

# SANCTUARY LONDON

**Finding Home. Together.**



## WHAT DO THE HOLIDAYS MEAN FOR YOU?

Unwrapping gifts after church on Christmas Eve. Then after our big turkey dinner was done, after church of course on Christmas morning, we would spend the afternoon singing Christmas carols gathered around the piano in my Aunt Cobi's living room.

That's one family tradition that sticks out to me as I reflect on Christmases past. For some of us, Christmas is filled with great joy, warmth, family and amazing memories. For others it can be an extremely painful time of year as we are reminded of the pain of relationships lost.

This past Sunday, we had a discussion like this at Sanctuary. Many of our friends shared, and as we did, we grew closer together as a family, through the pain and joy.

What about you? What are your memories? Are there people in the periphery of your life that you sense might be lonely? What can you do to invite them in to be part of your family not only during this season, but also in the dark months to come? We all need to belong. -D.R.

## JOIN US!

Annual Christmas Party  
Wednesday December 18,  
2019 2-10pm.  
Full Christmas Dinner  
served @ 5:30

## CHRISTMAS CATALOG

It's not too late to support Sanctuary by purchasing gifts to support our community in honour of your friends!

Please see our website for more details:  
[www.sanctuarylondon.ca](http://www.sanctuarylondon.ca)

## A personal note of thanks and request for assistance

On this side of the Christmas parties, family get togethers, and catch-up visits with friends over the holidays, it feels like it will never end. So many details to take care of. Turkeys to cook. Presents to put together and wrap. Games to plan and songs to rehearse for our big gathering. But, I know, in a few short weeks, all of the celebrations will be done and my sabbatical time away from Sanctuary will have started.



First, I want to say “thank-you” for all the support and encouraging words that you have offered in the past few weeks after I shared that I was going to take some time off to rest. Expressions like “necessary to charge batteries,” “good for the soul,” and “loving others requires that you love yourself first,” have been a balm to my nervous spirit. I wasn’t sure how this news would be received and I have been overwhelmed with the support.

Second, I want to ask for your help to make this sabbatical possible. Financially, we will have extra needs. We will be increasing the hours for Tessa and Mechele in order to cover programming. I will not be speaking in other communities while I am gone - a decrease in income from honoraria. And I will have some costs associated with healing retreats and counselling. Can you help us cover those costs with a one-time end of year donation? Or beginning to (or increasing) a monthly donation to Sanctuary? You do so here: <https://www.sanctuarylondon.ca/getting-involved/donations/> OR, can you spare some time in the next six months to help out? We could always use a few hands to help prepare weekly meals, help clean-up, or enjoy sitting with folks during a drop-in (engaging in conversation or playing a game). We could use all those types of support for the next six months (after as well!)



Finally, my prayer for you this Christmas is for peace. Peace is not just an absence of bad things but a movement towards things being set right. Peace is soaking in the moments of love, engaging in good conversation, tasting good food, and allowing yourself to really laugh. It is also learning more about the pains of this world, engaging those who are hurting from those pains, and challenging those things that cause those pains. It is there that we meet the One for whom Christmas is named. And as Tiny Tim once offered, “God bless us, everyone.”

Gil Clelland



# Merry Christmas!

from all of us!

We are so thankful for all of your support, love, and encouragement throughout 2019. We pray that your holiday season will be filled with warmth, joy, and peace. Many blessings for the New Year!

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*And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that shall be for all people!"*



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