

News for Scattered Pews

Jan/Feb 2022



Val's Voice



The season of Epiphany begins with a star and the well-loved image of magi...

For some of us in this part of the world, it has become a peaceful image, ensconced as we are in our houses this time of year.

But the more you have travelled, the more you realize that travel is rarely simple... It comes with real danger, uncertainty of circumstances along the way, and in this case, not even knowing when arrival will be, or what the destination is.

And yet even as we continue to live some of that uncertainty now, and learn more of it on the news, we hear "The light shines in the darkness" and we hear affirmed in our faith that fear and anger, hatred and violence will not overcome it. The light shines on.

That shining light is important, because in this season, which has been called "ordinary time" in years past, we are reminded that in the midst of our ordinary times will be times of great heartbreak as well as times of great joy.

We hear of joy and heartbreak in Scripture: the joy of a wedding celebration which then runs out of wine. The task not only of fishing all night, but of living the danger of a fisher's life only to come up with no fish, and no way to feed those depending on you. We hear even of Jesus' own experience of being one moment honoured by those in his hometown, and the next threatened by them... Life is full of joy, but its winding path is also treacherous.

It may be, then, that all of these times are ordinary. Perhaps it is that for us as God's people, our call is like that of the wise men. In the midst of a world which can be dangerous or heartbreaking, we are invited to watch for God's light.



When we see it, we may be called to enjoy it, to relish it. Like the renewed wine at that wedding, we are invited to savour God's goodness when it comes and enjoy the celebration of life. In hard times we are also invited to hold on to the knowledge that God's goodness is around us, and when the ordinary goodness of life fades, to remind ourselves that God's goodness will come... Celebrating is thankfully always part of what being human and being faithful is!

But when we see the glimmer of God's presence, like the wise men, we are sometimes also invited to seek it. To wonder at what it means, to give up our safety and travel to the far country of ideas we aren't familiar with, and people we've never met.



This Sunday, in the midst of this season, we are invited with Jesus to consider how the Spirit of the Lord will allow him to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind... Those are familiar words to us, but every new day they can lead us to new and unfamiliar territory.

In these hopefully waning days of the pandemic, please hold in prayer the question of how it is that our parish can celebrate the goodness of life with our neighbours, and also how we can live in a way that is good news to the poor, that offers release to captives and sight to the blind (when we ourselves are also blind...)

Epiphany is when God makes God's self known in the midst of what is unfamiliar. Blessings to all of us on whatever insights it offers and whatever journeys it inspires!

Val

(image credits: Jane Tattersfield, Jen Norton)

Vestry Notes from January 22

We began our Vestry meeting, as usual this year, with a good conversation around Carey's question. **"How can we encourage parishioners to participate more fully in Vestry and other initiatives?"**

Carol shared some of the reasons (insufficient time, conflicting family responsibilities) some nominees gave for not letting their name stand. Vestry members also wondered if it would help if we established more short-term committees that came together to work on and complete a specific task. (That's what we did to plan Christmas carolling in December.)

Some thought it might be helpful if parishioners attended Vestry meetings as observers, to get an idea of what is involved. There is a newly developed "Introduction to Vestry 2.0" document that describes the work of Vestry. Have a look! In case you are wondering, we do have a good number of Vestry members. The Diocesan Canon indicates we need 4-20 members; at 11-12 members we are in the middle of that range.

Finance Report: Thanks to the commitment and generosity of our parishioners, as well as the pandemic assistance of various levels of government, we finished 2021 in the black! As of December 31, 2021 income added up to \$185,140 while expenses totalled \$184,917.

Our **Annual General Meeting** will be held via Zoom on February 13 at 2 pm. Carey will chair the meeting. The declaration of membership will be done through the Zoom registration process. Don't worry, it will make sense when you are doing it! A paper copy of the declaration - or some other process - will be provided to those connecting by phone.

A special note of good news: Asher (Abid's brother) arrived in Winnipeg last fall as a newcomer, and is doing well. He has been fortunate to get full-time work as a hair stylist/barber and is making plans to get the needed appropriate Canadian credentials.

If you are wondering when we might consider **returning to in-person worship**, well we aren't quite sure. Bishop Geoff gave parish Vestries the ability to make this decision themselves, and we had a good conversation about it, but Vestry didn't think it was a wise time to come together right now, with Omicron spreading so quickly, and hospitals and ICUs so full. It will be great for us to get together when it seems wise, but it doesn't seem wise right now.

The Aurora Family Therapy Centre is offering a **Circle of Security Parenting Group** to help parents have a more secure relationship with their children. The online program runs for 8 weeks starting February 2. There is a fee but financial assistance may be available.

More information is available at:
<http://www.aurorafamilytherapy.com/>

Take care everyone! Please stay in touch with your friends and neighbours to let them know you are thinking of them: connection is important these days when we are tired!

Vestry has also been reminded recently that it is good for us to **be involved in our neighbourhoods**, and the larger community. Do you know of things happening in St. Vital or surrounding areas that our parish should know about or be involved in? Let one of our Wardens or Vestry members know!

Did you know that every week the National Church puts out information from all across the church? Check it out! the **Anglican Journal** can be found at www.anglicanjournal.com

And last but not least, Vestry was advised that Judy, **our Parish Administrator**, (and Tom) will be moving to Edmonton this spring. There was shock and sadness to hear this news, after 12 years of Judy's exemplary commitment to our parish.

Judy has been working from home a lot the last two years, which gives us some flexibility going forward. As of March 1, she will be working only remotely (from wherever her laptop is!). She has offered to continue working for the parish, if Corporation wishes, and conduct all functions and responsibilities that can be done remotely for as long as is needed. She will provide training to Vestry members, wardens and others for activities that need to be done onsite, including if the parish decides to hire someone for part or all of her position. Many of you have already wished Judy well, and we all will have a chance to do so more formally later.

The Parish of St. Mary Magdalene is on Treaty 1 territory.

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