

News for Scattered Pews

October 3, 2021



Val's Voice

The photo below is from the corner of my backyard where I sit writing this afternoon. It is a gift to be able to be outside this time of year, in the shade, without having to wonder about a sweater or a rain

jacket. The picture looks lovely; afternoon light is great this time of year.

If you were able to zoom in on the shot, though, you would see a whole bunch of different things you can't see from afar.

Among the brightly coloured flowers there are dead flowerheads that are a little the worse for wear, and a rake that could be put away, as it won't likely be needed here for awhile. There is ribbon grass that has taken over where it really shouldn't be, bleeding hearts that have all but died (Do they always do that in fall?), and compost bins that will be replaced with a wooden structure for the same purpose (Will the mice get in – hope not!).

You get the idea. In our yard, as in life, there are all sorts of things that need tending.

In life, this fall, there truly are all sorts of things that need tending. Our provincial neighbours to the west are in the midst of yet another wave of the pandemic of 20-21. Many of our hearts are somewhat broken as we think of people we have lost, or lost touch with, perhaps even people we are now divided from, in the midst of pandemic angst. This week we also turn our thoughts to the lives and relationships damaged by residential schools on this land.

For many, these things pile up one on another. Provincial troubles combine with personal worries and we are not at our best. Health concerns appear. Adults worry about their parents, and their partners, their kids and how to pay the bills when things are unfolding with so much uncertainty. Kids worry as well... about friendships, and stress, and the future.

But in the midst of all that, there are spots of light.

People who let us know that we are heard. (Even when we don't say a word, they let us know that we are heard.) People who are able to complete tasks some days that we absolutely could not pull off – so that in turn, on another day, we too will return the favour for them.

These last weeks on Sundays we have been working our way through the book of James. *Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them... confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.*

For me, one thing these words do is acknowledge that we will all be in different places in life at the same time. Whether it is a day to celebrate or mourn, what is always important is an acknowledgment to me and to God both, that all the work that needs doing in this world, the whole lot of it together, is beyond just me. I will seek to chip away at the tasks that present themselves day by day.



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Together we can all aim for the good toward which God leads us, but for big picture wisdom to deal with the complexities that have been growing wild for generations, that is a time to seek God's strength and love, God's healing for the sins we commit against each other, and God's own creative spirit, which has made something out of nothing more than one time in this world.

These days are tough; the pandemic is everywhere, but, as one of our own young people said the other day, so is God. For all of us, there is hope, because God gives it. There is light, because God made it. There is time for restoration and reconciliation, because that is God's goal for all creation.

Val

Vestry Notes from September 28

Our meeting began with an acknowledgement of the land on which we meet and an expression from the members of what it means to us to be members of our Parish. We all expressed gratitude that it is a safe and welcoming community in which to live out our earthly journey.

Our **financial situation** (income and expenses) is on track for the time of year.

In-person services have restarted and are being held under provincial health guidelines and the directives from our Bishop. At the present time Zoom services and meetings are continuing. The schedules of Altar Guild, Greeters, Readers and Intercessors have been reactivated. Gradually, groups who choose to hold their meetings on our premises are returning and under Judy Asker's direction are being rescheduled. They too must follow provincial guidelines and the directives of their own organizations.

It was decided the **Thanksgiving offering** this year will be shared between parish funds and a specific Healing and Reconciliation objective (soon to be identified).

We are close to being **able to respond** to Archbishop Linda about 'Spirit Sparks', and to share our observations about 'Eucharist during COVID' with Bishop Geoff, as requested by these leaders.

1JustCity, the organization under which St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry functions, along with The West Broadway Community Ministry, The Oak Table and Just a Warm Sleep, is running a Faith Community Certificate Program. This is an **adult educational experience** linking faith and justice in Winnipeg's inner city (details and dates are available at www.1justcity.ca/letjusticeflow). Vestry agreed to provide financial assistance to a parishioner wishing to enrol in the program.

Church **calendars** are now available from the office.

At the end of our time together, we gave thanks to God whose power working in us does do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.



Fall Garage Sale

Our first pandemic Garage Sale took place October 1-2. About 350 shoppers came by over the two days, which is about half of the usual number. The total fundraising figure will be provided to Vestry at the next meeting, but no matter the amount, holding this sale was a great success for our neighbours and for our church community.

Thanks and blessings for Cathy Mondor's inspiring leadership and the support of many volunteers.

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

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