



News From The Pews

St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph, Ontario

From the Rector - Advent - Christmas 2020

Dear parishioners and friends,

Here we are at the start of the Church's New Liturgical year, stuck in an increasingly expanding, annoying, and worrisome pandemic. The expectation, hope, and preparation that Advent marks at the beginning of this new year as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, the season of Holy birth and incarnation, is full of questions. What can we do? What can't we do? How will we anticipate and prepare for the celebration of God's great incarnate gift in the birth of Jesus in a time where we must be ready to pivot on a moment's notice? Well we, as a staff and leadership team, have gotten pretty used to and adept at responding on the fly to maintain and respond to the opportunities and challenges of worship, pastoral, and outreach ministries during strange and worrisome times. Our stewardship theme for the year sums it up well; "Holding Our Own in Unexpected Times – 'faithfully navigating through stormy seas'."

It seems fitting for 2020 that in the Northern Hemisphere Advent arrives precisely at the time when darkness is still encroaching to its fullest over the light of day. We are also most aware of the complexities and dark forces at work in our earth from climate change to political conflicts and strife, to the COVID/ Coronavirus pandemic. We are at a seemingly dark, fearsome hour, which is precisely the moment for the Christian heart to both claim, and proclaim, "Hope". We are waiting. We are expectant. We hold faith that God is acting through and with us to build the Kingdom of Love and Peace.

We, as a parish, have much to be thankful for and much to proclaim to the world around us,

as we continue to faithfully embrace God's call to faith and action in our life as a congregation. So we will celebrate Advent and Christmas as best we can with a blend of live, live-streamed, and recorded live worship opportunities for you to access as you are able. The list of worship opportunities listed in this newsletter looks exciting, imaginative, and joy-filled for the unexpected season of corporate life we are in. It is our best gift to you, and the wider communities in which we serve. I sincerely look forward to sharing this time with you as best we can!

This comes with all good wishes to you for a Happy Advent and a Blessed Christmas. This is God's creative time.

Love and Peace in Christ,

The Reverend Canon Ralph T. Blackman
Rector



Update from Council & Corporation

It has been a busy and fruitful time at St. George's over the last few weeks. Here are some of the highlights that Corporation would like to bring to your attention:

Many of our families with children have received a Kid's Pack full of fun activities and worship materials to work on either while watching the on-line worship or to complete on their own time. These monthly packs have been very well received—upon receiving their pack, one of our junior parishioners exclaimed with delight, "This is for me? My own mail from the church?!" Thanks to Laura Keller for spearheading this initiative and to the folks who are personally delivering the packs to our families.

Once again, the Saturday Night Supper crew prepared a delicious hot meal for 100 people on November 21. The menu of Shepherd's Pie, coleslaw, rolls and dessert was prepared by the youth (with help from a few adults) of St. George's and expertly organised by Jon Fage. The piping hot meals were driven over to Royal City Mission on Quebec Street where they were prepared in individual take-away containers. Thank you to all who support this programme either by contributing time, food or funds.



Our MISSION at St. George's:

- to make Jesus Christ known

Our GOAL is to make St. George's a place of:

- prayer and seeking after God
- faith where Christ and the Gospel are proclaimed
- outreach to those in need
- engagement in the issues that confront us today
- love where all find a warm welcome



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On Sunday November 22, Corporation organised a celebration in recognition of the 35th anniversary of Rev Ralph's ordination into the priesthood. A personal message on the outdoor sign, flowers, cupcakes and cards of good wishes made the day



special for Ralph. Thank you to those who donated to the Rector's Discretionary Fund, which now has over \$1,500 in it. This fund allows the Rector quick access to money to help people or organisations in times of emergency or need.

Ten families comprising 35 people attended the second annual Advent Wreath Worship event on Saturday November 28, lead by Rev Ralph. Much appreciation to Elizabeth and George Adams for supplying the fresh greenery and frames for this fun family gathering.

A very successful Poinsettia fundraiser provided more than enough funds to cover the cost of poinsettias for the chancel decoration. The remaining money has been deposited to the operating fund.

By now you will have received the 2021 Stewardship Campaign package expertly prepared by our Business Manager, Ellen Luccock, and her team. This includes the narrative budget for the coming year, as well as a one-time opportunity of an

additional gift called "The Thirteenth Month". We encourage you to read the information, consider your level of financial support and return your pledge forms to the church office at your earliest convenience. We understand the challenges this year has brought to everyone and want to sincerely thank you for your continued commitment to St. George's.

Members of Corporation are currently undertaking the annual Mutual Ministry Reviews of all staff. These reviews serve as an opportunity for staff to share their views on how things are going from their side. Corporation listens and then follows up with recommendations and updates to job descriptions, work-life

balance and workplace dynamics. Without a doubt, St. George's has a dedicated and hard-working staff who keep our church well organised, spotlessly clean, financially accountable, musically rich and spiritually connected to each other and the wider community. We are blessed.

Finally, we would like to draw your attention to the Advent and Christmas schedule. Just a reminder to register on-line or call the church office before Thursday noon if you would like to attend any of the services or events in person.

Council and Corporation wish all parishioners, staff and clergy a very happy Christmas and a blessed new year.

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Financial Update

Since the end of September, we have again been enjoying in-person services at St. George's. However, we can only accommodate a limited number of parishioners per service and many are still watching the services online. Although we do have a large number of parishioners using preauthorized giving, the reduced numbers attending services has resulted in reduced income for the church.

The Diocese, who administers our payroll, has applied and been approved for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) in every month that it has been offered and is planning on continuing to apply for these funds as long as they are offered. This benefit is not shown as a rebate, but rather a reduction in our salary expenses. As mentioned before, Workside is back and this, along with a few individuals who have started to rent the kitchen, also offsets some of our expenses.

Our year to date (January to October) income at \$247,212 is off by \$45,000 from last year and is off budget by \$118,000 mainly due to a decrease in identified givers. There was also a reduction in both the Lent, Easter and Harvest offerings that added to the decrease.

Our expenses of \$375,831 are slightly under both last year's and the budget, due to the CEWS and some other savings. However, our expenses over revenues continues to grow and our deficit is now over \$128,000. This is almost \$40,000 greater than the same time last year and over \$111,000 greater than what was budgeted for.

As a parish, we must continue to do what we can to help St. George's recover financially from COVID-19.

For those who want to start PAG, please contact the office at office@saintgeorge.ca or call 519-822-1366.

If you wish to send in a donation, please mail it or if you want to drop it off at the Church, make sure there is someone in the office (rather than dropping it off as the outside mailbox is not secure). Donations can also be made online on our website or through e-transfer to bookkeeper@saintgeorge.ca.



All families are invited to join us for

EPIPHANY FAMILY WORSHIP

Saturday, January 2, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

BOOK ON OUR WEBSITE

St. George's Church | 99 Woolwich Street
519-822-1366 | www.saintgeorge.ca





Advent & Christmas at St. George's

SUNDAYS IN ADVENT (December 13 and 20)

8:30 am *Holy Eucharist* (Book of Common Prayer)

11:00 am *Holy Eucharist* (Book of Alternative Services)

STATIONS OF THE CRECHE - A Festival of Nativity Sets

December 19 from 3:00-5:00pm

December 20 from 3:00-5:00pm

December 22 from 6:00-8:00pm

CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 pm *A Family Christmas Eve*
with Communion

(Child-friendly service of story and music)

7:30pm *Community Festival of Christmas Readings & Carols*
(Lessons & Carols with a modern twist)

10:00 pm *Christmas Mass in the Midnight*
with Communion
(Traditional candlelit service)

CHRISTMAS DAY

10:00 am *Holy Eucharist*

Register to attend on our website.

All services will be available for viewing live on Facebook,
or later on YouTube.



St. George's Church presents

STATIONS OF THE CRECHE



Enjoy a physically-distanced 20-minute walk-through experience of over 100 nativity sets on display in the soaring architecture of St. George's Church, accompanied by beautiful music of the season.

Please book your timeslot with people from your household or social bubble only. Masks are mandatory.

Donations to support the ministry of St. George's will be gratefully accepted.

DECEMBER 19 FROM 3:00-5:00PM
DECEMBER 20 FROM 3:00-5:00PM
DECEMBER 22 FROM 6:00-8:00PM

Book your timeslot at www.saintgeorge.ca or call 519-822-1366.

St. George's Church | 99 Woolwich Street, Guelph

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