

News for Scattered Pews

November 2021



Val's Voice

As I write, I'm remembering the kids who came by on Sunday... dressed up as dragons and vampires and princesses, looking for candy and kind neighbours. They were all having so much fun. Their parents

were too, strolling along the street with their own friends, catching up on neighbourhood news. All Hallows' Eve, a gathering of God's people, one with another.

We don't normally think of it that way, of course. Or I haven't, anyway. But I think the pandemic brings out more than our usual appreciation for any opportunity to get together. The luxury of an entire evening strolling the street had the power to make scarcely-seen neighbours seem like old friends, people we have had only a chat or two with seem like possible companions, and all those kids seem as important as a batch of nieces or nephews might be.

It was a good warm up for All Saints' Day, which is of course what it is. It reminded me that we are, all of us, God's people. For all our differences, in politics or faith understandings, in childrearing methods or gender, and in all the disputes that sometimes seem to take more than their share of airtime in the public square, we are in this life together. And we are here, because God put us all here.

Not only that, but God made us. God scratched God's proverbial head, considered which attributes this child of God should have, and then when God was done with the forming, God breathed life and spirit into each of us. Set as we are on this earth, we now live together...

You may not have thought of it quite like that, but that is an approximation of one of the stories of creation. Of course, in Scripture, there are many. Another is instead a story of how God made us all at once. There are also rich tales of how God spoke to any number of God's children, leading Abraham and Sarah from one land to another, speaking to Moses from a burning bush, in Jesus discussing with a woman the wonder of living water which comes from both wells and our life with God.

There are so many stories that shape us as God's people, and that tell of our shaping. It is no wonder that we don't end up all being the same.

But that being the case, we still need to learn to speak to each other, to communicate well, and to discern where God would lead us. As the people of St. Mary Magdalene, we are a gift. To each other certainly, but also to any number of people we know in other ways. In fact, there are countless people in St. Vital and around the neighbourhood, whom we don't know at all, for whom we are a gift as well. As they are for us. We may not know them, and so we may not have any idea what our gift or theirs is, but that is the way our God has made us.

So friends, this All Saints' Day consider how it is that the good news of God, and the life of Christ and the breath of the Spirit have settled in your life. And then listen and watch for glimpses of God's presence in the life of your neighbours as well. Wait for inspiration for ways our little community could be and do good for our neighbours, God's beloved, whom God has given to us, just as God has given us to them.

These windy chilly fall days, wait and watch for God's warmth and God's Spirit together, and see where we might end up.

Peace to all of you - God's beloved.

Val



Vestry Notes from October 26

At our October meeting, Vestry members were invited to share our thoughts and dreams about what the parish is called to do and what the parish is doing well.

It was generally agreed that as a community of believers we support one another well through prayer, practical help and spiritual help. The church building has a 'presence' in the community because it is well kept, accessible, has wonderfully tended grounds and modern signage which both welcomes and informs those who pass by. The ministry of hospitality



is extended to newcomers to our worship services and also to folk (infants to seniors) who need a safe place to hold meetings. There is an observable sense of joy and friendship and positive energy as people meet for various activities. There are many ways that we reach out to care for others including giving support to the St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry and in Refugee Sponsorship. Because our church is a place of worship and a meeting place it helps us find a balance in meeting the commands to love God and love our neighbour.

We received the monthly reports and are happy that the facility upkeep is in hand, the user groups are returning, in-person worship continues and Sunday School has resumed. We are grateful that income and expenses are on track for this time of year.

A budget committee is being formed and anyone with skills in this area who feels called to assist, is invited to contact Darryl Melnick or Raymond Nembhard.

We look forward to meeting Asher Munir, brother of Abid, who has now arrived in Winnipeg and is the most recent person to find refuge in our community.

Because of continued uncertainty around COVID19 restrictions, it is most likely that our Christmas hamper program will be offered in the form of Gift Certificates this year.

It is also important that we continue to communicate with one another as best we can to keep our community strong and always remember that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Heather Birtles

On All Saints' Day

(Excerpt from a column by Bishop Kevin Robertson "Saints: the stars of our faith" in *The Anglican*, November 2021 issue. View the entire column at toronto.anglican.ca/the-anglican-newspaper)

One of my favourite definitions of a saint comes from the apocryphal tale of a man and his young daughter who walked into a great cathedral one day. The girl was in awe as she gazed upon the magnificence of the building. She looked up at the soaring arches, and then her eyes moved to the large colourful figures in the stained glass windows. "Daddy, who are these people?" she asked her father.

He replied, "These are God's friends. They're called saints." The girl paused for a moment and then asked, "So saints are people that the light shines through?" Yes, saints are those whom the light of God shines through.

But the light of Christ shines not only through the great stars of the Church who are memorialized in stained glass. Each one of us can point to those in our own lives who have reflected Christ's love and helped to form us in faith. These are our own stars, who have transformed our lives and communities through the power of God's love.

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

3 St. Vital Road, Winnipeg MB R2M 1Z2
stmarymagdalenewpg.org

Phone: 204-253-0555 (church office) 204-930-7253 (Val's cell)
Email: stmary@mymts.net