



SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST ANGLICAN CHURCH May 19, 2020

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' Matthew 28.16-20

Dear Friends in Christ,

Alleluia, Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia! May his grace and peace be with us.

In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples encounter the risen Christ not locked away in a room (as in John's Gospel), or in the temple, or in the synagogue in Nazareth, but on a mountain road outside of town. It is a reminder to us that we encounter Jesus in a variety of places. It is a reminder to us that even when we encounter Jesus, some of us doubt, and regardless of where we find ourselves, Jesus is with us always.

It has been ten weeks since we last gathered for public worship here at St. John's. The buildings remain closed in accordance with the Provincial government's State of Emergency legislation and our Diocesan directives. I have delayed writing to you as I had hoped there would be news to share regarding returning to gathering together. I am sorry that I don't have that news yet. On Friday, May 15, our Metropolitan wrote on behalf of the Provincial House of Bishops to say that they are taking a cautious and measured approach in their plan to reopen Anglican churches. A copy of that letter is enclosed and is posted on St. John's website. We will remain apart for awhile longer.

Some of you have been asking me: "When will the church be open again?"; "What will worship be like?"; "Will there be Eucharist?" My answer to all of these is, "I don't know." But that is not a reason to despair. All shall be well.

The Very Reverend Shane Parker, elected on March 14, will be consecrated and seated as the 10th Bishop of Ottawa at 7pm on May 31 at Christ Church Cathedral. This service of consecration will unfold under strict gathering limits and in full consultation with Public Health Officials while ensuring canonical requirements are met. Because the service will not be open for the public to attend in person due to the pandemic, the service will be livestreamed via the Diocesan website. Please pray for Bishop-elect Parker and for our church communities as we navigate our new world in these unfamiliar days.

While the buildings (church and office) are closed, the work of the church continues. Here are just *some* of the ministry initiatives and processes that are being undertaken during the lock-down:

Ministry

- Emily Duberville is using the St. John's Sunday School Facebook platform to offer online Sunday School.
- Members of the congregation make regular phone calls to parishioners. If you are not receiving a call, please call the parish office and leave a message. We want to stay in touch.
- Dawn Dunlop has recorded a series of praise songs that are available on YouTube and people are welcome to sing along.

- The "Meals-to-Go" program, co-ordinated by Virginia and Dan Willis and aided by volunteers sees over 150 breakfast/lunch bags prepared and delivered in the community following Public Health pandemic directives. This has been made possible through generous donations of parishioners, friends, County emergency funding and donations from the private sector.
- Sunday morning worship is offered on the St. John's Facebook page via livestreaming at 10am (can be watched later as well) and is recorded for re-broadcast on Cogeco Cable the following Sunday at 8am and 1pm.
- Compline is livestreamed at 9pm every evening on the St. John's Facebook page.
- A short form of daily prayer is included with this mailing, along with a list of the daily bible readings until the end of June.

Administration

- I e-mail members of Parish Council twice a day with any news or updates from the Diocese and I speak with the two wardens and treasurer at least once a week.
- Parish Council has been meeting monthly via Zoom.
- Updates are posted to our website and Facebook page.
- Bob Mulrooney has been diligent in reporting our financial situation and is working with Diocesan Financial Ministry personnel to navigate Government financial assistance for the not-for-profit sector. We have continued to pay our lay staff during the suspension of office hours and public worship and to meet all of our financial obligations.
- Pre-authorized remittance is available for those who wish to use automatic bank withdrawal for their offerings. Offering envelopes may be mailed into the church office. Many thanks to all who are continuing their financial support of St. John's.
- I come through the buildings each day to pick up mail and check for voicemail messages.
- The Auction Committee made the difficult decision in March to postpone the annual Dinner Auction to May of 2021. Their foresight proved wise as we now know that large public gatherings are still not permitted.

Property

- The buildings and property are inspected regularly throughout the week to comply with insurance directives and to ensure that everything is maintained.
- After 23 years of looking after the flower bed by the church sign, Candy Barber has retired her gardening trowel and has passed the mantle on to Bob Theoret.

A summary of the Diocesan COVID-19 Guidelines regarding church buildings are enclosed and the full details are available at <https://www.ottawa.anglican.ca/index.php/covid-19>. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself, the wardens or any member of Parish Council.

I give thanks for your faithful support and witness as we continue to serve the world God loves, even in these unusual times. We will surely come together again. Skilled scientists and researchers are working tirelessly for treatments and a vaccine for COVID-19. They will prevail. As will we. Please continue to pray for one another, for our church and for the all people. Be steadfast in faith and joyful in hope, knowing that Jesus is with us always.

I remain your servant in Christ,



The Reverend Canon Catherine Ascah
 catherine-ascah@ottawa.anglican.ca
 (613) 859-4962

Encl.

Photo: Detail from white altar frontal at St. John's.