



Parish Update #32 - Lent 2022

Hello Parish Members,

I am writing this on the day after Dr. Strang has announced that if current epidemiological trends continue, Nova Scotia will lift all COVID restrictions by March 21. Hallelujah – we may be on track for a freer gathering style before Easter! However, that is not where we are currently living and working! A reminder that we continue to be under the requirement for physical distancing, so no great changes in our worship are happening right now. On **March 7**, the gathering limit increases to 75% of capacity but physical distancing is still strongly recommended “as much as possible”. This means that from this **Sunday, Feb. 27 until Sunday, March 20**, we will continue with our current practice of using a pool to draw names and to invite attendees. Seating will continue to be assigned during that time. You can still register your name for the pool during these next four weeks by calling the parish office or emailing me. Remember that we also currently recording an **at-home worship service of Morning Prayer** each week which is available on the parish website and YouTube on Sunday mornings at 7:45. We record **the 10:00 Sunday worship** as well. It’s usually up for viewing by 1:30 on Sunday afternoon. These are handy for weeks where you have not been invited to in-person church!

Although we are currently awaiting instructions from our Bishop, we believe that **after March 21**, all things being equal, we will return to open worship, with no seating plans, invitations or registration required. We expect our choir to return at that time as well. Until further notice, we will still recommend you wear a mask out of care and respect for the vulnerable in our congregation. Onward and upward!

Lent begins this coming Wednesday, March 2. Our Ash Wednesday observances include:

- 1) Ashes to Go – 8:30 a.m. on the corner of Inglis and Prince St – drop by for a prayer of blessing and the administration of ashes
- 2) Ash Wednesday Online – 12:00 noon on our parish website and YouTube
- 3) Ash Wednesday In-Person celebration of the Holy Eucharist with administration of ashes

*NOTE: This is a separate worship pool from the Sunday pool. Please call or email the parish office or myself to reserve your spot for this Ash Wednesday evening worship.

Ash Wednesday has also been designated by Pope Frances as a **day of prayer for peace and for the protection of the peoples in harm’s way during the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has called Anglicans to join in this vigil of prayer from this Sunday until Ash Wednesday. Our church will be open for private prayer from 9:30-12:00 and 1:30-

3:30 on Ash Wednesday. There will be someone on site to monitor numbers and seating and the maintaining of physical distance. You may drop in for prayer during these times providing there is space when you arrive. Whether you can be with us on site in the church or not, please join us in prayer for peace.



Lenten Happenings:

We're offering several things this Lent to help you draw closer to God and grow in Spirit. Our Lent Program is called **"You Are Here"** and is produced by Barn Geese Worship, a group of Lutheran clergy in the US. A snippet from their introduction to the program says: *"We typically talk about*

Lent being a journey. And it is true there is movement in Lent. But what if Lent isn't only about journey? What if it is also about stationary place? The scripture readings for Lent this year (Revised Common Lectionary Year C) present a unique sustained focus on location and place." So we'll be thinking this Lent, less about trying to get to somewhere (a "journey") and more about the place where God has placed us and how God is present here. During the Lenten season there are two ways that you be part of this program:

1) Daily Devotionals: A short electronic meditation which will be emailed to your inbox each morning, allowing you time and space to be with God every day. Sign up by emailing me! And if there are folks who would like to receive the daily devotional by a paper copy, speak to me and that can be arranged through the parish office.

2) Midweek Service and Discussion: Every Thursday evening in Lent we will hold a worship service with reflection and discussion at its heart. (Don't be shy! You can participate by speaking or by simply listening!) The first two of these evenings will be held online on Thursday, March 10 and Thursday March 17 at 7:00. After restrictions lift, the remaining Thursday evenings (March 24, 31 and April 7) will take place in person in the choir area of the sanctuary. Again, sign up with me to receive the links for the first two weeks.

And again this year, we'll be participating as a parish in **Lent Madness**, the most fun you can have online in Lent! Modelled on March Madness (the college basketball classic pool in the USA) Lent Madness pits well-known and obscure saints from our past and present against each other in a bid to win the Golden Halo and holy bragging rights. It's amazing what you can learn

and how you can be inspired by spending time with these ordinary people who gave their lives to God! You can sign up for Lent Madness at www.lentmadness.org by entering your email in the subscribe box at the right hand side of their homepage. Then join with us in keeping score every Sunday on the big bracket poster in the church sanctuary. May the best saint win!

Good Deed Beads: Our Sunday School children will all be receiving a bag with the materials to make Good Deed Beads for Lent. These beads remind children of drawing closer to God by doing loving things for others. Each good deed is marked by moving a bead on the strand. This little devotion can be carried with you daily and ends with the praying of the Lord's Prayer. There will be extra bags available on the first Sunday of Lent for pick up by our not so young parish members (i.e. you adults out there) who might like to do this devotion along with the children.

Details about Holy Week and Easter will follow soon!

We are continuing with our **Baby Needs Drive** for the Colchester Food Bank for the balance of the month of February and up until March 7. Donations of food, clothing, and other essentials for babies and toddlers will be received in the red food cart if you are coming to in-person church or dropped at the parish office. Thank you for your support of this initiative of your Chancel Guild. For further information contact Maria Murphy or Prue Hansen.

Meditation and Lectionary Lunch will resume their in-person meetings on Friday, March 4 at 11:00 and 12:00 respectively in the upper hall. We will be masked and physically distanced at these meetings until at least March 21. All are welcome to join us.

Our Parish Book Club **Bookworms and Church Mice** has resumed meeting after a two year hiatus during the pandemic. The next gathering will be online via Zoom on Sunday, March 20 at 1:00 p.m. The book for discussion will be The Book of Hope by Jane Goodall. To participate, email me for the Zoom link.

This **Sunday, Feb. 27** we will be happy to welcome the **Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith** our **Diocesan Vocations Coordinator** to both our online and in-person worship services. Frances is the preacher for the day and will tell us more about the Diocesan Discernment process in which we are engaged together.

As noted in my last parish update, Maria Murphy has resigned after 40 great years as Cemetery Manager for the parish effective March 31st. The small team working on updating the **Cemetery Manager Job Description** has completed its work. The position will be posted on **Indeed – Job Search Canada's** website next week. If you or anyone you know is interested, the position information can be accessed by visiting the job search site or by contacting the parish office. Closing date for this competition is Friday, March 11.

So, as we prepare to enter this holy season of Lent, I leave you with a prayer created for Ash Wednesday (though it works every day during the season). It comes from “You Are Here” and has been used with permission.

God of new beginnings, where we see the ashes of our failure, you see the stardust of a fresh start. Turn us toward each other and toward you. Lead us into quiet spaces when the noise of the street corner drowns out your voice. Beyond life, beyond death, show us how to rest in you. Amen.

God bless you with love as Lent draws near with a purple-armed embrace!

Rev. Lori