



News From The Pews

St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph, Ontario

From the Rector - Pentecost 2020

Dear Friends,

We have decided that with the circumstances of COVID-19 and how it has affected our being as a "church community together" that it would be appropriate to send out a Pentecost edition of *News from the Pews*. Our regular Holy Week/Easter edition, because of the self-isolation "stay at home" directives that came out in late Lent, was necessarily suspended. We hope this, along with our online presence (web; social media; live-stream worship) and the direct phone-tree calling, will help give us a sense of connectedness in our faith community during this difficult time.

I am not sure that I have ever had the opportunity of writing a Pentecost letter to any parish in which I have served. However, it is really quite appropriate as Pentecost marks the start of the story of the empowerment of the ministry of the collective congregation of the church, the "Ecclesia." It is the story of the faithful, the followers of Jesus, taking up the mission to proclaim and live the gospel throughout the world. It marks a reversal of the Tower of Babel story – where God caused one common language ("common understanding") to be confused into many uncommon languages – because all in their own language hear the disciples speaking about "God's deeds of power!" Back to "common understanding." So how do we do this now, in our time, when we cannot assemble?

We face so many issues and worries: the tragic marks of our age – conflict, intolerance, hate, mass murders, global warming, the mass extinction of so many species, and now the pandemic of our time COVID-19. It can all seem so overwhelming and it exposes our deepest fears of the world and of ourselves. However, it is in the midst of crisis, confusion, and the challenges to "holding faith" that the gifts of God's salvific hope are expressed most fully. It is in the radical love of Jesus's passion, death and resurrection that we find the deepest meaning and power of these gifts of hope.

God meets us, and empowers us, in our weakness and brokenness.

It is a rather different faith story, and message of good news that we take "to the world", when we acknowledge that God meets us in our vulnerability, in our brokenness, in the risky exposure of our true selves, and in our deepest fears and hurts. It becomes a real story of compassion – of "feeling with" which makes true the sentiment and hope that we hold, which is that God is with us in all things. For me, the point is that God is there – here! The richness of our journey of faith comes from engaging the sharp and painful edges of our true selves, and our present reality, daring to wrestle with God the issues that confront us, and to be as persistent as badgers in the pursuit of justice. Redemption comes out of the messy places, not the pristine. This is what it means to continue in what "we have been taught" and firmly believe. This is why God came into the world, that all might know life.

As we move into Pentecost 2020, in the fullness of late Spring, we need to look and see that "there will be new life here!" The best of life is when we live in gratitude for the abundance of love and gifts we receive from God our Creator. We are cognizant of the challenges of our time, but we cannot let fear and the sense of scarcity overwhelm the ideals of hope. Through the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus, God affirms that life overcomes death and fear. Our mission to proclaim the gospel to the best of our abilities in the times in which we live remains. We do this by loving and supporting one another and the strangers we may meet, even if this compassion is displayed best by "staying home" and keeping a safe physical distance. We can show love with our eyes, by listening with our ears, by smiling, by sharing an encouraging word, and by doing acts of kindness as we are able. Church?? We are still very much alive and here!!

Love and Blessings in Christ,

Ralph+

Welcome to our new wardens



Shirley Stuart

Thank you to those who asked me to act as Deputy People's Warden this year at St. George's. I was surprised that I wanted to do it as it is a new role for this old Anglican. I will need to learn more about the congregation as well as what is expected from the position but I have excellent teachers. I will try, with your kind guidance, to understand, help, facilitate, mediate, encourage, in order to be a good deputy. I have been an Anglican all my life and at St. George's for about five years. Married to Jim, mother of two sons, and two daughters-in-law, and grandmother to four children, transplanted from Vancouver (via Collingwood), I have learned to love living in Guelph and being a member of this congregation.

Elaine Tucker

I found my spiritual home at St. Georges Church 22 years ago following the death of my first husband, David Tucker.

Born and raised in Guelph, a lifelong resident, I am a product of this caring community. I taught school and music and raised our three children here; owned and operated a retail business for 34 years and was steward of an historical building in the downtown core. I am a charter member of 100 Women Who Care Guelph and enthusiastically support St. George's outreach programs of Community Suppers and the Guelph Connections Concerts.

David Leigh and I met here, romance blossomed, and we were married 16 years ago in St. Georges Church. We actively participate in the social life of the Village by the Arboretum where I sing in the choir, act in Cabaret, play bridge, and organize fashion shows, festival dinners and decorating the Village Centre for Christmas. We nourish a close relationship with our blended family of six children and spouses, 12 grandchildren and partners. Hosting family parties requires a truckload of home cooking! We participate in either of the two Sunday services as Greeters, cook up our favourite recipes for Soup & Buns and have given our support on the committees for the Golf Tournament & Dinner and the Parish Christmas Dinner. As a member of the Chi Rho Fellowship, I have taken an active role on the executive, in fundraising and organizing special occasions.



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



It is an honour for me to serve as Deputy Rector's Warden. I hope to bring a positive attitude, to embrace necessary changes, listen with compassion and empathy, work harmoniously toward consensus, and fulfill my obligations to Parish Council with understanding, energy, and sincerity; being ever mindful of the Love of Christ.

Update from the warden's

Well, it would be an understatement to say it certainly has been a topsy-turvy time in our lives since the Vestry Meeting on February 23rd. Despite the upheaval of routines and the cessation of public gatherings, Corporation and Council continue to work behind the scenes and via regular Zoom meetings to keep St. George's operating.

First of all, Corporation is pleased to welcome Elaine Tucker as Deputy Rector's Warden and Shirley Stuart as Deputy People's Warden to the team. Thank you

to George Adams and Maria Fage who have retired as Past Wardens, however Maria is continuing on Council in the role of Liaison to Outreach and Social Justice. Other changes to C&C include Gerry Manning replacing Paul Deacon who retired as Liaison to Music, Worship and Faith Formation, Harry Oussoren taking over from

Steve Conway as Chair of Building and Grounds, and Graham Nasby retiring as an alternate Delegate to Synod. John Laidlaw has stepped into the role of Treasurer in addition to remaining as a Delegate to Synod. Thank you to everyone for giving your gifts of time and talent to our church.

It seems so long ago now, but C&C had a very productive visioning retreat at the Crieff Hills Centre on February 29th. Out of that day came many ideas and strategies with the goal of moving St. George's forward and preparing for the challenges ahead. Covid-19 struggles aside, it is no secret that all the mainstream Christian churches will be facing difficulties over the next two decades. Our invitation is how to keep St. George's a vibrant, thriving Christian community, where Jesus and his ministry of loving one another remains at the centre of all that we do. How can we become

relevant, not only to our current parishioners, but to people who are looking for spiritual fulfilment, those who are marginalised and disenfranchised, those who are seeking hope in a world that is turning more and more inward, away from community. Building bridges and links to the greater Guelph community was core to our discussions, as was eliminating division and negative attitudes within the parish due to change. When the Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed and we are able to meet together again, C&C will highlight our future plans

for St. George's, ever mindful of the past that has shaped who we are to this point.

Interestingly, the impact of Covid-19 on St. George's has not been entirely negative, for out of the disruption has arisen a new way of "doing church": the overwhelming success of the Live Facebook (and YouTube) services must be noted.



Individuals and groups within St. George's have been checking in on one another. C&C, along with other volunteers, embarked on an ambitious project to contact all those on the parish register with the intent, first and foremost, to ensure everyone is being supported and looked after during this time of isolation. It has been an extremely positive undertaking, one which may be repeated again depending on how long lockdown restrictions continue. Examples of grace and kindness have rippled through our congregation as we seek to "be church" outside of the building.

As per insurance regulations during this time, Toni continues to work diligently attending to the upkeep and maintenance of our building. Brendan has been temporarily laid-off, but as soon as we are given

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the go-ahead, he will resume his duties. Flashing repairs to the East window were finished and we are now waiting to see that they were successful before completing the plastering and painting of the inside arch. Following an inspection of the lightning rod system, it was discovered there were several damaged grounding wires. Again, for insurance reasons, they were promptly repaired. Water seepage was causing problems with the foundation and to correct that, the mortar between the blocks of limestone has been repointed. These are the practicalities of looking after a beautiful OLD Victorian church, even during a lockdown.

Just like our homes and the families within, it is critical now more than ever to lovingly care for, support and maintain our congregation and church building. Our task as wardens is to be faithful stewards of all aspects of St. George's: solid foundations, strong bricks and mortar, lightning rods...what a great metaphor for all of us as we strive to be a forward-looking Christian community, during and post Covid-19.

In peace and wellness,
James and Laura
Wardens of the Day



Join us after FB Live Church for
a Zoom Coffee Gathering.
Email the office at
office@saintgeorge.ca for the
log-in link.



PENTECOST PARADE

**SUNDAY
MAY 31, 2020
9:30AM - 9:45 AM**

- COME DOWNTOWN TO LISTEN TO THE CARILLON FROM THE SAFETY OF YOUR VEHICLE.
- PLEASE REMAIN IN YOUR VEHICLE AND ONLY TRAVEL WITH PEOPLE FROM YOUR HOUSEHOLD.
- DRIVE ON THE EAST SIDE OF WOOLWICH STREET TO RECEIVE A SPECIAL PENTECOST "DRIVE-BY" BLESSING.
- VEHICLE DECORATIONS ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED!



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Facebook Live Worship

Every Sunday, 11:00am

Follow us on Facebook, and sign up for notifications so you know when we go live. You can also watch the service at a later day or time.



Subscribe to our YouTube channel (St. George's Anglican Church Guelph). Services posted by 2:00pm Sunday.



Bells for Frontline Workers

Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.

St. George's Church is pleased to show our support for the brave men and women who are on the frontlines in the fight against COVID-19

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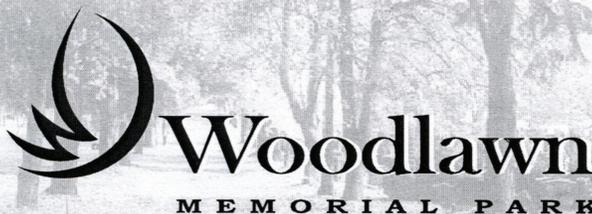
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Treasurer's Report

As you all are aware, COVID-19 has caused the shutdown of the Church and St. Georges is now without a significant amount of income. We have lost our rental income from groups that use the Church including the Workside Early Childhood Education Centre. All the while, our expenses have remained largely unchanged. St. Georges is very fortunate to have a great number of parishioners on preauthorized giving (PAG), which has helped to provide a steady stream of income, however we are still in a deficit position, particularly since we were closed for the Easter week services.

The Diocese of Niagara, who administer our payroll, applied for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and was approved. They are planning on applying every month that they are eligible for this subsidy and have been approved for March. This will help to offset some of our expenses.

For those of you who are not on PAG, and would like to help provide a steady cashflow to St. Georges, please contact the office at office@saintgeorge.ca or call 519-822-1366 and leave a message. If you wish to send in a donation, please mail it rather than dropping it off as the outside mailbox is not secure, but mail is picked up daily. Donations can be made online on our website.



We recently attempted to call everyone on our parish list. If you did not receive a phone call, there is a chance that we don't have your current phone number.

Please email any updates to your contact information to office@saintgeorge.ca.

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St. George's is currently closed to the public

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