

Cathedral Connections

SUMMER 2021

*We are a Eucharistic faith community, inspired by the Gospel,
committed to engaging each person in the joy of living in the service of Christ.*

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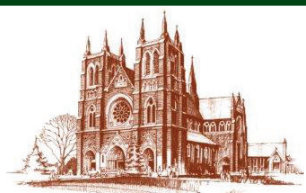
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The commitment of these dedicated volunteers has been an important feature of the re-opening of the Cathedral for Masses during the pandemic. Read about this significant new parish ministry on pages 6-8. Photo collage prepared by Cathryn Hall and Morris Lamont.



ST. PETER'S
CATHEDRAL BASILICA

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We Remember

"I am the resurrection and the life ... Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die." John 11, 25-26

Theresa Lillian Francis Diorio
December 18, 1934 – March 23, 2020

Anne Mary Hamilton
May 25, 1927 – March 30, 2020

Suzanne Marie Clifford
August 5, 1940 – April 9, 2020

Gail Stapleton
October 24, 1937 – April 11, 2020

Josephine Mary Sansone
February 18, 1918 – April 16, 2020

Luciano Tomasiteg
December 8, 1942 – April 18, 2020

Olinda Pistor
March 23, 1925 – May 2, 2020

Maria Concepcion Flores
January 19, 1957 – May 11, 2020

Aurea Stanny Dsouza
December 17, 1996 – May 18, 2020

Donald Galbruith Gray
April 23, 1966 – June 2, 2020

Andrea Jacoba Vossen
November 17, 1943 – June 4, 2020

Gerda Hilde Foti
April 25, 1932 – June 13, 2020

Elisabetta Pains
May 18, 1933 – July 16, 2020

Honorata Leoy Malicdem
April 30, 1941 – August 6, 2020

Ida Regio
March 3, 1920 – August 19, 2020

Mariela Smith
March 15, 1943 – September 8, 2020

Richard David Baker
October 22, 1963 – September 22, 2020

Vincenzo "Vince" Manganaro
June 1, 1954 – September 25, 2020

Edna Mottram
May 27, 1928 – October 4, 2020

Joan Willena La Count
August 19, 1931 – October 26, 2020

Lucille Grace Vita
July 24, 1925 – November 4, 2020

Norma Elsie Corcelli
May 19, 1920 – November 9, 2020

Eugene Francis McCaffrey
October 9, 1933 – November 11, 2020

Lawrence George Mellen
December 15, 1934 – November 16, 2020

Hugo Josef Karrasch
January 26, 1939 – December 27, 2020

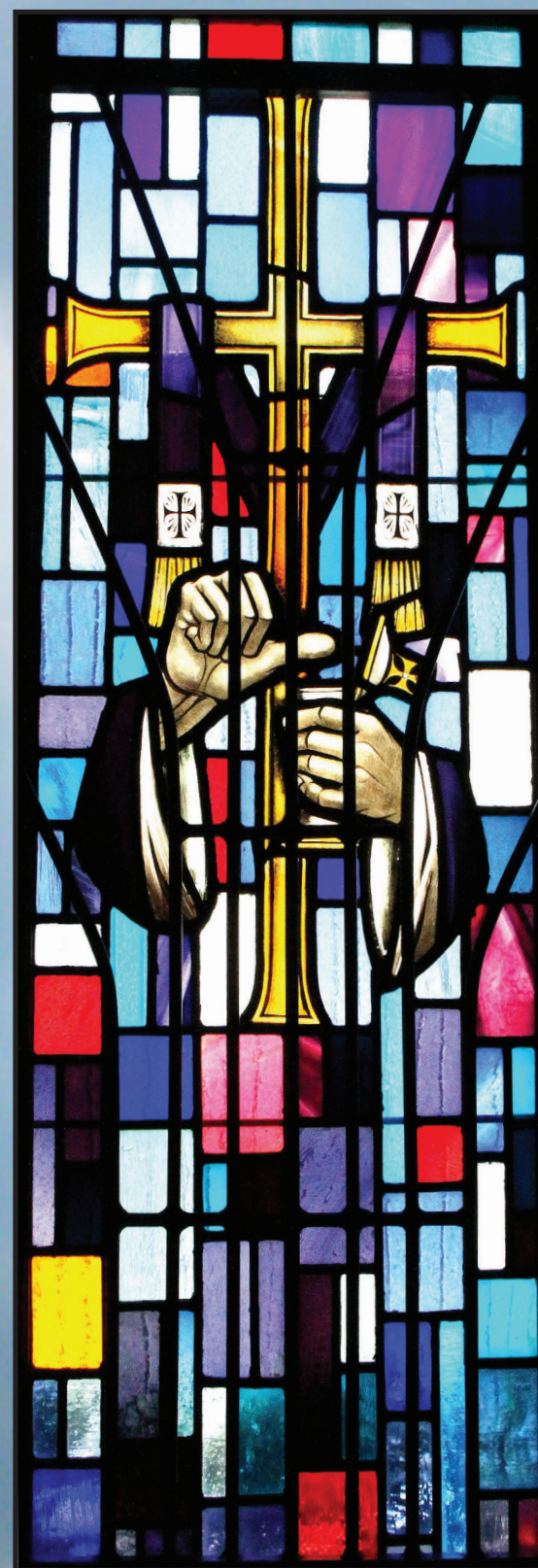
Norbert Patrao
March 2, 1944 – January 8, 2021

Virginia Marie Sloan
June 1, 1937 – January 19, 2021

Begona Tellaeche
December 30, 1927 – March 20, 2021

Mario Anthony Vella
May 27, 1971 – April 6, 2021

Teresita Rosario Torre Franca
October 3, 1941 -- May 6, 2021



ST. PETER'S CEMETERY & HOLY ROSARY WALKWAY

CEMETERY PRE-PLANNING *For the love of your family*

PRE-PLANNING IS NOT ABOUT DEATH -
It's a Celebration of your Life

PRE-PLANNING MAKES SENSE

- Takes the burden off your loved ones.
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HOLY ROSARY WALKWAY
St. Peter's Cemetery is pleased to announce the completion of its latest project which honours the wishes of Pope John Paul II that Catholics renew the practice of praying the Rosary.

The project has also provided for the cemetery needs of those who are more comfortable with the option of cremation and the many choices that this opens up to them.

**CATHOLIC
CEMETERIES
MINISTRY**

*Caring for the living and
faithful departed as we await
the resurrection of the dead.*

*Our knowledgeable staff would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience
or send you additional information concerning our many services.*

For further information please contact a Family Service Counsellor.

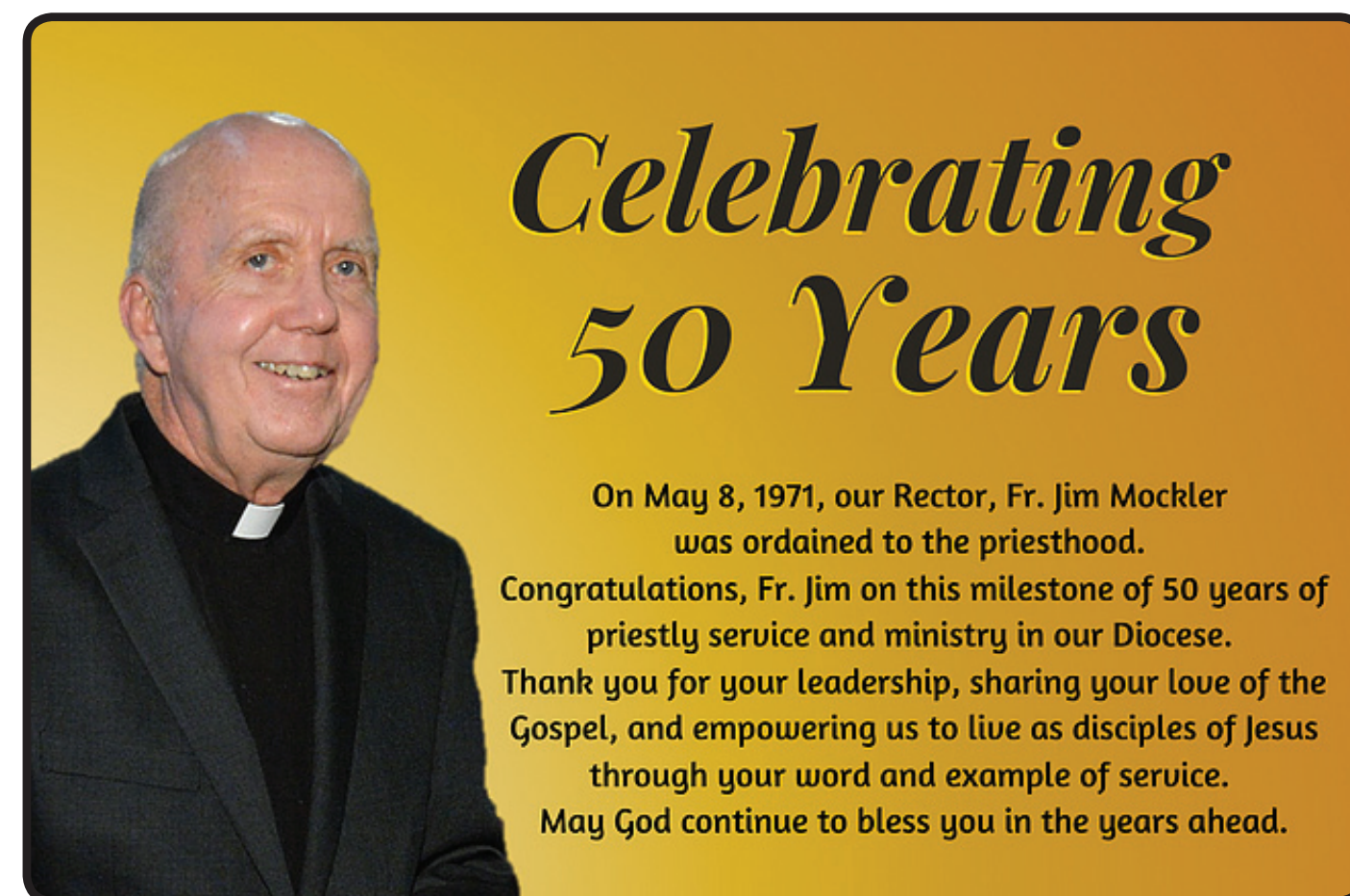
FOR INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
**ST. PETER'S CEMETERY AND
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WILL ASSIST IN ALL AREAS OF BEREAVEMENT, BE IT BURIAL,
CREMATION, PRE-NEED OR AT NEED SERVICES.

*John and Patrick Donohue,
Margaret Bloomfield, Martina McGrenere-Vanderidder,
Philippe Lauriault and Roberta MacNeil*
MEMBERS OF ST. PETER'S

362 Waterloo Street at King **519-434-2708**



Celebrating 50 Years

On May 8, 1971, our Rector, Fr. Jim Mockler
was ordained to the priesthood.
Congratulations, Fr. Jim on this milestone of 50 years of
priestly service and ministry in our Diocese.
Thank you for your leadership, sharing your love of the
Gospel, and empowering us to live as disciples of Jesus
through your word and example of service.
May God continue to bless you in the years ahead.

A TIME FOR PRAYER, RENEWAL, REFLECTION, TRANSFORMATION

It has been a long time since an
Issue of Cathedral Connections
appeared. Thank you to editor Paul
Carson and the committee members
not only for pulling this issue
together but also for their patient
understanding as we experienced
where the pandemic was taking us.

I also want to express my
gratitude to Fr. Peter Amszej, who
will be leaving us at the end of
June. I will have more to say in
the *Bulletin* next month. He has
been here only a year but I have
enjoyed getting to know him and
work with him. He has served
well in very difficult times and his
sense of humour, patience and
adaptability have been examples
to imitate. While taking part in
parish ministry, he has also offered
to be a parish connection with
students in our Catholic Schools
that operate online. Overhearing
him speak to the students and
listening to his homilies have
encouraged me to look at things
from a different perspective.

These days many are
wrestling with a lot of concerns.
We are regularly trying to figure it
all out. When will this end? What
will we go back to? What have I
lost? What have I gained during
these months?

In the midst of it all I have
heard countless stories of people
reaching out to be supportive,
keeping in contact with each
other. I have felt that support
myself. These days remain difficult
and still, at times, frightening but
if we all do our best to follow the
guidelines presented along with
getting vaccinated, we will move
to better days ahead.

I was sent the following quote:
"A happy person is not a person in
a certain set of circumstances, but
rather a person with a certain set
of attitudes."

We just concluded the season
of Easter. This enriching time
of prayer and reflection always
calls us to allow ourselves to be
renewed and transformed. The
only time that won't happen will
be when we don't want to.

The Resurrection of Jesus
tells us there is hope every new
day no matter what loss we may
experience or what causes things
to be different. As people of faith,
we travel together into the future
with confidence, knowing all will
be well.

Fr. Jim Mockler

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Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro C.S.B.

Bishop of London

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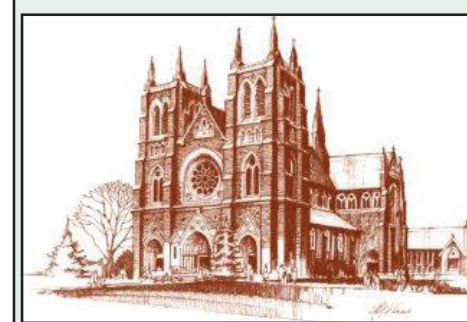
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St. Peter's appreciates your ongoing support

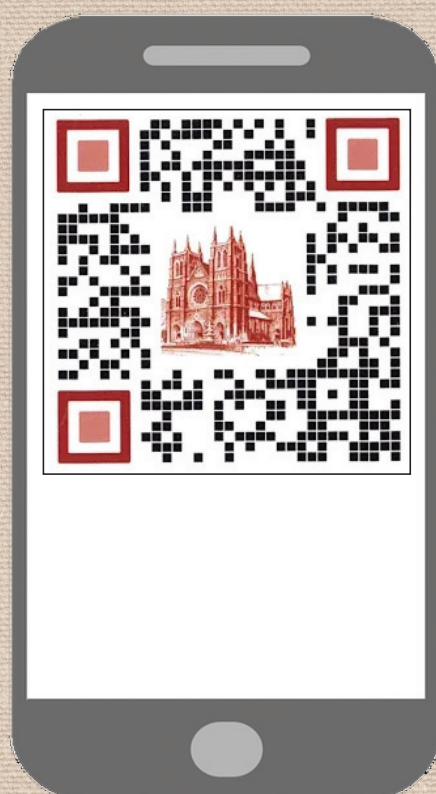
As a response to inquiries we have received about giving, we provide the following for your information:

Methods of Giving during the COVID-19 Crisis

1. Mail a cheque to the Cathedral Office
-- 533 Clarence St., London, ON, N6A 3N1
2. If you can access a Parish Bulletin (use the Mobile Giving ad below), scan or tap the QR Code to access our donation page -- you will be prompted through a number of screens on how to donate.
3. On the parish website, there is a "Donate" button on the top and bottom of the Home Page screen -- you can donate on-line.
4. When on the Donation Page, you can sign up for Preauthorized Debit Preauthorized Giving -- your offertory amount will come from your account automatically at the end of each month.
5. Also, on the parish website, there are QR code instructions in the "About" tab at the top of the Home Page -- just scan or tap the QR code that appears on your screen and follow the prompts.

St. Peter's
Cathedral

Mobile Giving
Now Available



1. Place your device in camera mode or open the QR Code Reader
2. Hold your device over the full QR Code.
3. Your camera will scan the QR Code.
4. Follow the prompts to donate.

FROM THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Welcome to the Summer 2021 issue of *Cathedral Connections*, almost 12 months later than originally intended and certainly different in content, reflecting the vastly different world in which all of us -- individually and collectively -- are living.

This is our second venture into digital publishing, one of the many adjustments the Cathedral parish has made and continues to make in the face of the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To our regular readers, some of the content will seem familiar, perhaps reassuringly so -- features such as "What are you Reading?"; news from significant parish organizations including the Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; thoughtful contributions from our Cathedral clergy; and yes, a re-appearance of Clarence, the Cathedral Mouse (sporting his new facemask!).

However, every submission has been affected by the reality of coping with the pandemic's effects on our accustomed lifestyles, and our new collective reality is best reflected in the special features, including:

- a different type of front-page picture, celebrating the dedication of the many volunteers who facilitated the successful partial re-opening of the Cathedral for Masses in full compliance with the various government regulations, plus an insightful article from our Pastoral Minister, Cathryn Hall, who organizes this important new ministry;
- reflections from a diverse group of parishioners on how they have "coped with Covid" and the significance of their connection with the Cathedral in meeting these challenges. My personal thanks to each contributor who responded to my editorial "arm-twisting" with an insightful article and (in most cases) favourite photo;
- a profile of our Receptionist/Secretary, Vianca Kmet -- the "voice on the phone" and unseen hand on the computer keyboard who's been the main contact between the parish office and our parishioners during the pandemic shutdown;
- a detailed report to the parish from the Finance Committee (also found elsewhere on the Cathedral website) that's somewhat more optimistic than many had expected;
- a "behind-the-scenes" look at our successful live streaming of Masses.

Had 2021 been a "normal year," this spring would have been marked by much greater details given to three anniversaries:

- the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of our Rector, Fr. James Mockler (see page 3);
- the 20th Anniversary of the publication (in April 2001) of a parish *Newsletter*, which began as a one-page, two-sided *Bulletin* insert, continued monthly in the same format in May and June, and then expanded into a quarterly tabloid in September with the main headline, "Introducing Our First Newspaper." Look for more in future issues.
- June 28 (the Vigil of the Solemnity of St. Peter and St. Paul) is the 136th Anniversary of the Dedication of St. Peter's Cathedral in 1885.

Each of these Anniversaries deserves more coverage, and for Fr. Mockler and the Cathedral, far more parish celebration than is possible at this time. But more appropriate conditions will surely come...

While we continue to cope as best we can, as individual people of faith and as a parish community, please stay safe, get vaccinated and enjoy reading this issue.

Paul Carson

A Call to Remembrance



Members from Indigenous communities and others gathered May 30 and placed children's shoes and other items at the steps of St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica. The shoes serve as a memorial, after the remains of 215 children were discovered at the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. "I felt something hit my heart, grieving you know. I could feel the pain of my people. I could feel the pain that they're experiencing knowing those children went missing and were never found until today," said Yeyatalunyuhe, one of the organizers of the memorial. Organizers hope the memorial will encourage passersby to stop, reflect and pray.



Our flag will fly at half-staff in memory of the 215 children at the Kamloops Residential School who never arrived home -- a tragedy that cannot be put into words and yet calls us to reflect on our collective responsibility to action.

Rev. James Mockler,
Rector,
St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica



DIOCESE OF
LONDON

I am shocked and profoundly saddened by the horrifying discovery of the remains of at least 215 children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc First Nation.

When the operation of residential schools was delegated by the federal government to several Christian faith-based groups, there were many failures in fulfilling Christ's mission of bringing the good news of the kingdom of God and helping the oppressed, including failures of the Catholic Church.

The presence of the graves of these innocent ones sheds light on a clear failure of those responsible in not embracing the Gospel values of love, mercy, justice and compassion, and for forgetting their commitment to respect the dignity of all people. These lost innocent ones are another reason why we must continue to learn from these failings and work with Indigenous communities towards the healing called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Yesterday, a memorial was placed at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica in London as part of a nation-wide commemoration of the lost children. I visited the memorial today to pray, asking God to bring comfort to the families of the deceased and all survivors of the residential school system. We will continue to pray for the families of these children and survivors and commit ourselves to playing a constructive role in the journey towards healing and reconciliation.

+ Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB
Bishop of London - May 31, 2021

Mi'Kmaq Prayer

Creator, open our hearts
to peace and healing between all
people.

Creator, open our hearts
to provide and protect for all children
of the earth.

Creator, open our hearts
to respect for the earth,
and all the gifts of the earth.

Creator, open our hearts
to end exclusion, violence,
and fear among all.

Thank you for the gifts of this day.



CONFÉRENCE DES ÉVÊQUES CATHOLIQUES DU CANADA
CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Statement from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
following the recent discovery
at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School
on the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc First Nation

On behalf of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), I express our deepest sorrow for the heartrending loss of the children at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School on the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc First Nation.

The news of the recent discovery is shocking. It rekindles trauma in numerous communities across this land. Honouring the dignity of the lost little ones demands that the truth be brought to light.

This tragedy profoundly impacts Indigenous communities, with whom many people across this land and throughout the world now stand in solidarity.

As we see ever more clearly the pain and suffering of the past, the Bishops of Canada pledge to continue walking side by side with Indigenous Peoples in the present, seeking greater healing and reconciliation for the future.

We lift up prayers to the Lord for the children who have lost their lives and pledge our close accompaniment of Indigenous families and communities.

May our Creator God bless all of us with consolation and hope.

Richard Gagnon

+ Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg and
President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops

31 May 2021

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) is the national assembly of the Bishops of Canada. It was founded in 1943 and officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948.

Celebrating our re-opening Volunteers

In the first week of June 2020, when the government announced that places of worship would once again be allowed to open our doors, the task placed before the Pastoral Team was: how do we execute all of the safety protocols that needed to be in place to safely re-open our churches? The only answer was: volunteers.

When I put the first advertisement for volunteers for re-opening the church in the *Bulletin* in mid-June, I was not sure who, if any, would answer my call. Within just a few days, the emails and phone calls began to arrive, and arrive, and arrive. I was overwhelmed with the response. Some of the names I recognized; many others I did not.

During the final week of June, I held eight Volunteer Meetings (at that time gathering sizes were limited to 10) to talk through all of the extensive protocols that needed to be in place: welcoming, pre-screening, and registering of our parishioners, seating of parishioners, directing of traffic flow in and out of the Cathedral and at communion, and sanitizing of the Cathedral after every mass. Then I showed the volunteers the church set-up and answered any questions.

Prior to this, much planning went into readying the church with the distancing markings on the floor and pews, roping off pews that could not be used, putting up all of the necessary signage, and ensuring all of the sanitizing materials and other safety equipment were available. This task was undertaken by some of our Administrative staff -- Brian Galea, Peter Greff and Fatima Silva. On the weekend of June 27/28, with 15 volunteers

for each Mass, we opened our doors for the first time in three-and-a-half months.

Since the re-opening, we have celebrated in-person a total of 150 weekend and weekday Masses, 40 baptisms, 4 First Communion celebrations, 10 weddings, 12 funerals, as well as 3 Diocesan celebrations. Each and every time we opened our doors, no matter the size of the group attending, we needed anywhere from 2-15 volunteers present to carry out the various health and safety protocols. As time went on, more volunteers came forward, often the current volunteers recruiting other volunteers; some volunteers had to step away for work and health reasons. When we resumed the celebration of other sacraments in the Fall, anytime an "ask" for assistance went out, the volunteers quickly heeded the call. When we moved from three to four weekend masses and added daily Mass, the volunteer pool continued to grow. When various protocols changed -- our new reservation system, government and Diocesan protocols updated -- the volunteers stepped up quickly to adapt to any changes necessary.

Now almost a year later, with two "interruptions" with the lockdown after Christmas and the Stay-at-Home order a few weeks after Easter, our Re-Opening Team includes many singles, couples, entire families, with ages spanning from 5 to 80+! The experience over this last year has had its ups and downs, joys and challenges, but who better to describe their experiences than the volunteers themselves.

Cathryn Hall, Pastoral Minister

I volunteered for the Masses as I have always been a volunteer not only at the Church but where I worked. Volunteering is one way, especially when you start attending Mass at a new or different Church, to meet the attendees or new parishioners. I enjoyed the greeter's job most because I got to know so many people.

Norene Culp



For me it is getting the best of both worlds -- being part of the church community and serving God.

Nazreen Scheid

It was Sarah's (a teenager!) idea initially to volunteer at the church and it turned out to be such a wonderful experience we didn't realize we needed! We were so happy that as a family we could offer our help to keep the church safe and clean, while at the same time meeting and getting to know members of the parish. We now plan to always try to help and continue to be active members in this wonderful parish community. I would recommend volunteering to anyone who is able!

The Power Family



David enrolled us both as volunteers, although I was okay nurturing my spirituality safely at home. I was glad he did, because I very soon realized that many hands were needed to make things work safely and smoothly, so it was nice to be able to help out, but also it was lovely to be among people, after being isolated for so long, and to worship in our Cathedral building again. Of course, Masses were not the same -- everyone was separated and there was no choir -- but as volunteers, we did get to greet and speak to many in the community every week. Before the pandemic, we sang in the choir and thus generally just spent time with choir members. Since one of the tasks you gave us during the pandemic Masses was to check people in as they entered, it was nice to get to know names and to get acquainted with the diversity of people who come to Mass at the cathedral. We were also very impressed with the awesome team of volunteers.

Crystal & David Sharp



Celebrating our re-opening Volunteers



You're never too young to volunteer...

For me, I'd like to share few of my favourite verses guiding me as I volunteer especially these days. A little act of kindness can go a long way:

Romans 12:13 "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practise hospitality."

Galatians 6:9-10 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

1 Peter 3:8 "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble."

The act of gift-giving, whether it'll be one's time, talent or treasure in the humble service of God through His Church.

a volunteer who wishes to remain anonymous

"Volunteering means helping to make sure we can celebrate together as a community. I have met so many wonderful volunteers and made new connections with parishioners. I volunteer to be more connected to my faith and our parish family. Personally, volunteering is helping me to understand what it means to be a disciple. Plus it's fun!

Sheila Craig



I am so thankful to be able to be part of the volunteer team and help usher at any Mass or service at the cathedral during this pandemic and give back to our parishioners. I do this in return for the support I have received from St. Peter's since converting and joining the parish through the RCIA program in 2013. I always felt that to be part of the parish I need to be involved and participate however I could.

When the opportunity to help parishioners return to the Cathedral and enjoy Mass by being a volunteer, I signed up and have enjoyed greeting everyone that arrives and waits in the rain, sleet, snow or sun in the plaza, or when showing them to a pew when inside. I look forward to when I can be back to ushering or greeting as soon as we can!

Dave Houghton



We decided to volunteer because we wanted to get to know more parishioners and that has been a nice reward. We've really gotten to know our fellow volunteers and the "regulars" at Sunday morning Mass. Volunteering was also an incentive to attend Mass, rather than relying on live streaming. And ... you do get "reserved" seats. Can't think of any challenges -- most people were very amenable and happy to be there. We got lots of "thank you's" each week!

Jack & Dorothy Palmer



"The reason I volunteered was to first help the church open during these times but also to ensure the safety of my church family that wanted to attend. When I saw your request for volunteers, I had no hesitation; I just knew that was where I was supposed to be!"



Sherry Bedard

The more that we are facing challenges with the risk due to this pandemic, the more that we find meaning and purpose as volunteers at 10:30am Sunday mass. Serving God and His church in our own little way is the expression of our faith that bonds and nourishes us body and soul. Where else we can spend best of our weekend but in the beautiful Sunday Mass celebration at St. Peter's Cathedral.

The Balana Family



I just really felt happy being part of the team and attending!

Vanana Nages

Celebrating our re-opening Volunteers

First of all, I volunteered because I had the time and I knew St. Peter's had the need. Secondly, I am fully aware of how vulnerable our parishioners are feeling at this Covid time! I felt I could empathize with people because I, too, have felt vulnerable. A smile and a kind word as people enter the Cathedral is just so critical particularly at this time.

I find most people understand the restrictions but sometimes the rare person may feel free to express their frustrations. I am okay with that because to me that presents a challenge. An extra kind word or some expression like: "I know how frustrating this is but let's pray we get these vaccines and get this Covid behind us."

I am so happy to be able to attend Mass when we can that I will do anything to make that happen! I have enjoyed working with my fellow volunteers and I appreciate how wonderful it is to have gotten to know them in a way that may not have happened prior to Covid. I think we have developed our own little bond and I am thankful for that!



Lastly, I would just like to say on behalf of my husband and myself that we consider it a great privilege to serve!

Janet & Lawrence Jardine

I have attended St. Peter's Cathedral for over 30 years and been involved and volunteered in many committees and ministries. The greatest reward in this experience is getting to know both the volunteers and parishioners. In a large parish, you see and recognize a lot of people but often don't know their names. Now I do! Being able to greet people by name adds to the hospitality and welcoming we strive for as a community.

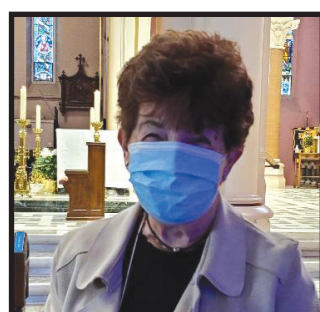


Michael Wojtak

I was sooo elated when you sent out the request for volunteers because I was feeling a loss of my focus for prayer and I was missing my cathedral "family." I was so happy to volunteer because for me it is a "prayer," offering my commitment to God to provide service for Him and my church Family. I have been humbled by the response to our volunteering ... that our efforts are appreciated by so many. The joys are the "thanks" given when I register folks for Mass ... I want to hug them but that is TABOOOOO. My volunteering shifts are the highlight of my day. I have met some amazing fellow volunteers who are so dedicated to doing our best for every Mass to ensure that every one is safe!!

I thank you for your support, encouragement and appreciation.

Rose Marie Forbes



Volunteers in Action



Recognizing the volunteers pictured on our front cover:

1st row: Dave Houghton, Jean Martial, Terrence Yiu, Bruno Cuccarolo, Carolyn Martinelli, Gina Welch.
2nd row: John Balana, Ian Balana, Abigail Balana, Agnes Balana, Rolly Balana. Crystal Sharp, David Sharp, Charline Thomas.
3rd row: Alexis Bedard, Sherry Bedard, Helen Malheiro, Grace Malheiro, Noah Malheiro, Joe Malheiro, Joe Borst, John Roche.
4th row: Julie Sans, Lisa Taylor, Catherine Caldwell, Michael Wojtak, Michaelanne del Negro, Dorothy Palmer, Janet Jardine, Lawrence Jardine.
5th row: Nazrene Scheid, Norene Culp, Odilia Gouveia, Olivia Celle, Laura Power, Sarah Power, Liz Power, Peter Power.
6th row: Pamela Trainor-Brooks, Peter Cuddy, Raul Satierra, Rose Marie Forbes, Rosel Rotega, Sheila Craig, Vanan Nages, Susan Howard.
7th row: Carla Alazzam, Joelle Alazzam, Bashar Alazzam, Jack Palmer, Shelley Baker, Jeniffer Sacay.

You are our "front line and essential workers" and none of our celebrations -- big or small -- could have taken place without each and every one of you. Your call to serve the People of God of our parish community has been an extraordinary sign of your love and commitment to the faith.

Thank you!

FR. PETER AMSZEJ -- SOME POST-PANDEMIC VISIONING

Greetings to all Cathedral Connections readers!

I was asked to share a few reflections on my time here at the Cathedral since last September. Well, let me summarize by saying the pandemic was really good at making things challenging and frustrating. Anybody out there relate with that? I think all of us have had our routines and familiar ways of doing things upended over the last year. But, the change in how we live out our parish ministry has given us time to reflect on how and why we do things, and also on what might be waiting for us in the near future as things return to something more closely resembling what we might consider as "normal."



Fr. Peter Amszej
"Don't listen to this guy..."

Ideally, I would share with you some brilliant reflections of my own but, as I have learned over fifty years of life: "What the heck do I know anyway?" I steal most of my good ideas and then try to pass them off as my own. So, in the sake of honesty, let me share with you my source for these reflections in that credit may be given where it is due. Over the last few years, I've really come to enjoy listening to the podcasts and reading the e-mails of a Christian pastor from the Barrie area by the name of Carey Nieuwhof. He does a lot of interviews with people in the Christian ministry world and shares a lot of leadership wisdom from their experience and from his own personal experience. Go and look him up on the Internet and don't just take my word for it.

Recently, Nieuwhof wrote a short list of four characteristics that he thought would distinguish churches that would thrive in the post-pandemic world versus those that won't. What he says rings true to me and I offer it to you (resisting the temptation to steal his good ideas as my own) for reflection:

1) Thriving churches will embrace a hybrid model of physical and online ministry.

Let's face it: the pandemic has forced many churches (our Cathedral included) to start doing things like live-streaming some of their services. But, moving forward, it won't be enough to see online ministry as merely a necessary evil or as a lesser alternative to "real ministry." As Nieuwhof often says, everyone we're trying to reach is already online to some extent (much more so with younger people to whom we seriously need to start reaching out) and is living some kind of hybrid of digital and physical lives. Just reflect on your own experience to see if this is true or not. Good God, even I started an Instagram account a couple of months ago to make myself just a little less behind in social media than I usually am.

We need to see and embrace the opportunities that are out there -- if you want to see a Catholic who is doing this well, just look up anything that Bishop Robert Barron of Los Angeles is up to these days. As Nieuwhof says, "It's not 1987 anymore, so why act like it in your church?"

2) Thriving churches will focus more on "moving people forward" rather than just "bringing people back."

This can be a tough one for us as priests and pastoral teams and parishes to embrace. There can be a dangerous tendency after the pandemic eases to try to restore or recreate "what once was."

We might find ourselves pining for the attendance numbers that we used to have, the same style of social events we used to hold, the same programs and routines with which we were familiar and comfortable with. But, as Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John, "The truth will set you free." And the truth is that things will probably not return to the "normal" that we once knew -- not in our work patterns,

in our schools, in our purchasing and travel habits, and probably not in our church lives, either.

If we spend all of our energy in trying to recapture what once was, we'll be playing a losing game. But, as Nieuwhof says, we still need to focus on "moving people forward" in their relationships with God in what will become (sorry to use the oft-repeated phrase!) "the new normal."



Rev. Carey Nieuwhof
"...Listen to this guy instead!"

3) Thriving churches will be those that embrace rather than judge those that they are trying to reach.

Even before the pandemic, who of us wasn't guilty at least some of the time of judging those who weren't joining us at Mass on a regular basis -- whether it was family members, friends, neighbours, those we find on the Cathedral grounds or just the generic crowd "out there"?

Let's face it: sometimes the stereotype of "judgmental Christians" that is so prevalent in our culture has in fact been well-earned. I think one way we turn that around is to change the question we ask about those not joining us. Often, we might direct our questions at them: "Why are you not coming on Sundays? What possible good excuse could you have for missing Mass?" But, maybe we should start asking ourselves: "Why on earth would they want to come? What possible good reason would they have to start coming after they've been away for a long time (or never came in the first place)?"

Once we get answers to those questions, we could get to work on making those reasons a reality. After the pandemic restrictions begin to lift, we'll have plenty of opportunities to show love rather than judgment towards those who aren't rushing to join us right away.

4) Thriving churches will be those that are Gospel-driven, not ideologically-driven.

We all know that our Church exists in a highly angry and polarized culture. Just turn on any TV news/talk show or venture into any chat room on the Internet to see how true that is. There is always a danger that churches might latch on to an unhealthy polarization in their approaches, as well. I think we've all encountered churches that seemed to be more focused on politics, ideological issues or on particular personalities than on the Gospel.

Of course, those polarized approaches will draw some devoted adherents (who will applaud when you insult those on "the other side" with whom they're at war). But, as Nieuwhof points out, our culture needs an alternative to itself, not an echo of itself. The Church has the delicate mission of fostering Gospel, hope-filled unity in the midst of deep cultural, ideological and political divisions. And it has always had that mission -- if you don't think so, take time to read the Acts of the Apostles to see what the early Church faced.

So, there you have it. If you disagree with any of those reflections on post-pandemic churches, don't blame me, blame Carey Nieuwhof! That's the wonderful thing about using other people's ideas -- you can always pass on the blame to them along with the credit.

If you've got your own ideas of what churches will need to do to thrive in the near post-pandemic future, I'd love to hear them -- preferably over a coffee or beer. But, that will have to wait until we're safely able to do so -- preferably sooner than later, Lord!

Fr. Peter Amszej

LIVE STREAMING MASSES -- OUR NEWEST PARISH MINISTRY

Live streaming of Masses, other liturgies and prayer services may be seen as the newest parish ministry at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica, but it's not entirely a product of the pandemic response.

"The decision to move into live streaming was made after the first pandemic shutdown in March 2020," says business manager Brian Galea. "We had recognized the need to embrace the technology so our parishioners would be able to 'touch base' with their parish in this way, and the realities of the pandemic have made this project a new and important ongoing parish ministry. This allows shut-ins and the many others who cannot attend Mass during the pandemic to maintain contact with the parish in a very important and meaningful way, either via the Cathedral web site or on YouTube."

Live streaming was already available at some other Catholic parishes in London and the first postings of Cathedral liturgies – the Easter Triduum in April 2020 – were produced by diocesan staff using their own staff and equipment.

Several months later, after completing the repairs to the silver bell tower and the masonry adjacent to the St. Joseph's altar, the parish had the funds: a combination of the revised budget plus some donations and bequests. "We consulted with parishes such as St. George's and Holy Family that already had live streaming, did the research and decided to make a serious investment – about \$16,000 – in an excellent new camera and control board," explains Galea.

The new camera is mounted beneath the choir loft, directly under the organ, and the operator sits in the choir loft, a safe distance from the organist. "The Pastoral Team decided on our format: focusing on the presider's chair, the main altar,

the ambo (for reading of scripture and the homilies) and the large statue of St. Peter (during Communion)," Galea says. "We decided to use slow pans with the camera instead of quick cuts and follow the priest in the sanctuary so viewers would have an experience somewhat like sitting in about the fifth pew."

The control panel is easy to operate and the live streaming makes use of the Cathedral's excellent existing sound system.

The installers, says Galea, were very familiar with the Catholic Mass and with what the parish needed. Five parishioners have been trained as volunteer videographers.

On average, about 80 people watch the Saturday evening Mass "live" and an additional 300 log in during the following week. Live streaming the Wednesday noon Mass usually attracts 80 viewers on a weekly basis. The Prayer Services have attracted between 40 and 315 followers; the Masses of Ash Wednesday and the Easter Triduum each attracted more than 600 viewers.

"We chose to live stream the Saturday 5pm Mass during the same weekend it is celebrated so people don't have to change their Mass habits or watch it several days later," Galea explains. "It's convenient and consistent."



The live stream camera



The camera operator in the choir loft

Paul Carson

How to Access our Live Stream Liturgies

Mass: Saturday 5pm & Wednesday 12noon

Website via computer or smartphone: cathedral.dol.ca

Click on the Live Stream link in the upper right area of the home page
Click on the liturgy you wish to view

Log onto YouTube.com - In the search box, type: St. Peter's Cathedral London Ontario

Then search for the liturgy you wish to view
OR go to the Playlist* tab > Livestreamed Mass Celebrations

*Playlists of pre-recorded virtual services such as the Sunday Prayer Service and Stations of the Cross are also available here.



YouTube via television access, if available

Use voice command: St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica London Ontario [date of event] on YouTube
Click on the liturgy you wish to view.

PLEASE NOTE: Access via voice instructions is available only on Rogers Ignite. Subscribers to Rogers original, Bell satellite and Bell Fibe must have a "smart tv" and use the search function.



REMINDER: Whether you access the Cathedral page on YouTube via the Cathedral website or directly to YouTube, you'll see a "Subscribe" link. By activating this link, you become a Cathedral Subscriber. Click on the bell icon to receive notifications of every event posted on the site plus reminders of the posting ... **and it's FREE!!**

PROPERTY & MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Property and Maintenance Committee is happy to report the completion of a number of projects over the last year. Some of these projects had been planned over the last couple of years; however, further research, obtaining quotes and timing caused a few delays.

The Fleche (Silver Bell Tower) project was one of these projects that was delayed. Most of the issue involved using a crane, scaffolding or an articulating crane. We opted for the articulating crane but that was not possible as renting it would have caused a 2-3 year delay. Fortunately, a straight crane with a cage (enclosed platform for two men) was allowed so we could complete the work (see photo at right). The project was finished last September in a two-week period involving scraping, wood work, painting, caulking and some metal work. And happily, the work has sealed the tower from water leaking into the Cathedral.

Repairing the leaks above the St. Joseph's Altar has taken some time to correct. The cause was misdiagnosed over the past seven years as either a copper issue or a seal issue. It turned out that the masonry was to blame. One of the decorative towers and cap had to be taken down and rebuilt. The use of a modern sealer will help slow deterioration in the future. Re-painting will still have to be done in that area, with completion likely in the Fall.

Our church bells went silent last September -- a number of notes were missing when playing the Westminster Chimes and the Angelus. It was painfully obvious to anyone hearing the bells that there was something seriously wrong. We accepted a quote from Verdin Organ Company located in Woodstock; the work was to be completed in late December, possibly even for Christmas Eve. Unfortunately, Covid reared its ugly head once more and our contractor and his assistant had to leave the job for a few weeks. This pushed the date into January when we were experiencing the second lockdown and work could not be started.

In mid-February the contractor and an electrician were able to start replacing the strikers that hit the bells, the controller, wiring leading from the sacristy to the bell tower and the large electrical box in the tower. This was a challenging project especially in the dead of winter but the sounds of those bells ringing again after five months was music to every parishioner's ears when they came for Mass.

Our live streaming equipment was not ordered until the



The Cathedral bells are ringing again!



first three project costs were known or had been paid for. You can read more about the live streaming project on page 10.

We have been continuing the Organ Project, and unfortunately, new issues are being addressed. As you may recall, we were replacing the leather pouches but we also must replace a motor on the fan and the bellows of the organ. Unfortunately, the lockdowns have delayed the work but we are hoping the project will resume at the end of this third lockdown.

Last, but not least, there is a water leak in the Organ Loft that needs to be addressed. Fortunately, Peter Greff, our custodian, noticed it when he could hear a noise from the loft that he could not identify. It was a water leak from the roof that is just missing our new live streaming equipment by inches. We are currently gathering quotes to address the issue, but given the height of the Cathedral, it will not be an inexpensive fix.

We would like to thank all of the parishioners who give generously to the restoration of the Cathedral and those who remember us in their estate planning. The forethought of both of these groups has enabled us to complete some of these projects and feel confident in addressing others. Thank you for your generosity especially during these challenging times of Covid-19.

Brian Galea



Water damage in the Organ Loft

Coping with the Pandemic

St. Peter's parishioners reflect on the past year

Pause, change and adjust

Over the past fourteen months, our day-to-day experiences have changed. The pandemic has forced us to pause and adjust our lives. We never realized how much we would miss attending school! Doing online learning is not the same as being in person. We have missed the face-to-face interactions with our friends, playing on sports' teams and being a part of school clubs.

Although we have not been able to participate in many of our routines, we have found some new opportunities to keep us engaged in the community (such as volunteering with the London Food Bank and the London Public Library) and our parish at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica.

Prior to the pandemic, we were altar servers weekly at the Sunday 8:30 morning Mass. When the churches were closed, we were no longer able to attend Mass at the Cathedral, which meant we could no longer serve in this ministry. Having Mass online kept us connected to our faith and helped us continue building our relationship with God. With the arrival of summer, churches reopened and we were able to find new opportunities to be involved in parish life. We started volunteering at Mass each week and plan to continue to do so after this most recent shutdown. We have met wonderful people by volunteering. Many of the parishioners have expressed their gratitude in being able to attend Mass. We feel fortunate to have helped out in this small way.

Experiencing the pandemic has made us shift our ways of doing things. This change has made us grow and maintain hope that God is always with us.



Grace & Noah Malheiro

What happened to the singing?

A little bit of history: Who knew what effect Covid would have on all of us! At Western's Don Wright Faculty of Music (DWFOM), where I also teach, all music making was abruptly shut down at 10:30 a.m. Friday, March 13, 2020. Meanwhile, the Cathedral was still open and our Cathedral Singers scheduled to sing. On Saturday, I emailed Father Jim with my concerns, as things were escalating. He kindly told me to make the decision that I felt comfortable with, so I notified the choir that we would not be singing on Sunday. Two hours later the Bishop closed the churches. I breathed a sigh of relief for my choir members, whom I did not want to put at risk.

What happened next: With churches closed, we were all making huge adjustments to our prayer life. The internet was suddenly exploding with new spiritual media. Singing was deemed dangerous as Covid deaths had occurred after a choir rehearsal in the States. Research in the musical community was in full swing, analyzing the effects of singing droplets. Eventually singing was possible only with masks, face shields, plexiglass barriers, high ventilation (preferably outside) and a huge distance between singers (measures established at DWFOM).

New adaptations: With church choirs being silenced at the most sacred season, we were still in shock, and the realization that this would last more than a few months began to sink in. Periodically, I connected with the Cathedral Singers, sending ecards and reflective music. Subsequently, new technology evolved with sophisticated software to create virtual choirs. The time and expertise involved in this technology was beyond me and the cost to have someone else do it not affordable. The Cathedral Singers include teachers, a principal, front line workers, a doctor, nurse, students and retirees. I realized that they would be busy organizing their own families and situations, so zoom rehearsals and virtual recordings were not an option. I know that when we return, we will be up and running in no time.

Our Situation: When online services were organized by our Cathedral, I was asked to provide music for the videos, expertly compiled by Morris Lamont. This new venture gave me the opportunity to learn new technology with Garageband, where I recorded both the singing and the instrumental accompaniments. Eventually, we were able to have singing for some in-person Masses and I am most grateful to our dedicated musicians for their bravery and fortitude. The words, "this soon will pass" come to mind, as we live one day at a time.

The future: With a renewed appreciation for the gift of music, I look forward to the day when we can raise the roof with our singing in our magnificent Cathedral.

Gloria Gassi,
Director of Liturgical Music

Living in the coronavirus pandemic

When the Coronavirus Pandemic started, it shockingly changed our lives. As we look in the past, we see that we threw celebrations and gathered together as a community without wearing masks and social distancing, and now it has all changed. When we look around, we see that our everyday lives are different, like going to a store, attending Sunday Mass, and even keeping in contact with our friends and loved ones.

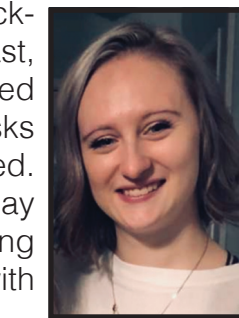
My experience as a post-secondary student has changed a lot since the pandemic. Throughout my three semesters, I gathered in a class face-to-face with the professor, making my education easier. In my fourth semester, which was my very last before graduation, I attended classes differently. From the effects of the pandemic, I had to attend classes virtually by participating in virtual lessons as well as working in online groups on different projects and assignments. While completing my last semester virtually, I always reminded myself that no matter how classes and assignments were organized, I could keep up with my projects and study for tests and complete them on time.

Throughout the months of this pandemic, I have heard from a lot of people about their ways of coping throughout this difficult time. I have coped by using online sources for staying in touch with friends and family, and also by doing one of my favourite hobbies, like shopping. Also, I have coped by delving into colouring number books, doing wordsearches, riding my bike and bird-watching to help me manage stress and anxiety.

Most of the time, I have been praying different prayers every day: prayers for the pandemic, St Michael the Archangel prayers and different novenas, but most importantly, the holy rosary. Also, thinking and staying positive has helped me throughout this difficult time -- knowing that God is always with me to help and protect me.

My involvement with the Cathedral during the pandemic has had a strong impact -- not seeing a lot of people at Mass on Sundays due to having a maximum capacity, as well as being socially distanced and not being able to sit with all our brothers and sisters as a group. Even having different rules to follow. Also, not being able to attend our events and get-togethers has been an impact because of isolation.

By keeping up my faith and prayers, I always know that I am not alone and this applies to everybody around me as well. No matter where you are and what you're doing, you are not alone. God is always with us throughout difficult times and sufferings. You are all in my thoughts and prayers. With the help and grace of God, our Dear Saviour Jesus Christ, and Our Holy Blessed Mother, we can stop the spread of COVID-19. May God bless you all and protect you all.



Jordynn Fraser

Coping with the Pandemic

St. Peter's parishioners reflect on the past year

Routine, space and technology help us to cope

Does familiarity breed contempt? Does absence make the heart grow fonder? While these questions are clichés, the pandemic forced us to answer them as a couple and as parishioners at St. Peter's. Like everyone else, societal shutdown in March 2020 brought changes to our work life and our relationship. Business hours no longer kept us apart -- we were now together 24/7. This could've created a lot of stress in our relationship, but it didn't.

The key: routine and keeping separate workspaces. While working from home made the commute easy, we still kept our daily morning routine. We wake up at the same time, have breakfast and start work at our scheduled time. In addition, we established separate work areas, giving us the necessary space to feel we weren't tripping over each other. When it was time to start work, we trotted off to our "home cubicles" and would meet later for our lunchtime walk. We were blessed that our day-to-day routines didn't change and the only difference was our workspace.

On the other hand, the government's decision to close churches forced us, as with others, to find ways to stay connected to our faith. Last year, we scrambled to find services for the Easter Triduum, which we watched live. Moving forward, as the pandemic raged on and the closure of churches continued, we watched Mass on YouTube and continued to read scripture on our smartphones.

However, it was refreshing to return to Mass at the Cathedral when churches reopened for a brief time. Although restrictions were in place, it felt good to be in the Lord's house with fellow parishioners. We were reminded of the importance of worshiping as part of a community and participating in the Eucharist. Although we're now back to online Mass for the time being, hopefully the province will soon reopen, allowing us to return to the Cathedral without any social distancing, disinfecting or attendance restrictions.

This past year has answered two important questions: does familiarity breed contempt and does absence make the heart grow fonder? While the pandemic has forced temporary changes, we've taken one day at a time and we've used routine, space and technology to help us cope physically and spiritually.

Tracey McDonald & Gerry Rucchin



A Nurse's Perspective

My family and I have been parishioners at the Cathedral for many years. During this time, we have become involved in various ministries and I continue to help with ushering, schedule permitting!

Alex and I got engaged on June 8th, 2019. After sharing the news with our families, Alex and I began to plan for the wedding. However, with the arrival of Covid-19 it became evident that we were not going to be able to celebrate our wedding. And so, we had to re-focus and in June 2020, we made the difficult decision to postpone. Not only was it difficult coming to this decision, but as a healthcare worker, I was also quickly becoming tired and stressed out. Having the wedding to look forward to had been a light at the end of the tunnel, but now that tunnel was even longer.

As we enter the summer of 2021, we are hopeful but still nervous for our new date at the end of this year. The vaccine has provided hope but we remain cautious as we re-plan our wedding -- we have a few contingency plans at the ready.

Unfortunately, in April 2021, I started experiencing sudden, terrible abdominal pain that required surgery to have my gall bladder removed. As a nurse, I was not keen to be admitted to hospital but there was no other choice. This meant I was awaiting surgery and not able to see my family before the operation. I am grateful that I was able to have the surgery when I did, as only days later the province shut down many surgeries to assist with the influx of Covid-19 patients and the need to re-deploy hospital staff.

Thankfully I have a very supportive family, and recovery at home during the stay-at-home order was not so bad. As I return to work, I am nervous because I understand the challenges we face at work. As a nurse, returning to work with restrictions can be tough because you do not want to put additional stress on colleagues during an already tough time.

In a weird way, this pandemic may have actually brought Alex and I closer together. We have had some difficult conversations, such as the postponement of our wedding and ultimately the beginning of our future together. These conversations have opened us up to being more transparent with our feelings and accepting of how the other is feeling. We have also learned how to tell each other we

need time and space to process feelings on an individual basis before a discussion.

One very positive discovery we have made is our new-found love of kayaking. Being able to get a change of scenery with no one else around has allowed us to cope with our stress levels and to get to spend time together doing an activity we both enjoy. Kayaking has led us to find some peace, quiet and tranquility in a world that feels upside down. I am often in awe of the wonders of God we find in nature from the new goslings making their way through the rivers to the paths the water carves in the landscape.

As a shift worker on the frontlines during the pandemic, I often feel the stresses of work creeping into my daily life. This has resulted in many conversations with those closest to me, oftentimes my mother, who always turns me back to my faith in times of distress.

Alex was fortunate in that his job is deemed essential, so his routine has not changed too much. His workplace has very strict guidelines that have been enforced since the beginning of the pandemic. His only time spent working from home was when my unit at work went into outbreak and he was required to stay home as he had been "bubbled" with myself. His workplace has been very understanding and worked to accommodate the work-from-home until he could return.

Even through these incredibly difficult times through the past year, I feel that I am still called to be a nurse. There are times when I have had to draw on my faith to remain composed and strong while silently praying as a patient of mine is taking their last breath, while another continues to heal and live. Those are moments in which I may suffer emotionally but feel embraced by God's love to continue in my vocation.

The tenacity and strength of the nursing team I work with shines each and every time I walk onto the unit. This is a prime example of God's grace showing through even in the darkest of times.

Dalia Matijevic



Coping with the Pandemic

St. Peter's parishioners reflect on the past year

A Perspective from the Classroom

As with most people, the past year has been nothing like we had ever imagined. Pretty much every aspect of life has been significantly altered and continues to be, though finally, there is some light with the vaccine roll-out gathering steam.

For many years, the Cathedral has been a part of our lives and in 2017, we were married here. We are both involved in ministries, such as the choir, the children's choir, hospitality, marriage prep and with the Knights of Columbus. Unfortunately, these ministries were drastically altered and even halted during this time. Fortunately, we have been able to keep in touch with many members of these ministries whom we have come to know over the years, but we are really looking forward to being able to gather again in-person as a community. Like everyone throughout the pandemic, we have changed how we practise our faith, with live-stream Masses at home, and when things re-opened, booking reservations.

In our roles with the London District Catholic School Board as a teacher (Ana) and as a vice-principal (Michael), we had to quickly transition from an in-person school setting to a virtual setting more than once. One aspect of this significant change that we have both experienced is the amazing support and dedication of both our students and of their parents, many of whom were facing daunting situations with work, health and having all 'normal' routines stopped. However, even in the face of these challenges, they continue to recognize the importance of education and above all, Catholic education. Our students continue to inspire us with their gifts of resilience, energy and the tremendous empathy they demonstrate to their peers and quite often to us as well! Quite often, it is their smiles and happiness that make the day brighter!

The staff we work with at our respective schools have also been a constant source of strength and determination, while modelling great professionalism, grace and talent. They consistently go above and beyond to make the best out of the

many difficult situations that we have all encountered over the past year and most importantly, they have supported one another, along with us during this time. Without their kind words, adaptability and understanding, this time would have been so much more difficult to get through.

One significant result we have experienced since the onset of Covid is that the pandemic has really pushed everyone, ourselves included, to be more creative and adaptable. In order to be able to reach and motivate students, it has been necessary to use new approaches to teaching and to be very adaptable when doing so, as things don't always work on the first try! Also, we have had to be more determined not just in terms of teaching, but also in terms of continuing to get the message of actively living our faith, even during stay-at-home orders. We recognized early on that it would be very important for us within the schools to figure out ways to support the practice of the faith as much as possible. From on-line liturgies and Masses, to small group celebrations, regular prayer within classroom communities and guest presenters, our faith is vibrant and alive in our brick and mortar schools as well as virtually!

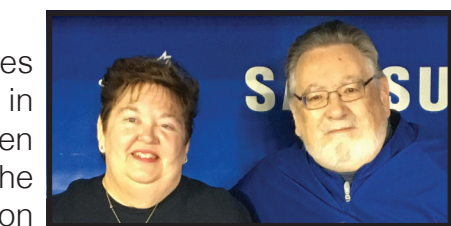
Throughout this time, we have learned a lot about ourselves – we have learned what we took for granted and have discovered new things that have become important or even renewed within us. One aspect we now recognize is the tremendous sense of community that we had become used to at the Cathedral but did not fully understand until the onset of the pandemic. We miss the chats, coffee visits and the waves from afar. When we can regularly gather together again, we will definitely not take being part of the Cathedral family for granted again!

Michael Butler & Ana Matijevic



Coping with Covid changed our lives

As two retirees with no immediate family in London, the Covid pandemic changed our lives dramatically. Our plans for travel abroad were cancelled (twice), as were several intended trips in Ontario for theatre, sports events and sight-seeing. Many of our activities at the Cathedral have been either cancelled or significantly modified, and like many other parishioners, we can participate in the Mass only remotely, though live streaming. We became regular viewers of the Daily TV Mass on Salt & Light and explored other Catholic liturgies on YouTube – this has served to keep us grounded in our faith. We have been blessed with reasonable health and have now had our first shot of vaccine; the second can't come soon enough! Coping with the pandemic has been a learning opportunity, a motivation to give thanks for God's many gifts and an incentive to utilize modern technology to maintain contact with our friends and family.



Dawn Munday & Paul Carson

Dealing with Loneliness

As a widow, Covid has made me more lonely, more cut off from people. I am not a techie, but I stay in touch with my friends here in London over the phone and I video call my sister in Holland and she calls me. I miss being able to go to the theater and take trips. When I am really feeling down, I go on a little jaunt to Port Stanley for a Shaw's Ice Cream to cheer me up. From time to time, I join the people in my bubble who have adopted me. I have been able to continue as a lector at the Cathedral, and go to Mass when it is available but I miss the congregation and friends in the parish. To fill the gap, I watch the Sunday Mass on Salt & Light TV but it's not the same. As we all do, I look forward to "being liberated" and returning to St Peter's in person.



Ina Pakkert

St. Peter's On The Web..

We look forward to
your visit & invite you to
send us your
comments via email.

The website can be found
on the Internet at:

<http://www.cathedral.dol.ca>



CLARENCE, THE CATHEDRAL MOUSE – SAILING ALONG

I sometimes pace when I worry. And over the past year, I've worn a little track in the carpet by my writing desk. During times like these, even a mouse can feel the weight of the world on his shoulders, which is a lot for a mouse to carry! I'm sure that many of you have felt this way as well.

Lately, I've been thinking about Noah -- you know, the guy with the ark. He's quite a hero in the animal world for the work he put in to save a few of our ancestors, although I'm pretty sure that the ark had more than two mice on it as we hate to miss out on a good party!

Noah and his family had a challenging journey ahead of them, and I sometimes feel as though we are in the same boat (so to speak). They couldn't see the waters coming but took precautions anyway, and then when the floods did come, they didn't know how long the journey would be or when they would see land again. As predicaments go, floating along in the middle of a great sea with a ship full of noisy animals to take care of can't be an easy one. But Noah and his family all pulled together and trusted in God to help them get through it.

Here, in our parish, many of us have been pulling together to help one another and help out whenever the church doors are opened for Mass or other events. I've

been doing my bit by cleaning the smaller nooks and crannies and by trying to keep the other mice socially distanced -- an uphill battle if ever there was one! Sewing a mouse-sized mask was another hurdle, but I managed it without getting too many pinpricks and even made one for my friend Gopher, which he appreciated.

Both Gopher and I are happy that summer is around the corner. We expect that a few more outdoor activities will soon be allowed and are looking forward to flying our kites, playing a round or two of soccer, and other lawn games. Just a word of advice -- never challenge a gopher to a game of hide-and-seek!

In the meantime, please stay safe, everyone. Remember to wear your masks and wash your hands. Although taking these precautions might seem troublesome at times, at least we don't have to build an ark!

Wishing all of you a wonderful summer!

*Clarence, the Cathedral Mouse
(with editorial assistance from STH)*



Year of St. Joseph

December 8, 2020 ~ December 8, 2021

On December 8, 2020 (the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception), Pope Francis proclaimed a special "Year of St. Joseph," extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Pope also issued an Apostolic Letter, *Patris corde* ("With a Father's Heart"), in which he describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father and a father in the shadows.

The proclamation and Apostolic Letter mark the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX's declaration of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

Pope Francis writes, "An aspect of Saint Joseph that has been emphasized from the time of the first social Encyclical, Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, is his relation to work. Saint Joseph was a carpenter who earned an honest living to provide for his family. From him, Jesus learned the value, the dignity and the joy of what it means to eat bread that is the fruit of one's own labour.

"In our own day, when employment has once more become a burning social issue, and unemployment at times reaches record levels even in nations that for decades have enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work, of which Saint Joseph is an exemplary patron.

"Working persons, whatever their job may be, are cooperating with God himself, and in some way become creators of the world around us. The crisis of our time, which is economic, social, cultural and spiritual, can serve as a summons for all of us to rediscover the value, the importance and necessity of work for bringing about a new "normal" from which no one is excluded. Saint Joseph's work reminds us that God himself, in becoming man, did not disdain work.

The loss of employment that affects so many of our brothers and sisters, and has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, should serve as a summons to review our priorities. Let us implore Saint Joseph the Worker to help us find ways to express our firm conviction that no young person, no person at all, no family should be without work!"

In a Letter to the Faithful of the Diocese issued on the solemnity of St. Joseph (March 19, 2021), Bishop Fabbro observes, "Saint Joseph was a man who listened for God's voice in his life and who sought to respond to it as fully as possible even when it was difficult and demanding, requiring him to set aside his own hopes and dreams. Perhaps in what we see of Saint Joseph in the Gospels, it is this fact that stands out most of all: that he let go of his plans, his expectations for himself and his future in order to serve the Lord.

"The path set out for him entailed being a stranger among strangers when the promised child was born; of being hunted by a tyrant and fleeing from his homeland, living as a refugee in a foreign country with the poverty and insecurity that occasioned; and of eventually returning home to pick up the pieces of his life. And throughout all these trials, there was the constant and anxious concern for the child and its mother entrusted to his care and protection."

Year of Saint Joseph Prayer

God of tender strength, in this year, we entrust ourselves to you, through the intercession of your servant Joseph. Attentive to the words of an angel, he provided shelter and protection to Mary and your Son.

As a father, a spouse, a worker and a refugee, he knows our struggles, and we see him reflected in the faces of all in need.

Under his protection, may our Church and our country walk the paths of goodness and justice. May our service, like his, be hidden, so that in all things, you might be glorified.

We ask through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

© Rev. Michael Bécard

A variety of useful resources, including Prayers, Litanies and Devotions, for the Year of St. Joseph are available on the Diocesan website: dol.ca/year-of-st-joseph



INTRODUCING VIANCA KMET – ST. PETER'S RECEPTIONIST/SECRETARY

Our parish welcomed a new face to its office administrative staff last year. She is the front-line contact for all of us seeking help in the office. COVID has meant that very few parishioners have had in-person contact with Vianca Kmet, but as part of her diverse role, she is the “voice on the phone” and the author of emails in response to general inquiries.

Recently, I asked her colleagues about her contributions to the parish and they offered high praise.

Brian Galea, her “boss”, commented, “Vianca's job was dealt a weird hand in that she worked at St. Peter's for only five weeks prior to our first lockdown in March, 2020. This hampered her learning and training but she has enthusiastically learned on the go.”

Cathryn Hall echoed Brian's sentiments, praising her strong technology background; “She has brought our social media side to life with the website, Facebook, and Bulletin as well as the behind the scenes with our livestreaming and YouTube channel ‘management.’ She also has been instrumental in implementing the phone and online Mass Reservation system, and recommended a booking system for Pickleball scheduling that has worked very smoothly.”

Cathryn commented as well, “Vianca has brought a fresh face to our office staff ... While certainly a challenging year to begin a new job during a pandemic, Vianca has risen to the challenge. She is a self-starter, has had to learn much on her own, but is not afraid to ask questions. She brings a calm presence amidst the chaos. Her welcoming and hospitable spirit will be an asset once we eventually are able to re-open and she will be able to interact with our parishioners in person.”

Brian also noted that Vianca “will actually experience a full liturgical year at the Cathedral without all of the restrictions we have now. Our office will be fully open, full rentals of rooms, plus event and evening parking, all of which will create a very different environment.”

Vianca agreed to answer a few questions to help introduce her to the parishioners.

Give us a little background on yourself.

I am Vianca Esquivel Kmet, wife to the most loving husband, Albin, and mother to the most amazing little boy, Septimus. I am originally from Manila, Philippines. I am third of five siblings – three of them are in the medical field. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Biology, which was a pre-requisite course to medicine, a path similar to those of my siblings. However, somewhere down the road, my passion shifted; I got attracted to business and management. After a few years in the corporate world, I earned an MBA and sailed through various roles in marketing management and corporate planning in the retail industry.

What brought you to Canada?

In 2016, I moved to Canada to fulfill a childhood dream and follow the leading of the Spirit -- to be married to the love of my life. Moving to Canada, then an entirely foreign country to me, and entering into married life, were both a leap of faith and fate. While I do not have close relatives in London, I do have cousins and friends across Canada. The physical “absence” of family was tough in the first few months but the warm welcome and cordial support of new-found friends made the



Septimus, Vianca and Albin Kmet

major change a little less overwhelming. I had also found consolation in experiencing all four seasons in one week in Ontario.

What inspired you to become a member of the parish staff?

I had already been involved in several parish ministries: the Outreach program, an altar server and the Marriage Preparation team. I was between jobs when the opportunity opened up. After praying about it, I felt propelled to pursue the position.

You were in the office for scarcely five weeks when everything shut down. During that brief period, what were your initial feelings about the job and how were you managing the role?

Despite the various corporate roles I experienced in the past, I knew this role in the parish office was different in terms of dynamics. To me, keeping a sense of adaptability was paramount to effectively manage the role. When the shutdown happened, it seemed like it was part of the learning process. A portion of the job entails in-person interaction with parishioners and visitors of the Cathedral. Obviously, during the shutdown, this part of the job was minimized. The invisible behind-the-scenes work still required a great level of attention such as sacramental registers, archival parish documents and the usual office admin tasks.

Because of the restrictions of the shutdown, there was an opportunity for me to learn much more about the significance of some of the work that I do, and the “official nature” of the documents. The parish team has been generous in sharing their knowledge and wisdom, and that helped me recognise the value of my job more. So, managing the role during the first shutdown was not as overwhelming as one might think because of the gentle guidance and support that I was given.

How did the pandemic change what you are doing and your supports as you learn the role?

My schedule certainly changed. When provincial orders such as State-of-Emergency and Stay-at-Home were observed (in separate periods), the 8-to-4 office hours became flexible in a sense that I was expected to be in the office only for essential tasks. Hands-on tasks such as those that need physical access to parish sacramental registers and other resources were done in the office, while the rest -- such as putting together the Sunday *Bulletin*, digital parish communications and database -- were accomplished remotely.

Continued on Page 17

INTRODUCING VIANCA KMET – ST. PETER'S RECEPTIONIST/SECRETARY -- Continued

In general, the means of communication have shifted. Though in-person interactions are minimized, the customer service aspect of the job continues to be a priority. Most responses to general inquiries and requests shifted to online (i.e., email, website, social media) or over the phone. This was expected; hence from my end, I purposely aimed for more visibility online. This part of the change of shifting to online gave me some sense of thrill and enjoyment as digital communication/marketing is one of the fields that piques my interest.

Because of the unpredictability of things during a pandemic, parish bookings (including pickleball), Mass requests, wedding dates and the like had to be re-done and rescheduled accordingly. It was/is almost impractical to book anything 2-3 months ahead.

Lastly, the pandemic has definitely compelled me to revisit the way I approach technology not just as an end-user but as a service-provider as well. New online systems such as the Mass Reservation program and YouTube for live streaming Masses and services had to be put in place to further serve the parishioners and visitors of the Cathedral. Basically, the pandemic has obliged me to be more resourceful, flexible and open to changes in the work routine and procedures that have been around for years.

What do you miss most as you work from home?

Working from home with a three-year-old child who's always underfoot is a juggling act. When I work remotely, I certainly miss the social interactions with colleagues, parishioners and random visitors, and conversations that don't involve Paw Patrol. There's nothing quite like setting down your office



Vianca in her home office, with Septimus and the "Paw Patrol."

supplies and not having them doodled on, and keeping the same pen for longer than five minutes.

What do you look forward to in the coming months as we hopefully return to a more “normal” environment?

As restrictions are lifted and we begin to gradually move towards some semblance of normal, I look forward to seeing more parishioners face-to-face (or mask-to-mask), and a return to a vibrant parish active with ministries, activities and events.

When we all have an opportunity to meet again, be sure to welcome Vianca.

For all you do behind-the-scenes, we welcome you and thank you for the work done on our behalf.

Dawn Munday

Prayer to Our Lady, Health of the Sick

**O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey
as a sign of salvation and hope.**

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

**At the foot of the Cross you participated
in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.**

**You, Salvation of God's People,
know what we need.**

**We are certain that you will provide, so that,
as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting
might return after this moment of trial.**

**Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the Father's
will and to do what Jesus tells us:**

**He who took our sufferings upon Himself,
and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the
Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.**

**We seek refuge under your protection,
O Holy Mother of God.**

**Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to
the test – and deliver us from every danger,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

– Pope Francis, March 2020



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OUR KNIGHTS IN ACTION DURING THE PANDEMIC

The last in-person events we held for the parish were the Shrove Tuesday dinner and a Parish Breakfast back in February and March of 2020. Since then, we've worked hard to continue to "think outside the box" to respond to the spiritual, financial and social needs of the parish, the community and our council. Parishioners are accustomed to the Knights putting on in-person social or fund-raising events that bring everyone together; yet, due to Covid, we took stock of how we could try to meet our mission as Knights and it caused us to pay closer attention to the "small things."

These "small things" included making calls to brother Knights and their families to make sure that they are well and assisting those who could not get out of their homes with basic needs. Of course, we love putting on grand events, but, reaching out to someone who is lonely or who can't leave their home made a world of difference in that person's life.

As so many people lost their jobs, the **London Food Bank** faced an overwhelming rush and demand on their resources. Our council responded by donating \$1000 to help families in need. Additionally, through our Knights and their spouses who work in the Catholic school board, we distributed winter coats to children in need.

It is truly a remarkable time to be a Knight today! We are humbled to know that our founder has been declared Blessed by the Pope. Fr. Michael J. McGivney formed the Knights of Columbus in 1882 and it has grown into a worldwide organization that has yielded much fruit for Christ. It has had a positive transformative effect on the lives of our members, their families, the Church and our community. It was through the intercession of Fr. McGivney that an unborn baby was healed and this led to his beatification on October 31, 2020.

For our outstanding contributions to the parish and community during 2019-2020, our council received two awards last Fall: the Columbian Award and the Founder's Award. We were honoured to have Fr. Jim receive them on our behalf in tribute to the beatification of Fr. McGivney.

Additionally, it gave me great privilege to extend to Fr. Jim the **Knight of the Year Award** from our council as we conclude this Fraternal Year. As our council's chaplain, and as the rector of our Cathedral, he has stood tall in the face of many heavy responsibilities during Covid. Throughout it all, Fr. Jim has always encouraged us to hear God speaking to us in the silence -- in this way, we can know of God's presence and have renewed hope.

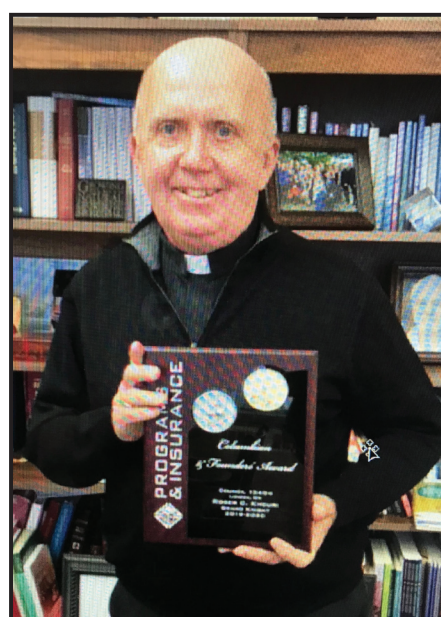
To assist in our spiritual growth as Catholic gentlemen, we have been meeting virtually to pray the Scriptural Rosary for the needs of our families and parish. During May, we joined with all Knights throughout the Order to pray the Novena for Life. Back in October, Knights joined at Life Chains, social distancing, as public witnesses to the sanctity of life. Our council donated \$500

to Fresh Start in support of women who face crisis pregnancies.

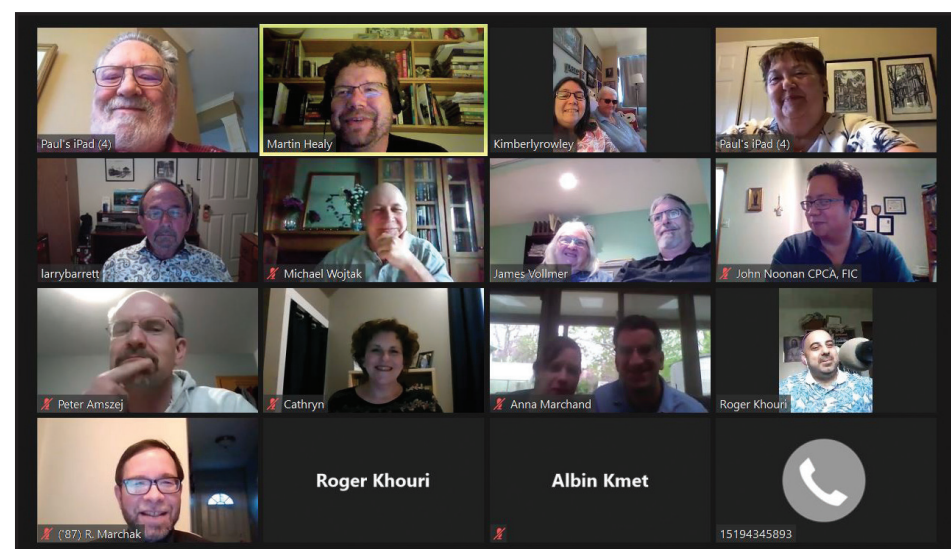
Earlier this year, one of our Knights, Gio Sussini, gave a talk at our monthly meeting. It was important to hear from a brother Knight to aid us on our own spiritual journey with the Lord. Gio spoke about how he encountered the Lord anew while working in the State of Vermont. He felt God's presence as he did a Holy Hour and as he saw the vastness of the mountains in Vermont. People remarked that they saw a difference taking shape in Gio's life, and for Gio, he knew that the Lord had His hands in his life causing the positive change. Gio saw the Lord as the artist of artists, the scientist of scientists and the master architect. He saw the Lord and the Lord saw him. We were moved by Gio's openness in sharing a reflection about his walk with the Lord.

Recently, Fr. Peter Amszej delivered a Spiritual Talk for our council via tele-conference. He offered reflections on the book "Parish Priest: Father Michael McGivney and American Catholicism," looking at what it might say to our situation today. For our council, this was very timely so that we can know more about our Order's founder and how to live out our Catholic faith without wavering.

Last but not least, we had such a fun time May 27 at our first virtual Parish Trivia Night. Paul Carson and Dawn Munday served as our team captains and we all enjoyed seeing familiar faces from our parish at this event.



Fr. Mockler with the Columbian Award and the Founder's Award

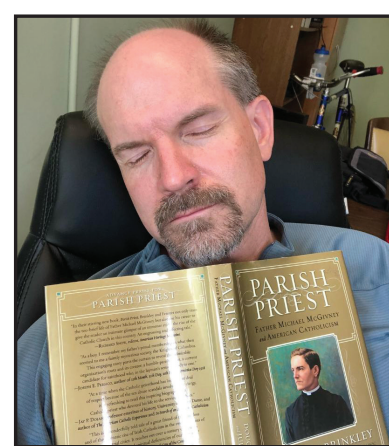


Some of the participants in the virtual Trivia Night on May 7.

We will do it all again with a second **Parish Trivia Night on Friday June 25 at 7 pm. Please visit our website at www.StPetersKnights.ca to register.** Door prizes and many lasting memories are sure to be had, so don't miss it! Even if you're not a trivia buff, don't worry about it, it's a team effort and we're there to re-connect with one another, to build community among the parish.

To help support and strengthen Catholic family life, our council established the **Family of the Year Award** to recognize an outstanding family in our parish. I am honoured to announce this year's recipient: the Rafal and Tamara Schubert family. They moved to London in 2018 to

Continued on Page 19



Fr. Peter putting intensive research into his presentation for the Knights.

CWL REPORT – COPING WITH THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC

Welcome to the virtual world, St. Peter's CWL! Were we ready for it?

As mandated by the National Catholic Women's League, for the health and safety of our CWL members, in-person meetings, information sessions, celebration of life events and fundraising came to a halt!

As we live through the pandemic, communication is so vital. Recognizing that about one-quarter of our membership, including those in retirement and long-term care facilities, do not have access to the internet, changes and adaptation were necessary. Who isn't up for a challenge, especially with all this time on our hands?

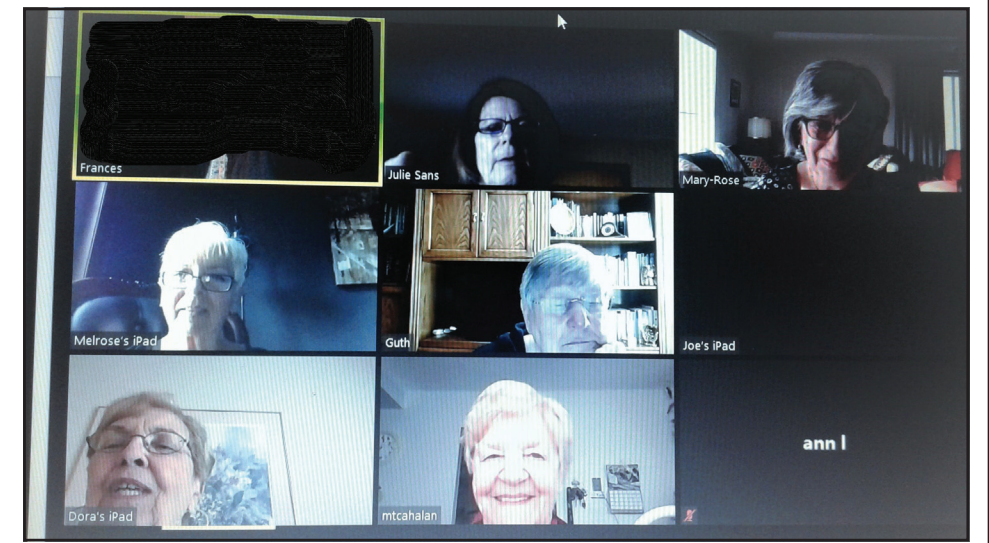
Newsletters were mailed out containing updates, directives, service recognition, activities and distribution of the 2020 discretionary donations to our community, regional and national organizations. The wonderful technology of Zoom was a good alternative for in-person CWL Executive and General meetings, and also facilitated the participation of guest speakers. Through these virtual meetings, designated CWL members were able to attend the two-day 101st London Diocesan Convention on April 20-21, where the business of the League was carried out.



1920 - 2020
100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
HONOURING OUR PAST AND INSPIRING OUR FUTURE

Courtesy of Rebecca McCarrell, Past President, London Diocese CWL

Now, how do we connect with our not-so-technological members? Volunteers were solicited to become a "Webfam," where they are assigned a CWL member who does not have computer access. Once an email is received, the volunteer contacts them with the updates and, if required, provides instructions on attending sessions by connecting with their telephone. This ensures that all members are receiving the email communiques that provide



A recent CWL weekly virtual Rosary.

resources, webinars and virtual rosaries, and also made possible the initiation of 2021 membership renewal.

During the past months, many members have volunteered their time and provided donations to ensure there were no shortages of face masks, head coverings, and so on and that these and other supplies are distributed to those in need. Our members shop local, eat local and provide service when called.

St. Peter's CWL Council has grown in countless ways to adapt to God's call.

St. Peter's CWL Council Executive



Treasurer Jo Guth with the donated quilt commemorating 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care during a May 5 visit to the St. Joseph Hospice.

OUR KNIGHTS IN ACTION DURING THE PANDEMIC - CONTINUED

be closer to other family members and because they felt it is a community that would better nurture their children -- Maximus (one) and Kamila (five).

I was heartened to have met Rafal almost two years ago when he joined our Knights of Columbus council. Upon becoming members of our parish, both

Rafal and Tamara quickly rolled up their sleeves to assist at parish events and activities; Tamara joined the Catholic Women's League. In addition to volunteering in the community, they are founding members of the Optimist Club of London-Fanshawe, which focuses on helping children in the community. Currently, Rafal and Tamara are police officers with the Ontario Provincial Police. Congratulations to the Schubert family!

During the past 15 months, a few projects had to be put on hold due to Covid but we are hoping to get them back on the front burner in the near future. For example, we would like to host an Electronics Recycling Event and a Parish Food Drive, and also serve a meal at St. Paul's soup kitchen.

Spend June getting to know us better! **On Friday June 11 at 7 pm, drop into our Virtual Open House using Microsoft Teams. To register, please contact John Noonan at 519-870-9675 or john.noonan@kofc.org.**

We are more than just a fund-raising charity; we are emboldened to live out our faith to strengthen our families and parish.

Roger Khouri



Rafal and Tamara Schubert, with son Maximus and daughter Kamila.

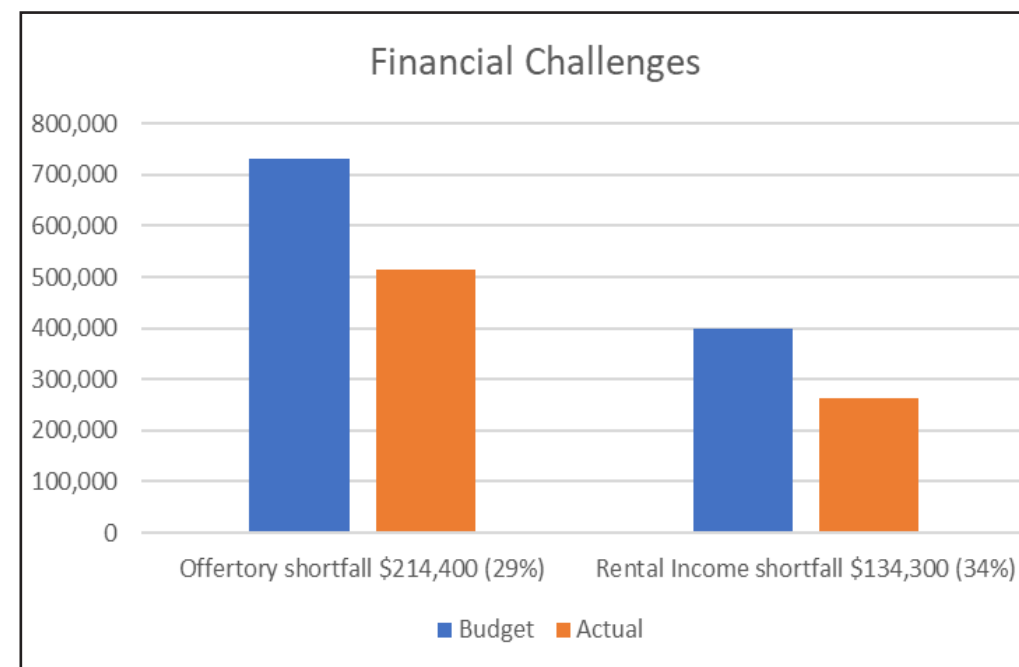
FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

2020 was a year of extraordinary operational and financial challenges for St. Peter's Cathedral Parish. We are very thankful for the support received from the many parishioners who were able to continue regular offertory giving, from our generous donors, from the Diocese of London, and from government support programs. The Finance Committee is particularly indebted to the Cathedral staff for their untiring and successful efforts to keep the Cathedral operating while substantially reducing expenses in these trying times. Overall, we are happy to report that the Parish has successfully weathered the storm so far and our finances are in reasonable condition as we enter 2021.

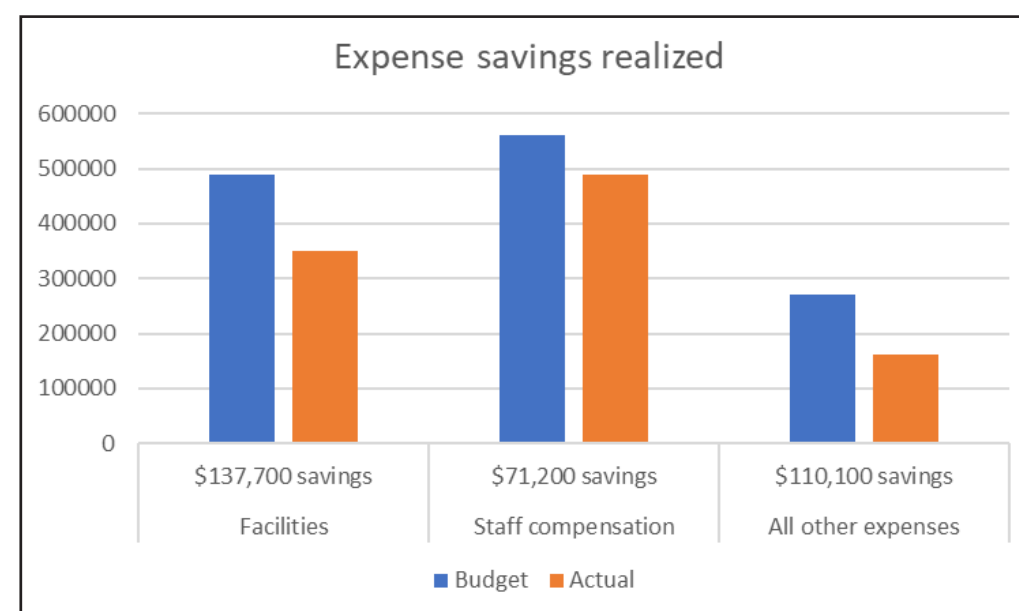
2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Total Operating Revenue was lower than budgeted by \$266,000.**
- **Total Operating Expenditures were lower than budgeted by \$319,000.**
- **Financial support from "other" sources amounted to \$235,000.**
- **The boiler loan is finally fully paid off.**
- **Both operating and capital accounts are in satisfactory condition.**

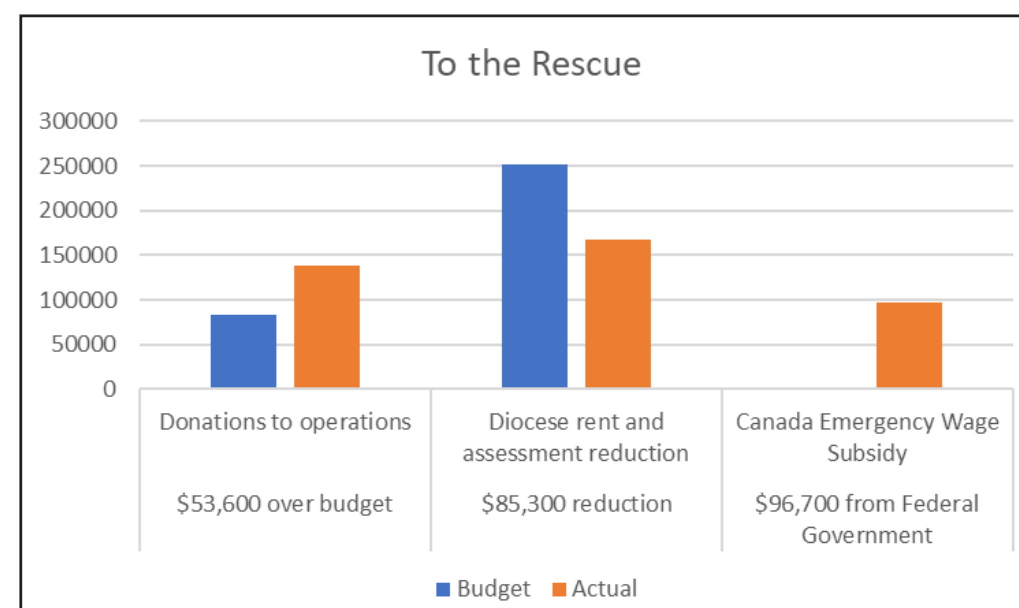
With the Cathedral closing mandated in March, 2020, there was a dramatic initial slowdown in regular offertory receipts and especially the Easter Appeal. It has been very gratifying to witness a gradual but steady recovery in offertory receipts during the year despite the ongoing restrictions on Masses. Regular offertory receipts ended the year at 72.6% of budget, and the total Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas appeals generated 60.3% of the budgeted level. One surprise was the precipitous collapse in rental revenue, down by \$134,300 for the year, due largely to a dramatic drop-off in parking revenue.



A tight lid was kept on expenses. With the Cathedral closed or in very limited operation for most of the year, the cost of operating the overall facilities was lower than budget by \$137,700 and salary costs were reduced by \$71,200. Expense reductions due to limited activities in education, ministry, liturgy and other costs resulted in additional savings of \$110,100.



Finally, we are very grateful for the support received from our generous donors (operating donations \$53,600 higher than budgeted), the Diocese of London (\$85,300 in forgiven rental charges and Diocese assessment), and from the Canadian government (Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy \$96,700).



THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

With the severe restrictions on Masses ongoing for several more months at least, the operational and financial challenges to the Cathedral Parish are expected to continue throughout 2021. Management of these challenges is made particularly difficult due to the many uncertainties and the unpredictability of future developments. It has proven virtually impossible to budget more than a month or two ahead with any degree of confidence. As mentioned, we entered 2021 in reasonably satisfactory financial condition, and we are carefully monitoring our ongoing fund balances against an "early warning" fiscal plan for the year. However, it appears certain that our expense controls have reached their practical limits, and the 2020 levels of support we received from the Diocese and from government programs are unlikely to be repeated. Thus, a 2021 draft Budget is not shown in this financial statement.

Accordingly, in order for the Cathedral Parish to continue to successfully deliver on its faith mission including continued Mass celebrations, it will be vitally important for St. Peter's parishioners to continue to support the Parish through regular offertory giving in 2021. The Finance Committee and the Cathedral staff are sincerely appreciative of your ongoing generosity.

Financial Report to the Parish Year Ending December 31st 2020

	2019	2020 Budget	2020 Actual
Operating Revenue			
Offertory	\$717,424	\$730,145	\$515,746
Stipends and Parish Social Activities	\$27,448	\$27,700	\$8,901
Donations	\$148,477	\$84,000	\$137,612
Ministry Revenue	\$5,515	\$5,500	\$4,020
Rental Income	\$386,614	\$398,200	\$263,890
Other	\$48,036	\$48,250	\$12,356
Special Collections Received	\$30,294	\$30,900	\$12,356
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	-	-	\$96,680
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	\$1,363,808	\$1,324,695	\$1,058,367
Operating Expenditures			
Facilities	\$472,271	\$488,715	\$351,058
Liturgy	\$41,721	\$43,431	\$20,237
Compensation	\$542,302	\$560,217	\$489,066
Education and Ministry	\$34,944	\$40,413	\$17,427
Other	\$4,404	\$5,020	\$711
Stipends Paid	\$9,220	\$9,100	\$1,650
Special Collections Paid & Fundraising Expense	\$17,472	\$18,690	\$10,310
Diocesan Assessment	\$102,831	\$104,040	\$60,687
Donations Paid	\$63,904	\$50,625	\$50,192
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	\$1,289,069	\$1,320,251	\$1,001,338
OPERATING SURPLUS	\$74,739	\$4,444	\$57,029

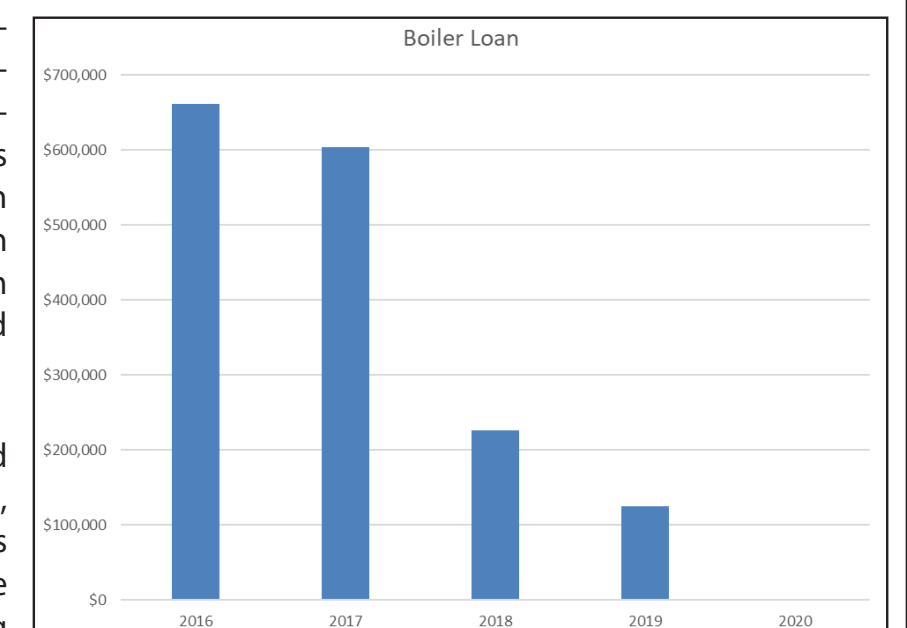
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happened to rental income?

When the first lockdown was applied in March 2020 many of the largest downtown office buildings were quickly emptied when office staff moved to work-from-home. As a result many office workers no longer required monthly parking in our North Lot. At the same time, downtown restaurants and theatres were closed and all Victoria Park events were cancelled, so there has been little demand for evening and event parking. Interestingly, office rentals in the parish centre have held up well. Gatherings and events in the gymnasium have ceased but this lost income has been replaced by the very high demand for pickleball courts ... an excellent example of innovation by Parish staff.

Why is paying off the boiler loan important?

We have been making substantial regular annual payments of interest and principal on the outstanding boiler loan since the loan was taken out in 2013, and additional payments to reduce the loan have been made when funds permitted. The chart shows the loan progress in recent years. Now that the loan is fully paid off, we will be able to reallocate these funds toward making much-needed facility repairs and improvements.



ROLE OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The goal of the Finance Committee is to faithfully represent parishioners in supporting and advising the pastor and business manager in their stewardship of the parish's financial and facility resources, as they continue to deliver on the church's mission.

If you have any questions which we can answer or comments to make, please contact any of us through the Parish office.

Fr. Jim Mockler
Rector

Brian Galea
Business Manager

Jay Jeffery
Chair, Finance Committee

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Our intrepid (anonymous) reviewer recommends two books for your enjoyment and the deepening of your faith. "Small is Beautiful" raises many issues with which we grapple today as governments try to balance covid lockdowns against enabling some degree of normal economic activity. If you have read only the Narnia novels of C.S. Lewis, then "Surprised by Joy" will introduce you to one of his many books of spirituality written for adults.

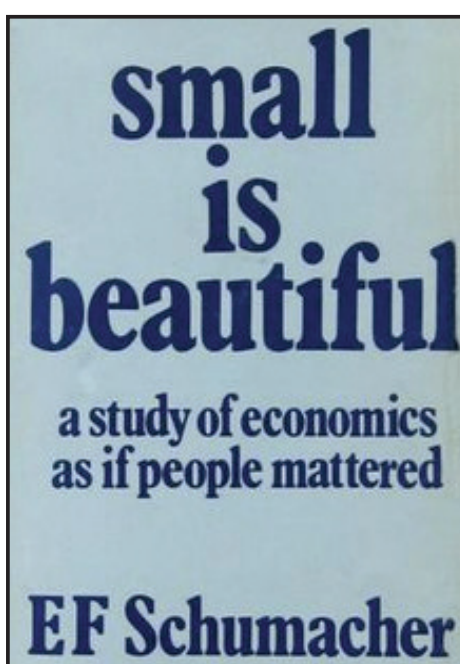
SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL by E.F. Schumacher

When we read the news these days, we encounter a continuous stream of stories that make our future appear bleak. Canada may have avoided the worst instances of such difficulties, but one need not look far beyond our borders to see how much worse things can become for significant numbers of people.

We should keep in mind that society has always been confronted with problems of such magnitude that it would seem impossible to resolve them. A book that outlines a possible way to address major issues in the modern world is "Small is Beautiful" by E.F. Schumacher. It was published in 1973, and in 1993 The Times Literary Supplement named it as one of the most influential books published since World War II.

Born in Germany, Schumacher went to England in 1930 as a Rhodes Scholar. During World War II he was interned as an "enemy alien" and was sent to work on a farm, but the intervention of G.M. Keynes led to his release. He became a top advisor on the economic revival of post-war Germany, the chief economist of the British Coal Board, and an economic advisor to such developing countries as India and Thailand. In his youth he was an atheist, but he came under the influence of papal encyclicals that dealt with social problems such as "Pacem in Terris", as well as writers like G.K. Chesterton and Thomas Merton. Eventually he converted to Catholicism and died in 1977 at age 66.

"Small is Beautiful" is a collection of essays in which Schumacher develops the idea that any economic program that does not place human development at the forefront will eventually fail. Indeed, the subtitle for the book is "Economics as if People Mattered." He contends that economics is not a "science" in the sense that physics is a science; it is not possible to uncover a set of immutable laws that will inevitably yield progress. People are not simply natural capital that are to be used for a single-minded pursuit of profit; the idea that "avarice and usury and precaution must be our gods for a little longer" is doomed to lead to conflict, depletion of natural resources and eventual collapse of society.



E.F. Schumacher

He is, in fact, quite pragmatic, seeing clearly that greed and envy, when cultivated, lead to many of the problems in society and the environment that we see today. While much may be achieved, fundamental problems get ignored. For instance, we might consider the unintended consequences for society of the automobile and social media. Schumacher states that, "The hope that the pursuit of goodness and virtue can be postponed until we have attained universal prosperity and that by a single-minded pursuit of wealth, without bothering our heads about spiritual and moral questions, we could establish peace on earth, is an unrealistic, unscientific and irrational hope."

With this perspective, Schumacher analyzes how economic policies have affected the lives of individuals in various situations. He considers such diverse topics as the misuse of development aid in India, the role nationalised industries should have, the environmental impact of the use of fossil and nuclear fuels, the way in which profit sharing affects the viability of private companies, and the various types of "ownership" in the capitalist system.

In all of these considerations, Schumacher goes beyond traditional economics with its focus on such sterile concepts as "gross national product". Instead, he considers what he calls "meta-economics"-the study of how economic policies affect society as a whole. In this expanded view, he draws on the Christian tradition. He notes, however, that once the concepts of morality and responsibility are used in any discussion of economics, it becomes "well-nigh incomprehensible to the majority of modern men." Nevertheless, he discusses at length the "marvellously subtle and realistic doctrine of the four cardinal virtues" -- prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. These he feels are the foundations on which any successful society must be based.

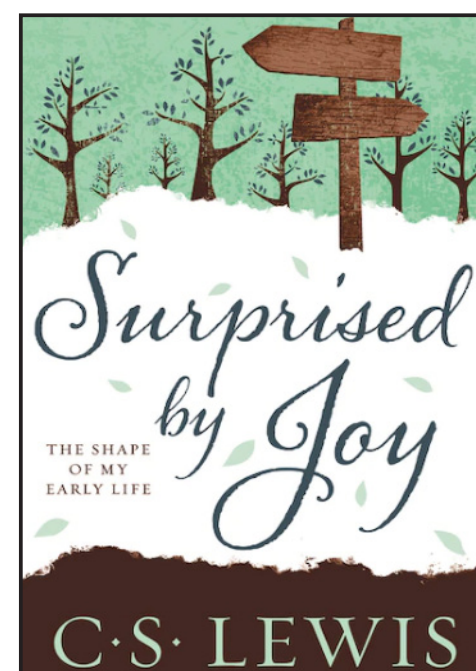
"Small is Beautiful" is not a long book and it is written with an engaging style. However, it outlines many provocative ideas that call for careful and thoughtful reading. Even though Schumacher wrote this book over 45 years ago, his observations still resonate in today's world.

SURPRISED BY JOY by C. S. Lewis

Spiritual autobiographies, in which the author outlines the evolution of his personal relationship with God, can be quite compelling.

Examples include "The Confessions" of St. Augustine, "The Seven Story Mountain" by Thomas Merton and "A Confession" by Leo Tolstoy. These are accounts written by three very different personalities of how they came to accept Christianity after having either rejected or ignored it earlier in their lives. They all provide insight to those who never have had to undergo the painful process of totally reconfiguring their spiritual outlook.

"Surprised by Joy" is C.S. Lewis's contribution to this genre. The author is well-known for such diverse works as "The Chronicles of Narnia," a fantasy for children, and "Mere Christianity," a series of radio talks given



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WHAT ARE YOU READING? -- continued



C.S. Lewis

when he was just seven years old. His father was ill-equipped to deal with Lewis and his older brother, so he sent the two of them off to English boarding schools for their early education. The first such school was run by a master who was not only incompetent, but also cruel, and likely insane. This closed, and the next school, though it was "reputable", was detested by Lewis as it not only tolerated, but encouraged snobbery and bullying without providing meaningful education.

Despite this handicap, Lewis managed to self-educate through wide reading and immersion in such arcane topics as Norse mythology. Finally, for two years he lived with an inspiring retired school master who personally tutored him by having him read in their original language the works of such classical writers as Homer and Cicero. On his own, Lewis devoured books by such wide-ranging authors as Rousseau, Jane Austin and G. B. Shaw. With this peculiar background, Lewis won a prestigious scholarship to Oxford, but his studies were interrupted by serving in the British army during World War I. He celebrated his 19th birthday in a trench in Flanders; within five months he was badly wounded. After hospitalization, he returned to Oxford, obtained his degree in English literature and became a tutor at Magdalen College.

While recounting this progression, Lewis also provides a fascinating description of how his spiritual life evolved. When quite young, he became an atheist, considering all forms of religion to be merely mythology or legends. However, he always was searching for "Joy", something he held to be quite distinct from "pleasure" or "happiness". He came upon it while quite young by conjuring up an imaginary "Animal Land" or by first encountering such classic books as "Squirrel Nutkin" by Beatrix Potter. The books he subsequently read had a profound effect on his experience of joy. Slowly, he came to realize that "joy" was not to be found by searching and then by possessing, but rather it was experienced as part of the search itself. Lewis expends considerable effort in elaborating what exactly this implied for the development of his own spiritual life.

Another ingredient in Lewis' conversion was the exceptional personalities he encountered. These he often met in unexpected places; there was a sickly boy who lived nearby when growing up in Belfast, a fellow soldier who was killed in the trenches, and a number of people at Oxford including J.R.R. Tolkien. Lewis confesses to being shocked upon realizing that these people, whom he greatly admired, were generally deeply religious. He writes, "Everything that I had laboured to expel from my own life seemed to have flared up and met me in my best friends." He gives a very personal account of how these

on the BBC. In "Surprised by Joy" he recounts events in his life that led first to his acceptance of the existence of God, and then finally to his becoming Christian.

It is a short book, and Lewis just presents the basic information about his upbringing and education needed to understand how he became Christian. He was born into an upper middle-class family in Belfast, but the family's stability was shaken by the death of his mother

experiences resulted in his finally accepting the presence of God; "In Trinity Term, 1929, I gave in and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed; that night the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England." Soon after he became Christian, accepting that God indeed became man in the Incarnation.

The primary reason I enjoyed this book is that it provided a way for me to better understand and appreciate our faith. Another is that I feel that I came to know Lewis as a person; he is a most engaging character and must have been an exceptional conversationalist. Closely linked with this is that Lewis makes wonderful use of language in his descriptions of characters, places and his own inner life. In a few deft phrases, he can present the reader with the thrill of swimming in the surf off the coast of Donegal, the horror of trench warfare, or the pleasure of coming in from a brisk winter's walk to enjoy a cup of hot tea and a good book.

Although this book needs close attention in order to be appreciated, this effort is well rewarded.

Suggestions for "Pandemic Period" Reading

Many friends and family members have told me of a change in their reading habits during the time of covid. Some have stopped reading fiction; others concentrate on that genre. A few have turned to reading only on screens. And some have confessed to not reading at all! I approached a few parishioners to tell us what books they found had addressed spiritual hunger in this pandemic period, and the following are some responses to my query.

Kath Johnston recommends "Song of the Seed": Macrina Wiederkehr is a spiritual midwife and gardener of the soul. By using fresh and focused paraphrasing of the Gospels, she leads us for 30 days into the comfort of God's love. The parable of "The Sower and the Seed" provides the text for this retreat. Sister Macrina is an easy-going yet wise disciple who converses rather than evangelizes. Her clever prodding consistently engages the reader in deeper thought. Her suggestions offer counsel, consolation and comfort.

Wiederkehr immediately cuts to the heart of the matter when she asks, "Has our intimacy with God and with others suffered because we too readily embrace the distraction and noise around us? Are there treasures hidden in our own fields that need to be found"? If yes, then a commitment to this 30-day spiritual oasis will help us to find that the seed does indeed sing in our heart! The Word of God becomes flesh in us. (HarperOne, 1997; \$15.99 CAD.; Amazon Kindle \$11.99; cheaper second-hand copies available.)

Peter Williamson has been reading St. Augustine, and for a wonderful discussion of the remarkable life and contributions of that Father of the Church, he recommends "Augustine's invention of the inner self: The legacy of a Christian Platonist" by Phillip Cary. (Oxford University Press, 2000/03, available in expensive hard and soft covers and as an Ebook. For those who have borrowing privileges at UWO, it is available online, and on the shelf at the King's College Library.)

Crystal Sharp brings three books to our attention. She found the first stimulated greater understanding of the role of faith in

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Our mission: To live the Gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy.

Here at St. Peter's, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul holds tightly to our core value of supporting those in need by meeting people face-to-face at their home, often chatting for a bit to listen to their stories. Often, we may be the only visitor a person has in a given week, so making that connection is just as important as the food or clothing voucher we are there to provide. We know that we are not going to fix their situation. We are there to help them out.

Who calls our Parish looking for support? Our homeless, refugees, newcomers, those recently incarcerated or living on fixed incomes, the unemployed and working poor – both individuals and families encountering difficulties in their lives and who live within our Parish area.

The pandemic and protocols put in place to keep everyone safe, while challenging, have not deterred us from our mission.

We are one of the few parishes in London that continues to have personal contact with people in need near their home. How have we accomplished this? Every Tuesday afternoon, our incredibly dedicated team of volunteers travel separately in their cars while still matched up in pairs to visit each address. We use our cell phones to call and arrange for individuals to meet us curbside, verify their identity and provide a grocery store gift card and possibly a bus ticket -- all contactless.

Even during these difficult times, we have been able to issue vouchers to provide clothes, household items and furniture to those in need when there has been access to the SSVP Store at 585 York Street, near Adelaide.

Your incredible support of our efforts has allowed us to provide assistance for 765 adults and 58 children with more than \$30,000 in grocery store gift cards over the past 13 months!

Our Christmas Delivery of gift cards to 170 families was carried out last December, due in large part to the incredible generosity of you, our parishioners, who filled the financial void left when we were unable to promote our Angel Tree this



The parishioners of St. Peter's Cathedral have continued to provide assistance to the needy in downtown London through the ministry of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

past Christmas.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our Winter Welcome Lunch, which is a collaborative effort of our Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul held annually in January. We very much look forward to resuming this tradition of serving a lovely hot lunch while enjoying friendship and conversation with invited guests from the community we serve!

A very special "thank you" to Mike Zadorsky, who has now completed his term as President of our SSVP conference. Under Mike's leadership, our SSVP continued to thrive and grow as he guided us to live our faith in our mission of service. We are very grateful that Mike will continue to journey alongside us as we serve those individuals and families in our community who need our support.

If you want the rewarding experience of putting your faith into action and help people in our community, I invite you to connect with us at stpeters@ssvplondon.com and we will share our Vincentian vision.

Sheila Craig

WHAT ARE YOU READING? -- continued

our lives: *"Speaking of Faith: Why religion matters – and how to talk about it"* by Krista Tippett is wonderful in its depth of ideas, drawn from science, philosophy, different religions, historical events, great thinkers and ordinary people, in discussing the role of faith in our lives. Also, quoting from the book cover, "Tippett illustrates a way to speak about faith that diffuses the many conflicts surrounding religion. Her way of speaking about the mysteries of life – and of listening with care to those who endeavor to understand those mysteries – is nothing short of revolutionary." I agree. (Penguin/Random House, 2008; paperback \$20; new and used copies cheaper. Kindle edition available at London Public Library.)

Crystal also recommends two books that affirm faith in goodness, which she agrees has some bearing to the larger role of faith in our lives.

"Haroun and the Sea of Stories" by Salman Rushdie. It is heartwarming and funny – a great story about the power of stories to make people happy. Nadine Gordimer's quote at the back of the book describes it best: "Fantastical, funny, whooping through drama and comedy, good and evil, introducing creatures delightful or frightening, this joyous and tender book is a whole Arabian Nights entertainment."

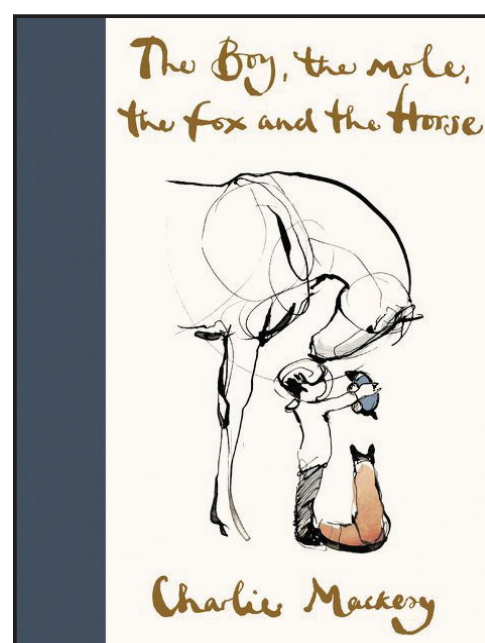
(Penguin/Random House, 2020; \$15.99 CAD; available in Kindle and in cheaper used copies.)

"The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse"

by Charlie Mackesy. Simply written and beautifully illustrated, this little book says so much in so few words affirming friendship, kindness and connection between very different beings. There are some lovely insights in conversations between the characters, for instance: "Isn't it odd. We can only see our outsides, but nearly everything happens on the inside ...". And many others like it.

(HarperCollins, 2019; \$28.50 CAD; many copies at London Public Library; available in Kindle and Audio CD, and used copies also.)

This column covers books, articles, videos and websites that parishioners are consulting to expand their spiritual knowledge. If you have something to recommend, please contact Hilary Neary at nearyh@gmail.com.



WHAT ARE YOU READING? FLANNERY O'CONNOR: A VERY RARE BIRD

The American short story writer and novelist, Flannery O'Connor (1925-64) knew there were times others bristled at the depths of her Catholic convictions, and would attempt to head that off at the pass, proclaiming, "You shall know the truth, and it will make you odd." But she wasn't prepared to soft-pedal (let alone deny) her faith for the sake of keeping any social exchange pleasant; not even one that could advance her literary career if she played her conversational cards diplomatically.

At a salon-type evening at the home of influential writer and taste-shaper, Mary McCarthy, O'Connor was badly out of her element and kept mum until the conversation veered into a discussion of the Eucharist which the assembled sophisticates agreed was all fine and well so long as you didn't take it literally. At that point the 25-year-old writer piped up for the first time all night, stinking out the joint with her declaration, "Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it." Later on O'Connor reflected, "That was all the defense I was capable of but I realize now this is all I will ever be able to say about it, outside of a story, except that it is the centre of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

Some absurdly interpreted her outburst as the frightened utterance of a threatened literalist denying the value of symbolism. Though only two collections of short stories (*A Good Man Is Hard to Find* and *Everything That Rises Must Converge*) and two novels (*Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*) appeared in her short lifetime, O'Connor is universally hailed as one of the finest American writers of the 20th century. This singularly accomplished artist had no lack of appreciation for the power and the value of symbolism and metaphor and analogy and all the other tools in a writer's chest.

But even in the face of social ruination, she would not demote the dreadful and demanding primacy of faith to the level of an intellectual comfort or conceit. She knew full well the sort of mediocre cesspool where that sort of sloppy thinking led: "One of the effects of modern liberal Protestantism has been gradually to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and vaguer and more and more relative, to banish intellectual distinctions, to depend on feeling instead of thought, and gradually to come to believe that God has no power, that he cannot communicate with us, cannot reveal himself to us, indeed has not done so, and that religion is our own sweet invention."

Or, as she put it more succinctly on another occasion: "What people don't realize is how much religion costs. They think faith is a big electric blanket, when of course it is the cross."

The only child of devout Catholic parents in Savannah, Georgia (a region of the southern United States which many would designate as the centermost buckle of the Protestant Bible belt) Flannery O'Connor, like the peacocks she raised at the family's rural home, was a pretty rare bird. After her death from lupus (a debilitating and intractable disease which she contracted from her father who died when O'Connor was 15), the peacock became her personal emblem. In some form or other – fan open and radiantly splayed or trailing behind like an exotic bridal train – a peacock is

invariably worked into her book jackets and other illustrative commemorations such as postage stamps.

In 1979, O'Connor's good friend Sally Fitzgerald published the magnificent collection of O'Connor's letters, *The Habit of Being*, which admirably serves as the autobiography which she never had the time to write. For those who find it hard to make much headway with Flannery O'Connor's fiction which

can seem so coarse and brutal to the uninitiated, these letters smooth the path admirably. It often puzzled readers why O'Connor always peopled her blackly comic and sometimes outrageously violent tales with manic and even unhinged Protestants.

A fan once wrote to her asking why her weird and grotesque characters, from the most secretive brooders to the most raving fanatics, were invariably Protestants. O'Connor answered:

"To a lot of Protestants I know, monks and nuns are fanatics, none greater. And to a lot of monks and nuns I know, my Protestant prophets are fanatics. For my part, I think the only difference between them is that if you are a Catholic and have this intensity of belief, you join the convent and are heard from no more; whereas if you are a Protestant and have it, there is no convent for you to join and you go about in the world getting into all sorts of trouble and drawing the wrath of people who don't believe anything much at all down on your head..."

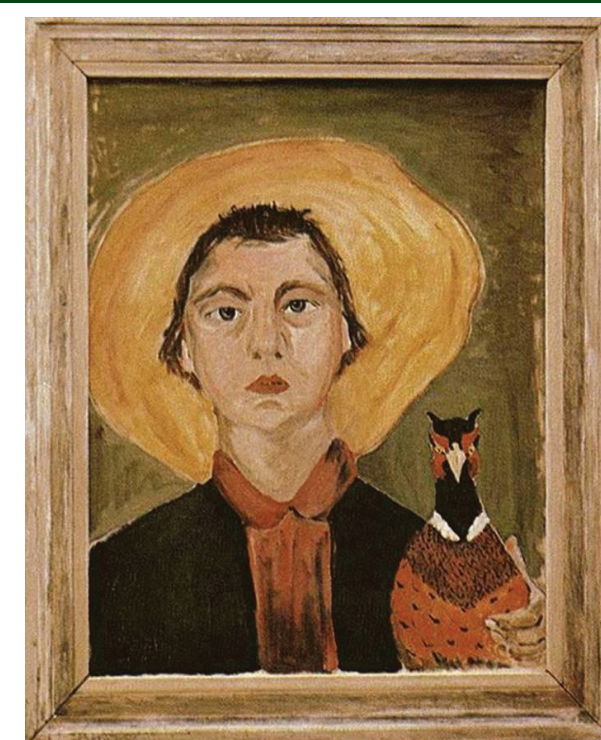
In Flannery O'Connor's single most celebrated short story, *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, a horrible controlling grandmother inadvertently leads her family to their hideously violent doom. This snobby, bossy busybody, always wanting things her way and fretting about how things will look to others, is only able to escape the spinning hamster's training wheel that is her mind for a few seconds when she suddenly apprehends the awful mystery and tragedy of the tormented misfit who has killed everybody else in her family and now points his gun at her. When she reaches out to touch this deformed and suffering soul in a moment of self-forgetting compassion, he draws back in revulsion and plugs her in the chest with three bullets. "She would have been a good woman," he tells one of his accomplices later, "if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life."

In his one-hour documentary, *Flannery O'Connor: The Storyteller*, Bishop Robert Barron points out that for her final 15 years, lupus was O'Connor's stand-in for the misfit, graciously poised to shoot her every minute of her life, giving her the clarity to see things as they are in every possible circumstance and dimension and the courage to tell the truth in her uniquely hilarious and harrowing way.

In a more subdued and thoughtful tone in one of her later letters, O'Connor expressed the same insight like this: "In a sense sickness is a place, more instructive than a long trip to Europe, and it's always a place where there's no company, where nobody can follow. Sickness before death is a very appropriate thing and I think those who don't have it miss one of God's mercies."

Herman Goodden

Herman Goodden, a longtime parishioner at St. Peter's, is the author of a weekly blog, www.hermangoodden.ca



Flannery O'Connor's self-portrait





Photo courtesy of the Diocese of London ~ Matt Clarke

Prayer for our Present Time

We approach you God,
ever confident in Your compassionate
mercy and protection.
At this time, we find ourselves walking in
unknown lands
yet we trust that You continue
to guide our paths.
Our needs are many.
In Your goodness, turn Your ear to us and
hear our pleas.
Give strength to those caring for our sick.
Give wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Give courage to those labouring to
meet our needs.

Grant healing to the sick.
Grant loving consolation to the
frightened and weary.
During this time of fasting
from the sacraments,
help us to find Your presence in other ways.
As we carry this cross, and wait
patiently at the tomb,
keep us mindful of the resurrection.
May Your Son, the Great Physician
and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Peace,
come quickly to our aid.

Amen

– Fr. Michael Béchar, Diocese of London

**For Information on Diocesan Directives issued by Bishop Fabbro and
Resources for Prayer and Reflection, consult these helpful websites:**

**St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica: www.cathedral.dol.ca
Diocese of London: www.dol.ca
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.cccb.ca
Salt & Light TV: www.saltandlighttv.org
The Holy See: www.vatican.va**

**City of London -- www.london.ca
Middlesex-London Health Unit -- www.healthunit.com
Government of Ontario -- www.ontario.ca
Government of Canada -- www.canada.ca**