



The Spirit of St. Mark's

A Season of Reconnecting

We are in a season of reconnecting with our wider communities.

After two years of forming small bubbles with family and select others, we are emerging from these small communities to reconnect and reform. But as we have begun this process, it is hard to deny that our time of social distancing hasn't changed us all in ways we are just beginning to realize and are only starting to understand.

One of the important communities for us as followers of Jesus is our church community, our Christian family. Not that we stopped at any point being part of that wider community of Christ,

but in returning to being in physical community as a church, changed as we all are, it might fit a little different. Over the next while, St. Mark's will be highlighting some



Our Church Family

of our many important ministries to give thanks for the ways we continued to be the church through the time of separation, and to remind us of the important work that we do when we gather to pray and work together as we reconnect.

God Bless +
Rev. Rob Park

From the Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral Care during Covid was very challenging, but the members of St. Mark's continued to demonstrate love and care for their parish family.

Pastoral Care is dependent on building relationships. A call list was created early in 2020 that included every member of St. Mark's - active or not. The names were distributed among a team of volunteers who called the names on their list at least once a month. If there were any spiritual or medical concerns, the information was forwarded to the clergy or parish nurse. Once the pandemic

started to ease, the call team was advised that they could stop calling. Some members continued to call because they have built a relationship with 'their people'.

The Pastoral Care Team meets monthly. During the peak of the pandemic the meetings took place using Zoom. We are grateful to be able to meet in person once again. During the period when it was not possible to visit in person, calls were made monthly and often more frequently to those most fragile in our parish. Referrals are assigned to the

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member of the team who is best able to meet their needs and develop a relationship with them. Recently, a member of our team was able to visit a member of our parish in long term care; it was not known how this person was managing due to privacy guidelines in the facility. It has been an exciting time for both as they have reconnected.

Brantford Blessing Centre

The Brantford Blessing Centre relies on church groups from around the city to provide dinner seven days a week for those in need. St. Mark's committed to cooking and serving once a month for all of 2022.

The number of meals served fluctuates from just around one hundred to a high of 176. St. Mark's has prepared pasta dishes, pulled pork, Mexican casseroles, chili fries and sausages on a bun along with sides and a dessert.

We are thankful to have a core group of nearly ten people who routinely help out on a Monday night. New helping hands are always welcome.

A Message from the Wardens

As the year marches along and we are now into July, the wardens would like to thank you for your continued support of St. Mark's. We are thankful for many things: Rev. Rob's new ministry with us, our wonderful fill-in organist Roger Bayley, the loosening of Covid restrictions and the return of some social time.

There are folks already planning some exciting events for the fall. Those who came out for the trivia night thoroughly enjoyed it and there is another one being planned. We look forward to some family focused events as well.



The floors are being re-waxed this July and as always, the garden club is ensuring that the outside

Other ministries such as the Card, Prayer Shawls and Flowers were also very active during the past two years - more about them next month.

Our sincere thank you and gratitude to all of those who have supported pastoral care during this time.

God bless.

From the Brantford Blessing Team

St. Mark's has been regularly participating in cooking and serving dinner once a month at The Brantford Blessing Centre since August 2021. The group of volunteers prepares meals from scratch and serves dinner on the third Monday of every month for those who require the services of The Brantford Blessing Centre.



On Monday, June 20th, St. Mark's served roughly 170 people a delicious dinner of chilly cheese fries, mixed veggies with dip and coffee cake for dessert.

If you would like to help at a dinner, please contact Christine in the office to find out more details.

of the church is beautiful and welcoming.

Have a wonderful summer and remember that 9:00 am and 10:30 services continue throughout July and August.

Year to Date Food Drive Totals

- Total Pounds of Food Collected to June 2022
1788 Pounds
- Total Monetary Donations
\$1020.00
- The next drive will be on August 20th. In addition to food items, we will be collecting backpacks, lunch bags and school supplies. Monetary donations are appreciated.



Refugee Sponsorship

St. Mark's has been involved in refugee sponsorship on an ongoing basis. We were the primary sponsors for a Syrian family in 2016 and a family from Zimbabwe in 2019. We have also partnered with private sponsors for a second Syrian family. We are still waiting for their arrival.

St. Mark's parishioners were invited to support Ukrainian refugees this spring. Donations were received for World Vision (\$650) and donations were also received to support the refugee sponsorship efforts of the Slavic Full Gospel Church in Brantford (\$2595). St. Mark's parishioners also donated furniture, blankets, televisions and other household goods.

Irene, the coordinator of refugee sponsorship at the Slavic Full Gospel Church, tells us that 17 families and five individuals have arrived from Ukraine. Quite a

few of these families are large families with three or more children. The church used the money from donations to help pay for travel costs to Canada as well as the initial cost of setting up a home: rent for a month or two, food and transportation. One or more of the adults in most of these families has now found work and so many of the families are close to being self supporting.

Ongoing support is still very much appreciated. There is still a need for financial donations as well as bed linens, especially for single beds, towels and gift cards especially to FreshCo (because of proximity to where people live).

Thanks are extended to St. Mark's parishioners for their generosity and support. Questions or offers of support can be directed to Mieke Schroeder (519) 759-8372.

Sunday Morning Kid's Programming



Share God's Word

a new resource for faith formation for young children.

Our new 'Waypoint Kids' Sunday morning kids programming will be starting on Sunday, September 11th and will take place during the 10:30 service. We will be using *Sparkhouse Digital Programming* which is a

The lesson of the day will match the lesson the adults are receiving to encourage continued

discussion at home. Our new Sunday morning kids programme will use an 'inquiry- based' learning model which means the lesson remains the same but the path will be flexible and move through the kids' questions and what activities they want to do.

We have a strong group of volunteers to help run our new Sunday morning kids programme and we will also be asking the parents of the kids attending to commit to being the '2nd adult' on 2 Sundays between September and Christmas.

Youth Group News

Youth group meetings have adjourned for the summer months as we prepare for the fall. Anyone going into grade 7 in September is invited to join our youth group. Contact the office for more information. On Sunday August 14th, we will be having a *Youth Group Meet and Greet Family Event* for all current youth, new youth and their families. Time and place will be announced later. We will also continue to meet Sunday evenings from 7pm to 8:30pm starting on Sunday, September 18th, 2022.



Something New for Youth Group Members!

Join us on Friday, September 9 at 5:30 for dinner followed by a youth group meeting from 7:00 - 8:30

This will be a regular monthly event for all youth group members.



Report from the Finance Committee

If you haven't made a financial gift to St Mark's for some time, please consider the following...

Parish Council was informed at its June 21st meeting that, while total receipts are up from last year they are short of budget as of the end of May.



- Total offerings for operations are \$78,388.95 (last year: \$76,935.70; budget \$91,740.00). However, giving through envelopes is down from last year as well as pre-approved donations through the Diocese. These changes are understandable as church attendance is down due to the pandemic but the need to support the Parish continues. Offerings for special Sundays are up bringing the total up.
- Givings for the Building Fund are up from both last year and budget as are givings for Outreach needs or programmes that St. Mark's supports.
- In addition, funds received from Hall Use, Trust Interest, fundraising and other miscellaneous categories bring the total revenue to date to \$107,280.36 (last year: \$86,738.73; budget \$112,520.29)
- While giving is up from last year, total expenses are up even more from last year and from budget. Wage costs are up significantly as we now have a Rector full time instead of part time Clergy and staff received a small increase this year after two years without. The number of staff has been reduced so that the increase in the wage bill is not as great as it could have been. Insurance, heat and hydro have also seen significant increases.
- Expenses to date to operate the Parish are \$126,749.26 (last year: \$102,227.03; budget: \$128,523.72). There has been some capital expense this year but this was covered by donations to the Building fund. All Outreach donations have been paid out to the charitable causes.
- The net of the income and outflow is that \$29,407.69 (last year: \$19,693.30; budget: \$21,214.43) more has been paid out than has been received and the balance in the bank account has been reduced. At December the bank balance was \$70,822.23 of which \$30,000.00 was invested with the Diocese. The resulting balance of \$40,822.23 has been reduced to \$12,321.67 as of May 31.

We give thanks to God for the many parishioners who continue to participate in the parish's mission by means of their financial support. Your generosity makes our shared ministry possible,

If you haven't made a gift to the parish in support of our ministry in some time, please consider doing so now, and please consider enrolling in our convenient Pre-authorized Donation plan (PAD).

*Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.
(Ephesians 3:20)*

Blessing of the Backpacks Family Event

On Friday, August 26th, St. Mark's will be hosting the 'Blessing of the Backpacks'. This will be a family event and BBQ for families of St. Mark's and the community. At this event, we will bless all the backpacks that we receive via donations over the months of July and August.



All kids are asked to bring their school backpacks as we will be playing various kids games with our main event being 'Back to School Bingo' where kids can win Back to School prizes to fill their backpacks.

Pre-authorized Donation forms are available in the church office or by calling Anne Walker at 519-756-3685.