

## **April 8, 2021 WEEKLY UPDATE**

### **PANDEMIC UPDATE**

Effective Thursday, April 8, the Province of Ontario is in a mandated state of emergency and a stay-at-home order has been issued. This does not affect our current operations at St. John's, for we are in our diocesan plan Red Stage, meaning the office is closed and liturgies are on-line only. Voicemail, e-mail and regular mail are checked daily during this stage. Parish Council meets via Zoom monthly and Canon Catherine sends a daily memo to Council with updates and news.

Please do your part in helping to stem the tide of this virus. The virus cannot survive if we do not give it a host environment in which to live. So, let us continue to fight the good fight in order to finish the race. As vaccinations become more available, be sure to register to be vaccinated. Once vaccinated, continue to wear your mask, wash your hands and keep a safe physical distance from those outside your household. Limit your trips to essential errands/appointments/work only at this time, but be sure to safely get out and get some fresh air each day. Also, reach out to friends, neighbours and family virtually and by phone. A simple "hello" and a bit of a chat can do much to raise spirits weighed down by the pandemic isolation.

It has been a long winter. We are all tired and frustrated. But the days are getting longer, the weather is warming up and as we have witnessed over the past year, virus transmission decreases dramatically when we all observe the public health protocols.

Information regarding our diocesan response to the pandemic can be found at <https://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19>

### **LITURGIES DURING RED-STAGE**

St. John's continues to offer recorded Sunday morning worship via its YouTube, web page and Facebook starting at 12 noon. We are hoping to move to live-streaming our Sunday morning worship soon, rather than the record and upload model currently employed. We are waiting on delivery of some equipment for this. In addition to Sunday morning Eucharist, Compline continues to be live streamed on Facebook at 9pm each evening.

## **EASTERTIDE: PARISH POCKET PRAYERS**

It has been so long since we've been able to see one another. But we can still pray for one another. During the fifty days of Easter (Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost on May 23), consider this exercise to stay connected with others, while being apart.

- Find a small stone, a button or token, and assign it the name of someone in the parish.
- Keep that stone or button in your pocket throughout the day or somewhere that you will see it regularly.
- Whenever you reach in and feel it, then silently say that person's name and offer a short prayer. It can be as simple as "God, please bless NN" or "Jesus, be with NN at this time."
- At the end of the day, before you go to bed, put the stone on your bedside table, or dresser and ask for God's presence with that person throughout the night. You can use this prayer, or offer one of your own: *"Dear Lord, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live. Give your angels charge over NN throughout the hours of this night, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends on you and each other's toil. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen."*
- You can pray for the same person throughout Eastertide or choose a new person each morning.

At Pentecost, you may wish to let those people know you have been praying for them, but that is not necessary if you prefer to pray anonymously.

## **PINT AND A PASSAGE**

We may not be able to gather at the pub with our bibles, but we can come together online to discuss the Gospel passage for the upcoming Sunday. So, pour yourself a pint (or cup of tea) at home and log on with others to break open the Word together. To register for the coordinates, please contact Canon Catherine at [catherine-ascah@ottawa.anglican.ca](mailto:catherine-ascah@ottawa.anglican.ca)

## **COMMUNITY DINNER ON DELIVERY**

We sent out 179 meals on Monday, April 5. Many thanks to Dan and Virginia Willis and their team of volunteers who prepped, packaged and delivered these Easter dinners to grateful recipients in our community.

## **FELLOWSHIP**

*Afternoon Tea Tuesdays* – Tuesdays at 3pm. Strictly social. Pull out your best china tea service, make a delicate little sandwich or set a plate of scones and jam before your computer and join in a civilized afternoon tea and friendly visits with friends near and far. To obtain the Zoom coordinates, please e-mail the parish office [stjohns\\_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca](mailto:stjohns_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca). Hats, fascinators and ascot ties are optional.

## **OFFERINGS**

Thank you for your generous financial support. Your donations make the ministry of St. John's possible. Offering envelopes can be mailed to the parish office or dropped off in the mailbox. Perhaps consider signing up for PAR (pre-authorized remittance) if that would work for you. Information was about PAR is available from the Envelope Secretary: SJSFenvelopesecretary@gmail.com

## **MISSION & MINISTRY UPDATE**

Carebridge Community Support has heard back and their application for funding under the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) program was not approved. However, CMHC is petitioning the federal government for additional RHI funding, and the application is being kept open.

In the meantime, Carebridge remains committed to an affordable housing build in Smiths Falls and continues to explore possibilities and build relationships. It is still too early for a comprehensive congregational meeting, as scope and cost of project is still under development. Canon Catherine will join Carebridge's Project Team in order to receive up to date information in a timely fashion which can be shared with the congregation.

Information about Carebridge and their mandate can be found here: <https://www.carebridge.ca/>

A reminder of the timeline that has brought us here:

- November 2018 a parish retreat facilitated by Jay Koyle, Congregational Development Officer for the diocese of Algoma called on St. John's to consider its Gifts, Assets and Passions.
  - Town Halls and invitations during coffee hour in early 2019 invited the congregation to contribute its suggestions regarding its gifts, assets and passions.
  - April 25, 2019 a meeting was convened at St. John's where community stakeholders, municipal politicians, service providers, other churches and service clubs shared identifiable needs in the community.
  - The congregation was invited to indicate where they felt St. John's gifts, assets and possibilities, as distilled into the broad categories, could be used to address the identified community needs. Housing and Youth "scored" the highest.
- Opportunities to join in some form of an affordable housing project in town were presented in the fall of 2019 and conversations with Carebridge Community Support began. At two town hall meetings at St. John's where members of the congregation were invited to consider

partnering in an affordable housing project, there was clear and overwhelming support to pursue such a project, understanding that this was preliminary show of interest.

- Work around establishing scholarships for post secondary education began.
- Conversations continued at Parish Council and updates, as they were available, shared with the congregation.

We will continue to provide updates as information becomes available. Earlier parish updates are available on our parish website.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Sunday School Live happens on the St. John's Sunday School Facebook page at 11:30am. Everyone and anyone can tune in and enjoy this time of teaching, prayer and fellowship. For more information, contact Emily at emduberville@hotmail.com. Please note that you can participate, even if you do not have a Facebook account.

### **BISHOP'S GALA**

The 38th Annual Bishop's Gala and silent auction will take place virtually on Thursday, May 27 at 7pm. This event will raise funds for two specific initiatives: All Mothers and Children Count is a comprehensive health, food security and nutrition program in rural Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Mozambique undertaken by the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF); Virtual Therapy for Disabled Children is an urgently needed service of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Center in our Companion Diocese of Jerusalem.

All proceeds from this event will support these two programs. Information and tickets are available at <https://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/bishop-s-gala>

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Interested in receiving updates right to your inbox? An electronic bulletin will be sent out every other Thursday to those who have subscribed. Subscribe by e-mailing the parish office: [stjohns\\_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca](mailto:stjohns_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca) The next edition of the e-bulletin will be April 22.