



Immaculate
Conception Church



St. Bridget's
Church



St. Kateri
Tekakwitha



Sacred Heart
Church



St. Michael's
Church



Published By:

Immaculate
Conception Parish,
669 Prince Street,
Truro. N.S. B2N1G5

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Contact info:

office@icctruro.org
(902) 893-7188

Spotlight



ADVENT & ALPHA



Advent Message from Fr. Jim O'Connor:

With great anticipation the Advent season of the Church begins on November 30th. We join most denominations of our Christian brothers and sisters in preparing to welcome Jesus our saviour into our world in His humble birth at Christmas. While our anticipation continues for His Second Coming, Advent focuses on God's prophesied lowly entry into our world as one of us. God's encounter with humanity is so significant, we begin our church liturgical year with the First Sunday of Advent.

Preparation in the season of Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") symbolically gives us the time we need to prepare ourselves, not just for an annual celebration of his appearance in our world, but for a personal encounter with Him. God wants us to come to Him as much as He wants to come to us.

We symbolically come to him by our personal preparations in our home, our church and our community. Advent devotions like the Advent wreath, remind us of the true meaning of the season. Among the many decorative, social and cooking preparations, more importantly, let us include daily prayer, penance and fasting in these activities to enable us to prepare spiritually. Readings from all four Advent Sunday Masses call us to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world. Finally, we assemble at church to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with prayerful and joyous festivity in the Solemn celebration of the Nativity of our Lord. Our Christmas Mass schedule for all five churches, offers a variety of choices for this solemn celebration. Come, invite your family and friends to celebrate with us.

In the New Year, once more we offer another choice in coming to our Lord, Alpha! Jesus describes himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Like Advent, the Alpha ministry is a new beginning in another way, particularly for those exploring Christianity. And, there are many beginning to explore. Again, invite your family and friends!

WHAT IS ALPHA?

Are you ready to take a deeper dive into your faith?
After all this time, do you still have questions?
Are you open to hearing, conversing and learning from others?

The Alpha Canada National Office was established in November 1998 – its purpose being:

“Sharing the Good News of Jesus”.

The Alpha Program is an 11 week course that creates a space where people gather to learn about and discuss life's big questions in a friendly, open and casual environment.

The founders of Alpha believe that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, therefore at Alpha, you have the opportunity to explore your spiritual beliefs, ask questions and share your point of view.

Alpha is for anyone curious about exploring life's big questions – purpose : faith : spirituality

“We believe that what unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us”

What does an Alpha session look like?

Connection : Content : Conversation

Connection - At each 2-hour session, groups enjoy a time of getting to know each other, usually over a free meal or snacks.

Content - Each week, the video explores a new topic that is central to the Christian faith. The series explores the big issues of life and faith and unpack the basics of Christian belief, addressing questions like “Who is Jesus?” “Why and how do I pray? And “How does God guide us?”

Conversation - Participants gather into pre-arranged small groups with a trained facilitator to discuss the topic in a judgement-free environment. Learn, ask, share, connect!

With gratefulness for a few years of Alpha in our parish, beautiful things are said and experienced with many having conversion and renewal as they begin or deepen their life of faith. However, there is a need for ongoing discipleship and mission. It takes all the resources of a parish to derive the power begun in Alpha. Recall that the culture of past has changed:

WAS: Behave - believe – belong
NOW: Belong – believe - behave

Alpha accomplishes the belong and the believe with a power beyond us. In Love, Truth, and Relationship, there is power – these are the attributes of Jesus who is bigger than Alpha. Therefore, our human experience is bigger than Alpha. Despite the power of the experience, there is leakage in the excitement of new-found faith. For mature Catholics we have our Sacraments, programs, repetitious devotions, liturgies, etc. These move us along on our journey into the life of Christ. However, most Alpha participants are still infants or youth in their faith. They require attention and guidance to continue their journey to maturity in the life of Christ, the spiritual life.

There will be a new Alpha Series beginning in January 2026 at **Immaculate Conception. St. Bridget’s** concluded a very successful Alpha program earlier this year and plans are underway for another. As well, an Alpha series will begin in the Spring of 2026 at **St. Michael’s**. If you would like to register or have any further questions regarding the course, please reach out to Trish in the Parish Office.
More information about Alpha can also be found on: alphacanada.org

ALPHA - A NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

Written by Tony Harvey

Saint Luke the evangelist wrote two books - his matchless gospel of Jesus, and a sequel - The Acts of the Apostles. He introduces The Acts in these words, “In my first book I told you, Theophilus, about everything Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up into heaven” (Acts 1:1) implying that in the book of Acts Jesus would continue his ministry through the apostles, now empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The early church then was to be the prototype and model of the true church down through the generations. And in Acts 2: 41-42, Luke gives a summary of the life of the early church “those who welcomed his (Peter’s), message were baptized – “they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Comparing today's church, we find most are devoted to the apostles teaching (through attendance at mass and private Bible study), the breaking of bread (Mass) and prayer (personal and corporate). But sometimes an equal devotion to the fellowship or common life of the church is missing. Yet this was the great strength of the early church. Luke continues: all the believers met together, shared everything, met in homes, shared their meals with great joy and generosity” (Acts 2: 44 to 46) to the point when even their enemies were obligated to acknowledge “how those Christians love one another”. This is where Alpha comes in. We meet together, share a meal, ponder God's word, and begin to share our lives together, just as in the early church. This is what is needed in every generation but particularly perhaps at this time, when the world feels like a hostile place, there are still wars being fought and isolation and loneliness are so common. So please join us at Alpha as we seek to build community together. If you cannot join us, please pray for a mighty work of God to take place in the lives of our participants.

