



The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener

ON EAGLE'S WINGS

June 23, 2019

Available online at StJohn316.com/OEW

Financial Update

The following update was provided to the congregation after the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, June 1. If you were not able to attend that meeting, please read and consider how you might respond. (See especially the bullet points at the end.)

Thank you all for attending this brief update on the state of our finances. At our 2019 Vestry meeting four months ago we heard that it would be important to carefully monitor our finances this year, and Parish Council committed to keeping the congregation informed with regular reports. We plan to hold another of these update meetings in September.

Thank you also for generously supporting the life and work of St John the Evangelist through your regular giving. Your giving is what makes everything we do possible.

We have recently come through a time of much change and uncertainty. The last few years have sometimes felt unsettling and even a little chaotic. We want to begin this brief report with a review of some of the events of the last two years as a reminder, and to inform those of you who have joined us more recently.

In the Spring of 2017, SJE was asked by the Bishop to meet several conditions before being allowed to begin the search for a new Rector—the search that resulted in Preston being appointed—loud cheers. The first of these was that we raise in congregational donations and pledges the amount required to end the year without a deficit. This meant raising \$24,500-- an additional 11% above what we had budgeted for regular congregational giving for 2017. You responded generously and we met 115% of that goal within a few months.

The next step was one that every parish in the diocese was asked to take: to create a five-year balanced budget scenario that was based entirely on **sustainable** sources of revenue. In other words, our budget plans could not rely on one-time or windfall sources of revenue, but needed to be reasonably reliable, on-going revenue. The Mission and Ministry Task Force was charged with this task, and brought two options to the congregation in two town hall meetings. Rather than make significant cuts to program, the congregation chose to increase its regular congregational giving by 16% over the beginning of 2017 (before we had the 11% Solution campaign). This commitment would allow us not only to maintain our current ministries but also to fund new ministries.

During the following months, the congregation responded to this choice with increased giving, but during 2018 we also experienced a higher than expected loss of members to death and departures for various reasons. The result was that we saw a net increase of about 4%-5% in givings rather than the 16% we needed.

This shortfall did not produce a year-end deficit in 2018, because we also had much lower than normal expenses: we were without a Rector for six months, and the Diocese assisted us with some of the costs of our Interim Transitional minister.

This year however our financial commitments are back to normal, and the

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The next issue of On Eagle's
Wings will be available on
September 22nd.

Nurses Notes

Elsie Millerd, Parish Nurse

Creating Caring Communities

Last month at the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry I had the privilege of hearing about the development of a special health ministry at St. Aidan's Anglican Church in London, Ontario. Patrick Ferguson, parish nurse, and the Rev. Canon Dr. Kevin George, rector, introduced us to their efforts to create a caring community for people suffering with mental illness. Their key message was to "walk with mental illness, don't wash it away."

The development of the program at St. Aidan's came out of a congregational survey which identified the need to name mental illness and address it in the congregation. The parish health team, consisting of the parish nurse, health committee, rector and parishioners, turned to an internet resource, **Mental Health Ministries**. It is an interfaith web based ministry that provides educational resources to help erase the stigma of mental illness in our faith communities. This ministry points out that:

- One in four persons sitting in our pews has a family member struggling with mental health issues.
- A majority of individuals with a mental health issue go first to a spiritual leader for help.
- Clergy often lack the training to provide appropriate support and referral information.
- Our faith communities can be a caring congregation for persons living with a mental illness and their family members.

Mental Health Ministries presents a five step program for creating caring communities:

1. Education: The importance of beginning this education with the leadership of the church is stressed. Education might involve having a speaker or workshop, providing materials from various mental health groups, using bulletin inserts and newsletters to educate about serious mental illness, and offering a health fair to teach about different mental illnesses.
2. Commitment (Covenant): The church leadership commits to be intentional in seeking ways to become a caring congregation. It is often concerned lay persons who initiate this process because pastors are so overwhelmed with other responsibilities. By involving the clergy and other leadership groups, a task force can be developed to assess the needs of the congregation. This can lead to adopting a statement of the congregation's commitment to this ministry.
3. Welcome: This involves seeking ways to integrate persons with a mental illness into the faith community by getting to know them through the mutual exchange of joys and concerns. It includes inviting persons with a mental illness to participate as they are willing and able...acting as a liturgist, being part of a group, etc. It can result in congregations helping the person with housing, employment, transportation to medical appointments and practicing important social skills.
4. Support: God wants us to care for one another – and allow others to care for us in our time of need. We are called to "bear one another's burdens." (*Galatians 6:2*). Support can be provided through mentors, a referral list to mental health services, a support group, counselling services, provision of meals or housing, prayer shawls and support to family members.
5. Advocacy: People with a mental illness too often get caught in a "revolving door" health care system. A congregation can be involved in advocacy by keeping informed on pending legislation about mental illness, contacting elected representatives, supporting candidates working on mental health issues and partnering with other community organizations for community events about mental illness.

At the conference our presenters, Patrick Ferguson and Kevin George, encouraged us to consider a time in our journey when someone showed us the care of presence that says "Don't be afraid, I will not leave you." How do we receive that kind of care? They asked us to reflect on what prohibits us from receiving the care of another at times of

difficulty. We were encouraged to consider how Christ sees mental illness and to give voice to some of the negative attitudes and stereotypes that are prevalent in church land today. They asked us what needs to happen in our parish community to create an environment that says “Don’t worry; if you slip I will catch you.”

At St. Aidan’s the health ministry team is developing people who will come alongside people with mental illness. They help parishioners to have awareness of each person’s needs. Remembering the high incidence of mental illness in every community, what kinds of learning and development would be appropriate for us to embrace in our parish to create a caring community? Developing such a community can happen best from the grass roots. I encourage each of us to consider what part we can take in the process and to share this insight with the community as a whole. Together may we be a community of love and support to all those who suffer in body, mind and spirit.

Resource: Mental Health Ministries <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/>

For a comprehensive report on the 2019 conference of the Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry see page 7 of the June, 2019 edition of Huron Church News, *Expanding our horizons: parish nursing ministry*. <https://diohuron.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/web-HCNJune2019.pdf>

Coming Events

Memory Boosters Social Club

2nd and 4th Tuesday each month 1:30 pm to 4 pm

A peer led social club in which to meet new people and learn about community resources and services that are designed to make living with dementia a little easier. The goal is to provide a warm and supportive place for people living with dementia and their care partners to socialize, relax and have fun together.

To learn more or to attend call Karin at 519-885-2375 or Elaine at 519-897-4264

E-mail: memoryboostersinfo@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/memoryboosters

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RENEW/KMSB fundraising concert



It Is Yard Sale Time Again

Elaine Duncanson

Once again the urge to purge has come and this time with a vengeance. Then comes the problem of deciding what is worth some space, what is useful, or beautiful, or has some special significance. The gurus tell us to make piles of what to toss, what can be sold, what to donate, and what we will keep. Some people can toss with ease while other people see the memories in each item.

Life changes will dictate some choices. Stiff limbs are not likely to ski again. But those hills were glorious and the long trek through the woods was peaceful. The camaraderie of marathons from Woodstock NB down to Fredericton over two days, along with the stories of extreme weather, waxing problems, and reaching a checkpoint in the nick of time will be easier to store than the skis and poles. Will anyone want them?

Family circumstances, such as distance and frictions, will dictate some other choices. A set of fine china for twelve has not been used in several years. Then the amount of work needed to prepare the home and the food to fill those plates is overwhelming. Not to mention the amount of planning and diplomacy to make it all work. A relative seems interested in taking the dishes so that will leave some space that will be filled quickly by other treasures.

The ads have changed recently from 'downsizing' to 'rightsizing' perhaps because so many people panic at the thought of letting go of their possessions. We all know we can not take it with us in the end but we do not think we are at the end, yet. The pros who help people rightsize suggest making a plan of what fits the new space to make a comfortable setting. Put the most used items in the space first and fill in with anything that is needed. Then you dispose of the rest. It sounds so easy.

One woman had to go into a nursing home since her legs no longer worked but her mind is still very active. Her husband visited her daily and brought fresh supplies of her books and returned the ones she had read to their shelf. Then he was diagnosed with a terminal illness and died surprisingly soon. Bob has stories of hunting for books she wanted but now others have rearranged everything in preparation for selling the house and the contents. She bought another bookcase and has stuffed as many of her favourite books as possible in her room and barely has space to move.

There is a sense of loss when parting with some things. It may be sensible and necessary. It may make living easier but still there is a pang when the object is put on the sale table. And another when someone buys it. But if it remains at the end of the day, there is a sense of shock that no one recognized the importance and the value in the item. They could not see the memories attached to it.

I have made some wonderful finds at yard sales. On a trip several years ago, Bob and I toured a number of thrift shops and came home with a car full but very little to report to the customs officer. Nick, the cat, quickly commandeered the half circle mat as his own. It cost us two dollars. Another time we found a set of dishes for four with a winter pattern that I use from the first Sunday of Advent until Epiphany. I think that cost us twelve dollars. We can hope that some of our excess can bring joy to others.

Life can change suddenly or slowly until you realize that things are not what they were. Decisions are forced on you at times and the choices can cause much pain. It is a time to choose what is important, what you treasure, what will enhance the future you hope to have. Some possessions take up little space and can be tucked in a drawer until you take them out and enjoy the memories. Some are treasures passed on from previous generations and have stories attached to them. There needs to be a place for them. When the excess has been cleared away, we expect to find value in what we have kept.

Geneva Forum for Health Awards – Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is one of the four Winners!

Ann Coughlin

The Geneva Forum for Health Awards are presented during the World Health Assembly, recognizing and honouring global health leaders “who have made fundamental improvements in delivering high-quality, sustainable, patient-centred healthcare. Particular emphasis is placed on proven, disruptive innovations that have the potential to become global best practice.” This year, the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is a recipient of this award – an award that is often given to health ministries (another recipient this year is the Chilean Ministry of Health for innovative food labels), world leaders (including Gro Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway and former Director-General of the World Health Organization), agency leaders, and large Foundations (last year, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation won for malaria programming)!

Ilana Landsberg Lewis travelled to Geneva, Switzerland in May to accept the award on behalf of the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign.

Here’s what the Geneva Forum for Health says about the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign:

“Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign is a unique fundraising initiative conducted in solidarity with African grandmothers raising 15M children orphaned by AIDS. It has attracted more than 10,000 volunteers forming 300 local chapters who raise money through everyday fundraising activities such as potlucks, art auctions and quilting bees; the movement has since spread international. The movement is grounded in building solidarity, respecting African grandmothers’ expertise and amplifying their voices to promote authentic and substantive response to the AIDS epidemic.

African grandmothers supported by the initiative are vocally demanding access to education, healthcare, land, legal representation and freedom from violence.

Collective vision defined by African grandmothers calls for a future in which grandchildren and communities are thriving, and have left behind the ravages of AIDS.”



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gap between budgeted and actual congregational giving is creating a growing deficit.

Here are the numbers as of the end of April of this year:

- For the four months of January to April, our budget assumes congregational giving through envelopes and automatic debit of \$86,098.
- Our actual giving through envelopes and debit to the end of April was \$76,608.
- This means that we have a shortfall in regular giving to date of \$9,490, an average of \$2,375 per month.
- Givings were better in March and April than in January and February, but were still below budget by \$1,200 in April.

This is not the whole financial story, however. We are also receiving higher than expected revenue from Use of Space—rental of parts of our building by outside groups. For the first four months of 2019, rental revenue is \$4,000 above budget, reducing our Jan-Apr shortfall from \$9,490 to \$5,490.

Other positive signs: during the five year period 2012 to 2016, St John's experienced an average 2.5% decline in attendance annually. Attendance continued to decline through 2018. But so far in 2019 not only has that decline in attendance stopped, our attendance is up **above** what it was in 2017.

We also know that an increase in giving usually doesn't occur immediately when attendance increases. So we hope that giving will increase naturally over time as attendance grows.

Repayment of the loan portion of the cost of our recent roof repair and HVAC installation through your pledge to the RENEW program is on target and slightly ahead of schedule. We plan to say more about RENEW at our September update.

So the financial picture is not great, but it's not terrible either. There are signs of hope, and we should not feel discouraged about our current financial situation. At the same time, we cannot allow this shortfall to continue to grow. Ending the year with a deficit is no longer an option for St John's. In addition, we are entering the summer months, and this is a period when givings typically decline. The Parish Council will begin looking at ways to reduce spending that will have as little impact as possible on our ministry together. We will also work to increase our regular revenue.

So as an important part of this effort, we are asking you to consider one or more of the following responses:

- if you are regular donor to St John's, please consider whether you can increase your current giving .
- if you are giving via envelopes, consider switching to automatic debit, which provides us with a more predictable and regular sense of our income. If this is something you'd like to do, Judy Shantz and Sharon Sapelak are here to assist you do that if you'd like help.
- If you want to stay with using envelopes, please consider writing post-dated cheques for the period of time when you expect to be away during the summer month. This will help us avoid the drop in income which usually occurs over the summer.
- if you are not already giving via envelopes or automatic debit, consider obtaining a set of envelopes or setting up an automatic debit; again, there are people here who can assist you to do that.
- if you know of someone looking for office space to rent, suggest they contact the church office to learn about the possibility of renting space at St John's.