

St. James Anglican Church, Leitrim

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August 27, 2020

Greetings to you,

We are writing to you today to bring everybody up to date with the life of our beloved St. James Parish family. Many of you already know most of the news, but we think this will be a good way for us to review together and to talk a bit about plans.

To begin, this letter is not intended to cause any anxiety!

It is intended to pass along news and help our parish life to remain filled with hope and centred in love.

While most of our parishioners are quite well, many are feeling the anxiety of these strange times. I know that some of us are facing the stresses of medical issues, loss, and illness in our families. It is so important that we have such a closely knit parish and we have been able to continue to support one another over these past five months.

The next section, our finances, comes from our Treasurer, Mike Thomas. We have not been able to meet face-to-face for our Parish Councils, but the work of the Church has continued. We still cannot have face - to - face meetings until we are out of the Amber stage of recovery. (Our Diocese has developed a colour coded schedule for us to follow in order to mitigate the risks we all face just now. With each colour of Red, Amber, Yellow and Green, we have specific conditions to meet. You can check our Diocesan web site for more information.). Too many people would be left out of a “virtual” Parish Council meeting, so we have tried to keep everybody up to date with letters and financial information. This financial section is a more formal statement of our financial situation.

Mike writes: “The following is the church’s financial position as of today. I have not finalized the month of August yet as I expect more offerings to come next week.

Our bank balance is \$36,211.31 which includes the \$8,000.00 in the Consolidated Trust Fund. This is broken down as follows:

General Fund.	8,241.67
Ottawa Deanery Fund.	311.28
Building Fund.	9,370.84
Memorial Fund.	7,549.22
Church Accessibility Fund.	1,425.56
Xmas Church fund.	1,312.74
Total.	28,211.31. Plus \$8,000.00 = \$36,211.31
Total Revenue year to date.	24,298.00
Total Expenses year to date.	22,863.82
Year to date surplus.	2,609.18

We are in this favourable position largely due to the fact that the Synod Office had forgiven our monthly commitments for March and April of this year totalling \$5,526.00. As we did not have our Caeli Dinner and Yard Sale this year, we lost approximately 4,500.00 of revenue and would have been down almost \$9,000.00 had the Synod not waived their monthly fee. Thanks to many of our generous parishioners, we have been able to maintain a positive surplus. Mike.”

Donations are welcome anytime and can be sent by mail or by using the ‘Donate’ button on our website or you can make other arrangements with our treasurer. E-mail mikeandirenethomas@gmail.com .

I think you will be delighted that much of our outreach has continued. We have kept in touch with our most frail parishioners at least weekly. We are up to date with our budgeted expenditures, so we have continued our usual support to all the diocesan programs we have undertaken.

I have seen our buildings and grounds. They look beautiful, as always. I believe that beauty is part of our outreach in that it offers a sense of hope and beauty and God’s bounty to all who pass by, even in our current difficult time. Also, in terms of our outreach, it would be wonderful if we could continue our other two Christmas traditions. For several years, we have collected items to fill a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child. Do you think we can continue that project, which Vic is happy to organize as he has in the past? Last year, we collected money for the Rotary Home for the purchase of a new kettle for four young adult residents. Would you like to do that again? And, finally, for many years, we have collected food for our local food bank. We stopped doing this during the height of the pandemic, but now the need has arisen again. Victor has offered to be at St. James between 9 and 10 am on the first Saturday of every month. He will collect any food left by us and take it to the Food Bank, until we can get back to our usual routine. Would you like that plan? Outreach has always been so important to us, and the generosity of our parish definitely makes a difference to our most vulnerable neighbours.

Thanks to TAD Higginson, we have been able to include those in our parish who wish to join our worship live each week. Being together, even in this virtual way, has been a huge boon

to us and we are very grateful to TAD for his generosity and kindness in setting us up and maintaining the system, and tinkering with our wayward computers.

We expect that most of you will have heard about our Diocesan plan for the re-opening of our churches for worship. Many parish churches, especially the larger ones, will open for worship probably at the beginning of September. You will have heard about all the precautions being taken to protect us from illness. I am sure some of us will be very sad to hear our own decision about opening. Others of us will be very relieved.

We are almost all in the age group most at risk of grave consequences should we catch Corona Virus. We, (the Wardens and I), have decided that our beautiful little church is just a bit too little to be able to accommodate some of the necessities of re-opening at this time. For example, we are not able to ensure enough air circulation at this stage. We have agreed that we will wait to see what happens when the children and their teachers return to school, and other businesses continue to open. As the conditions for re-opening are lessened, our need for excellent ventilation will be lessened. We will reconsider our position in time for Thanksgiving.

At St. James, our method of decision-making is usually to discuss options and preferences together. Sometimes at length! Ha. But this year is different. So, we have a question for you. We, the wardens and I, would like to see our Christmas Lighting tradition continue, especially this year. We agree that it is more than a display of lights. It is a sign of God's presence and love, especially for all the folks struggling along Bank Street on those bleak winter evenings. It is also a gift to our fire fighters next to us, the Police department across the street, and the children and their families who are our neighbours at the Rotary Home up the road. We will have to ask for some financial gifts to support the plan as normal fund raising has been very difficult. Or perhaps a scaled down version. We still have time to discuss this.

My thanks to our Wardens who have done so much for our community during this crisis, even more than usual. Thank you to each of you. And I thank not only our wardens. Thank you for your prayers. Your caring is a gift which the Wardens and I treasure. We have all come together in many different ways to support each other and to continue to build up the Kingdom of God, even now in all our uncertainty.

If you have any thoughts, questions, ideas or feedback on anything you have read in this letter, please do contact the Wardens or me. We will be happy to hear from you. This parish belongs to all of us. We all have our own ministry, as St. Paul tells us in our Scripture this week. Our ministries are unique to ourselves. And each of us is vital to the body. All of us are necessary.

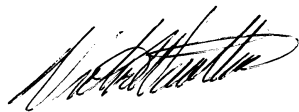
Together, we have a history, most of which we love. It is what we used to call "Normal" or the Norm. But as we heard in last week's Scripture, sometimes we are called out of the Norm into something new, just as Abraham and Sarah were. Because of the Pandemic, we will certainly have lost much. We are called into a future which we do not know yet. Eventually, we will know it as our "New Normal". But for now, the journey can be frightening and difficult. When we are frightened, we can remember with gratitude that God goes before us. God follows us, and God remains with us on the journey.

God bless you. You are in our thoughts and our prayer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Oak".

People's Warden

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vicki Hinkle".

Rector's Warden

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joan" followed by a small cross symbol.

Priest in Charge