

**April 30, 2021 WEEKLY UPDATE**

**PANDEMIC UPDATE**

Current provincially mandated pandemic restrictions do not affect activities at St. John’s, for we are in our diocesan plan Red Stage, meaning the office is closed and liturgies are on-line only.  Our plan meets or exceeds the provincial thresholds.  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 note that currently, funerals may not be held in the church, and funerals held at the funeral home or at the graveside are restricted to a maximum of 10 participants, excluding funeral home staff.

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, you are encouraged 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 (with the exception of today’s snow squall!) 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 rather than the record and upload model currently employed and will advise of any service time changes once we are able to do so. In addition to Sunday morning Eucharist, Compline continues to be live streamed on Facebook at 9pm each evening.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL VESTRY**

There will be a special Vestry on **Wednesday, May 26 at 7pm via ZOOM** regarding the establishment of the St. John’s Memorial Scholarship. Details regarding this initiative, along with a time-line of how we came to this point, was mailed out by Canada Post on April 30 to all eligible members of Vestry. It will also be available on our website.

You must pre-register to attend the Vestry. If you are not comfortable attending the meeting via Zoom, then arrangements can be made to contact you on the night of the Vestry to record your vote. Please refer to the mailing or the website for details.

**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.

**EXPLORING THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

Have you ever wondered about the origin, purpose and meaning of one of the oldest confessions of the Christian faith?  Join Deacon Robert Sicard as he facilitates an on-line study on the Apostles’ Creed on Wednesday, May 5 & 12 beginning at 7pm.  This study will be offered via Zoom.  Pre-registration is required by e-mailing stjohns\_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca  There is no charge for this study and no advanced reading or preparation is required.

**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

**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.  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

**COMMUNITY DINNER ON DELIVERY**

Our next Community Dinner on Delivery will be Sunday, May 16.

**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>

Tickets are not required to attend the virtual “show” but those who purchase tickets will receive a “swag bag” delivered directly to your home (within diocesan boundaries)

**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

The next edition of the e-bulletin will be April 22.