



Parish Update #14

October 29, 2020

Hello dear friends at St. John's. It's time for another parish update.

We have now been worshipping with a **combination of in-person and online services for 6 weeks**. For the in-person worship, we began with 3 weeks of Morning Prayer services mirroring exactly what was recorded online for that week. The last three Sundays we have been experimenting with having Holy Communion at the in-person service. It has been going well and though we receive in one kind only (the host or bread) we still feel the presence of God's Spirit with us. The respect and reverence in the building at the time of reception has been palpable. We'll continue in this way for the foreseeable future unless the Covid-19 restrictions change

A reminder that if you wish to try **in-person worship** with us, you must register with the parish office at 902-897-0566 or by email at stjohnstruro@ns.sympatico.ca. One registration gets your name into the pool for weekly draws on an on-going basis. If you have email, you will receive an email by Wednesday of the week you are being invited to attend church. If you don't have email, you will receive a phone call by the end of the day on Wednesday. If you know that you can't attend that Sunday, please let us know when you are invited. We will pass your spot to the next person on the list. You might be interested to know that we now have 55 people registered to attend. 35 of those registered are in couples or family groupings and 20 are singles. We feel that so far, the process of selection has been fair. As always, since March, **online worship** continues for those who are not yet wishing to worship in person. We hope to try some recording of the in-person services in the near future. If they are of satisfactory quality, they may occasionally replace the zoom services we have come to rely upon.

News from the **2020 Bicentennial Team**: You will have noticed the absence of the Historical Tidbits from both our online and in-person services. Adele Stokoe is taking a well-earned break and visiting her first grandchild, Elliott, in British Columbia with her husband Michael. When she returns, there will be one last Tidbit to finish off the year. You'll be happy to know that the whole year of Tidbits will be produced as a booklet and available for us to purchase in the near future. Stay tuned for details. The Tidbits have given us the 2020 feeling when so many other events have had to be cancelled or postponed. 2020 began with our New Year's Levee and will finish with our parish's participation in the 2020 Santa Claus parade for the Town of Truro on Saturday, Nov. 21. The plan is for a stationary parade on some blocked-off streets downtown which folks will be able to walk past and view. We'll send more information as we have it! It was also good to share with our mayors – Bill Mills from the Town of Truro and Christine Blair from the Municipality of the County of Colchester on Oct. 18 during our in-person worship. Their Honours presented the parish with certificates of congratulations for the Bicentennial year.

Though we are separated physically and many of our ministries have changed, we continue with the **Christmas Index project for 2020**. We don't know yet how many families we will be able to support with a Christmas dinner and other foodstuffs, but we have begun our collection as usual. You may bring your items to the in-person worship and place them in the grocery cart in the upper hall or bring them on Tuesdays throughout the fall to the Link door from 12–2:00 when there will be a volunteer from the Pastoral Ministry Committee waiting to receive them. The list of items follows:

Weeks of Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 – toothbrushes and toothpaste, small can of vegetables, small can of baked beans, can of soup (any kind), can of tuna, jam, peanut butter

Nov. 1 – crackers, cereal

Nov. 8- can of juice, small can of fruit

Nov. 15 – cookies, Stove Top stuffing mix

Nov. 22 - can of cranberry sauce/jelly, coffee, tea or hot chocolate

Nov. 29 – 3 boxes of Kraft Dinner, bag of Christmas candy

Dec. 6 – tub of margarine, monetary donations toward perishables

Dec. 13 – last day for items to be brought in

Please be aware of the expiry dates on the products you bring. This food will not be consumed until Christmas or into the New Year.

We have also put up our **mitten tree** to serve local schools with hats, scarves and mittens for children. You can donate your knitted goods to the grocery cart or in the Link on Tuesdays. Thank you for your continued help with these important ways that we reach out!

We are moving forward with our project to do a **video greeting/gift for Rev. Gary and Diane** on their retirement and move to Halifax. We're hoping you will help to make this a true parish message! You can send a written message, still photo of yourself (and family), or a short video clip with your message for Gary and Diane. Send them to Stephen Hamlin at shamlin@bellaliant.net. In the subject line of your email write: "**Gary's Gift**" so Stephen can easily find and sort them. You can also leave a written message or photo at the office and we will scan them into the finished greeting. Once compiled, the whole video will go to Gary and Diane as a message of our affection and respect. We would like to have this project completed by Christmas as the latest, so get working!!!

Many of you know that on Sept. 12, our Diocese elected a new bishop in the Rev. Sandra Fyfe. Plans are now being made for her **Consecration** service which will be held at All Saints Cathedral in Halifax on Monday, Nov. 30 at 7:00 p.m. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the in-person service there will be limited in numbers and will be by invite only. Plans are being made to livestream the service both on the Diocesan Facebook page and the Diocesan YouTube channel. Addresses for accessing the livestream are:

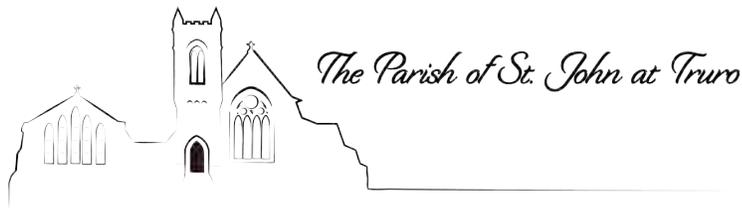
<https://www.facebook.com/Diocese-of-Nova-Scotia-and-Prince-Edward-Island-274107035933762><https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyuAcbkJhnMeYgGu5vn2ZBQ>

You may want to watch at home or choose to join us as our parish will be amongst several in the region who will be hosting an in-church screening of the event. More details about that will follow, as of course, you will have to register to attend and the numbers will be limited as they are on Sundays.

Until December 1, when Bishop-Elect Sandra begins her work as our Bishop, I continue working as one of three **Diocesan Administrators**. It has been challenging, eye-opening and humbling work and I have been honoured to do it. But I'll be thankful when it is done because I can't wait to have time again to lavish on the parish and all of you. Thank you for your patience in these last three months when I have not been able to be as present as I would like to be. This too shall pass!!!

I'll leave you with a passage from the letter to the Hebrews which seems tailor made for this moment in the world's history: **"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for the One who has promised is faithful."**

Yours in Christ's love and service,
Lori



Parish Update #13

Sept 24, 2020

Hello folks,

We are settling into fall with strange new routines at the church. I thought it was time to update you again about how things are working.

We have now had two Sundays of in-person worship with 30-35 persons attending. Things are certainly different when we gather with physical distancing and masks! But most of the people who have attended have told me that they are just very happy to be in the building again and to worship with others. What this means for you:

- If you are still hesitant about gathering with others, we understand. Our on-line worship continues each Sunday at www.stjohnstruro.ca. We hope that you will gather with us virtually and still feel part of us. In weeks to come, some of our online worship (we hope) will be livestreamed from the church rather than pre-recorded as it has been up to now. We will see how that works out!
- If you wish to come out and try worship in person again, you **do need to register** with the parish office by phone (902-897-0566) or by email (stjohnstruro@ns.sympatico.ca) with your name and the number of persons in your party. You can register at any time and your name will be in the pool for every Sunday following your registration.
- For in-person worship, we have been using a random number generator to choose from all the names registered to determine the 30+ persons who will be invited for each week.
- We call or email by Wednesday or Thursday to let you know when you are invited to worship. If you can't attend for that week, let us know when you are contacted so we can offer your place to someone else in the pool.
- **Please do not come to church if it is not your week to attend.** No substitutions will be allowed, so if you can't attend, please don't send another family member or friend.
- Names not chosen by the random number generator will be rolled over into the pool for the next week.
- **You only have to register once** but we do appreciate knowing if you are going to be away for a block of time.
- Please refer to Parish Update #12 (available on the parish website) for more information.

If you do choose to come to in-person worship, things will look a little different when you arrive. Our greeters will meet you in the Link and ask you to gather (with physical distancing) in the upper hall. Then they will seat you in assigned seats. Wearing a mask and maintaining physical distancing is required. Any other instructions you need will be provided when you arrive. By Thanksgiving weekend, we hope to be able to provide a service of Holy Eucharist. It will be in one kind only (bread but no wine) and the presider will serve you in your seat to

maintain physical distancing as much as possible. God guide us and keep us as we navigate these strange times for worship.

In other news, Rev. Gary and Diane have completed their move to the city. They are living in Bedford and starting to get settled there. I spoke with Gary this past week and he sounds about as rested as someone who has just accomplished a move in short order could be! We spoke about an event to honour and thank Gary and Diane for their contributions to St. John's. We both agreed that it will have to wait until larger gatherings are allowed and food and festivity can be part of it. But in the meantime, our Parish Council is planning a virtual celebration of the Yetmans by way of a video greeting card to which you can contribute in the very near future. Stay tuned for more information!

Some of our groups have begun meeting in person again – mostly in our Upper Hall which provides the space to gather with physical distancing. In particular, the **Meditation Group** and the **Lectionary Lunch Bible Study** are back to gathering every Friday at 11:00 and 12:00 respectively. All are welcome to join us. For information on the meditation group contact Kim Benedict at kim.benedict@me.com and for the Lectionary Lunch contact Rev. Lori at lramseyis@gmail.com.

In these changing times, we are operating quite differently than before in terms of our **pastoral care** of parishioners. I want you to know that I am not doing regular general visiting at the hospital, though I have been able to go in and visit individual parishioners when asked by the parishioner or family members. Please be vigilant about letting me know when your family members are admitted to hospital by calling me at the parish office or at home or sending an email.

Angela continues to work in the **parish office** from Monday-Thursday (8:45-2:00). The office is not, however, open to the general public at this time. Please phone before you visit, so that Angela can let you in. As always, I am available to meet with you at the office by appointment. Sadly, cleaning and sanitizing protocols and the necessity to maintain a log of those who come and go precludes “drop in” visits for the foreseeable future.

Our Pastoral Ministry Committee meets this coming week and will make some decisions for our **outreach into the community** during this time. We had been keeping up with monetary donations to local helping agencies during the lockdown. Now we need to determine whether we can return to our community dinners, Friday grocery card program, Stone Soup, Christmas Index and all of the other good things we had been doing. Whatever we do must be done with the safety of volunteers and clients in mind. Perhaps this is a time when some new directions for service will be revealed to us and some old ones creatively over-hauled. Stay tuned!

I continue to work for the Diocese as a Diocesan Administrator providing oversight until our new Bishop-elect Sandra Fyfe is consecrated. We look forward to this happening on Nov. 30 likely with small numbers in the Cathedral in Halifax and with a virtual connection throughout the Diocese so that we all can share in the joy of this new beginning. I apologize for not being

as present in the parish as I am used to being due to this responsibility. I rejoice for the fact that I am now nearing the half-way point in that time commitment!

Be assured of my prayers for all of you as we continue to navigate this new reality. I leave you with words of Kitty O'Meara from Time for Transformation.

"In a time when we must endure a virus that brings death, we can choose to be more alive than ever. Let's not squander this gift to heal and emerge from our cocoons transformed. Gentle peace."

In Christ's love,

Lori



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Parish Update #12 - Sept. 1, 2020

Dear Fellow St. John's Members,

I hope you all have had a good and relaxing summer, soaking up the sun and the warm days! The adjective I've heard most to describe people's summer and vacation experience this year was "different". And it surely was. The approaching fall will be different as well.

You are receiving this update to bring you up to speed on our plans for re-opening of physical worship and some activities at St. John's. Let me say up front that this is a **limited** and **experimental** opening. Much will depend on the progress of Covid-19 infections as schools reopen and the fall moves forward. We realize that some are anxious to return to physical worship but that others are still uncomfortable with being in groups. The return to physical worship does not mean that you must or should be present. Please do what is best for you.

We are planning a limited return to worship this month. There will be one service of worship each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. (Cleaning requirements after each use of the building preclude holding two services.) You are invited to **register your name** with the parish office if you wish to attend. You can do this by calling the office and leaving your name (and the number of people in your party) with Angela or on the office answering machine or you can email the office at stjohnstruro@ns.sympatico.ca. This registration begins immediately and will run until Sept. 15. Please note: it is your responsibility to register if you want to attend and registration is the only way to come to church for the foreseeable future. All names registered will be placed in a pool and numbered. We will use a random number generator to choose the names of those who can attend for each week. Our maximum attendees for now will rest at 30 to ensure proper social distancing and safety. You will be emailed or phoned during the week that you will be eligible to attend church to let you know. If you are unable to attend, please tell us when you are contacted. We will place your name back in the pool and will offer your place to the next person in the random number sequence. No substitutions will be allowed so if you can't attend, please do not send your family member or friend. Our greeters will have a list of those eligible to attend on a given Sunday and only those eligible will be admitted. **Please do not come to church if it is not your week to attend.** We would not be happy to have to turn you away! We believe that this is the fairest way to proceed for the near future. It is our hope that we can accommodate everyone who wants to worship in 3-4 weeks and maybe less, depending on how many of our folks are ready and comfortable to come to church. When we have accommodated everyone, we will start the rotation again.

Our online worship will continue as it has been. When it is not your week to come to church, you can continue to be with us in this way. For the first rotation of weeks, the worship in

church will be exactly the same as the online worship – a simple service of Morning Prayer with a homily and instrumental music. We will see how we do with our safety measures and then decide when a return to services of Holy Eucharist might be possible.

When it is your turn to come to church, things will look different and we want you to be prepared. Following is a list of the guidelines for our time in church. They have been put in place to ensure your safety and that of your fellow parishioners.

- Come early to church to facilitate seating
- Gather outside in good weather (or in the hall if it's inclement) and wait to be seated
- Maintain social distance (6 feet in all directions) and wear your mask at all times in the building
- Greeters will seat folks according to a seating plan – no choosing of seats
- Seating will be front to back
- Hand sanitizer / masks are available at the back of church. Please sanitize when you enter.
- You are encouraged to enter and exit quickly, without socializing before or after worship
- Greeters will help folks to leave the church from back to front
- Offering plate will be at the back of the church, not passed
- Music will be instrumental only, unless singers are pre-recorded
- The Peace will be shared verbally or with gestures. No physical contact.
- We will use projection only – no books or leaflets
- No sharing of food (coffee time, potlucks)

As to other aspects of our life together, we offer the following. **Masks** are required in all public areas of our buildings: the church, hallways, and our large meeting spaces. For the foreseeable future, **Sunday School** will continue to post Godly Play stories online as physical distancing would be difficult to achieve in their small space. **Physical meetings** may resume if they are small in number. The parlour meeting space can only accommodate 4 people socially distanced. If your meeting is larger than this, you will need to book the upper hall and set it up so that all attendees are six feet apart. There is always the option to continue meeting online.

Office: Angela will return to working in the office in the week of Sept. 8. She will be in the office Monday-Thursday from 8:45-2:00. The office will not be open to the public at this time. If you wish to come in and conduct business with Angela, please call ahead so that she can let you in. As always, we will watch for you and let you in if you have an appointment or are there for a meeting.

These are strange guidelines and rules for a church but these are strange times. We appreciate your co-operation. Your support and participation through the months of lock-down has been astounding! The parish leadership is very aware of the faithfulness of our people and very thankful for it.

As we go forward into this uncertain time, let me share a prayer that our student Jane sent to me soon after masks were made mandatory in Nova Scotia. It was written by the moderator of the United Church of Canada.

A Prayer as I Put on My Mask

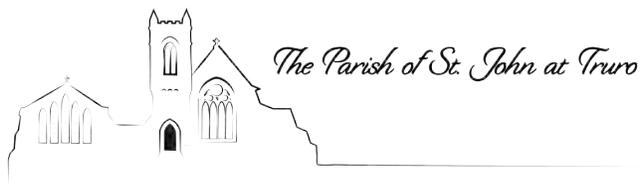
Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth –
let it be “an outward sign
of an inward grace” –
a tangible and visible way of living
love for my neighbours
as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered
uncover my heart
that people will see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice will be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
as the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully
and full of care
to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be
shield and banner
and each breath that it holds
be filled with your love.

In your name and in the name of love, I pray.
May it be so. May it be so. Amen



Parish Update #11

July 12, 2020

Hello friends,

There are a few things that will be helpful to you to know for summer and I hope I can remember to include all of them in this update!

- 1) **Worship:** For the summer, worship will remain online as decided by Parish Council on June 16. As of today's date, the government allows buildings like ours to be at 50% capacity or up to 200 persons BUT, physical distancing still must be maintained. In a building like ours, this leaves us with the ability to accommodate only small numbers. So not much has really changed. In conversation with many parishioners over the last months, I've gotten the message that although it is disappointing to wait, folks are also appreciating the cautious approach to re-opening.
- 2) You may have heard that there have been two small private family funeral services held in the church recently. These were pastorally important for the families involved and we were happy to provide them. They also gave a chance for us to see how worship works with social distancing and other restrictions. Bear in mind that for these events we were working from a guest list which allowed us to plan the seating before the event! Hopefully, these learnings will help us as we plan for reopening. It may be that we begin in the fall with asking folks to sign up in order to come to church and work on a rotation basis for attendance. It pains me to say that, but it may provide a way for us to manage our numbers and ensure that people are safely seated. Time will tell.
- 3) **Vacation Coverage:** I will be on holiday from 15 July-15 Aug. For pastoral emergencies during this time, please contact Rev. Dorothy by email at dottytay9@gmail.com or by phone at 902-843-4166. Jane Magrath returns to work with us on July 15th and will be on hand to assist Rev. Dorothy with these needs. She can be reached at jane.magrath@gmail.com or by phone at 902-817-2132.
- 4) **Office:** The parish office will remain closed for July and August. Messages left on the office phone will be monitored. Angela is available by email at stjohnstruro@ns.sympatico.ca or by phoning her at home at 902-261-2887.
- 5) **Visiting:** As of this writing, I have begun trying some home visits with those who are comfortable with someone coming into their home. This is very limited at this time as I do not want to be going from one house to another for obvious reasons. So I am fitting in one visit at a time as my workload allows and continuing to do some phone ministry with those I cannot get out to see. Unfortunately, there is no permission yet for clergy to visit in nursing homes or in the hospitals. Again, as I said at the beginning of the pandemic, I am willing to be present for palliative parishioners, but the request needs to come to the hospital or nursing home administration **from the family** in order for the permission to be given. I still have no access to records of who is in hospital at any given

time, so I really appreciate your family letting me know of any needs for your loved ones. At the very least, we can pray if we know they are in hospital!

- 6) **Charitable Outreach:** Thanks to your continuing generosity, Parish Council has decided that it will be possible for us to continue our outreach donations to Hub House and Colchester Food Bank over the summer. June's donations have now been made and funds are earmarked for the July and August donations. Parish Council also made a \$300 donation to First Baptist Church in June to help them with an emergency hot meal program that they have been running on a take-out basis 5 days a week since the pandemic began. A worthy effort by our neighbours in faith that we wanted to support! Word has reached Placide Chiasson from our partners at Lifewater Canada of the elevated need for wells and clean water during the Covid-19 outbreaks in Africa. So he asked if the parish could make its' budgeted 2020 commitment of \$2000 to Water of Life now as opposed to waiting for a possible project in the fall. The Finance Committee was surveyed and agreement given for the donation to go as soon as possible. With funds already on hand in the Water of Life bank account, we can afford to drill a well! It's so wonderful to be able to still do some of God's loving outreach work, albeit in different ways!
- 7) With Rev. Gary's retirement announcement, I am sure you have begun to think, as I have, about the future shape of our pastoral care and ministry to parishioners. My work is largely administrative and involved with planning and animating our worship and programs. Though my heart is with the people, I have to juggle many things in order to save some time over for home visiting and being with our people. It's no secret that Rev. Gary did a large share of our nursing home and hospital visiting over the last dozen years. It was and is one of his strengths and we've been very blessed to have it! Rev. Dorothy's work has focused on our outreach ministries, our Christian Education, and our worship. So with Gary's retirement, there will be a gap in pastoral care that we will need to explore. Please be prayerful about this over the summer. I will have to change up some of my duties to serve this need. Are there ways that you can help?
- 8) I wish you a blessed summer and hope that some form of vacation, relaxation and "getting away" are part of your experience, especially with the relaxation of some of our restrictions on travel. A prayer for our time apart: *O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
Amen

Peace, Rev. Lori



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Special Parish Update – June 24, 2020

Dear Friends at St. John's,

I am writing to announce to you that Rev. Gary Yetman will be retiring from active ministry as of July 31, 2020. This retirement notice was tendered to Archbishop Ron Cutler on June 18th. In his note to Archbishop Ron, Rev. Gary noted: "I have been blessed by the years of ordained ministry but given my age and health, it is time for retirement." I am sure that this news will be sad news for most of you, as it is for me. Rev. Gary has given generously of his time, energy and love to us at St. John's throughout his ordained life. His dedication to God and the people never wavered. I could not have asked for a better companion in ministry. This retirement marks the end of active leadership in the parish's ministry for Gary and Diane. What is next for them is still up in the air. We're hopeful that once gathering in larger groups is possible again, we can have a celebration to mark their years in ministry with us. I'm sure you join with me in wishing Gary and Diane well on this next phase of their life journey.

In Christ's peace,
Rev. Lori

A Retirement Note from Gary:

Upon reflecting over the past 13 plus years of my ministry, I recall Archbishop Ron's address at my ordination as Priest. He spoke to us about how we are called to serve others, laboring together to build up the family of God.

I thank God for the years I have spent ministering with Rev. Lori and Rev. Dorothy. I have a great respect and love for their teaching, support, and encouragement. And I also give thanks to God for each and every member of St. John's. The community's support of my ministry enabled me to join together with them in our unending journey with Our Lord through all the ups and downs in our efforts to build up the Kingdom of God. I thank each and everyone of you for your understanding and patience when and where I goofed up.

Both Diane and I are grateful for your love and support over the last 20 years and will always hold you in our thoughts and prayers.

God's blessings, Gary.



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Parish Update #10

Hello to all our parishioners and friends,

I am writing this memo after our last Parish Council Meeting before summer. At its June 16th meeting, Council voted to follow the status quo in the parish for the summer months. This means that we will **remain with online worship and keep our buildings and office closed to the public.** There are many reasons for this choice: the current gathering limits of 10 persons inside and 15 outside, the very strict social distancing guidelines given to us by our Archbishop in consultation with the provincial Dept. of Health and the organization and team work that will be involved with ensuring a safe return to worship whenever that happens. Getting folks together for training and managing this return over the summer would be difficult as would informing all of our people about the rules, especially those who do not have computer capability. And though the province has promised an increase in gathering numbers to be announced on June 19, larger numbers do not change the capacity which we can manage in our building while following the social distancing rules. All of this, along with the success of our online worship, the expressed hesitation of many parishioners to return to in-person gatherings and the cost and effort of sanitizing our premises after every use has tipped the balance in favour of maintaining the online presence only at least until September. We realize that this does not serve every need in the parish but it seems to us the most sensible approach for the near future. Parish Council did give permission for small meetings to take place in the buildings provided they do not exceed the number limit and can take place with social distancing in one of our larger spaces. Chairs of any committees that may choose to meet this way must inform the parish office, the rector or executive before the meeting to ensure that the space is properly set up, that a record of attendees is kept in case of the need for contact tracing and that plans are made to sanitize the area after the meeting. Zoom meetings are still encouraged as an option in place of physical gatherings. Again, I would remind you that Archbishop Ron has cautioned us about re-opening too quickly, taking time to do the planning required and having the checks and balances in place to safely police our return. Even when we may return, he says, this doesn't mean we necessarily must or should. We hope that you will understand and support our choice; a choice that many other parishes in the Diocese are also making at this time.

To help us to get ready for summer and to facilitate vacation coverage, I am delaying my vacation this year by a few weeks. **I will now be away from July 15-Aug 15.** During that time, Rev. Dorothy and our AST student, Jane Magrath will be working together to provide the online worship and will be available for you to contact if you have any emergency needs. Diane MacLeod has now begun her summer break and so John Greer will be providing all of the music for our online worship. Angela will be available to help with needs or questions of an office nature by phone or email. You may leave a message for her at the office or call her at home (902-261-2778). When I return on Aug. 15th, we can begin to make plans for the fall and deal with any changes that have come to the rules and regulations over the summer.

As you may have heard, I have taken on a Diocesan responsibility for the next number of months. I am one of **3 Diocesan Administrators** appointed to oversee the smooth running of the Diocese in the absence of a Bishop. Once a Bishop is duly elected (hopefully on Sept. 12) and installed (hopefully soon after that), the Administrators' task will end. Doing this work for the Diocese will take approximately

20% of my work time. That percentage of my salary will be reimbursed to the parish by the Diocese. I have asked Parish Council to allow me to use part of that money to upgrade my computer which has become a real hub for the parish in this online reality. I will appreciate being able to work more easily and efficiently with more up-to-date technology. Parish Council has also agreed to look at a proposal to channel some of this money toward the purchase of some good camera and recording equipment to facilitate the sharing of our live worship with the online audience once we are back to worshipping in the church. We don't want to miss this opportunity to continue to reach folks who have found us electronically during lockdown! This proposal will hopefully be ready for Council to review early in the fall.

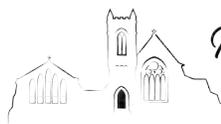
News from the **2020 Team**: it has been decided to postpone the Gala Service and Dinner (originally scheduled for Oct. 18) until next year. The new date will be **Oct. 17, 2021**. This decision will allow us to fulfill our original vision for the celebration: to involve a large number of parishioners, to invite special guests, to worship and give thanks for our 200 years together, and to enjoy a special meal – hopefully all without changing to a larger venue, reducing our numbers or worrying about social distancing. The other fall events – Bicentennial Cross Sunday and the Historic Hymn Sing may still be able to happen either in person or online. Stay tuned! The Team reminds you that our 2020 puzzles and ornaments are still for sale. Contact any team member: Adele Stokoe, Judy MacKenzie, Bev Devouge, Dorothy Tay or Rev. Lori to purchase some!

A request from our Property Committee: do you know of anyone who contracts out to do **snow removal**? Yes, it's 32 degrees out there today but we are currently reviewing our snow removal plan for 2020-21 and are preparing to put the work out to tender. If you know of someone who would like to be considered, send an email off to Robin Phillips (Chair of Property) at ruthrobin@ns.sympatico.ca or Michael Stokoe at mwstokoe@gmail.com. Thank you!

That's it for this time! Another update will follow before I leave on holiday with details for contacting those who are covering in the parish. A blessing between us all for this time apart: *"Be ever in the embrace of the Father, be ever in the embrace of the Son, be ever in the embrace of the Spirit. Be ever in the embrace of one another."*

In peace,

Rev. Lori



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Parish Update #9

May 31, 2020

Greetings! I miss you all immensely! Now I know how St. Paul felt writing to his Christian friends from prison! (I'm only partially kidding there!) Here are some things that are currently on the boil at St. John's.

We are awaiting guidance from Archbishop Ron about how to **resume church life in a physical way**. Guidelines have been developed and some smaller churches may be able to begin providing some worship gatherings. It isn't known when larger faith gatherings will be allowed. What we do know is that the current indoor gathering limit is 10 persons. We also know that when we re-open it will be with social distancing measures in place. We have been doing some checking and measuring and figuring in our building with regard to how many people we can accommodate under social distancing. (Remember that 6 feet distance means six feet to your right, to your left, in front of you and behind you for a total of 36 square feet around your body.) Our church's pews are not 6 feet apart so we would only be able to use every second pew. The main aisle is 5 feet wide so folks cannot sit on the edge of pews. The aisle leading from the elevator/link is also only 5 feet wide, cutting out the use of the pews directly on either side of it. The side aisles are tiny and so are out of the question for use. With all of the angles and distances measured, we can accommodate 18 single people in the main body of the church. 4-5 could sit in the family choir area. Another 4 could use the upper choir. These numbers could increase slightly if couples or families and not singles were the first to arrive for a service as folks from the same household can be seated together. However, once the safe seating is filled by either singles, couples or families, those arriving after would have to be turned away. The church would need to be sanitized (wiping down of pews, door handles, push buttons, bathrooms, shelves, counters etc.) between each service. Questions of the practicality of doing this arise. We have checked out the distancing in the upper hall, thinking that without pews, we might be able to fit more folks in – but the result was still about 20 people safely accommodated. Moving to the hall would also mean the loss of our projection technology. This would be problematic as the use of shared books is likely not going to be allowed under the new rules. I am pondering the return to regular Eucharistic practise as well and want you to know that this may not happen for a time either. Distribution of even just the host would require frequent hand sanitizing for the presider and at least a mask since the 6ft distance cannot be maintained. (Neither your arms or mine are that long!) More importantly, those receiving communion would have to be alone in the aisle and in the center so it would likely be one person at a time – no line-ups – for communion, which would be a long and unwieldy process. It appears that singing will be banned for the foreseeable future, as will potlucks and other sharing of food, and Sunday School. Given all of this, I invite you to some reflection, prayer and conversation with each other about the best way forward for us in this near future time. I am committed to maintaining an online worship presence indefinitely and am beginning to think that even after we are completely free to open up, that it makes sense for the parish to continue to offer an online worship format. We are certainly reaching folks who never came to physical church! What then, is helpful in terms of physical gathering? What makes the best use

of our staff and volunteer time and energy? What accommodates the largest number of our people? These are things to ponder together. Be assured that Parish Council will be talking about this at its June meeting.

It is a very long way away given our current reality, but you may want to know that the Parish Council has now finished its consultation on the future of the **Coffee Fellowship**. It has been decided that when we are able to return to it, Coffee Fellowship will continue with a simplified but homemade menu. Providers will be invited to bring 2 items – one healthy and one less so each week, to be determined by themselves. Store bought cookies will not be served. All cookies that were purchased for Coffee Fellowship have been donated to the Colchester Food Bank. Coffee Fellowship providers can return to the ministry which gives them joy – providing food they create for the church family. Please God that the day when we can gather this way again will not be too far away!

Terrace Hill Cemetery will be open as of June 1 for visitation, though burials have been taking place for about two weeks now. The current gathering limit for the cemetery is 10 people for visitation and 15 people for burials. Please note that you must practice social distancing in the cemetery. Visitors are responsible for monitoring their numbers and may risk a fine if the numbers exceed the posted limits.

As you know, the **election of our next Bishop** has now been postponed by several months. Depending on gathering restrictions, new dates of Sept. 12 or Oct. 24 have been proposed. An electronic election option is also being considered. Stay tuned for further announcements. On May 16, the **nominees** for the Episcopal election were announced by the Diocese. They are: the Rev. Katherine Bourbonnierre, the Rev. Carl Fraser, the Rev. Sandra Fyfe, and the Rev. Elliott Siteman. You can read the profiles for the candidates on the Diocesan web-site: <https://www.nspeidiocese.ca/programs/our-structure/pages/nominees-for-bishop-of-the-diocese-of-nova-scotia-and-prince-edward-island>. Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance on this process.

Donations have been made for May to both **Hub House** and the **Colchester Food Bank**. The Bill Rawlinson Memorial Outreach Fund has also been able to help a student this month. So our outreach into the community continues in some small way, working through the hoops of Covid-19 ways of doing business!

As we approach the **summer months**, I remind you again of the various ways you can keep up **your support of the parish** if you are away (or even if you are not!) You can place your offering in the mail slot in the crypt door of the church (to your right as you stand on the pathway facing the Link). This slot drops into a secure box with a padlock that we access from the inside. Alternatively, you can mail you donation to the parish office. Our treasurer, Angela, is checking the box once a week and processing all donations. You can also sign up for PAR (pre-authorized remittance) by phoning Angela at home (902-261-2778). She can sign you up for the program over the phone. We greatly appreciate your on-going support.

This coming Sunday, don't forget to watch our virtual **Celtic Evensong** which will be available at 7:00 p.m. Join us for a quiet service of music and prayer!

I'll close with a prayer for our parish in the uncertain time:

God of the Cross and Loving God of Community, we are not in a church building today but Church is never canceled. We are not wise, and not very often kind. But we are the Body of Christ in your suffering world. We know that our vocation is to be the Light of this Christ whose Body we are. Give us courage to be the Church and to keep our minds on what matters—which is to keep loving the world which you have called good. Buildings may crumble; the Church Year may pass; but your Church endures from generation to generation. Make this for us a Feast Day of your Protection, your Plenty, your Purpose, your Plan and your Peace. All this we ask, as we pray with all the saints and with each other in Jesus's name. Amen.

Peace,
Rev. Lori



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Parish Update #8

Greetings and peace to all of you in our St. John's family! When I started out writing these email updates, I never dreamed we would get to #8 and counting. But here we are! Social distancing continues and we find ourselves experiencing small amounts of freedom. The numbers of new cases are encouragingly low, yet Covid-19 deaths still continue to happen. It is tempting to think that we are turning a corner (and I hope we are) but we need to stay the course and continue to put others' welfare first by obeying all of the public health directives. At this time, I am praying for all of you, for your mental health and your stamina to be sustained. Stay firm and strong!

I want to say a word of thanks to all of you for your continued **financial support** of the parish. At a time when many churches are experiencing a downturn in donations, we are more than holding our own. Your dedication in this has been amazing and has allowed us to continue to function, to pay our bills, pay our staff and still do a modest amount of outreach into the community. So thank you for your faithfulness! I pray that you continue to keep this need before you as the financially leaner summer season approaches.

I have good news to share about our **AST student, Jane Magrath**. She was to finish her time with us at Easter, but you'll have noticed that she is still contributing to our on-line worship each week and doing much to keep us connected behind the scenes. This has been volunteer work on Jane's part and has helped us so much during this time of lockdown and virtual church. We thank her for that! Jane's summer plan has changed as her Clinical Pastoral Education course at the QE 2 has been cancelled due to the virus. So she and I put together a proposal for her to work at St. John's for 10 weeks this summer under the postulancy program of the Diocese. That proposal has been accepted and the Diocese will pay Jane for 20 hours per week in our parish for 10 weeks starting immediately! Jane will be with us mid-May to mid-June and mid-July to mid-August. She will take a break from us from June 12-July 12 so that she can take some summer courses at AST. We look forward to having her with us whether we are in virtual or physical church mode!

Our community members continue to feel the effects of the **violence in Portapique**. The horror and fear and sense of loss will be with us for a very long time. As a church, we continue to pray for all those affected, remembering that that includes each of us. Two resources which may be of help to you: 1) our parishioner, Dr. Karen Ewing, who has a family practice in Bass River, has created a video about the community's response to the shootings. It is posted on the Health Authority's website or you can find it at <https://vimeo.com/417684682>. I highly recommend it! 2) Counselling is available for the next few weeks at the Portapique Hall for anyone who feels

they need it. This service is provided by provincial victims' services staff. Contact toll free: 1-800-565-7912 for an appointment. The counsellors can also be accessed at vicservices-cent@novascotia.ca. As always, I am available by phone or email if you need to talk!

As some of you will no doubt have heard, the **Diocesan Electoral Synod** will not take place on May 30 as originally scheduled. Diocesan Council has chosen a tentative rescheduling date of Sept. 12. Should it not be possible to gather a large crowd (3-400) in one space by September, another tentative date has been chosen for Oct. 24. We shall see what develops. Either way, Archbishop Ron Cutler will retire on July 31. At its June meeting, Diocesan Council is expected to follow canon law and appoint three senior clergy of the Diocese as clerical administrators to oversee the work of the Diocese until such time as a new bishop can be elected. Please pray for all involved in this crucial time of change for the Diocese.

Looking ahead, we had been planning another of our wonderful **Celtic Evensong** events for the evening of **Trinity Sunday, June 7**. And though we can't hold that in the church, we are currently working on an abbreviated online version of the Evensong complete with candles, beautiful words and stirring music from our homes. Watch for further details and plan to join us on the evening of June 7 for a time peaceful reflection as we experience the presence of God together!

Increasingly, my mind turns to what it will be like when we can gather again. I am praying for patience and wisdom so that when we do gather it will be safely and with care for each other. On that note, you may be interested to know that Archbishop Ron is sharing in an online meeting with other faith leaders and provincial representatives this week to be talking about what our return to worship and gathering will look like when it comes. Reflecting on where we've been these past few months certainly takes us to questions about where we will be. What have we learned? What have we gained and lost? What should we take with us from this crisis time into the future? How will we behave differently as churches and as individuals? I can't emphasize enough my sense that what every one of us does will matter! I want to share with you this little video which was sent to me by parishioner Jane Greene. Her comment was "This says it all." I think in many ways, it does. Because it's a child's bed-time story, some will dismiss it as a pipe dream or wishful thinking. But as always, when we speak to children, we boil things down to their essence and get to the point. This little video does that! I hear the voice of God's truth in it, challenging us to do better, to be better, for each other and for the world God loves. See what you think.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GvuCX4W6Xrg&feature=youtu.be>

in love and faith,
Rev. Lori



Parish Update #6

Friday, April 24, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Here are a few things you might want to know as this difficult week winds down.

Further to my letter earlier in the week about the shooting tragedy that has shattered our community, I hope many of you will have the opportunity to watch the Facebook live online vigil **Nova Scotia Remembers**. It can be accessed at:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/162084731778930/?multi_permalinks=165375891449814¬if_id=1587668206712147¬if_t=feedback_reaction_generic. The vigil begins at 7:00

p.m. today, Friday, April 24. The bells of the St. John's have also been rung every day this week at noon – tolling once for every person lost and then playing “Amazing Grace”. They will ring also on Friday night before the online vigil begins. We have sent our Facebook post of the noontime bells video to the folks hosting the vigil. It had 230 hits in its first two hours on their site! Perhaps it will be part of the vigil itself. As it is, it is an expression of St. John's love, faith and solidarity with our community. Thanks again to Cathy Boudreau, our bell ringer and Diane MacLeod for capturing the sound on video. For those who cannot access Facebook, CBC will be broad-casting the vigil on television and radio. A non-technological way to participate is to tie a piece of Nova Scotia tartan or any blue fabric to your doorstep, mailbox or lamp-post or to light a candle in your home on that evening in solidarity with the vigil. In the days to come, we will be looking for other ways to help our parishioners and community to cope with the heaviness of this on-going tragedy.

Parish Council has decided to delay the usual May 1 opening of **Terrace Hill Cemetery** indefinitely due to Covid-19. The cemetery gates will remain locked until further notice except for interments which will likely begin to happen soon for spring. These interments will be conducted following social distancing regulations.

Donations are currently being prepared for Hub House and the Food Bank for the month of April. This will add to the donations already made in March and will be in lieu of our regular outreach contributions to the community. Parish Council has committed to reviewing the parish financial position each month until the lock-down ends in the hopes of making continuing monthly donations to both Hub House and the Food Bank.

At a recent online meeting of the 2020 Team, the decision was made to officially cancel the planned June parish picnic, as we had previously cancelled the Anniversary Tea.. The team is now looking toward our fall events with the hope that at least some of them can be salvaged.

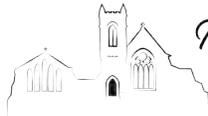
Last but not least, our first online Godly Play story has been posted for the Sunday School children and the families. Anyone else who is interested in experiencing Godly Play is invited to check out the video at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLdK3pQf-s4&feature=youtu.be>

That's all for this update.

Wishing you peace in the on-going work of staying strong,

Rev. Lori



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Tuesday, April 21, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

This note comes by way of reaching out to all of you in the wake of the horrible and senseless tragedy we have all been experiencing since the weekend. The shooting rampage across Colchester and Hants counties has wounded our communities deeply. I have been holding you all in prayer since Sunday. I know a number of you had friends, colleagues and in some cases, family members among the victims. And even if we did not know them personally, we are all touched by such stories of loss and grief. Some of you I have spoken with, emailed with or texted with about the events. Others, I know, are bearing the load quietly on their own. I want you to know that I and Rev. Gary and Dorothy are at the other end of the phone or the email or text if you need someone to talk to about these things and the questions of faith that they raise for all of us. Consider also your faith family, there are many friends who would be honoured and pleased to listen to you. Reach out, pick up the phone if you are feeling overwhelmed.

In this time of confusion and sadness, I ask you to pray. Pray for our communities, for the victims, their families and friends. Pray for those who may be wounded in body, mind or spirit. Pray for our police officers and first responders, the dispatch operators and the health care workers who will never forget what they saw and heard and experienced that night. Pray for healing for us all. And please, if you can, out of your charity, pray for the soul of that tortured and tormented man who brought this upon our unsuspecting community. He too, needs God's healing. As we all draw closer to God in prayer, we will find strength to respond well to our neighbour's needs, doubts, fears and grief and to carry our own.

One thing we know in all of this confusion is that God is with us. Jesus hung on a cross to show us the extent of God's love and solidarity with all who suffer the cruelty, injustice and unkindness of this world's brutality. God's presence in the darkest places is our guide and our strength. Many of you have told me that your faith is tested and you can't find peace. It is normal to feel angry, frustrated, hopeless and even vengeful when someone perpetrates such violent acts in our midst. It is human. It is ok to be there for a time, but to stay in those negative emotions can eventually lead us down the same path of hopelessness that this shooter may have followed. There is another way. There is God's way, which Jesus embodied for us. It is the way of loving-kindness, compassion, forgiveness and peace. It is a way that shares sorrow and gives the self for others. It is a way that draws close to God even as the darkness obscures our sight. It is a way that always believes and hopes and prays for our better nature as God's children to be revealed. Seek that way now. Be gentle with yourself and others. God is working even in us, even in this.

Let me finish by noting that we have seen many acts of love and an out-pouring of solidarity called forth by this tragedy. You may want to know that in the last few days, I have received

calls of support from our Bishop, from clergy all over our Diocese and beyond, as far as Toronto, Brockville and points west. This morning as I was composing this letter, the phone rang and it was an Anglican parishioner from Mississauga who felt she needed to reach out. She found our parish number online and figured we were the closest Anglican parish to the location of the rampage. She called and talked with me for ½ hour about the love that binds us in Christ. I was touched and strengthened so very much by her concern and I promised to share her love and promises of prayer with all of you.

Jan Richardson, who blogs at <https://paintedprayerbook.com/> wrote this lovely blessing for a time like this. May it bring you some peace in these days.

Rev. Lori

Blessing When the World is Ending

Look, the world is always ending
somewhere.

Somewhere the sun has come crashing
down.

Somewhere it has gone completely dark.

Somewhere it has ended with the gun,
the knife ,the fist.

Somewhere it has ended with the slammed
door, the shattered hope.

Somewhere it has ended with the utter
quiet that follows the news from the phone,
the television, the hospital room.

Somewhere it has ended with a tenderness
that will break your heart.

But, listen, this blessing means to be
anything but morose. It has not come
to cause despair.

It is simply here because there is nothing
a blessing is better suited for than an
ending, nothing that cries out more for a
blessing than when a world is falling apart.

This blessing will not fix you, will not mend
you, will not give you false comfort; it will
not talk to you about one door opening
when another one closes.

It will simply sit itself beside you among the
shards and gently turn your face toward the
direction from which the light will come,
gathering itself about you as the world
begins again.

Parish Update #5

It's been a while since my last note to you all. We are deeply entrenched in this lock-down and I imagine that you, like me, are getting weary of the restrictions. Yet, we know that we have to keep doing what we are doing for the good of our neighbours and families and community. This time of self-isolation can be described in the same way as the life of faith – what Eugene Peterson calls “*a long obedience in the same direction*”. What sustains us in the frustrations of that obedience is love, love for God and for those around us. I pray God's Holy Spirit is with you to sustain your love and your willingness.

We continue to make worship recordings for each Sunday and to make them available on the parish website at www.stjohnstruro.ca. Just press the blue webcast button to the right on the main page for a selection of all of our recordings since March 22. This week we also posted a recording of a service of **Compline** for nightly use. Compline was an important part of my life during my university years as each day ended with it in the darkened chapel at 10:00 p.m. In those days, we used the Book of Common Prayer for the worship and I chose to stick with that for this service. It will remain up on the website and can be used for nightly prayers any evening during this time of isolation. The BAS does not have a service of Compline, but there is a supplemental worship called Night Prayer which we will also record and post in the near future. I'm always looking for ways to make the recorded worship interesting and meaningful for you, so if you have any suggestions, please email me! As I am phoning around to speak with parishioners, I am also becoming aware of the number of our folks who do not have internet access. So I am working on a paper order of home prayers which will be ready to send out to those folks sometime next week. It is a small way to help them stay connected during this time.

Parish meetings and gatherings continue to happen online using Zoom. Finance Committee has met this way several times and Parish Council will be meeting on April 21. Our Lectionary Lunch Bible Study on Fridays has begun to gather this way and our 2020 Team will also meet this week using the technology. The Licensed Lay Minister training group are using it for their meetings. And thanks to our **Sunday School** Co-ordinator, Melinda Tattrie, our Sunday School is going online with the introduction of Godly Play stories by video this week.

We continue to endure the suspension of all of our **outreach activities and programs**. In lieu of these programs a donation was made to both Hub House and the Colchester Food Bank in March. We are preparing to make another donation to each agency for the month of April. We plan to revisit that obligation each month until things return to normal. Hopefully, there will be sufficient funds available so that we can continue to do this good work throughout the lockdown through these agencies that remain open to serve those most in need.

On that note, a sincere thank you to all of you who have been so faithful in financially supporting the parish through this time. We have managed to meet all of our financial commitments to date because of your committed generosity. As I have said before, the office will continue to receive your donations through the mail or the secure mail slot in the crypt door of the church. (This secure lock box is located to your right as you stand on the path between the hall and church looking toward the Link.) PAR is also a wonderful way to keep supporting the parish. If you are not signed up for our pre-authorized giving program, Angela can help you do this over the phone. She is working from home and is available at 902-261-2887. Alternatively, A PAR registration form is attached to this email for your use through the mail. Again, thank you for your faithful response.

I'd like to draw your attention to two special dates coming up this week. Tuesday, April 21 is one of a number of days set aside for **Holocaust Remembrance**. You will find a video entitled "*Six Stories for the Six Million*" on our parish website or at www.veteranmemorialpark.com. I was to present one of the stories at the Holocaust Remembrance event in Bass River on that day, but it has had to be cancelled. So sharing via the website seemed a way to honour that commitment. Please watch, pause, pray and reflect. And Wednesday, April 22 is **Earth Day**, a day to remember the commitments we made as individuals and as a parish in October at our Climate Change service. You can catch the video we opened with that day, "*This We Know*" on our website or at <http://www.bluemarbleinitiative.ca>.

I'll close with something that came from the Anglican Church in Woodlawn, N.S. It's a list of questions folks have been asked to post on their fridge and look at every day. Might do us some good too:

Daily Quarantine Questions:

1. What am I **grateful** for today?
2. Who am I **checking in on** or **connecting with** today?
3. What expectations of "normal" am I **letting go of** today?
4. How am I **getting outside** today?
5. How am I **moving my body** today?
6. What **beauty** am I creating, cultivating or inviting in today?

Peace to all of you,

Rev. Lori

Easter Letter 2020

Dear Parishioners,

In just a few days, the ancient cry will go up again: **Alleluia! Christ is risen!** It's a word of faith spoken by countless people like us, people who have not seen and yet believe. People who feel in their hearts and lives the presence of the Risen One, who is always near and whose life and energy transcend time and circumstance. Surely, if there was ever a time that the world needed to experience a Risen Lord, lavishing life, hope and grace, it is now. And so, I wish for each of you a lively sense that you are loved, graced and upheld by Jesus in the power of his Spirit, living in you. And when that great morning comes, I wish you a blessed and happy Easter!

There's no doubt that this will be an Easter for the books – one like none of us has ever experienced! I remember when my biggest concern as Easter Day approached was that we might lose the worship to a freak snowstorm! None of us could ever have envisioned this! I want you to know that I have spent considerable time, energy and prayer pondering how we could celebrate Easter in this time of pandemic. Most of that pondering was around the Eucharist and its centrality to this most high feast day. Could that ever translate to electronic worship? Many Anglicans believe that it is not appropriate to celebrate the Eucharist unless the Body of Christ is physically gathered and all of the gathered who wish to can participate by receiving the elements. (I was certainly trained that way – as a priest we were not permitted to bless the sacrament for our own use alone, but only when gathered with others.) As a result there have been calls throughout the Anglican Communion for this time of pandemic to be understood as a **Eucharistic Fast**, where we intentionally understand ourselves to be unable to receive that grace for a time. The joy of gathering together again someday (soon?) will be the reward for this time of going without. An intentional fast is also, many feel, an opportunity to reacquaint ourselves with the riches of liturgies that are not Eucharistic – those of Morning and Evening Prayer, Compline and other services of the Word and to focus on preaching. I think we are beginning to see that in the plethora of online worship that is already taking shape.

Another way of looking at this issue is through the theology of **spiritual communion**, which teaches that the desire to share in the Eucharist is effective for the receiving of its' gifts and graces. Anglican theology has always taught that in extremity, a person who is present to see the sacrament and cannot receive it but desires the presence of Jesus, will receive him as if they had consumed the elements. Imagine for example, someone who is extremely ill but in whose presence the Eucharist is celebrated with family and friends gathered around them. Surely, they would know the presence of Jesus with them. This theology also stresses the other aspects of the celebration of the Eucharist as the great and central prayer of the church, offered in thanksgiving for God's redemption of the whole world. This is an important aspect of the

celebration that is not affected by whether the elements are received by many or just one or two.

Archbishop Ron has told the clergy of the Diocese that he doesn't like the term Eucharistic Fast because a fast implies a spiritual discipline that one has **chosen** for spiritual renewal. This crisis was not chosen by any of us but has been thrust upon us. However, he does understand the concept and sees an intentional fast as a valid approach to the sacrament at this time. He did not, however, impose a cessation of the Eucharist upon the Diocese. He believes that the concept of spiritual communion also has great potential to bless and grace our people. He has said that each parish priest knows his/her people best and the Eucharistic practice and piety of their home place. Therefore, he has left the decision to us. And in true Anglican style, there will be a diversity of practice with regard to this for the duration of the pandemic.

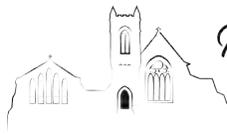
I understand the theology of spiritual communion, but it does not speak to me as deeply as the lived experience of the gathered body freely partaking and sharing God together does. It feels very strange to be making this decision for all of us, but I am choosing for us to abstain from the Eucharist for this time, until we can gather together and truly give thanks to God, not only for the joy of being together again and sharing God's gifts but also for the end of this horrible pandemic.

That having been said, I find I cannot contemplate the celebration of the resurrection without the Eucharist and so I will preside at a BAS celebration on Easter Day. You may want to have your BAS open to page 185 or you can download a pdf copy of the service at <https://www.anglican.ca/about/liturgicaltexts/>. This will be very strange for me, and I expect for you, but we need to honour the day and the Lord and God's triumph over the very spectre that haunts the world in such an ever present way now – bodily death. I cannot say how it will feel, but as it stands now, I am fairly certain that this will be the only time during this pandemic that I will preside at the Eucharist online. But, I am always open for God to change minds and hearts, especially mine, so we shall see.

The altar for Easter day was to be made beautiful by the family of Jeff and Leona Hunt. In lieu of flowers now, they have made a donation to the General Fund of the parish. Their dedication reads: *"To the glory of God and in loving memory of Leona's father Bill Dicks, her grandfather Dominey and grandparents Dicks and Jeff's brother, Terry, his grandfather Flanagan and grandparents Hunt. The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen, indeed! Alleluia!"*

Be assured of my constant prayers and longings for all of you. I'll close with this Celtic blessing: **Be ever in the embrace of the Father. Be ever in the embrace of the Son. Be ever in the embrace of the Holy Spirit. And in them, be ever in the embrace of one another. Amen**

Joyful Easter, Rev Lori



The Parish of St. John at Truro

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Parish Update #4

April 3, 2020

Hello parish friends,

Welcome to another update from my home to yours!

This Sunday is Palm Sunday and we enter into the solemnity of Holy Week. It's going to be very strange indeed as the church remains shuttered and unadorned in this most important time. However, we know that the church is not a building or even the liturgies and rites that take place there. The church truly is the people, the body of Christ, wherever it is. So to the church, **to each of you**, I say, let's make this a holy and meaningful observance of Holy Week right where we are now. God is surely in this with us, or the Incarnation of Jesus means nothing. Surely God has chosen to be in the fear and confusion, the uncertainty, the suffering. Just as surely is God present in the creativity and innovation churches and other institutions are showing, in the compassionate tending of the sick, in the diligent search for a vaccine or cure, in the tireless leadership of those who advise us and update us and make and enforce policy to keep us safe, day after day. Thank God for this constant sustaining presence!

This Sunday, Palm Sunday, we will again feature an-line worship which will be on our website early on Sunday morning. Simply go to www.stjohnstruro.ca and click on the blue web-cast button on the right hand side of the page. In lieu of palm crosses this year, we're inviting you to make a palm cross from paper or any material on hand (directions at this link - <https://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-Make-Palm-Crosses/> or use one you may have saved from last year, or use any other type of cross that may be in your house. Bring them with you to the online service, as we will bless them virtually during the worship!

For Holy Week, we are planning 3 online services:

Holy Thursday, April 9 going live at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday, April 10 going live at 1:00 p.m.

Easter Day, April 12 going live at the usual time of 8:00 a.m.

May God bless us all as we join in this unusual way of celebrating the resurrection!

Other news that you might want to know:

We are learning to use the Zoom platform to hold necessary meetings electronically in the parish. So far the Finance Committee and the Licensed Lay Minister Training Group have met this way and others will no doubt follow. April's Parish Council will be held this way. Thanks to our AST student Jane Magrath and her wife Wendy Carroll for introducing us to Zoom and helping in so many ways to get us comfortable with using it. God provides in mysterious ways!

Our bell ringer, Cathy Boudreau, has been faithfully ringing St. John's bells every Sunday morning during this closure. Thank you, Cathy, for reminding Truro that we are still here and still praying for our neighbours. Hopefully, the sound of the bells brings courage and hope to our community.

As promised, a donation has been made to both Hub House and the Colchester Food Bank in lieu of our March Stone Soup and Community Dinner events. These organizations remain open and are serving the folks most affected financially by this crisis. Please pray for those on the front lines of this service. It is difficult to be unable to fulfill our outreach commitments in the usual way, but we will monitor the situation and the parish cash flow in the coming weeks so that we can hopefully minister in this way by another round of donations.

A hearty thank-you to all of you who are donating to the ongoing expenses of sustaining the parish – some of you through PAR, others through CanadaHelps.org and others by mailing in cheques or dropping offerings into the crypt door mail slot. All of these faithful offerings are greatly appreciated!

I'll leave you with a prayer shared by our new Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls.

Prayer for a Pandemic

(from St. Paul's Ch., Lexington, KN, shared by Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls)

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close,

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country,

Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbour.

Amen.

Blessings and peace,

Rev. Lori

Parish Update – March 27, 2020

Hello folks,

I pray that you are all well and surviving this anxious time with a measure of peace.

I'm writing to let you know that as of March 25, Archbishop Ron has **extended our closure of worship, programs and events for two months**. This means that **Holy Week and Easter will now be an online reality**. Watch the website and my emails for information about what will be online for Holy Week. It will be a pared down version of what we normally do, but we will provide something for your journey!

Worship for Sunday, March 29 has been prepared using the Zoom platform with the participants speaking from their homes. We made this decision in light of the tightening regulations for the number of people who can gather in one place and to show compliance and leadership on social distancing. **You can access the service on Sunday by going to the parish website (www.stjohnstruro.ca) and clicking on the web-cast button on the right hand side of the page**. Using electronic means of communication for worship has been a steep learning curve for the parish leadership, but God is good and we are getting more comfortable. Please bear with us!

The parish office remains closed. Messages left at the office will be returned as they are monitored remotely. The 2020 Committee wishes you to know that the current closure also means that the next up-coming event for the 2020 Celebration – **the Anniversary Tea has been cancelled for its original date of May 9**. The fate of many of our planned celebrations is up in the air. Stay tuned for further information TBA.

We will not be producing a physical Easter letter this year, for a host of reasons, not the least being the cost. There will be an email version, of course. Without the physical letter, there will be no Easter offering envelope. Easter is a significant offering time for the parish, usually producing a sizeable portion of our budget. **So, let me gently remind you of the need to keep the financial functioning of the parish in mind**. Though the White bequest means that our buildings will keep functioning, our weekly offerings pay all other ministry costs including salaries and outreach. We have not yet had to make any difficult decisions about either, but that may come in the near future if this closure is extended. We acknowledge that some of our households may experience a change in income during this time, but we ask that if possible, you could be keeping up your offerings. You may do this by dropping your envelope into the secure mail slot on the crypt door (between the church and hall) on the right, by using the parish website (press the green Giving symbol and you may donate through CanadaHelps.org) or by PAR (pre-authorized remittance). If you are not on PAR and would like to join, our office administrator, Angela Burton is available by phone to get you registered at 902-671-2887. Thank you for your consideration of this need.

One of the very weird things about this shut-down is the change to how we have to do **pastoral ministry work**. I have been spending time emailing and texting our folks and have started taking the afternoons for phone ministry, beginning with those on the parish list who are alone and those whose health is compromised. It has been wonderful to spend that time with our people. There is a significant amount of loneliness and anxiety out there. I want you to know that several of our younger members have offered their services for shopping and delivery to those who are in need of that kind of help during this time. I have been offering that service to the people as I speak with them. If you know of anyone who is in need of that help, please contact me. Please also be mindful of those you may be able to help with a phone call. **A repeat reminder, the clergy no longer have access to an up-to-date listing of who is hospitalized.** If you wish us to contact your loved one in hospital, please call to let us know that they are there and we can call them through the patient switchboard. For now, that is as much as we are allowed. Visits for end-of-life care may be allowed, but require scheduling through the hospital authorities. Again, please call us.

I know that many of you have been reaching out to each other in many ways. I wouldn't expect anything less of St. John's people! I know that some folks began passing the peace by phone, text and email last Sunday after the worship. You each lead by example! We have also been thinking and brainstorming ways to make our contact during this time more effective and interactive. We're thinking that we will start asking, by email, a question each week to which we hope you will answer. All answers will be shared by email with our folks. It will be good to hear each other's thoughts and to see each other's names and to be reminded that our faith community is still out there! Stay tuned.

In closing, I pray you stay healthy and are kind to those around you. I pray you are making time for God in quietness and stillness. I pray that things are deepening for you and what is really life-giving and vital is becoming clearer for you. We will get through this with each other and with God's help!

Our theological student, Jane asked me to forward this link to you:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eve2y-P-Zjk&list=RDEve2y-P-Zjk&start_radio=1&t=0

With peace,

Rev. Lori



Further Updates – Covid-19
March 20, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

Some developments since my last email:

- 1) We have recorded a webcast service of Morning Prayer with a homily for this coming Sunday, March 22. We are grateful to the staff of Mattatall-Varner Funeral home for their generous offer to host us and to create the web-cast free of charge to us and other local churches. This is the kind of community co-operation that will help us all to get through this crisis! **The webcast will be live at 8:00 a.m. Sunday morning and can be accessed at our parish website www.stjohnstruro.ca or www.mattatallvarnerfh.com. If accessing through Mattatall-Varner's website directly, choose St. John's from the choices under Church Services on the left hand column.** It will be good to worship together! We hope to do this every Sunday as long as we are restricted from meeting.
- 2) Our office is now closed to the public. Angela will return to work on Monday, March 23, though she may do much of her work from home. The messages at the office will be checked regularly by both Angela and myself. For those of you not on PAR, offering envelopes may be deposited in the mail slot on the crypt door. Please be mindful that the expenses of the parish are on-going even though we cannot be together.
- 3) Clergy are no longer allowed access to the hospital for general visiting. No further lists of patients are being produced for spiritual care providers, so we will have no access to information about who is in hospital. If you have a loved one who becomes hospitalized, please call the parish office (897-0566) or my home (895-3534) so that we can pray for your family member and if they have a phone, we can call the patient switchboard to speak with them. We have been told that clergy will only be allowed to visit in extreme or palliative cases and then only at the request of the family. So you will have to be pro-active for your loved ones! Stay tuned as these rules change nearly every day.
- 4) Home visits by the clergy are still an option, though we won't be doing any casual visits in order to maintain social distancing. Visits for important pastoral concerns can still happen as long as you are willing and feel the need. Please call the office to arrange.
- 5) The Community Dinner for March 28 is cancelled as is our Friday morning food gift card ministry until further notice. We have made this decision out of a concern for our volunteers and for the difficulties related to take-out meals and the restrictions on gathering even small groups to do the preparation. As part of our on-going commitment to the homeless and working poor in our community, a donation will be made from the rector's Discretionary Fund to the Food Bank which is still operational. All food already left at the church for the Community Dinner will also be donated. We

are attempting to contact Hub House as well about their status and may make a donation there as well in the coming days.

6) Some other spiritual resources you might wish to check out:

The World Community of Christian Meditation (of which St. John's is a member) is offering a mediation series called Contemplative Path through the Crisis at www.wccm.org. Thanks to Diane Yetman for passing this on!

The folks at **Lent Madness** offer a link to Forward Movement Publications at www.prayer.forwardmovement.org for free daily morning and evening prayer resources and a daily meditation. These are produced by the Episcopal Church in the US.

I continue to pray for all of you, that you are safe, contented and filled with trust in God. Please look after yourselves and your loved ones and don't forget your neighbours. If you can help anyone while maintaining social distance, please do so. Our AST student, Jane Magrath sent this quote to me this week. It bears thinking about:

Many years ago, a student asked the anthropologist Margaret Mead what she considered to be the first sign of civilization in a culture. The student expected Mead to talk about hooks, clay pots or whetstones. But she didn't. Mead said that the first sign of civilization in an ancient culture was a femur (thigh bone) that had healed from a break. Mead explained that in the animal kingdom, if you break your leg, you die. You can't run from danger, go to the river to drink water or hunt for food – injured animals and humans become fresh meat for predators. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal. A broken femur that healed is evidence that someone cared for the injured, treated the wound, took the person to safety and cared for them until they recovered. Helping someone through difficulty is where civilization begins, said Mead.

Jesus drew folks together around him and taught them the value of having community together in him. We have much to offer to the wider society in this time of crisis. May we will draw from the resources of the Spirit and find courage to be there for others.

Peace,
Rev. Lori



March 17, 2020

To all of our beloved parishioners,

I'm writing to let you know that all worship and programming at St. John's is suspended until at least April 3. Archbishop Ron Cutler made this announcement yesterday and he will revisit it by April 3 to let us know what we should be doing for Holy Week and Easter.

As a result, there will be no regular worship, meetings or programs happening until further notice. It is my hope to have a worship resource featuring a Morning Prayer service with a homily available on our website for each Sunday that we cannot gather. It may be a video or just text – but either way, there will be something posted for us to join together in - from the safety of our homes.

This week March 16-22, our office administrator, Angela Burton is off on vacation. I am still working and checking the office answering machine remotely when I am not in the office. As usual, you can call me at home (902-895-3534) if you have an emergency. So far, I am still able to visit hospital and to do at home visits if you need me. We are not permitted in nursing home facilities at this time.

Choir practice, meditation and Lectionary Lunch are suspended for now. Stone Soup is cancelled for March 23. We are hoping that a modified and scaled back Community Dinner (March 28) may still be able to happen on a take-out basis. But this remains to be seen. Those who signed up to bring food and volunteer for that event are no longer required to do so.

I know that this is a time of anxiety and upheaval. We continue to trust that God is with us. God moves us toward our neighbours in a spirit of sharing and helping even though for a time we must remain socially isolated. Reach out where you can and help your neighbours – even phone call or an errand run and goods passed through the door can be encouraging to those who need us! It is important to continue to find time for prayer and reflection and to spend time with the sacred scriptures. It is a blessing that this year's Lent resource [#Live Lent – Care for Creation](#) has been a take-home one. I hope you will continue to follow it and to work with its wisdom. Lent Madness is also a wonderful online community to keep us connected. Watch our parish website, stjohnstruro.ca for more resources.

Gordon West has sent this beautiful prayer written by an Italian priest:

Midwives of the Soul

Lockdown.

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
you can hear the birds again.

They say that just after a few weeks of quiet
the sky is no longer thick with fumes,
but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
people are singing to each other across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open so that those who are alone may
hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the west of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know is spreading flyers with her
number through the neighbourhood,
so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques, and Temples, are
preparing to welcome and shelter the homeless, the sick, the
weary.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a
new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality.
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To love.

So we pray and we remember yes there is fear,
but there does not need to be hate.

Yes there is isolation,
but there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes, there is panic buying,
but there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness,
but there does not have to be disease of the soul.

Yes there is even death,
but there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.
The birds are singing again.
The sky is clearing.
Spring is coming,
and we are always encompassed by love.

Open the windows of your soul,
and though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Fr. Richard Henderick, OFM
March 13, 2020

Please continue to pray for our public health officials, governments, health care workers, clergy and others on the front lines of this pandemic. Pray for those in research searching for a control or cure. Pray for those whose lives are impacted economically by this virus and for those whose mental health is frail as they try to cope with fear and isolation. Take care of yourself and your loved ones and take all precautions to remain healthy.

Archbishop Ron has sent this prayer to us for use in a time of national distress:

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world, your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of danger and trouble, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defence. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in sickness and distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen

In God's peace,

Rev. Lori

***Please pass this message on to any parishioners you know who do not have email.**