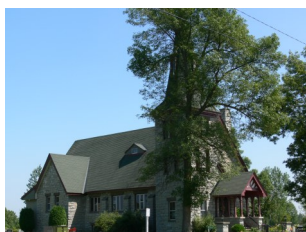


# THE GOOD NEWS

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## LET'S REVISIT OUR TIME AT ST GEORGE'S



## RECTOR'S REFLECTION

SUBMITTED BY FATHER JOHN STOPA

This newsletter focuses on the past of this Parish, especially on the life of St. George's Church. I wanted to take a moment to share a few reflections of my own. My first encounters of both churches was as a camper at the provincial park. When one camps at Fitzroy Provincial Park, it's inevitable that at some point a trek is made into the Harbour itself. And so it was that I would see this church across the street from the harbour store, having also seen the church in the middle of nowhere on my way to the provincial park. I still have a vivid memory of a giant sign in front of St. Thomas's Church, asking for donations toward a new roof. (I recall thinking that if I had the \$12,000 being sought or whatever the amount was—I would have gladly donated... All I needed to do was come up with the money somehow).

In the summer of 2000, while I was a postulant for ordination, I led morning prayer twice in the parish. Father François Trottier was rector at the time. I remember commenting on how there were more cars at the golf club than at church. After my ordination, I came back to do pulpit supply ministry (to celebrate the Holy Eucharist that is) a few times while the Rev. Kathryn Otley was rector. On my first occasion doing so, I was really late, having missed the right turn off on the highway.

I was spectacularly thrilled when Bishop John Chapman told me I would be going to the Parish of Fitzroy Harbour in January 2018 as priest-in-charge. I remember my first Sunday, my first celebration of the Holy Eucharist at St. George's, very

well. We were worshipping in the church hall (what would become known as The Amy Newell Hall.) Though the parishioners of St. George's are wonderfully kind people, during the sermon everyone seemed to be staring out the window looking on to Shirreff Street. It was one of those things where eventually I had to turn around and take a look as well to see what was going on. Alas, there didn't seem to be anything. One of the Mary's in the congregation explained that they were looking for deer... That deer had on occasion walked down the street, and it was interesting, and Please don't take it personally. I didn't. ☺

Back in 2007, I attended an academic conference on Oral History. It was very enlightening. Amidst all the professors and scholars, I was the only member of the clergy that was present. I came to the realization that Oral Historians and those in the church have a lot in common: we both hold holy stories that are told to us by previous generations and share our own holy stories with generations to come. If you think about it, the stories in the Bible started off as oral stories that eventually were written down.

There are many oral stories about St. George's Church as well as about St. Thomas's Church. A lot of these will begin with: "do you remember when..." In the years to come, we don't know what will happen to the property that holds the church and the rectory at 192 Shirreff St., Fitzroy Harbour, Ontario. However, in the future as we drive by that place, we will recall

cont'd page 8





Charles Shirreff from Leith, near Edinburgh, Scotland, crossed the Atlantic in 1817, proposing to settle near Port Hope. Somehow he was persuaded by officials to settle at the Chats Falls where the Mississippi River emptied into the upper Ottawa River, as they were anxious to develop the territory along the upper Ottawa.



In 1832 we are told "Mr. Shirreff erected at the Chats a square hewed-log building specially for the purpose of a school through the week and for holding religious services on the Sabbath. This was both the first school and the first church in Fitzroy Township."

Among various visiting clergy of all denominations leading services within its wall was the Reverend Hannibal Mulkins of the church of England, who afterwards went on to be chaplain at Kingston Penitentiary

## History of St. George's Anglican Church

Excerpt from [anglicanfitzroyparish.com](http://anglicanfitzroyparish.com) and Crosstalk Diocesan Archives

Early Anglicanism at Fitzroy Harbour, like the history of the village is tied up with the Shirreff family.

Mr. Shirreff built a sawmill near the mouth of the Carp River and engaged in lumbering and other projects including the first store in Fitzroy Harbour. When the artist William Henry Bartlett came through



Canada in 1838 sketching scenic settings he created one that was taken from the verandah of R. Shirreff Esq.; the earliest published engraving featuring a veranda in the history of Canadian Publishing.

The story of St. George's Anglican Church starts in December 3rd 1852, when Alexander Shirreff donated land for a church, parsonage and burial ground to the Bishop of Toronto. An Anglican congregation at Fitzroy Harbour started meeting by 1857, and by 1862 the congregation belonged to the Mission of Fitzroy Harbour & Pakenham with meetings in the village held in a drill shed, while another group worshiped in the school out on the ninth concession line of Fitzroy beginning in 1867.

Construction on St. George's began in 1857, although the congregation had collected only a quarter of the £1000 required to pay for the building. In 1860 Fitzroy Harbour was still a remote village, still, somehow the stone house of worship built of local brown limestone in 1863 was in the vanguard of ecclesiastical design. By 1863, the foundation with wall but no roof, had taken shape at a recorded cost of £2000. There were no pews and no heat. The completed building was consecrated on October 2, 1872.



It was not a large church, as a large church was not needed at Fitzroy Harbour, hence the dramatically lighted chancel was contained under the same roof as the rest of the small church. The west window was even more dramatic, extending high into the gable. The gables themselves were the most dramatically steep of any on a church in the Ottawa country. We can not be sure who designed this gem, either it was a late execution by Frank Wills (who died in 1857) or more likely the design of Thomas Fuller who was designing many churches at Ottawa featuring High Victorian gables in the late 1850's and 1860's (Thomas Fuller designed the Post office which is now the Arnprior and District Museum in 1896).



125th anniversary year, other extensive repairs and enhancements were undertaken. In 2000, the original stained glass was cleaned and restored, preparing it for another hundred years. At the same time, the stonework on the building was re-pointed.

Major renovations were recorded in the 1950's and the church hall was added in 1968. But it was not until 1981 that a belfry and spire were erected. In 1988, St. George's



Since our 125th anniversary, new garden beds have been created around the church and new signage has been erected. Ecumenical activity has grown with the annual vacation Bible school, Advent and Lenten services and the World Day of Prayer service hosted in rotation by the three denominations in Fitzroy Harbour village.

Monthly outreach collections support local and overseas projects. Each Christmas, two families receive a food basket and gifts. St. George's members initiated a project to grow crops for Canadian Food-grains Bank, in partnership with other churches and local suppliers.

St. George's celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2013.

## Animals in the Church

submitted by Mary McNeill

In the early days of St. George's, before the congregation could afford to put a roof on the church, sheep were allowed to graze in the chapel. As Mary says, this bit of history gives meaning to the hymn "Sheep May Safely Graze," both literally and figuratively.



# Sweet Memories of St. George's

## Mervyn & Emily Remember

August 11 2013, provided by Tom Jones

### The building



The altar is the original in Mervyn's and Emily's memory, having been moved forward off the wall during the incumbency of Reverend Donald Clark. There was no bell prior to the installation of the current one in the 1980s. Mervyn and Helen Poole (the first lady Warden) were Wardens when this took place. Eleanor Owens was very involved with having the bell installed. Mervyn never rang the bell until her funeral. While at the rail for Eucharist, Ken Spear (Priest at the time) asked Mervyn to ring the bell. "It was quite a challenge, but I got through it!"

The pews, the lectern and the stained glass are the only ones Mervyn can remember, thus being at least 85 years old. Electricity came to the church, and to all of the Harbour, in 1931 when the dam was being built. Previously, light was provided by coal oil lamps on brackets at every window. It was not very bright! The original ceiling was

considered too plain, so in 1929/30 Mr. Harold Owens put up the false rafters. The organ was located in the chancel years ago (Emily played it there). The organist had to pump with her feet. The sound wasn't very loud so that sometimes the congregation at the back of the church was half a verse behind the front! The current door from the church to the hall is in the location of a former window.

### Outside the church

There were stables for the horses for members of the congregation. The lot where the church is now situated had a house on the south east corner. It was demolished in the early 1960s.

### The Rectory

The rectory was built in 1954/55 at a cost of \$15,000 raised by donations from the congregations of the three churches of the parish.

### The Cemetery

The first man buried in the cemetery was one of Mervyn's grandfather's brothers, killed in a shanty in the 1840s. There are four Anglican priests buried in the cemetery:

- o Rev. EWB Richards
- o Canon Bill Belford
- o Archdeacon Eric Osborne
- o Archdeacon Howard Sadler

### Finances

For many years the annual budget was less than \$1000. During those years \$35 per year was budgeted for wood. The cemetery grass was cut once per year, with a scythe, in preparation for the cemetery service, at a cost of \$6.



### The services

The services were morning, afternoon and evening alternating between St. George's, St. Thomas' and St. Paul's. There was no communion after twelve noon. The Priest conducted the whole service, with no involvement of the laity, so that 90+ minutes was the norm, with communion taking twice as long. Parishioners brought their own hymn books. These hymn books contained the services too. The church was nearly full every Sunday, with sixty children in three Sunday School classes taking place for thirty minutes in the body of the church before the main service. There was no washroom. It was a miracle we got through that!

Don't cry because it's over;  
smile because it happened.

Dr. Seuss



### Evensong



Remember He is the artist and you are only the picture. You can't see it. So quietly submit to be painted—i.e., keep fulfilling all the obvious duties of your station (you really know quite well enough what they are!), asking forgiveness for each failure and then leaving it alone.

C.S. Lewis,

*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

### Blessing of the Animals



### Country Church (cont'd)

events. The corn roast, where they shucked corn for two hours. Making sandwiches for the Christmas craft fair. Emily Tripp telling stories about her youth growing up here. "I did not have that and it meant so much to hear other people's stories."

### Praying Chipmunk



## Country Church

Mary has been going to St. Georges since 1996. Some of her memories involve wild animals: "We're a country church and close to the wild life. It's all about learning to live with the wildlife."

I was a server on a hot summer day and we were in the middle of communion. I was watching the minister for the time to serve, when I spotted a chipmunk running along the edge of

a small step just behind the altar. While still assisting, I carefully moved to the other edge at the front, got my foot behind the chipmunk and nudged him just enough to convince it to go the other way. The effort was not unnoticed. After the service people asked, "did we really see what we thought we saw?" "Yes you did," I responded.

It was a baptism service; the baby's family was at the front

submitted by Mary McNeill

and the rest of the church behind. After the baptism, the minister picked up the baby and stepped down to the aisle to introduce him to the congregation. As he was doing that a bat suddenly flew out. The minister, quick on his feet, responded, "we're not a rich church; we couldn't afford a white dove."

Mary's other memories are of people working together to cater

cont'd →



## Sunday School Pen Pals

I have enjoyed attending St. George's as it is a beautiful small church with friendly parishioners that work well together & care for our church family (i.e.- share the joys & sorrows).

One memory I have that has a special place in my heart is of the Sunday School children having a "secret friend" with the adults in the church. The secret pen pal was revealed at the end of the Sunday School year, if I remember correctly. I believe it was the mid-90's. I think all the children and adults quite enjoyed the

connection. My two girls really enjoyed the connection as we're not from here and have no relatives in the area. My



older daughter, now living in Ottawa still keeps in occasional touch with her pen pal and they love to see each other when Andrea (our daughter) comes to St. George's.

When our younger daughter's pen pal was diagnosed with can-

cer, my daughter Lisa immediately wrote to her. Her pen pal was really touched by this, and told me to tell Lisa how much she appreciated the letter & was sorry that she was by then too ill to reply but was very touched by Lisa's letter.



I cannot but remember such things that were most precious to me.

William Shakespeare

submitted by Mary Shoup

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

Psalms 9:1

### Outside Service



### Art on the Lawn



## Pageants with Religious Themes

St. George's holds a treasure chest of memories for all of us. My favourite memories go way back to the eighties, when my husband Frank and I decided to work with the children to put on pageants with religious themes.

From the beginning, we felt these presentations should have a special quality that would help build self-confidence and give the children a sense of being an important segment of our congregation. To achieve this, we first gave the group a name:

**St. George's Workshop Players.**



All children connected with St. George's could participate, whether or not they attended services.

Next, we needed a stage and sets, so a platform was built that leveled the floor inside the chancel. Frank and Gary Weir created wonderful artistic backdrops appropriate to the themes of

each play.

The kids were not the only ones eager to participate. Men and women of the congregation got on board, contributing props, creating costumes and applying makeup. On at least one occasion costumes were borrowed (no charge) from the National Arts Centre. Striving to get the ultimate effect, we once even rented stage lights (at no cost to the church)

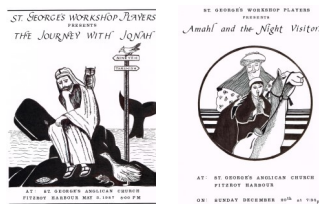
Children are not generally well heard when speaking to audiences in church buildings. (Voice projection isn't easy, either, for many adults) Of course there was no sound system in those days, so I enjoyed coaching the actors in elocution, and I was so proud of what they accomplished!

When performance day arrived we had no problem filling the pews.



Looking back, how can we ever forget the live donkey being led

submitted by Anne Senior



up the aisle with Mary and Joseph one Christmas Eve? And the touching climax of Amahl and the Night visitors? Or Jonah being swallowed by the whale? The fun costumes for the story of the ark?



These memories are treasured, as are so many others over the years. I am filled with gratitude to the pioneers for erecting this simple, beautiful, church—my spiritual home for so many years—and to God, the cornerstone of all things sacred.

### Antique Road Show



### St. George's Baseball Team



### Christmas Float





## Kneeler Project To help celebrate the 150th Anniversary



I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds. Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.

Psalms 77:11-14

## Garden Tours



## Altar Guild

A lot of my memories are about my time with the Altar Guild and the guidance I had from Helen Poole, Faye Stewart and Amy



Newell.

Those women were part of the fabric of the church setting a fine example and did their best to pass along the routines and traditions of altar work.

I participated in some of the sewing projects when we purchased kits for the different seasons of the church calendar for altar cloths and vestments. So many of the Altar Guild helped to complete this big undertaking. Sometimes it was a banner for an event or our needle work kneeler project, a stole for a visiting priest, it was a real variety of ways to participate with others in the life of the church.

Over the years I helped with the Sunday School and we made costumes for plays and the Nativity. The children were thrilled

and the costumes felt important to them although most were created from recycled/up-cycled bits and bobs, and done without much thought to fit—put a belt on it to hold it up or safety pin the hem and it will do. Looking back its wonderful to remember these young faces and see so many them now married with children of their own or off onto their own path.



We've had clean-up and tidy-up improvement projects inside and out, and painting the hall was another where Pat had us well organized and a team got the job done without too much trouble. Working together was always the key, it made a big job doable. Like our sister parish, our fundraisers, church suppers, garden



submitted by Margo Kealey

tours, plays, garage and bake sales all involving so many and were successful in keeping our bills paid and the community of St. George's connected.

The Bible Camp was another



popular summer week of activity for area kids. We hosted for a few years and were able to volunteer and lend a hand.

The members of the parish are a true family. My husband and I have moved many times and had options for other churches to attend closer to our home but it was important to me to remain connected to St. George's. The closing will be a heartbreak but one we have accepted as necessary. I hope we all will try to find some ways to retain our friendships and although not able to worship together we will keep each other close.

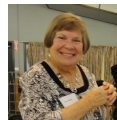


## Music

submitted by Wendy Mayhew

My family moved to Fitzroy Harbour in 1970. At some point in the early 70s St. George's was getting a new organ and we purchased the old organ. So through the 70's and into the

80's Dad directed the choir and Mum played the organ. The practices were held in our living room. I remember watching



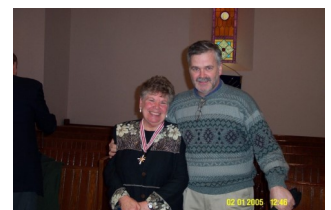
and listening and eventually being old enough to join the choir. To this day there are many Anthems sung by our current choir that I remember singing with my Mum and Dad.

In 2005 Amy received the Anglican Award of Merit



After her death in 2018 a plaque was awarded in her memory and the church hall was re-named in her honour.

The Amy Newell Hall





### Preparation for the Corn Roast



The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

### Holy Hops



## Baptisms, Cemetery and Weddings

submitted by Susan Morency

Dave and I have many fond memories of St. George's.

Both Dave and I were baptized at St George's, myself as a baby and Dave as an adult at an Easter Vigil. Our granddaughter was also baptized at St George's .

Dave and Victoria (our daughter) were both confirmed at St George's.

Dave worked many years auditing the books with Faye Stewart and then Darlene Weir as treasurers.

Working with the cemetery com-



mittee over many years, we have been able to successfully add to the cemetery to double it's size.

I was the coordinator of the Altar Guild for many years with a number of great volunteers.

The corn roasts, Irish Stew dinners,

Holy Hops and numerous dinners St George's catered were always



**Serving the congregation**  
Volunteers from St. George's Anglican Church in Fitzroy Harbour were out on St. Patrick's Day to serve up Irish Stew. From left to right, Darlene Weir, Margo Kealy, Audrey Jones, Jillian Portt, Anne Senior and Rev. Andrea Christensen.

fun times.

The highlight for Dave and I was our daughter's wedding in 2018 at St George's.

## Life in the Church

submitted by Pat Weir

Rev. Roger Young married Gary & I in St. George's in 1983. Gary had attended church here all of his life, and knew everybody. Everyone knew me - I, on the other hand, recognized some people by face only, and as some of you know, I have a terrible time remembering names. Well, wouldn't you know it - there was Velma, Zelma and a Thelma, and a multitude of Mary's. Lord help me!!

Time went on and, we were blessed with a daughter, Pauline. As I settled into church life, I was asked to be a reader. Now, Pauline was a very active young child - and on that Sunday, the season required Gary to farm instead of church, I was on my own to read for the very first time. To set the scene, the sanctuary at that time had choir pews along the walls and Pauline

would have been about 2 years old and very comfortable being in church - not at all shy. As I got up to read nervously for the very first time, Pauline of course was not going to be left behind, and followed me. As I started to read, I felt that people were very much engaged with my reading, but I quickly realized that they were being entertained by Pauline who was playing peek-a-boo with the congregation in the choir pews! I am not sure that anyone remembered the reading!!

Of course, St. George's is an old hand at hosting food after events. And of course, the beverage of choice is always coffee & tea. I can't recall if it was a special service or a funeral but the church was full and the hall was prepared with food and a very large urn of coffee. Our urn at that time tended to be a bit

quirky. Towards the end of the service, I popped out to make sure that the coffee was ready but low and behold... nothing, coffee grounds were totally dry. I reentered the back of the church and made some wild hand motions to Darlene. So with extreme speed we boiled a lot of water to pour manually over the dry coffee grounds - yuck! I prayed that the service would somehow be extended. Can't remember if the coffee was even drinkable, but I do know we heavily promoted tea that day!



### PSALM 77:11-14 NKJV

I will remember the works of the LORD;  
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.  
I will also meditate on all Your work, And  
talk of Your deeds. Your way, O God, is in the  
sanctuary; Who is so great a God as our God?  
You are the God who does wonders; You have  
declared Your strength among the peoples.



## So Many Activities

After Judy's daughters were born, she started attending St. George's. The first event she took part in was a steak barbeque, with pies for dessert. She was asked to make three pies and was not sure how they would taste. There was no restaurant in the community so this was a hit. Judy learned a lot, Amy taught us so many things about life and leadership.

Some of the activities of the church include: making the kneelers with Kathryn Otley (Judy took hers to Florida and Cape Breton to work on), Seed Grains,

The Haunted Church for Halloween, Holy Hops, Christmas in the Country, making lunch for Fitzroy Craft Fair, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary (each Sunday that year, had a theme), Camp Pontiac, The St. George's Dragons baseball team (played against the St. Thomas team), Art on the Lawn, (Artists, including Nancy Trottier, came and sold art on the lawn and The plays.

Judy explains: "It was a great place to group and learn how to be a caring adult. It was the leaders in the congregation."

submitted by Judy Watson

## Strawberry Social



## Working Together



As I recently made sandwiches for a funeral, I fondly remembered all the times the ladies of St George's have worked together making food. Those are cherished times for me. We would chat and share stories and laugh together while we got a lot of work done. We worked as a team and everyone did their part.

I remember the corn roasts, the BBQ's, the church picnics, the Irish stew dinners, the Field Naturalists dinner we catered, the strawberry social, the Holy Hops

fundraiser and silent auction, the Christmas bazaar baking tables, and the Christmas bazaar lunch counter where we made and served food. I can't make any sandwich for a group without happily remembering our dear Faye Stewart telling us (in her firm way) to make sure the sandwiches had enough filling and not to skimp!!

I feel very blessed to have been a part of the St. George's congregation.

submitted by Audrey Jones

# Bible School and Music

Kevin and Beth started attending St. George's in the late 1980s. They both have an Anglican background. They decided when their daughter started school in Fitzroy Harbour, they would go to St. George's.

Beth's family sat in middle pews, Kevin's family in the back. Kevin and Beth decided to sit in middle, and everyone looked at them when they did so. Amy, whom Beth knew, explained that they sat in Ken Belford's seat. That was their first introduction to St. George's.

Their children grew up in the church. Vacation Bible School was the biggest activity they took on—it involved a lot of work by dedicated people. It included all the churches in the area and they divided up the work. First year was in the late 1990s. It was huge and held at the United Church. Later moved to the Community Centre.

The church held chicken barbeques on the skating rink at the community centre. It was a huge fundraiser for the church. People made pies, salads and lots of

food. Beth was asked to turn two heads of cabbage into coleslaw.

Beth was always in the choir—a big one at that time. Ken Spear's wife was the choir director.

submitted by **Beth Portt**

**Canadian Foodgrains  
Bank**



## Catering,



## Fashion Show



## The Holy Haunted House





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Check out our parish  
twitter feed  
@AnglicanFitzroy

facebook.com/stthomaswoodlawn  
facebook.com/stgeorgesfitzroyharbour

Artist Gary Weir



ACW 1949



What we once have enjoyed  
we can never lose. All that we  
love deeply becomes part of  
us.

Helen Keller



*The service of de-consecration of  
St. George's Anglican Church  
Fitzroy Harbour*

*will be held*

*September 18th 2:00 p.m.*

*with fellowship to follow*

*Please come and help us celebrate the end of an era.*

## RECTOR'S REFLECTION (CONT'D)

submitted by Father John Stopa

those stories. The memories will come and go. At times it will be difficult – I suspect the first Christmas and Easter will be quite challenging without having St. George's as a place to go to worship. You will always have these stories that shaped the church and that shaped you. I hope you will continue to tell the stories of St. George's for years to come.

I don't know if you've noticed this or not, but we don't remember church time by years but rather by who was the rector. "We did this and this, when so and so was the rector of the church." It says something about the church that we remember time by the people who were there. Also, it used to be that we would mark our rites of passage at the church: it's where we were hatched, matched, and dispatched. Less and less is that the case, not only for our churches but for churches across the board. (For instance, in Fitzroy Harbour only Fr John Orban has a wedding this summer at the Roman Catholic Church.)

Lest all of this can be depressing, don't let it be so. What it means is that the church is (and here comes a scary word)... Changing! It is becoming something new. Exactly what that new thing is, we don't know what it is yet, but together we are on a journey of discovery. What I dearly, so dearly love about our Anglican liturgy is that it ends with the doxology: "Glory to God whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen!" There is so much deep meaning in this prayer that comes to us from Ephesians 3:20. I am often reminded of the words of Archbishop Michael Peers, one of our greatest Primates in the Anglican Church of Canada, who would remark that the church has survived through a lot worse in the course of human history – it can survive through this. We must be realistically optimistic, holding onto our holy stories, but looking forward to what may come, but still being willing to look for deer walking down Main Street.

## PRAYER

submitted by Father John Stopa



For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I

pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Ephesians 3:14-21)