

CENTRAL NEWSLETTER

December
2025

Keeping Christ in Christmas

Well, it's here again! The stores are decorated, the music is playing, we're searching for gifts, emotions are high, and we are tired, frustrated and broke. How have we come so far from the simple story of a baby in a manger, two young parents struggling to find a place to sleep, some poor shepherds, and a choir of angels? Unfortunately, among all the wrapping paper and boxes, the expensive gifts, the turkey dinner, and the expectation of "the best Christmas ever", lie the tattered remains of the true meaning of Christmas. How do we keep simplicity, love, and charity in our Christmas celebrations? Perhaps this is a question we should be asking ourselves and our families. There are many ways to "do" Christmas. May you all find one which brings you peace and joy. Christmas Blessings!

Upcoming Events

Friday, Dec. 5

K.W. Symphony

7:00pm

Saturdays, December 6,13,20 Central Bell Concerts

11:30am

Wednesday, December 10

Christmas Hymn Sing Café

2:00pm-4:00pm

Sunday, December 14

White Gift Sunday

10:00am

Sunday, December 21

Christmas Pageant

10:00am

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service

6:00pm

News and Events

K.W SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: Risen from the ashes, we once again welcome the K.W Symphony to Central for the “French Connections” on December 5. Come and celebrate the wonderful music this orchestra always provides.

WHITE GIFT SUNDAY: December 14. This Sunday, we reach out with gifts to folks in our community who are in need. Along with the mitten tree and the Christmas stocking collection, the White Gift Sunday provides an opportunity to help others.

CENTRAL BELL CONCERTS: Central’s bells are unique in Cambridge, and our bellringers, Ingrid Talpak, Richard Neff, and Alistair McIlwraith will provide the downtown community with Christmas music on 3 Saturdays in December, each concert starting at 11:00. Our bells are one way we reach out to the community, so come and support this talented group.

CHRISTMAS HYMN SING CAFÉ: Many thanks to David and Katherine Rochester for their wonderful “Remembrance Songs” played and sung on November 12. We also thank Katherine for her beautiful organ and piano accompaniment. On December 10, the Durward Bell Ringers will once again bring their Christmas program to Central’s Hymn Sing Cafe. Join us as we sing our favourite Christmas Carols and enjoy a time together at this festive season.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: The Christmas Eve Service at Central is family oriented and filled with the songs and stories of the birth of Christ. The meaning of Christmas shines brightly at this service, and, as a result, it is very popular, so it is wise to come early. Since many in our community are struggling this year, we are asking you to bring a donation to the Food Bank.

KIDS KORNER: Lulu is inviting the congregation to join the Central Children’s Ministry for the Christmas Pageant, which is going to be presented on Sunday, December 21. Lulu says “We’ve told the “boss man” to take the morning off and see what real talent looks like! We’ve been practicing for weeks and we’re gonna be terrific” (Oh that Lulu!)



THE SAGA OF DR. DICKSON'S JOURNAL

Discovery: The amazing survival of Dr. Dickson's journal and its incredible journey to its home in Central Church has garnered great interest in the media and in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. On Tuesday, October 7th, our church Administrator received a call from a woman on the 401, asking if the church would be open. The woman said she had a book that she had found at Value Village in Leamington that belonged to Central. After the woman left, the book was opened to discover that it was the journal of Reverend James Dickson, the first minister at Central Church, (1879-1914).



At this point, the "mystery woman" who had dropped off the book, became of interest. Who was she? Why did she bring it to the church? Modern communications being what they are, a friend who heard the CBC radio interview with Ingrid Talpak sent a contact number and Tracy Medel was located. When asked why she had driven 2.5 hours to return the book, she said it was just the right thing to do as she felt the journal belonged back at the church. A thank you letter has since been sent.

The Journal: The early pages in the journal constitute a memoir and relate Dr. Dickson's arrival in Canada in 1857, 10 years before Confederation. The rest of the book is a journal, containing photos, letters, drawings, and newspaper articles. Dr. Dickson describes many events during his Ministry including the fact that there was a small pox epidemic in 1903.

Provenance: Following Dr. Dickson's death, the journal was inherited by Florence Pearce, who was the granddaughter of Rev. James Dickson. It was then inherited by Florence Pearce's niece, Judy Douma, and in 1996 it was donated to a thrift store. It is not known who owned the journal from 1996 to 2025 when it was donated again, but we are grateful that it was cared for. Excerpts from the journal have been photocopied and are in the church hall.

Media Connection: Ingrid Talpak, one of our volunteers, was shown the journal and, after looking at some of the pages, realized what a treasure we had received. Ingrid, with her media background, realized how exciting this historical snapshot of Central Church was, and reached out to several radio stations, where she was interviewed about the find.

Action: Ingrid has been in touch with Dan Schmalz from Cambridge Archives regarding future care of the journal.

1. Ideally the book will be digitized and Ingrid will organize a group who read cursive writing and have them read the journal to be transcribed to text.
2. Ingrid will be sharing information about the journal on the Central Instagram page. [central_church_cambridge](https://www.instagram.com/central_church_cambridge)