

Matt's Media



The Newsletter of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Islington

Published November 28, 2021

We acknowledge that we are in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishnabe peoples, on whose land and by whose waters we gather to talk, listen, learn, worship, share and heal together in the name of our Creator, the Holy One of Blessing.

In this issue:	Worship & Events	p.	5	Next issue:	Lent: February 27, 2022
	Successful Market	p.	7		Submissions due: February 2, 2022
	Indigenous Issues	p.	12	Editor:	Kathie Oakden
	Miracles & Pain	p.	14		kathie.oakden@gmail.com
	Youth	p.	17	Layout:	Lisa Tait

From the Pastor—Real Presence

Rev. Philip Stonhouse

“And he said, ‘My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’” Exodus 33:14

I remember early in the pandemic, when we were still practicing a Eucharistic Fast, talking with a few people about how much they were missing Communion. Oftentimes they didn't have the words to express why Communion was so important to them, but they tried to articulate that there is something special and mystical about it. One of the many amazing things about Communion is that God in Jesus Christ becomes present in this feast and in us. I just become a “stand in,” dramatizing the reality that Jesus Himself is presiding at the table and feeding us with his body and blood. There are so many moments in our lives when God can feel distant, but in the moment of Communion, we know He comes close and fills our empty hands with Him.

Real Presence, as in “our presence to one another,” is less and less of a reality in the strange culture which has formed partially out of COVID-19 necessity, but also because of the general mobility of western society. Yet, Real Presence is crucial. Companionship, fellowship, hospitality, etc., have been proven to improve mental health, feelings of fulfillment, achievement, and much more. However, because of our physical separation, the small dopamine ‘hits’ we get from Social Media ‘likes,’ scrolling through pictures, or watching a TV show have become our best substitute for Real Presence and, too often, we settle for that.

This lack of Presence has become serious. Even in 2010 at the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art, New York), Marina Abramovic, an avant-garde performance artist, sat down across a table and invited others to sit down opposite her. She didn't say anything, she just was present for the other person. This had such profound effects that people left crying, thankful, amazed, and more. This is the result of the world we live in, where people don't even know that they need one another and yet it is so simple to be together, though actually being present is another issue in today's world.

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From the Pastor *(continued)*

As unsocialized, as awkward, and as bereft of social energy as we may be, we must make time for one another not just for our own health, but because it is the call of love. *“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that all who believed in him should not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). An essential part of this is that God gave and became present. That is why Christmas is so hopeful: our God who can do all things loves us enough to become truly present to bear our griefs, our pain, our sin, to walk beside us and heal us by His presence. We may feel that God is distant, but have we really practiced being present for God? Because He is definitely present for us. He loves us that much and more. A lot of healing and a lot of joy could come from discovering God’s real presence among us and then becoming present to Him and others. Advent and Christmas are about watching, preparing, and experiencing Christ’s presence with us, so let’s take this time to experience and share His presence with others.

If you would like to learn and explore more about this, take part in our Bible study on Presence during Advent and follow the Sunday sermon series about the Family of Christ which actually bore His presence to us.

*“You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”*
Psalms 16:11

God bless you all.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Philip

Worship Protocol: What You Need to Know

In-person

- Masks are required
- All COVID-19 protocols will be followed, including distancing and contact tracing
- There is no advance registration at this point
- You will be asked to sign in at the registration table
- Please follow all directional arrows
- There is no singing, but you can hum!
- Directions for communion (bread only) will be given during the service

For those joining online or by phone:

- Online leaders will need to unmute themselves at the designated time
- Coffee hour will continue at 12:10 p.m.
- Drive-through Communion will continue to be offered about once a month

Wardens' Report

Karen Lee, Stuart Watt, Marguerite Locke and Lianne Thompson

As we draw near to the end of 2021, we realize that we have much for which to be thankful at St. Matthew's. Despite COVID-19 and its restrictions, our church life has continued with many meaningful worship services, programs, and events. We are fortunate to have Rev. Philip, supported by an amazing team of staff and volunteers, to lead us. Heartfelt thanks to all.

Highlights of this fall included The Blessing of the Animals, The Reading of Mark's Gospel, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, All Souls Taizé service, and the very successful Messy Church gatherings. As well, under the leadership of Marguerite Locke and an amazing team, the Christmas Silent Auction and Mini Market was a huge success.

St. Matthew's is able to provide our worship services online and via YouTube supported by our Powerpoint because of our amazing Tech Team. We so appreciate their dedication to this ministry.

As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Food Cupboard will re-open in January 2022. Long-time volunteers Lois and John Armstrong are retiring from the team. We thank them for their many years of service with this ministry.

With COVID-19 restrictions being lifted, many of our previous tenants are now able to resume meeting and make use of the facilities. The Kingsley School Play Space has been completed and is being enjoyed by the school's students.

Outlined below is a summary of our financial status as of October 31, 2021.

Operating Fund	2021 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget
Income	\$221,941	\$209,692	\$248,104
Expenses	\$230,791	\$220,633	\$252,338
Net Operations	(\$7,850)	(\$10,941)	(\$4,234)

The Advent and Christmas Offering will be directed towards offsetting the current deficit.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our St. Matthew's family and friends for your generosity and continued financial support.

As you will see in other parts of this newsletter, there are many Worship Services and Events planned for the Advent and Christmas Season. In your journey through the Christmas Season, we hope you will find these meaningful.

We give thanks to God for God's continued provision and care for St. Matthew's, especially in these uncertain times. Wishing you and your families a blessed Advent and Christmas Season!

Help Wanted

Early Childhood Educator (ECE) for Toddlers, Sunday mornings

The Parish is currently seeking an early childhood educator to care for our toddlers on Sunday mornings (approximately 3 hours). Should you be interested or know of anyone who might be interested, please pass this message on to them.

Please forward inquiries to Karen Lee, email: karen@leeco.ca.

Chancel Guild News

Mary Gleeson

With a return to in-person services and a slight lessening of COVID restrictions, it will soon be possible for those members of our group who are comfortable doing so to resume some Chancel duties. It will continue to be necessary to follow the COVID protocols, and to alter some of the former routines in our procedures that we have followed in the past.

Thanks to all those who brought in produce to decorate the church for Thanksgiving. Your generosity was much appreciated, and the vegetables were delivered to the Daily Bread Food Bank.

Now that we are able to return to in-person church services, flower donations in memory of a loved one, or in honour of a special occasion, are possible once again. The flower chart is in the Narthex for those who wish to sign up, and if you are unable to make it to church, a phone call to the office, (416-231-4014) can be made. Unfortunately, like most other items these days, the price of flowers has increased to \$60. They are very fresh and purchased from a wholesaler, so we are doing our best to keep the price fair.

In case any parishioners or visitors have gluten issues, gluten-free wafers are available. They are individually wrapped, and the communion recipient will just have to whisper their need to the Administrator.



Let's Decorate the Church with Poinsettias

Christmas is fast approaching. We plan to use poinsettias to decorate the church once again. If you would like to order a plant in thanksgiving for something or in memory of a loved one, please fill in the form on the website or at the church on Sunday, or simply call or email the office. Payments may be made by etransfer, cash or cheque. The price this year is \$15 per plant. Please order no later than December 5.



Worship & Events

Sun Nov 28	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS (Book of Alternative Services) Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Nov 30	GIFT Advent Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.	Online
Wed Dec 1	BCP (Book of Common Prayer) Service: 10:30 a.m. GIFT Advent Bible Study (11:30 a.m. following service)	In person
Sat Dec 4	Online Men's Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. Contact Colin for the link: colinhall1999@gmail.com In-person Men's Breakfast: 9:00 a.m. Montreal Deli	Online or in person
Sun Dec 5	Unity Service: 10:00 a.m.	In person & online
Tues Dec 7	GIFT Advent Bible Study: 7:30 p.m.	Online
Wed Dec 8	BCP (Book of Common Prayer) Service: 10:30 a.m. GIFT Advent Bible Study (11:30 a.m. following service)	In person
Sun Dec 12	BCP Service: 8:00 a.m.	In person
	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
	Lessons & Carols: 4:00 p.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 15	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
	Blue Christmas: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
Sun Dec 19	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online
	Carols & Crumpets Fundraiser: 2:00 p.m.	In person & online
Wed Dec 22	BCP Service: 10:30 a.m.	In person
Fri Dec 24	Family Service: 4:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Choral Eucharist: 7:00 p.m.	In person & online
	Candlelight Service: 10:00 p.m.	In person
Sat Dec 25	Christmas Day Service: 10:00 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Dec 26	Sunday BAS Service: 10:00 a.m.	In person & online
Sun Jan 2	Unity Service: 10:00 a.m.	In person & online
Sat Jan 8	Online Men's Breakfast: 8:00 a.m. Contact Colin for the link: colinhall1999@gmail.com In-person Men's Breakfast: 9:00 a.m. Montreal Deli	Online or in person
Sun Jan 9	BCP Service: 8:00 a.m.	In person
	All Ages Service: 9:30 a.m.	In person
	BAS Service: 11:00 a.m.	In person & online

Events

All Souls Taizé: November 2 at 7:30 pm, in person and on-line

Music Director Tyler Versluis led a service of contemplative prayer and Taizé music selections, with guest soloists (soprano, alto, tenor, oboist, violinist, organist) and choir providing the music. During the service Rev. Philip read aloud the names of deceased relatives and friends, while candles were placed on the windowsills in their memory by members of the congregation.

*"A beautiful and exquisitely soul-filling evening of music and prayer.
I can't begin to describe how deeply this service affected me."*



Jesus Christ Superstar: October 20 at 7:30 pm, in person and online

Composer Tyler Versluis and actor/writer Rev. Philip Stonhouse explored two productions of this famous/infamous musical, discussing the elements within.

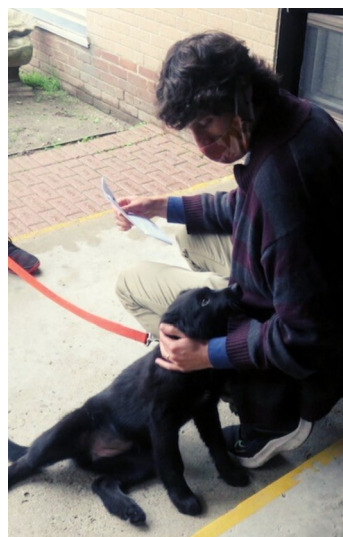
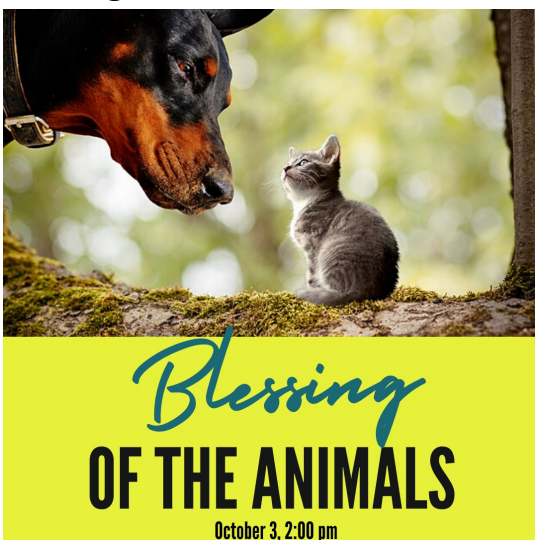
Jesus Christ Superstar is a rock opera with music written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and lyrics by Tim Rice. Loosely based on the Gospel accounts, it covers the last week of Jesus's life, beginning with the preparation for the arrival of Jesus and his disciples in Jerusalem and ending with the crucifixion.

Parallel video clips were chosen from each production (1973, 2000) that focused on Judas Iscariot, Mary Magdalene, and Jesus. Their 'flower-child' depictions in the 1973 version, which was filmed on-site in the austere desert of Israel, offered stark contrast to the 2000 version with its energetic studio choreography and overstated temptations.

Tyler considers this to be Andrew Lloyd Webber's greatest work because every song was a hit, still hummable 45 years later.



Blessing of the Animals: October 3, 2:00 p.m.



Thank You for a Successful Market

Marguerite Locke

The Mini Market Team was delighted with the participation of so many people at our Silent Auction & Mini Market fundraiser.

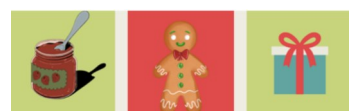
Despite COVID restrictions, we had lots of great donations to Auction, many generous bidders, and great fun along the way. Similarly, Sunday's Mini Market was a success with delicious baking, preserves, jams, and a variety of gift items and gift cards. In total, the generosity of purchasers resulted in \$4600 raised for St. Matthew's which is FANTASTIC. Thank you all.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the people who made this possible: Christine and Lisa in the auction website and communications; Pat Currie, Helen Prankie, Dorothy Sharp, Sandra Watt and Karen Lee for enthusiastic implementation of our plan; and Bruce Gleeson, Rick Prankie, Steven Prankie, Lianne Thompson and Dennis Locke for their assistance in set up and coverage of the book/puzzle sale. Leftover books were donated to Talize, "A Sustainable Fashion & Thrift Store" located at 3100 Dixie Rd, at Dundas in Mississauga.

It will be great when COVID rules are relaxed further and we can gather together more "fully" as a Parish. In the meantime, enjoy the wonderful things that you bought and the wonderful memories we made together.



Thank you all!



Ministry Memo: Finding the Words

Christine Ivy

The more we receive in silent prayer, the more we can give in our active life. We need silence to be able to touch souls. The essential thing is not what we say, but what God says to us and through us. All our words will be useless unless they come from within. Words which do not give the Light of Christ increase the darkness.

~Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Welcome to the first of what I hope to be a series of brief summaries and teachings and quotes in what I'm calling *Ministry Memos*, influenced by the book *Contemplative Youth Ministry*. This is for the whole church to read—not just those who have youth or are interested in youth ministry. I hope it inspires you and helps you catch the vision of what Jesus is calling you to both individually and corporately.

I have good news for you. When our words fail, when we don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit prays for us "*with groanings too deep for words.*"¹ There is a *deep* part of Christian spirituality that involves mystery, trust, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Jesus warned his disciples that they would be arrested and brought to trial, yet told them not to worry, but to trust that "God will give you the words to say", and that the Holy Spirit would "*speak through them.*"² These fishermen and a tax collector (think: manual labourers and a social pariah admin) - plus a bunch of other disciples we know very little about - *were not chosen because they were great with words.*

Perhaps church can make you feel like faith is "words, words, words." Christian education includes a lot of lectures, reading, writing and speaking. Sunday morning worship and Bible study are often similar. And fearing that we don't know enough or *don't have the right words* to engage with others—especially youth, creates a real barrier when we are invited into relationships.

The take-away I leave you in this brief introduction is this: It's OK to not have all the words.

¹ Romans 8:26

² Mark 13:11

20 Minute Creamy Tomato Soup from Scratch (From the Soup's On Kitchen)

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 tsp minced garlic
- 1/4 cup flour
- 3 tbsp fresh basil (or 1/2 to 1 tsp dried)
- 1-2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp basil pesto optional and to taste
- 2 1/2 cups milk
- 798 ml can diced tomatoes with Italian herbs (28 oz)
- 3 tbsp tomato paste (about half 156 ml can)
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan optional

1. In a large pot, melt butter. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add flour and whisk to combine.
2. Add basil, sugar, salt, and pesto. Cook on medium and stir 1 minute.
3. Add milk and whisk until combined. Cook and whisk on medium until thickened, stirring often.
4. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, and parmesan if using, and stir until combined.
5. Puree with an immersion blender if desired and serve.

Adult Learning Groups

Dawn Mercer

GIFT Groups

The Tuesday evening group has been meeting on Zoom to think through the *Mark* themes from Sunday sermons. The Dramatic Reading of the *Gospel of Mark* helped to provide a framework for the further study of the Gospel.

Advent Group Studies—Presence: God Here Among Us, Bring us to Light and Life

In Advent this year we will be re-exploring what Incarnation means for us in our Christian growth. God's great love in His presence on earth born as the infant Jesus changes us and changes our society. As we have lived through COVID we are reminded that 'presence' is a vital part of our daily life for both physical and mental health. In this three-session study we will explore how God's presence transforms us and how God's presence in us changes the world. The titles of the three weeks are:

1. The Power of God's Presence
2. Bearing God
3. Becoming God's Love

There will be a video to accompany each of the studies.

They began the week of November 21st. Join online Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. or in person Wednesdays after the service even if the first session is past. Call the office for further information.

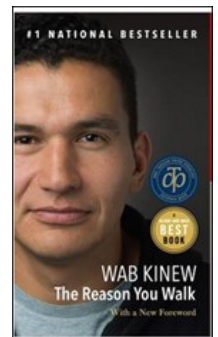
Working Group for Inclusion

The Working Group for Inclusion is offering another series of events to explore our commitment to Anti-Racism at St. Matthew's. The first was on Nov 14 – an online and in-person conversation around the YouTube video, *Holy Post - Race in America*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGUwcs9qJXY>. We highly recommend this video to anyone whether you came to the event or not because it describes many reasons why race is still an issue in the U.S. These same reasons apply to us in Canada!

We are in the process of organizing an online book discussion on *The Reason You Walk, A Memoir* by Wab Kinew. It is the brave story of one man pursuing reconciliation and redemption. We encourage you to read it now. Borrow it from the public library or contact the office for suggestions to order the book. Meanwhile we are planning a date to meet in the new year to discuss this book as well as our pursuit of reconciliation individually and as a nation.

Further events being planned include: a speaker to provide a good foundation for our future work and conversations, film studies, and discussions on various topics such as "What is systemic racism?", "racial microaggressions?" etc.

During October, Rev. Philip participated in Diocesan Anti-Racist and Bias training for clergy.



Children and Families

Dawn Mercer and Jeff Bonner

Following joyful in-person gatherings during the summer it was decided to continue in-person activities for children and families this Fall.

Messy Church

As reported briefly in the Thanksgiving issue of *Matt's Media*, September Messy Church celebrated Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Children created their own "orange shirt" to wear on September 30. It was a happy and safe event even though heavy rain resulted in using the Gym.



Given the space and facilities in the gym, we decided to make the focus of the October Messy Church a live animal presentation—Nature Ninjas. It could go ahead outdoors or in the gym. We planned that this would be an opportunity to attract new families to experience that Messy Church is really a "different kind of church." The response from the St. Matthew's community and our church neighbourhood was the best ever—35 kids and around 25 adults (including leaders). Because of the proximity to Halloween, children were invited to wear their Halloween costume, and many did.

The opening activity was to design a cloth animal mask. The creativity of kids was expressed in a variety of friendly and fierce animal masks. This was a chance to add to the collection of fun and imaginative masks that kids wear so automatically at this point in the pandemic. There were a variety of activities available for children as everyone finished their mask—from Animal Tangrams to word searches. We then searched for about 90 animal pictures that were hidden all around the gym area to put into "Noah's Ark." Philip led a very lively worship time which kids enthusiastically enjoyed.

In the featured event, children loved seeing the wide range of animals such as small snakes, lizards, huge snakes, a hedgehog and a skunk. Following an introduction to each animal, every child had a chance to see it close up and then a few who were really keen to touch got their chance to do so.

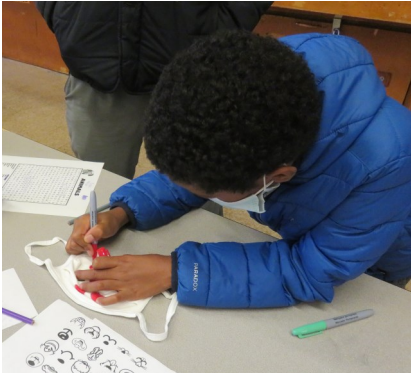
As they left excited (and hungry) all the kids got a take-home bag of animal treats. It was full of imaginative snacks that were available in small packs because of the proximity to Halloween.

Advent Messy Church on November 27 will provide an opportunity for kids and families to make things for our St. Matthew's Seniors and for less fortunate folks in our city—Toronto Urban Native Ministries. We will also prepare some materials for families to use at home in their Advent celebrations.

Messy Church is a different kind of church for families of all generations. It is a great place to bring friends and neighbours to experience the St. Matthew's community and a beginning of "Sharing Jesus' Love."

Children and Families

Dawn Mercer and Jeff Bonner



*Many thanks to Dawn Mercer, Jeff Bonner and the team
for their dedication in leading Messy Church.*



Upcoming Dates

January 29
February 26
March 26
April 30
May 28

Noon Renewal Wrapped up on October 8

From early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the Noon Renewal services on YouTube were a way for the St. Matthew's community to pray together regularly for the renewing and uplifting power of the Holy Spirit as we struggled through the many challenges we faced. With things returning to some degree of normalcy, with in-person services and the return of the mid-week service on Wednesday, we have wrapped up the Noon Renewal services as of October 8. Pre-recorded services and videos for special events will be posted. The Wednesday morning service will also be posted to YouTube.

We hope that you have found these services spiritually fulfilling and helpful through the trying times and that you will continue to pray for God's life-giving spirit to renew our selves, our Church, and our world.

Indigenous Issues

General Synod Communications, Sept 30, 2021

A Statement on the Indian Residential Schools from Indigenous Survivors, Elders, and Leaders

There are no words to describe what we feel in our hearts, as we face, once again, the fear and pain of all that has happened. We are not surprised by the discovery of the children's remains, but the strength of our feelings now has become overwhelming. We are reliving childhood feelings of helplessness, made even larger by our now adult understanding of the things that were intended for us by government and churches.

We understand that the children whose remains have been discovered—and those who are yet to be discovered—are speaking to the heart of every individual, every community, and every institution in this Land. The children are witnesses to the betrayal, by government and churches, of the values and ideals that they say are their essence, foundation, and purpose. In this betrayal, colonization became a genocidal reality.

The good life for this Land and its peoples will not be achieved without truth and justice. Truth and justice will only appear on the way of repentance. The reality that is represented by the remains of the children can no longer be denied or dismissed. The healing that will lead to the good life on this Land will come from a real and dedicated turn from the deceit of colonization to the restoration of Indigenous rights and authority. It is impossible to separate the future well-being of all that is called Canada from Indigenous justice.

The first step must be involvement and support for the pursuit of the truth of the Indian Residential Schools and Day Schools. This work will make clear the fullness of the need for healing for non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples alike. Beyond that, there must be a focused and full commitment towards enabling Indigenous justice and well-being. Such a commitment will acknowledge and make possible the full authority of Indigenous Peoples across this Land. All who truly hear the witness of the children will show this commitment in every aspect of their on-going life on this Land.

A Statement from the Primate: Residential Schools, Burial sites, and the Anglican Church of Canada *Archbishop Linda Nicholls*

Over the past several months the revelations of unmarked burial sites at residential schools have added new pain to the history of residential schools. The Anglican Church of Canada shares in that legacy as it administered some thirty-six schools, over more than one hundred years, in partnership with the government. We know there are sites at some Anglican residential institutions with unmarked graves or where burial records are incomplete.



... continued

Indigenous Issues *(continued)*

Our hearts ache for the children who did not return home and for their families. We did not sufficiently protect the children entrusted to our care from colonial policies and attitudes that denigrated their human dignity. We did not live into our own profession of faith to love neighbour as self. The repentance needed includes our commitment to work with families and communities to identify unmarked burials and missing children through further research in our archives.

We are committed to a long road of reconciliation, listening to Indigenous elders, survivors and leaders for their guidance. Our work has included acknowledgement of the painful legacy through apologies for our role and for spiritual harm caused (1993 & 2019); participation and full co-operation with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in sharing archival materials related to residential schools; developing a Healing Fund (since 1992) to financially support local, community-led projects that assist in healing of language loss, cultural abuses and other forms of oppression; and supporting Indigenous leadership as they develop a self-governing Indigenous Church.

Our commitment to the work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission includes a commitment to the 94 Calls to Action through advocacy for their full implementation in our Church and in the whole of Canada.

We cannot change the choices and actions of the past. We can change the present by listening deeply to the truth about the past so that it will shed light to make a different future possible.

To the People of St Matthew's Anglican Church

Nancy Hurn, General Synod Archivist (retired)

The impact of the church-run Residential Schools has recently reached a new and difficult level of understanding with the discovery of the graves of many of the indigenous students who died at the residential schools. The searching of school property across the country now has resulted in more heartbreak for most indigenous families. The preceding Statements – by Indigenous Elders and Families, and (in response) by Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada – reveal a heartfelt need to understand the truth about residential schools and colonization before true reconciliation can continue in this country.

The Anglican Church in Canada ran over 30 residential schools and almost 200 day-schools from the 1820s to 1969. In 1993, Archbishop Michael Peers, the then Primate, made an apology for the treatment of the children who attended the residential schools. Subsequently, the Anglican Church raised 25 million dollars to help cover the cost of the claims made by the survivors as part of the 2006 Residential School Settlement Agreement. Each Survivor was sent a letter of apology from the Anglican Church following the resolution of their claim. Neither of these actions resolves what has happened but they do form part of the journey to reconciliation.

We ask that you pray for the indigenous people of this land in hopes of finding mutual reconciliation and healing.

Miracles and Pain in Lingua Ignota's *Sinner Get Ready* Tyler Versluis

Recently I have been thinking a lot about miracles, both the ones we read about in the scriptures and the small ones that greet us daily. I have also been listening to the newest album of Lingua Ignota (Kristin Hayter), titled *Sinner Get Ready*, released this past summer. It is always interesting when the subject of faith and religion pierces into mainstream culture or when it manifests in strange or unusual ways. Hayter's background is in performance art, but she was formerly active in the Rhode Island industrial and noise music scene. Her music is always intense, and filled with extreme juxtapositions of beauty and ugliness. It is often overwhelming to listen to.

While Hayter's past albums were primarily about exorcising her demons, opening old wounds about abusive relationships, her history of self-harm and struggles with chronic illness, this new album latches on to something more novel. Hayter, who was raised Catholic, abandoned her faith in adolescence but recently began practicing again, albeit with a great deal of hesitancy. Hayter's story about returning to her faith is about how religion tends to find weird people in weird places: people searching for that precious gift of unconditional love when the rest of the world rejects them. Hayter contextualizes her faith as a massive double-edged sword, exploring the polarities of religion that make it the greatest motivating force on earth, the good and ugly.

Often our relationship with God is a product of our own struggles and shortcomings as humans. The concept of God can seem harsh, distant and patriarchal if we fight against Him. In *Sinner Get Ready*, we confront this God, a deity of radical devotion but swimming in the blood of His enemies. This is a God who will murder entire nations, including women and children to protect His own. Hayter sings painfully in *Many Hands*:

*The Lord spat and held me by my neck
I would die for you I would die for you he wept
The Lord held me by my neck
I wish things could be different he wept*

This is the God that so many have worshiped. This is not a God of extreme violence per se, but a God who grabs you by the throat and bestows the extravagance of His love on you, but only if you believe fully! After all, if you believe in the God who gathers the one lost sheep and who wipes away the tears from your eyes, then you must also believe in the God who will separate you from your family and friends on that last day, when believers are segregated from those who have stopped believing. And when you do believe, you will speak in tongues, you will handle snakes and not be bitten, you will heal the sick, seize the airwaves and show thousands of people the miracle of the Holy Spirit. This is the God of Jimmy Swaggart, who leads thousands into God's presence but cries crocodile tears when caught in his own hypocrisy:

*Repent now repent now
Remember this body is not your home
No pleasure in this year
No wound as sharp as the will of God*

[*Repent Now Confess Now*, Lingua Ignota (2020)]

... continued

Miracles and Pain in Lingua Ignota's *Sinner Get Ready* (continued)

It is a difficult image to accept, and Hayter synthesizes this image of God with her domestic abuse experiences: the love and violence of God commingle in massive doses. But like the hidden narrative in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, there is always the lurking, sneaking suspicion of “what if” in *Sinner Get Ready*. What if Jesus, this seemingly run-of-the-mill moralizer, is actually the Son of Man and the gateway to paradise and the redeemer of our iniquities? To accept that Jesus Christ is our Saviour means to accept that the old ways of the world will disintegrate, that not even death is certain in the end. Is this the “unconditional love” that we have desperately tried to manifest in this world, with no success? This invites a certain level of horror in our minds.

*Through Jesus' blood and righteousness
His beauty is my glorious dress
A name too terrible to say
With joy I dance round the abyss

Bold shall I stand on that great day
In bright celestial robes arrayed
Fully absolved through Christ I am
From sins too terrible to name*

[*The Sacred Linament of Judgment*, Lingua Ignota (2020)]

One of the hardest things about faith is that it is often a burden. The perception that belief constitutes a massive relief, an ecstatic wholeness of all the broken pieces in our lives, is simply untrue. To accept the unconditional love of God, to submit wholly to Jesus Christ, is often a process of horror. It means that we must believe in miracles, in the impermanence of this world and of the weakness of our own devices. The goal of Hayter's music is transcendence: to leave behind the pains associated with the body and with the world's condemnation. The artist's mind is set free, because one can accept that all things are possible through miracle or intercession.

*All my pains are lifted
Paradise is mine
All my wounds are mended
Paradise is mine

Paradise will be mine

No longer shall I wander
Ugliness my home
Loneliness my master
I bow to Him alone.*

[*The Solitary Brethren of Ephrata*, Lingua Ignota (2020)]

Out of the Cold—COVID Edition 2.0

William Hampton

In light of the continuing COVID pandemic we will once again not have the opportunity to host our guests at the church as we have in previous years. We are aiming to expand our supports to other ministries by including a hot meal program this year.

We will continue our programming from last year partnering with St Felix House, TUNM and Church of the Holy Trinity. Our support will include food, toiletry and clothing supplies as well as hot meals and lunches. Please continue your generous donations of the items listed below and we will make sure that they get into the hands of those that need them during these unprecedented times.

Clothing (Men's Clothing Only)

Ski and Winter Jackets *	Men's Blue Jeans *	Running Shoes *
Warm Winter Boots *	Backpacks (Large) *	Insulated Toques & Gloves
Men's T-Shirts	Casual Footwear	Men's Track or Sweat Suits
Men's Casual Trousers	Hoodies	Warm Sweaters
New Socks	New Underwear (briefs, boxers, thermal)	

Toiletries

Travel Size Toothpaste	Travel Size Deodorant	Travel Size Shaving Cream*
Travel Size Toothbrushes	Disposable Razors (3+ blades)	

** These items are particularly needed by our Guests*

We would like to thank St Matthew's for the continued use of the facilities for collecting, packaging and shipping the needed items without which the ministry would not be possible.

Flower Deliveries

Due to the thoughtfulness and generosity of a couple in our neighbourhood, we were able to drop off flowers to some of our seniors who find it physically difficult to come to church. From time to time, they also deliver to senior's homes and some hospitals wishing to add brightness and a smile to someone's day.

Flowers always make people better, happier and more helpful. They are sunshine, food and medicine to the soul.

~ Luther Burbank



◆ Remember, if you lose a sock in the dryer, it comes back as a Tupperware lid that doesn't fit any of your containers.

◆ Tablets were replaced by scrolls. Scrolls were replaced by books. Now we scroll through books on tablets.

◆ How did Scrooge win the football game? The ghost of Christmas passed.

Youth

Christine Ivy

Our Youth have gone back to school—there has been so much change for them, and I know schools are trying hard to keep students safe—and I'd love to be able to offer to them a safe, clean youth room, too! Our Youth Room, in the basement near the Kingsley School, has been used for storage for most of the past two years. It has some peeling paint, and really needs a fresh new couch and carpeting, too. I have so appreciated seeing people in person these last couple months, and the beauty of the sanctuary and acoustics... and I'd like to create a little sanctuary in our youth room where we can come and meet Jesus together. The goal is hospitality, and I need the help of the congregation to make this happen. Please email me or call if you have any ideas for how to get this ready ASAP for our teens! civy@saintmatts.ca , 647-924-0842.

As we take small steps towards rebuilding our community of youth during these unprecedented times, I have been able to meet with youth for one-on-one for walks outside or over Zoom. It has been good to develop these relationships, and I hope they will lay a foundation for us gathering again in-person one day. Our big event last month was hosted by All Saint's Kingsway, which had a "Glow Party" on October 30th. We wore costumes, carved pumpkins, and played games. It was a lot of fun. In November, St. Olave's is hosting a Crafts Night on the 27th at 7:30 pm. Working with the local churches has helped our small group of youth connect to fun activities with other Christian teens.



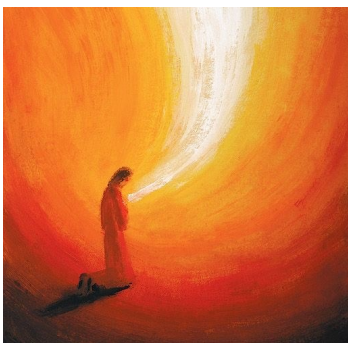
Online is still where much of the relationships with the youth happen. On Instagram, I am sharing a photo-a-day and encouraging youth to join me in a reading plan on The Bible App called "How to Pray." There's a short and thoughtful devotional and a few passages of scripture each day. November 28th is the first day of Advent, and we'll be doing a word-a-day Advent calendar reflection, which encourages people to take a picture (or find a picture online) and reflect on the word. Our youth also try to gather about once every two weeks to play games online together on Discord—please pray for this important ministry where we have fun and develop friendships!



If you believe in the power of prayer and have a heart for youth, I'd like to invite you to join me in praying. Please be in touch. civy@saintmatts.ca 647-924-0842.

Prayer begets revival, which begets more prayer.

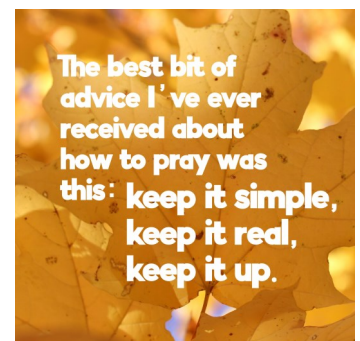
~Jim Cymbala



*Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
but those who hope in the Lord
will renew their strength.*

*They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.*

Isaiah 40:30-31 NIV



The Food Cupboard is Reopening

Noel & Sally Martin, Lianne Thompson

As we all know, the COVID pandemic shut down many programs and services. Hardest hit by these closures were those in the community struggling to make ends meet for their families.

St. Matthew's outreach programs were affected, too, including our small but mighty Food Cupboard ministry.

With vaccinations on the rise and safer spaces to meet, we are delighted to announce that we will be reopening the Food Cupboard onsite at St. Matthew's during the month of January!

How can you help?

- With your support, we will restock the cupboard with non-perishables through the month of December in preparation for opening in the new year. As you are able, please start gathering foods from the list below and bring them to the church starting Sunday, December 5th. A box will be in the narthex at the top of the stairs to place your offerings.
- The Food Cupboard team needs new helpers! Noel and Sally Martin will be leading the team, and we need two or three additional teams (singles, couples, or families) to help organize and bag the food and be part of a rotating schedule to hand out food once a week for an hour from the church (dates and times to be confirmed).

Please contact Sally or Noel at sallyannmartin17@gmail.com or call 416-622-1154 if you have questions or would like to join the Food Cupboard team.

<i>Non-perishable items needed for the food cupboard</i> <i>Items marked with ** are particularly needed right now, but all items are welcome</i>	
Large cans of pasta sauce	Instant oatmeal **
Large cans spaghetti & meatballs **	Small boxes of cereal **
Cans of soups (some chunky) **	Peanut butter
Pork and beans	Jam / jelly **
Large cans of stew **	Cans of fruit **
Cans of vegetables **	Jello or other small packaged desserts
Cans tuna fish / salmon	Cookies (packaged) **
Bags of pasta (penne, spaghetti, etc)	Instant coffee / tea bags
Macaroni and cheese **	
Small items like toothpaste / soap etc. are also welcome.	

We Need a Youth Room Revamp!

We are looking for help to update our youth room so that it has a fresh coat of paint, newer seating and newer carpeting for the youth of our parish. We haven't attended in-person since the start of Covid-19 and want to make this space clean, welcoming, and ready for the youth's creative contributions.

If you have any ideas or connections, please email Christine Ivy at civy@saintmatts.ca or call the office.

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Dec 24

Family Service, 4:00 pm (in person & online)
Choral Eucharist, 7:00 pm (in person & online)
Candlelight Service, 10:00 pm (in person only)

Dec 25

Christmas Day, 10:00 am (in person & online)

Pastoral Care: Pastoral visits can be offered over the phone, by email or via Zoom. Due to current pandemic restrictions, we cannot offer visits. Please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca.

Partners in Prayer: Should you desire prayer for yourself or for another person, please make details known to Bob Holloway at 416-253-4909 or rholloway@sympatico.ca. If necessary, the request can be transmitted through the church office.

Cycle of Prayer: "Beloved, pray for us." This is Paul's way of asking the Thessalonians to pray for him (5:25) and it expresses the genuine need for believers to support one another through prayer. Each Sunday, we will be praying for individuals and families of St. Matthew's in the Prayers of the People. Each week, a few names will be mentioned in our prayers and we will have the opportunity to support one another through prayer. Please take the time to remember these people during the week in your own prayers as well. If you do not wish to be included in our "Cycle of Prayer" please let the office know and we will be sure to keep your name off the list.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Prayer Shawls are provided to those who need the warmth and comfort of God and St. Matthew's. If you would like a shawl for someone, please contact the office at 416-231-4014 or office@saintmatts.ca. If you are knitting shawls for this ministry, please contact the office to arrange to drop them off.

Join Us

Wednesday
10:30 a.m. BCP service
(in person & on YouTube)

Messy Church
Last Saturday of the month
Youth Games/Sports Night
Last Friday night of the month



Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
9:30 - 3:30

The office is operating remotely.
Telephone and email messages will
be checked and returned during
office hours.

GIFT Groups

The Rev. Philip Stonhouse, Priest-in-charge
416-231-3060 / philipstonhouse@saintmatts.ca

The Rev. Gail Marshall, Deacon
The Rev. Merv Mercer, Honorary Assistant
Christine Ivy, Youth & Discipleship Assoc. Pastor
Jeff Bonner, Family Ministry Associate
Tyler Versluis, Music Director and Organist
Tom Travaglini, Sexton/Verger
Lisa Tait, Parish Administrator



Sunday Services

8:00 a.m. Quiet (in person)
(2nd Sunday of each month)

9:30 a.m. Casual (in person)

11:00 a.m. Classic (in person & online)

12:10 p.m. Online Coffee Hour

3962 Bloor Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9B 1M3

Email: office@saintmatts.ca ♦ Tel: 416-231-4014 ♦ Website: www.saintmatts.ca



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