



Parish Update #37 – Lent 2023

Hello parish friends! It's been awhile since my last update. I hope that's a function of the fact that more of us are getting out to church and that the parish is returning to a more normal way of life. But as it's almost time for Lent to begin, there's a fair bit of information to communicate so I thought I would send it to you by this note.

Sunday Worship: We're doing well with the in-person worship combined with streaming on Facebook Live. This means that we have open worship every Sunday at 10:00 and that you can also watch the service live on our parish website (stjohnstruro.ca) by clicking on the blue webcast button on the main page. The service is posted as soon as it is finished and remains on the Facebook page for a number of weeks, so you can catch it later if you aren't available at 10:00 on Sunday mornings. Our Facebook page is also a good way to catch up on some of the parish events as it is regularly updated by Natasha Bejarano and Cory Lunn. At this time we are still recommending masks and administering communion wine onto your wafer by a drop from an eye-dropper. After the winter flu season, we will revisit those precautions.

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22: There will be three opportunities for worship on Ash Wednesday as Lent begins. We will be on the corner of Inglis Place and Prince St (at the clock) at **8:30 a.m.** that day for **Ashes to Go**; a quick way to receive ashes and prayer as you go about your daily schedule. At **noon**, there will be a **said service** of Holy Eucharist with imposition of ashes. And at **7:00**, there will be a **sung service** of Holy Eucharist with imposition of ashes. These are chances to start our Lent off with a ritual of repentance and with God's blessings.

Lent Program: Our Lenten series this year is called "Ask". From the intro: ***A lot of times, when people encounter a big question in their life of faith, it can feel isolating. Forbidden, even. Do-not-go-there territory. But what if faith requires us to ask questions? What if we need questions to survive and grow as a community of faith? You want to go there, don't you? You want to believe dialogue with God, relationship with God, requires questions. Well, guess what? You're in good company. "Ask" is a Lenten series for anyone who's ever had a question about their faith.*** There are three ways to be involved in "Ask".

- 1) Sign up for our **emailed daily devotions**. Every morning you will receive a short devotion with a question to ponder for the day straight to your in-box. These begin on Ash Wednesday. Email Rev. Lori at lramseyis@gmail.com to sign up.
- 2) Join us on Thursday evenings at 7:00 in the chancel for weekday **Evening Prayer** with a discussion time. We'll ponder one of the big questions raised by the past Sunday's gospel each week. Series begins on March 2. All are welcome.
- 3) Think about your faith questions and place them in our **Question Jar**. We'll attempt to answer one randomly drawn question every Sunday in Lent after the morning announcements. (Remember that some questions aren't meant to have answers!)

Rev. Lori will also spend ½ hour each Sunday after the worship for an informal time to talk about the questions raised for us during the week.



Other Lenten disciplines: On the first Sunday of Lent (Feb. 26) we'll be distributing **Lent 2.0 bags** to everyone in attendance. These bags contain an object and a series of prompts and questions for each Sunday in the Lenten season. We hope they will help your Lenten reflections. **Lent Madness:** again this year, we will be sponsoring Lent Madness in the parish. This fun and simple Lenten Devotion pits saints against each other head-to-head in a race to see who will capture the imagination of the Lent Madness online community and win the Golden Halo. You can sign up to have Lent Madness in your inbox each morning by going to www.lentmadness.org and entering your email in the subscribe box. Then enjoy the learning each day and compare your votes with those of other parishioners. Track our progress toward the Halo on the church LM poster. And have some holy fun!

Annual General Meeting: Our AGM will be held on Sunday, Feb. 19 at 1:00 in the upper hall. This year we are returning to an in-person only meeting. We will try to be conscious of physical distancing in the hall and remind you that wearing a mask is recommended. We encourage all members of the parish to come and take your share in this yearly "taking of stock" for the church.

Since it is February again, Chancel Guild is again sponsoring its **Baby Needs Drive**. Until March 5, we are collecting baby foods and toiletries, diapers, wipes and anything else needed by babies and toddlers. These will be donated to the Colchester Food Bank at the end of the drive. Drop off any donations in the "baby box" at the back of the church on Sundays or in the Link entrance on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30 – 2:30. Thanks for your help with this annual drive!

Feb. 25 marks the return of the **Coldest Night of the Year** walk in support of Hub House, our local shelter for those experiencing homelessness. St. John's is fielding a small team of walkers again this year. You can speak to Rev. Lori, Tom Rudolph, Ina Major, Natasha Bejarano, Lynn Rawlinson or Joan Best to make a sponsoring donation and support this worthy cause. Thanks!

Food Table: Your Pastoral Ministry committee is experimenting with a food table at the monthly Community Dinners. This would be a free table from which people could choose food to take home with them. We plan to begin providing this table at the March Community Dinner, for which St. John's is responsible. We're asking if you could pick up some food when you grocery shop, drop it in the bin provided at the back of the church and we'll take care of the rest. Some suggested items: peanut butter, pasta, granola bars, soup, beans, cereal, rice, fruit cups, toiletries, sanitary supplies. Thank you!

Looking Ahead (Mark your calendars)

Sunday, April 30 – Sung Evening Prayer by our choir

Saturday May 6 – Spring Retreat at Whispering Spirits farm in Hodson

Wishing you well in these remaining weeks of winter and in the hope of the coming spring and resurrection celebrations,

Rev. Lori