

**April 22, 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, be sure to register to be vaccinated.  Currently, **anyone 60 years or older** **are eligible to be vaccinated through Leeds, Grenville, Lanark Public Health.**  <https://healthunit.org/covid-19-vaccine/>  Our health unit area is offering vaccines at four locations:  Smiths Falls Arena; Almonte Hospital; Brockville Memorial Centre and North Grenville Municipality Centre in Kemptville.  If eligible, you can book a vaccination at any of these centres.  If you are eligible to be vaccinated and would like some assistance booking your appointment, please contact the parish office.   Also, for those **aged 40 or older,** you may book an appointment to receive the Astra Zeneca vaccine at a local pharmacy.  In Smiths Falls, the following pharmacies are booking appointments:  Shopper’s Drugmart on Beckwith St.; The Drugstore Pharmacy at Independent Grocery Store on Ferrara Dr.; Smiths Falls Family Pharmacy on Brockville St. at Broadview.  Pharmacies in Perth, Carleton Place, Merrickville and Kemptville are also booking vaccination appointments.  Check <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations> and enter your postal code for a list of locations close to you.

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 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.

**MISSON & MINISTRY UPDATE**

Following a November 2018 parish retreat facilitated by Jay Koyle, Congregational Development Officer for the Diocese of Algoma, St. John’s was invited to consider its gifts, assets and possibilities.  Earlier in 2018, St. John’s was the recipient of two significant financial bequests totaling roughly 1.7 million dollars and there was need to discern how to wisely, faithfully and effectively use these funds for the mission and ministry of our parish.

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 with members of St. John’s.  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.

Affordable housing, and a potential partnership with Carebridge Community Support remains an avenue of pursuit, but no new information regarding this is available at this time.  Canon Catherine is a member of Carebridge’s Project Planning Team to facilitate timely communication of information as it becomes available on this file.  Please see previous updates for the steps that have been taken thus far.

Work around establishing scholarships for post-secondary education has been underway.  At its meeting on April 21st, Parish Council approved the following motion:

**Moved by Paul Howard, seconded by Karen Bryan, that Parish Council recommend to Vestry that St. John’s establish a scholarship in the amount $5000 renewable annually up to four years to be awarded annually to a graduate of Smiths Falls District Collegiate Institute pursing post-secondary education at an accredited college or university.  Motion carried.**

Details regarding the terms of the scholarship and its funding will be made available the week of May 3.  All active members in the parish will be invited to ask questions and provide feedback once they receive the information, and a special vestry in order to proceed on this initiative will be scheduled.  More information will be shared in the April 29 web-update.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:stjohns_smithsfalls@bellnet.ca)

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