



## Val's Voice

Our parish Visioning Day, this last Saturday, was led by Deacon Michelle Collins, assistant to the Bishop of the MNO (Manitoba Northwestern Ontario) Synod of the Lutheran Church (Fyi, Lutherans never say all

those words - they just say MNO Synod, or the Synod, and "the Synod" is a geographical area).

Anyway, the process was interesting. Michelle first asked us to read Acts 10:1-33. As we did so we noticed, in this passage all about visions, that *God gave different visions to different people*. God tilled the ground with these visions, calling people to learn from each other, to go talk to people they didn't know, even to open their minds to ideas and traditions that were not familiar. We learned that a vision is from God, and that it will take us somewhere new.

Then she asked each table group to decide on five 'values' that are at the core of who we are as a parish. I don't know about the other tables, but we actually found it was harder than we had expected to narrow our ideas down to five!

Then two of us left the table (because in Acts, followers are sent out 2 by 2) for a different table, to talk with those people, those followers, and try and settle on five values that fit this new group. Then we had to do it again! An interesting exercise as we realized that all these faithful people who have experienced the same church have different perspectives about what is at our core. We learn from each other, and we likely have to give up our pet value as well!

Michelle then asked us to name some new things we've tried in the last two years as a parish. We noted: how much we've done with Zoom; how much more we checked in on people by phone and/or mailed them newsletters; let our friends know they could join our worship if they wanted (and they did and continue to do so); found new ways to give offering; moved our worship and creativity outside as we decorated a cross for

Lent, Holy Week and Easter so our neighbours could see it; put up a Christmas tree with mittens and gift cards on it so our neighbours could receive the good news of the season in practical and festive ways; continued our outreach with Christmas Hampers and gifts for the St. Matthew's Maryland Christmas store, and with offerings given away to various causes we wanted to support. All of those things were good... we have done a lot!

We were asked which of those we celebrate, which gave us joy! And to consider what we might want to try in the next year or so.

At every step, it seemed our minds were opened a bit... to options, to ideas, to possibilities. The day opened us, I would say, to new things to which God might be inviting us.

**God's faithfulness is not measured in how everything stays the same; it is evidenced in God's people living their lives the best they can.**

And yet, to be honest, as the day drew to a close, I also found myself wondering about the budget planning meeting that some of us will be involved in this week. What new things will God open us to as we ponder the vision of those numbers on a page?! (Your prayers are most welcome!)

A new week has begun, and after a couple of nights of sleep, I find myself thinking that it was a perfect time to take that Saturday to celebrate who we are as a parish, and what we did these past couple of years. Even as the world went crazy, we lived our values despite all the challenges, and we were reminded that God's people have been around for thousands of years; and in that time, there have been so many changes.

God's faithfulness is not measured in how everything stays the same; God's faithfulness is evidenced in God's people living their lives the best that they can; attending to visions that are given and trusting that God's love will surround us and accompany on whatever roads we travel.

I suspect that in the next while we as a parish may find ourselves in the midst of changes we weren't expecting, on roads we don't know all that well. But as we travel onward we will always be strengthened and surprised by grace turning up when we turn a corner and pointing us to where we need to go next.

And this Eve of All Saints' Day seems like a perfect time to note that we gather always as saints of God, children of God, forgiven and loved and surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, people who have travelled maybe not this road, but their own surprising roads on the way to God's own welcome.

Blessings to all of you and those you love... and blessings to our neighbours!

Val



### Christmas Eve Services

2:00 pm

~ Christmas Pageant and Eucharist  
with a Christmas tea afterwards ~

8:00 pm

Christmas Eve Eucharist

### Christmas Day Service

10:30 am

Quiet Communion

~ a quiet Christmas Day service with music ~

## Vestry Notes from October 11

(Note: The September meeting was postponed to October 11 due to a number of members being ill. Vestry will next meet on November 22.)

Thanks to all of you who helped with the **Garage Sale** this year: Cathy, the coordinator, as well as her group of volunteers. So much work was done, with quite a number of the usual volunteers not available because of sickness or life events. The final tally for the fall sale, combined with the 2022 spring sale, meant our goal was met for this year. Well done!

Our **financial picture** for the end of September is not too far off budget, but we are tracking the deficit budget that was set at the early part of this year. I know there have been informal conversations over the last number of weeks as parishioners consider what a possible resolution might be.

**Truth and Reconciliation:** Amanda sent a request to Vestry that the parish purchase and erect a Survivors' flag. Vestry was enthusiastic and will look into the particulars of this. Amanda underlined the importance of Reconciliation as more than one day for all Indigenous, Metis and Inuit peoples, noting how essential it is that the First Peoples of this land know that non-Indigenous people are committed to the learning needed. We will be considering how best to offer our commitment to reconciliation learning and action.

Our new office person, Yvonne is great to have with us. She is helpful and kind, and glad to offer assistance where she can. Feel free to call and say hello!

## All Saints' Day service

Our All Saints' Day service on Sunday, November 6 will include a time for remembering those who have gone before. People will be able to remember

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those they have lost, by lighting a candle and having their names brought to the front.