianity?

A: It depends on whom you ask. Originally, it meant the activity of Christians who were interested in the findings of modern scholarship. They wanted to know more about the origins of the Bible, the historical Jesus, the development of the early church and so on. They also wanted a Christianity compatible with the findings of modern science. So they read, met, discussed and integrated into their faith the things new they had discovered. They were on faith journeys, always trying to “progress”, which is why they came to be known as progressive Christians.

Q: So is this what Progressive Christianity is still about?

A: It still is for this writer and for many others, but some progressives have now stopped progressing and are simply settling into a new form of Christianity. This is not bad, but there is always a danger that it will turn into something rigid.

Q: What are some markers of this new style of Christianity?

A: The Bible is understood as the record of two ancient peoples trying to be faithful to God under difficult circumstances rather than the authoritative word of God for all time. God is understood as an all-pervasive Spirit—the source of all that is and the ultimate source of our own strength—rather than an off-planet deity that occasionally intervenes in the world. There is much interest in Jesus as a human being. There is more stress on the religion of Jesus than the religion about Jesus. Jesus’ teachings are understood to be more about this world than the next. Among the many values strongly promoted: inclusivity, compassion and social justice.

Q: I’m still uncomfortable with the term, “Progressive Christianity”. It seems a bit judgemental. The subtext is that if I’m not “progressive”, I must be “unprogressive”.

A: Progressive Christians are aware of this problem but they don’t know what else to call it. A few have tried “Emerging Christianity” or “Emergent Christianity”, but neither promotes the idea that to be this kind of Christian, you’ll have to do some work. Also, the term “Emergent Christianity” has already been taken. It’s a movement coming out of evangelical Christianity. It shares many of the social concerns of Progressive Christianity but not an intense interest in scholarship.

Q: Where can I learn more about Progressive Christianity?

A: Marcus Borg’s little book, **Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time** has been the entry point for thousand of progressive Christians. We have several copies in the Wesley-Knox library along with copies of Marcus’s other books. Also consider books by John Dominic Crossan and John Shelby Spong. Attend their lectures. John Dominic Crossan will be speaking on **God and Empire** at Metropolitan United Church on Saturday, November 25. Troll the web or join one of the Borg or Living the Questions study groups at Wesley-Knox. God really doesn’t mind, and it’s actually fun to talk about the faith with friends.

Q: Which makes me wonder, do we have progressives at Wesley-Knox?

A: Like almost every mainline church in London—Anglican, United or Presbyterian, we have a few. They are the kind that are still progressing and they tend to keep a low profile. Often they think they are the only people in the congregation that have a few questions. Then they come together in a study group and find they’re not alone!—*Harry MacLean*

Wonderful World of Handbells

Last May, six members of the Wesley-Knox handbell choir attended the Good Vibrations Festival at McMaster University along with 450 other ringers from across Ontario and beyond. This was a chance for ringers at all levels to advance their skills and perfect their techniques while learning how to fit into the larger handbell world.

There was lots of enthusiasm and commitment among our ringers this fall. We played once in church and will be playing again at our Christmas program on December 4.

Two of our ringers, Sydney and Kennedy Kimber-Johnson, have discovered the fun and challenge of ringing duets. You’ll see more and more small ensemble performances as the year progresses and our ringers gain confidence.

6 Once again, we are selling cheese to support our handbell program. Our long-range goal is to purchase a set of hand chimes to augment our five octaves of handbells. Order forms are available in the parlour at coffee hour, or speak to any of our ringers. Final date for orders is Monday, December 5, with delivery set for later that week.—*Cathie Banks, director*

November 5–6: a Busy Weekend at Wesley-Knox!



Was it busy? Here's the first clue. No room to mention that November 6 was also our Remembrance Sunday!



Ruth Rushton, our gracious welcomer at the Harvest to Holiday Tea Room in the Centennial Parlour.



Jonathan Stewart and Emily Kovacs sold fruit cake at the Youth Group table—all for a good cause!



Alex and Maggie Walker and Alex's beautiful photos. Could that be Karen's Christmas present on the left?



Wilnah Bennett, Linda Olson and Freda Evans at the bake tables in the gym.



The Sunday evening Sudan Concert with Denise Pelley, Saidat, Steven Holowitz, choirs and bands.

A Christmas Miracle!

All knitters in our congregation are asked to pick up donated wool in the basket at the back of the sanctuary. The rest is simple. Just knit away! Toques, mitts, gloves, or scarves, adult or child!

The Mitten Cane will be erected at the back of the sanctuary by November 15. Our intention is to provide gifts for all Community Breakfast patrons in December. Please note that Out-of-the-Cold will not run this December as our regular day would be December 25.

Items not taken will be donated to Women's Community House and the London Men's Mission.

For all the non-knitters (myself included), donations of wool are always appreciated. Just place your wool in the basket at the back of the sanctuary, and it will magically be transformed into a Christmas miracle.—*Cathie Banks*



The goal is biblical literacy. The problem is not all kids can come to Sunday School every week. The solution is stay with one story for several weeks and teach it in different ways, ways that are fun. Seems to be working for the Good Samaritan!

The construction is over and gone! Now it's Advent and Christmas! Come to Wesley-Knox this Sunday and every Sunday at 10:30 am! Great music! David's thought-provoking sermons! Things to learn, friends to meet, and a God to thank and serve...

Advent and Christmas Calendar

Special Services...

Sunday, November 20

10:30 am: Mission Sunday
Jane Roy, speaker

Sunday, November 27

10:30 am: Advent 1
Holy Communion

Sunday, December 4

10:30 am: Advent 2

Sunday, December 11

10:30 am: Advent 3
Sunday School Pageant

Saturday, December 17

7 pm: The Swell

Sunday, December 18

10:30 am: Advent 4
7 pm: Night Passed service for members of 12-step programs and their families

**Saturday, December 24
Christmas Eve**

7 pm: Family Service
10 pm: Holy Communion with string ensemble

Sunday, January 15

10:30 am: UCW Sunday

Special Events...

**Karen Schuessler Singers
All Creatures Great and Small**
Saturday, November 19, 8 pm

Parents' Night Out:

Friday, December 2, 5–9:30 pm

WK Annual Christmas Concert:

Saturday, December 3, 8 pm

Community Breakfasts: Saturdays,
December 10 and January 14, 8:45 am

Out-of-the-Cold Dinners: Sundays,
November 27 and January 22, 5 pm
No Out-of-the-Cold December 25

Final Fall Movie Night:

Friday, November 25, 7:30 pm.

Wesley-Knox Council: Wednesday,
November 16, December 21
if needed, and January 18, 7 pm