Midweek Update #11 May 27, 2020

Happy Midweek everyone!

Happy Ascension-tide, the 10 day span between Christ Ascending and the Day of Pentecost, a time of waiting, preparation and anticipation. On Monday the worldwide church celebrated the saint day of Bede, the great Historian of the first centuries of Christianity on the Isle of Britain, he died on May 26th, 735 during what we call the Dark Ages, but when you read his book *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* you realize it wasn’t dark and it certainly wasn’t dull. The very next day, the worldwide church celebrated the saint day of St. Augustine of Canterbury, the reluctant missionary that Rome sent out to “romanize” the Christianity of the day in England. He was the first Archbishop of Canterbury and died on May 26th, 605. Anglicanism has been front and center in the liturgical calendar of the Great Tradition this week.

As Denise knits I’m reading one of David Edwards’ volumes of the history of English Christianity and presently we’ve been reading about John and Charles Wesley, priests of the Anglican church who founded Methodism and May 24th was the day that John Wesley always took as the day his heart was “strangely warmed” and his iconic career as itinerant preacher and organizer extraordinaire began.

We commune with women and men through time by and in the power of the Spirit, in Christ’s body, the Church Catholic, that is, the universal Church and even as we’re caught up in the warp and woof of the present that past influences us and helps us gain perspective.

And this present time has indeed been a busy one. Last Thursday, the Archbishop had a Zoom call with all priests-in-charge and presented the Phased re-opening of our buildings. I’ve attached a link here so that you can see the differences in the phases and what is possible in each. Of course, the virus doesn’t follow a human timeline so phases might be regressive as well as progressive, whether we go backwards or forwards as a society depends on us continuing to observe physical distancing, washing our hands and making smart decisions around who we’re around and what we do if we’re feeling sick.

But the proposed scenario is that Phase II for the re-opening of in-person worship will start June 14th. In order for that to happen we will need to make an application to the diocese by June 4th. The restrictions during Phase II, which you can see for yourself on the summary sheet <https://go.aws/2M6Gfp3> involve no celebration of the Eucharist (the online only refers to no one receiving except the priest and possibly one other), no singing, a limit of 50 people, no children’s ministry separate from the worship gathering, no coffee hour, the use of masks by everyone in the building, everyone washing their hands upon entry, and everyone signing in so that in case someone does get sick we can connect with everyone. Oh, and the bathrooms remain closed. Indeed the sanitization procedures are strict. It is hoped that Phase II will last only a short while before we could transition to Phase III. However, though we can receive the Eucharist in phase III (wafer only) we still wouldn’t be able to sing, have a coffee hour, and the strict cleaning regiman will still be in place. I’ve attached the full document here <https://go.aws/3daaMhs>

Given these restrictions, the Archbishop said that some/many churches might not want to apply for Phase II at all or simply practice a few gathering in Phase II as a way of getting ready for Phase III; indeed some churches may choose to wait for phase IV before gathering in person; phase IV will not begin until a vaccine is widely available, so probably 9 mos to a year from now.

At our council meetings on Monday and Tuesday evenings this is the option we’ve elected to wait for Phase III before attempting in-person worship. It was felt that there simply wasn’t enough benefit to trying to do so in Phase II and that we’re simply not ready to have a volunteer cadre in place for the extra cleaning.

But, it is hoped that on Sunday, June 21st we can have a test gathering in which we can practice the physical distancing, engage in some Q&A and possible visit outside afterwards as long as folks keep physical distance. I know we all are impatient to get together and see each other and it is hoped that maybe once a month we can do so in a very simple way. The councils of each parish will continue to be vigilant in preparing for Phase III and I’ll keep in touch with other parishes to get a handle on best practices and what other parishes are doing.

In the meantime we will continue to offer our virtual Home Prayers Service with the excellent contributions of our parishioners. There is also talk of organizing Zoom coffee hours that will allow us to see each other’s faces at least virtually. As well it is now permissible for small groups to gather in people’s backyards at a physical distance as long as common washrooms are not used and everyone brings their own drinks. There is one such gathering organized weekly on the St. Matthew grounds and something similar could happen at St. Thomas.

We are also exploring the possibility that once in-person worship begins again during Phase III that we will be live-streaming our services so that those who still wouldn’t feel comfortable coming or simply can’t come would be able to worship with us virtually. Perhaps we can actually expand our reach and draw in new parishioners. God helping us, our churches can learn, change, develop and grow!

Okay, on to other parish news. We had an exciting meeting of folk who are ready and willing to help with Christian formation in a virtual way. Before I announce some of the initiatives people are willing to do, here’s a survey that will help us determine your felt needs. Simply click the survey link and fill it out <https://forms.gle/besVCagaCrq9FDJH7> We’re hoping to discover (i) In our present situation, what is being missed most, regarding lack of in-person presence/ contact, (ii) what is it that parishioners would most like to see / do, especially in regard to spiritual formation?

Raven Weighel, council member at large at St. Thomas, is expecting, Congrats Raven and Joe!

Catherine Onken/MacDonald of St. Matthew recently gave birth to her fourth daughter. I’ve added a couple of pics in the hard cope, soo cute! Congrats to Catherine, Ryan and the whole family!

  




Parishioner contributions:

Nada: Martin sent me this beautiful Youtube clip ...Fr. Keating leading Folsom Prison Inmates into silence ..an excellent example for 11th step outreach to treatment centers  ...calming to the spirit and simple for the soul.

Interesting my first AA spiritual advisor, Danny O'Brien  got sober in Folsom Prison in 1945 and I met Danny when he was 40 years sober.He spent 10 years in Folsom Prison. Not a place for wimps! Danny was headed for the big leagues as a  boxer in the 30'but landed instead in prison...a rough tough wild man.  In sobriety he  softened around the edges as a   tough  spiritual crazy man who loved AA. <https://bit.ly/2X4Akaa>

Myrtle:

-  Dear Father in heaven thank you for the Prime Minister and Ministers, the Provincial Premiers and Ministers, and the scientists who are working hard to stop the spread of Covid-19.

-  Thank you that they thank and give us credit for the leveling off of new cases, because of our volunteer staying distant 6 feet, washing our hands often, not touching our faces, and isolating for 2 weeks after travel.

-  It is a joy every morning to hear on CBC TV 24 News, CTV, Global, 111 and CPAC,  the premiers of different political parties collaborate, cooperate, and answer questions in the press conferences that follow. They are exhausted.

-  Protect their physical, mental and spiritual health. Lord we pray for them to be open to Your wisdom and find inspiration and comfort in Your Word.

-  Bring revival of faith in Christ and ability to discuss these serious matters, with gentleness and patience.

-  Help the public to listen and understand these reliable media and keep them from fake news, anger and slander.

-  Thank you for virtual parliament with all 338 MPs present twice a week, and live parliament once a week. Lord with only 50 present and mostly from Quebec, watching on CPAC, I find their question period very distressing.

-  We pray for the tracking of contacts to be prompt and thorough with enough staff, as happened in South Korea, Germany, BC, and New Brunswick.

-  Guide and provide support for the scientists who are developing vaccines, testing and multiplying their manufacture.  Similarly guide developing and testing of medications.

-  We thank you that at last leaders have realized that staffing of Long Term Care has been inadequate and unqualified for many years. Bless our elders who have been seriously neglected. Provide more worship, hymn singing, recreation and maintenance of hearing aids and telephones so that they can talk with grandchildren and friends.

-  Lord in the summer months help all of us to learn how to be outdoors, in shops and street restaurants, 6 feet away from others.

-  Help us to resist colds, flu and a second huge wave of deaths from Covid-19 in the fall (342,104+ in 2 months in the world, 97,477 in the USA, 36,676 in the UK, and 6,380 in Canada).

-  Forgive us Lord that 81% of the deaths in Canada have been in Long Term Care.

In Jesus Name we/I  pray.

David Westcott:

All is going as planned in nature. This is a picture of 2 Canada geese  and 10 goslings we saw on a walk on Sunday in Barrowtown.

