

St. George's Anglican Church

News from the Pews



Autumn 2022

From the Interim Priest-in-Charge

As I write this note for the Thanksgiving Parish Newsletter, I do so with an attitude of gratitude. It is my understanding that later during the week that I am submitting this letter, the Parochial Committee will be starting a new phase of its ministry by beginning to conduct interviews with those individuals who are seeking to discern whether or not they are being called by God to serve as the next Rector of St George's Church.

Little did I know that when the phone rang in my home in Waterloo that I would move from the seven-year experience of retirement from full time parish ministry to share in the life of this wonderful community of faith. At the moment, my understanding is that Bishop Bell has called me to this ministry until the first of November.

The fun activity of the St George's Quiz, the swirl of the bagpipes as we offered the Emergency Services Recognition Sunday, the fun parish outing to the basketball game and a number of other memorable moments, serve as highlights as I look back over the last seven months.

Involvement in the Parish Photo Directory will ensure that Carolyn and I are linked with the ongoing story of this parish. I am gifting the congregation with a standing desk that was part of my father's office during his ministry and I am also gifting the parish with a pencil sketch of the face of Jesus which was created by a New Brunswick artist and which has been in my office throughout most of my ministry. I know that they will be in good hands.

I will never forget the words of a farmer who served as a Layreader in one of the congregations in the multi-point parish I served as my summer ministry as a theological student in New Brunswick in 1977. After the last service he and I shared, he shook my hand and changed the words written by Shakespeare in his work, *Julius Caesar*. "Forever and forever, farewell," he said, "...when we meet again we will smile, until then, this parting was well made."

As we celebrate Thanksgiving together, may it be a time when we value and appreciate the time we have spent together and give thanks for all the blessings of this life.

Warm Regards,
The Reverend Canon Christopher B. J. Pratt, Interim Priest-in-Charge

From the Wardens

It is reassuring to be back into what feels like almost a “normal” church routine after two and a half years of what certainly was not normal. Although the summer months felt more relaxed, programs and services still continued, and in some cases, ramped up a bit.

On June 19, we recognized the retirement of our Organist and Director of Music, Gerry Manning, after 35 years of dedication and commitment. The service was filled with wonderful tributes to Gerry, both sung and spoken. A time of celebration provided the opportunity for several heartfelt tributes that honoured Gerry’s legacy, along with sincere thanks given to Margaret Stewart for her contributions to the choir and music program. We continue to wish Gerry and Margaret a very happy retirement.

Corporation appointed Assistant Music Director Matthias Schmidt as Interim Organist and Director of Music until the position is permanently filled. This process of hiring will begin once a new Rector has arrived. We look forward to the months ahead with Matthias at the helm, providing a very capable musical bridge. You can read more about Matthias in the highlighted article.

Council and Corporation met in June and again in August to touch base and recommit to certain programs. An important motion was passed to partner with St. James' Anglican, Dundas, committing to assist with the official documentation for a Syrian family. They will be reunited with their family members already established here in Guelph.

Issues of security continue to be of concern; St. George’s is a central, downtown church, and therefore becomes a target for theft and vandalism. Council urges parishioners who haven’t done so already to consider making their financial donations through pre-authorized giving (PAG). Council also discussed the “church key” security issue. By Toni’s reckoning, there must be “hundreds of church keys out there”. Hyperbole aside, it does become a security and insurance issue when we lose track of keys and fobs. Some folks may be asked to return keys to the office, except for those who are identified as requiring them because of their specific role in the church.

The Children and Youth Working Group coordinated one last Kids’ Pack for the summer. The successful Kids’ Pack program was designed as a way to keep our children and families connected throughout the pandemic. Now that we are back worshipping in person, it has been lovely to see some of our families returning, along with a few families attending St. George’s for the first time. The new Family and Children’s area at the back of the church has been extremely well received by all; in fact, the Facebook post with a picture and write-up of the welcoming space has become our #1 “liked” post ever! It has been shared by many, and other churches are so taken with the idea, they are following suit. This is hospitality in action, and is a positive way to make Jesus Christ known.

From the Wardens - continued

Over the next week or two, there will be announcements about the start up of Church School for children. There are some exciting ideas coming along, and it is hoped to have a program in place by mid-October. There is a caveat: we need helpers to assist the coordinator. The idea is to keep the program simple, with short periods of commitment. Teenagers, middle-agers, and grandparent-agers are welcome to provide wisdom and care to our youngest church family members. Our dearly departed and beloved Queen Elizabeth II reminded all of us that age is no barrier when working toward the good of our communities. She was truly a model of making Jesus Christ known.

In the coming weeks you will hear more from the Parochial Committee regarding the search for our new Rector. Please continue to pray for the members of the committee as we move into the final stages of this process.



Gerry Manning and Margaret Stewart at Gerry's retirement celebration

The result of the Special Vestry Meeting on Sunday September 18 was unanimous approval of the parking lot reconstruction. The project is to commence late September and last approximately four weeks. A major part of our responsibility as Wardens is to maintain the church building and property on behalf of the Bishop. With her blessing, Bishop Susan has approved this project and given Corporation permission to proceed. She thanked all involved for our "care of the container of ministry that is your church."

There has been a good response to our new photo directory. The last photo directory was created in 2015, and there have been a lot of changes since then. This serves as an important opportunity to introduce ourselves to the new Rector. The next week of photo appointments takes place October 3 - 8. If you or your family are unable to attend a sitting, you can submit a photo for \$15. Please call the office to book an appointment as soon as possible.

Exciting plans are coming along for St. George's Christmas Market which will be held on Sunday, November 13 from 11:00am until 2:00pm. A dedicated team gathered together and worked very hard to reimagine what the former Sleighbell Fantasy could become, post-Covid. The new Christmas Market will still have many of the same aspects as before, but some will be slightly changed to simplify the event and reflect health and safety issues. How wonderful that St. George's is going to host this fun Christmas event again after a two-year hiatus. Please consider helping out either on the day, or with the set-up before or clean-up after. Many hands make work fun!

Faithfully submitted,
Laura McDonald and Rani Varkey, Churchwardens

Chi Rho Fellowship Update

Chi Rho Fellowship met on Friday, August 12, at Symposium for lunch and a wonderful reunion time after being shut down with the pandemic. We are looking forward to meeting again and inviting those interested in joining us.

Chi Rho is a social group that has been together for over 70 years meeting in fellowship and fun. We have had fund-raisers and supported St. George's and groups around Guelph in the past. Chi Rho Fellowship encourages each individual to bring one's unique experience, talents and perspective to our organization. Each one is encouraged to work to the outer edge of one's ability and thus participate in the growth of Chi Rho. Our momentum is fueled by our relationship to each other and to Jesus Christ. We always welcome new members.

We meet on the first Friday of each month and are looking at meeting in the afternoon rather than evening. Programs could be speakers, games or an activity outside the church. Under the umbrella of the Chi Rho charter at St. George's, we are considering inviting other parishes in the area to become part of the group. This is also a way of increasing our membership in friendship and fellowship.

If you are interested, please call Joseph Noseworthy (519-220-1625) or Ross Moore (519-822-7775).

New Family Space



Earlier this year, St. George's received a grant of \$3,500 from the Anglican Foundation of Canada to create a welcoming Family Space in the back of the church. Our Children & Youth Working Committee helped to furnish this new Family Space, and we look forward to you and your family enjoying it. The new space was part of a Blessing on September 4th, with young Adam helping to christen the new space. Thank you to the Anglican Foundation of Canada for helping to make this project possible.

Building and Grounds Update

Several significant projects are being worked on in addition to the routine maintenance of the building and grounds.

Bids for the reconstruction of the parking lot have been received and it is expected that K/W Cornerstone Construction will begin the work in the last week of September with completion in October. This work will include removal of the sidewalk (which is a hazard in winter), flattening of the slopes along the north side of the building, relocation of the stairs from the choir door to the parking lot, and reconstruction of the asphalt pavement.

Plans have been prepared to replace the temporary dais with a wooden structure. Provisions are also being considered for a lift to access the dais and choir area for those with mobility issues. A portable lift which will be positioned, when needed, in the area where the eagle presently stands. The eagle will be moved forward. This plan will be pursued in consultation with the new rector.

A preliminary design for the memorial garden has been reviewed and further input is expected shortly. A semi-circular sitting area is planned for the area between the east window and the Heffernan Street bridge. Drainage of the area on the south side of the church is an important consideration.

Emergency Services Recognition Sunday

A service honouring Guelph's first responders was held at St. George's on September 11th, marking the 21st anniversary of the September 11 attacks. The service was intended to provide an opportunity for the community to offer an expression of thanksgiving for the service and sacrifice of all those who support the life of the City of Guelph by serving on the front lines as Emergency First Responders.



In attendance were members of the Guelph fire and police departments, as well as Guelph Mayor Cam Guthrie and the Guelph Pipe Band, which played several times during the service.

Image courtesy of James Chaarani, CBC Kitchener

Treasurer's Report

As you can see in the chart below, our income from January to August was \$180K which is down from \$194K in 2021 and significantly off the budgeted amount of \$267K. Our total expenses in that time were \$312K which is on par with 2021 at \$309K and slightly lower than our budgeted amount of \$321K. This has left us with a deficit of -\$131K which is up from -\$115K in 2021 and well above the budgeted figure of -\$54K

How can you help?

The best thing you can do for St. George's is to make regular, generous offerings to the church. You might consider Pre-Authorized Giving if you haven't already. Simply fill out the form (download it from our website or contact the office for one) and your gift will come directly out of your bank account. No more having to remember an envelope every Sunday!

Other ways to donate include:

- Mail a cheque to the church
- Drop off cash or a cheque at the church during business hours (call ahead)
- By e-transfer to bookkeeper@saintgeorge.ca
- On our website using a credit card

	Actual Jan-Aug/22	Actual Jan - Aug/21	Budget Jan-Aug/22
Total Revenue	\$180,411	\$193,545	\$267,293
Total Expenses	\$311,513	\$308,554	\$320,950
Net Revenue	-\$131,102	-\$115,009	-\$53,657

Guelph Cemetery Commission – New Representative

Regarding the notice of vacancy for the Guelph Cemetery Commission: St. George's Corporation would like to thank George Adams for agreeing to act as St. George's second representative on the commission. When George was a Warden a few years ago, he liaised between the Commission and Council, and he possesses knowledge, understanding and a keen interest in the Woodlawn Cemetery. Thank you to those who expressed an interest in the vacancy. Hugh Spencer continues to serve on the Commission, and we want to thank him for his commitment over the years.

New Interim Music Director – Matthias Schmidt

St George's is privileged to have Matthias Schmidt step in as Interim Music Director. Matthias' term will be from September 2022 – May 2023. The goal is to first establish our new Rector then pursue a permanent Music Director in the new year.

Matthias received his early musical training growing up in East Germany singing in children and youth choirs and taking piano and organ lessons from the local church musician. This led to studying Church Music at the Berliner Kirchenmusikschule from 1992 to 1997. After receiving his degree he held various positions as a church musician in Germany and later Canada. Alongside his music career, Matthias always had an interest in woodworking, which led him to become a pipe organ builder for many years and currently has him leading the furniture department at Barzotti Woodworking in Guelph. The beautiful portable altar at St. George's was made by Matthias, along with a small credence table and a missal stand for the altar. Notably, he was the music director at Melville United Church from 2003 until 2017 before coming to St. George's as Assistant Music Director in 2018. He now is looking forward to his new role as Interim Music Director at St. George's.



One of Matthias' first tasks was to audition new choral scholars.

We are proud to welcome Laura Fleming, Lucy Guthrow and Avery Sukhdeo to St. George's music program.

Matthias is looking forward to his new role as Interim Music Director and we as the Parish are looking forward to hearing the beautiful music he will produce.

If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact Matthias at musicdirector@saintgeorge.ca

Prayer in the Time of Transition

Merciful God, giver of all good gifts,
look on your Church with grace,
and guide the minds of those who shall choose a new Rector for this parish,
that we may receive a faithful servant
who will care for your people and support us in our ministries,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.



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