



St. John's Dixie Quarterly

Volume 1, Issue 1
Summer, 2024

Welcome to St. John's Dixie! Welcome to the Quarterly!

Welcome to a new newsletter for the St. John's Dixie community. We plan on a new issue every season, so every quarter of the year. Hence the name, the Quarterly.

Our goal is to have this be a way of getting to know each other. Whether you worship with us in person, or online, or a bit of both, let's take some time to learn more about ourselves and what makes us a community.

In this inaugural issue, you can read about Fr Daniel's thoughts on the devastating fire at St. Anne's, and Bobby Briones' reflections on being a warden. You can learn about what the kids get up to at Sunday Funday Club. You can look forward to gardening, or look back on the festivities at our patronal festival on June 23.

You can read profiles of those you may think you already know, like Fr Daniel Brereton, Lori Corbett in the office, and our Children's Minister Kate Bastarache, as well as online coffee hour host Kathy Gilbert, who you may not have met yet.



And there may be things we missed. What would you like to see in the next issue? Who would you like to get to know? Is there something you'd like to contribute? Let me know.

The design will develop as we go along. If you have thoughts on the layout, colours, design features, or the choice of fonts, let me know. If you read this on your phone or a tablet and would prefer a different format / size, let me know.

-Janice Kretchman, editor
(stjohnsdixie.communications@gmail.com)

From Fr Daniel: Reflecting on a church fire

Many of you will have heard about and seen footage of the terrible destruction of St. Anne's Anglican Church in Toronto on June 9. Fr. Don Beyers, the priest of the parish, gave an eloquent and faith-filled interview to CBC regarding the loss of this historic building.

"The Church is the people, not the building" is a statement frequently made by those wanting to ensure that we don't become solely focussed on or identified with our physical property. Yet as true as this is, our buildings are more than simply a physical edifice to meet in.

Churches are sacred spaces, hallowed by generations of prayer and worship. They are places where people have joyously celebrated life's new beginnings, and have mourned together as lives have ended.

Churches also contain sacred images, vessels, and vestments. Some of these may be valuable pieces of art, as in the case of St. Anne's murals painted by Canada's famous Group of Seven. Or they may be things which have enormous sentimental value, given in memory of loved ones and in thanksgiving for God's blessings.

Perhaps even more importantly, church buildings are touchstones, connecting us to one



another through shared memories; the physical spaces alive with the shades of the past. Our buildings play a crucial role in people being a community. I'd go further and say the Church is the people gathered for worship and ministry.

St. John's itself burned down in 1924 after being struck by lightning. At that time, the congregation rallied with other members of the community to ensure it was rebuilt – its place firmly established not only physically in the community, but spiritually in the lives of its members. It mattered to people that the Church of St. John's continue to be here.

I can't help wondering, if our building were to be destroyed again, what difference would that make now? To our members, to the community around us, to the wider church?

Of course, many would be sad, but what would they be sad about? Would it be the loss of a touchstone with their own memories or would it have an impact on their lives today? Would the wider community notice if our church wasn't here, or are we simply a building they pass to get to the cemetery?

What are we known for in our community? What should we be known for? What could we point to as our legacy even if all our property was utterly wiped away?

As we pray for the people of St. Anne's and their recovery as a church, let us also commit ourselves to making St John's a vital ministry to the people of our community.





Getting to know... Kathryn Gilbert, Zoom Coffee Hour Host

What is your favourite hymn / composer / style of music?

I like a variety of music, but mostly classic rock and pop. Favourite composer would be Tchaikovsky.

What is your favourite bible verse / character / story?

Jeremiah 29:11

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

You can (hypothetically speaking) invite three people, real or fictional, to a dinner party. Who would they be and what would you serve?

My dad. I'm a daddy's girl and I miss the conversations and debates we used to have.

We could discuss anything and he always listened and respected my views even when they weren't his.

Shirley Chisholm. She's kind of my hero. I would love to talk with her about her challenges and accomplishments. She was a preschool teacher and pushed against the current.

Alfie Kohn. He's probably my education hero. I would love to discuss learning theory with him and I have a few questions about his writing and philosophy I'd love to ask.

Is there anything else you want to share?

I love lighthouses I'm a science nerd, well, a nerd in general. And I'm really thankful to have found St. John's Dixie.

How online coffee hour got started

Fr Daniel started online coffee hour during the pandemic, and was joined by parishioners from nearby and far away. Some who found him on Twitter joined in to see what our church was really like. One of those people was Kathryn (Kathy) Gilbert.

Once we were able to meet in person again, and Fr Daniel was wanted at in-person coffee hour, he was no longer able to host.

Kathy and Gael stepped forward to continue the online coffee hour once every two weeks. The sense of community already established was too strong to just let it go.

And that sense of community proved pivotal to Kathy when she later dealt with a cancer diagnosis. "I could not have made it without that group," she says. "The cards, the conversations, the prayers all meant so much." Indeed, when she was in the waiting room before surgery, she finally understood what people mean when they say "I felt your prayers."

Kathy continues to host online coffee hours every two weeks, and joins our Tuesday evening Bible studies, where she enjoys the thoughtful, loving approach to learning more about and coming closer to God.





Getting to know... Kate Bastarache, Children's Minister

When did you start working at St. John's?

September of 2023.

What's the best part of your job?

Working with and interacting with the kids as I hopefully am connecting with them and am making a small difference to them.

What do you wish people knew about your job?

It is probably one of the best jobs at the church as I get to connect with the young people who are the future of the church. Both the children and I get to have fun while I educate them.

What is your favourite hymn / composer / style of music?

My music style is eclectic as I will listen to all types of music and genres.

What is your favourite bible verse / character / story?

I think Noah is one of my favorite bible characters as he obeyed God without asking for explanations and as a result he learned that God would never abandon him. I like applying this moral to my own life.

You can (hypothetically speaking) invite three people, real or fictional, to a dinner party. Who would they be and what would you serve?

I would invite people from heaven - my mom, my grandmother, and my grandfather as I would like to have more time with them. I would serve a simple meal as the meal is not the important part of the experience, it would be being able to spend time with the people I love.

Is there anything else you want to share?

I would like to thank everyone at St. John's for giving me an opportunity and for welcoming me as well as my family into the congregation. The support shown to the Children's Ministry has been overwhelming whether it be attending Messy church, donating craft materials, or accepting Sunday smiles made by the children.

A look inside the children's ministry: Interview with Kate Bastarache

What is important to you about the children's ministry?

Teaching the children using fun methods is the number one priority for me as the children's minister. Kids wanting to come to Sunday Funday club means that the children's program will continue to grow.

What should the rest of the congregation know about the kids, and the activities you plan for them?

The kids work hard while in Sunday School even though they don't realize they are working as they are having fun. The activities that I plan support the lessons. For example, a story about Noah and the rainbow was followed by an experiment that involved using rainbow skittles and water to create a rainbow on the plate.

What's been the most surprising thing about your work here this past year?

I have learned and gained more than I feel I have given. Working with the children and seeing their progress as well as the support given to the program by the congregation has been amazing.

When are the kids "off" for the summer, and do you have any ideas for what they can do in lieu of Sunday Funday while on "vacation?"

June 23 was the last day of Sunday Funday Club before breaking for the summer. Children work so hard during the school year that when summer comes they need to use the time to just be kids and have fun. But reading books is always good, and there are some good craft ideas on Pinterest.



Do you like it better when there are fewer kids than expected, or more kids than expected on a given day?

Because of my programming experience as a librarian I can adapt. If there are many kids then it is a fun time, however keeping kids on track can be a challenge. Having few kids allows for connections to be strengthened, however it's hard to encourage participation.

How are the Messy Church events going? Do you want to change them up at all next year?

The introduction of Messy Church was a success as we now have adult members of the congregation joining to see what's going on! I'd like to move them to every other month as they are a lot of work and they do add extra cost to the church. If we keep them to every month then I would like to ask for adult volunteers to help out.



Getting to know...

Lori Corbett, Church Administrator

When did you start working at St. John's?

I have been with St. Johns since June, 2012. I replaced Parveen Mehta upon her retirement.

What's the best part of your job?

The best part of my job are the people. I appreciate the people that I work with and the people that I serve at St. John's.

What do you wish people knew about your job?

I wish people knew that I don't make decisions, just enforce the decision of the Corporation. And that these decisions are made for everyone's benefit and safety. People will often tell me that this is not how we did it before. Things evolve although slowly in church time, but at one time we never had to wear a bike helmet or seat belts. We've learned.

What is your favourite hymn / composer / style of music?

I have a few favourite hymns but I would say that I am fond of Shine Jesus Shine. I like upbeat, sing-along hymns.

What is your favourite bible verse / character / story?

Luke 6. 27-31. Do unto other as you would have done to you.

I really believe that kindness should prevail. You can get your message across without cruelty and intimidation.

You can (hypothetically speaking) invite three people, real or fictional, to a dinner party. Who would they be and what would you serve?

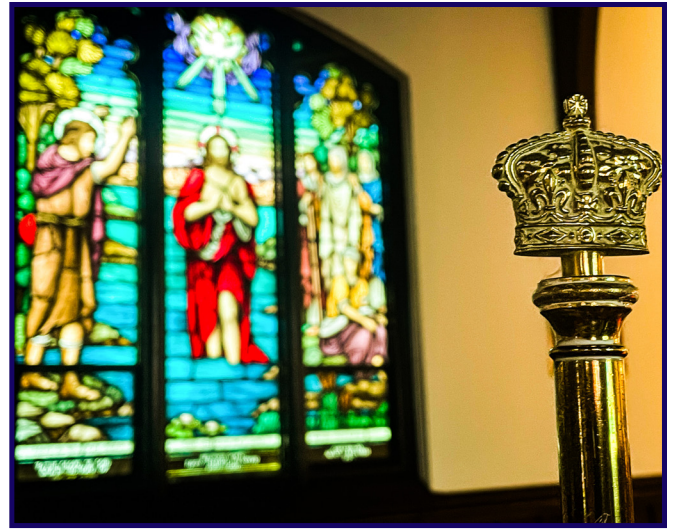
The people that I would invite to dinner are people that are no longer with me and I hold so dear to me. I would love to have just one more evening with my son, Kyle, my mom, Wendy and my son's girlfriend, Calea. It would not matter what I served I would just like to have one more opportunity to talk and hug them all closely. Family is everything to me and not having these people anymore has left a hole in my heart. Please don't get me wrong, I still cherish the ones with me still and they are the lights of my life but I miss these people every day.

Is there anything else you want to share?

I love my job and I feel blessed to have this opportunity. I pray that I represent St. John's in an honourable light. I enjoy coming to work everyday to new adventures and challenges. From the people who come here once to people that are here everyday I want to be welcoming and happy to share this place with them.

What it means to be a churchwarden

by Bobby Briones



It has taken me over two years to fully comprehend the duties/responsibilities of a churchwarden. If it took me this long to get settled, does the congregation know what it means to be a churchwarden? Yes, Canon 15 of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Toronto describes the job, but you have to be in the position to fully understand what it all means.

What was interesting to me was that the #1 “power” of a churchwarden is a legal one. “They shall and may sue and be sued.” Really? (N.B. *Not really. The churchwardens are covered under Diocesan Insurance.*) Nonetheless, that almost stopped me from being a churchwarden, but somehow, I knew it had to be more.

As with all work that involve serving God in any capacity, one must discern and reflect. Being a churchwarden is more than meets the eye. It is not only concerning the structure of the church, it is not just signing cheques every 2 weeks, it is not just the meetings, it is not just setting up the yearly budget, but it is more about a bridge between priest, staff, congregation, and community.



A churchwarden is a steward of the church, but it is also about demonstrating empathy, compassion, understanding, and care for the people that make up the church and the community. This may seem like a lot of influence and power – and it is – but there are checks and balances to avoid this. And one must remember every day that all of this is to do God’s will and not humankind’s agenda.

I enjoy being a churchwarden and I know I will not be a lifer. There is a term limit. It truly is a rewarding volunteer opportunity and I encourage everyone to look into their heart and discern if this is something for you. If it is, great! Talk to Fr. Daniel or a churchwarden.

Get out and garden

by Bobby Briones



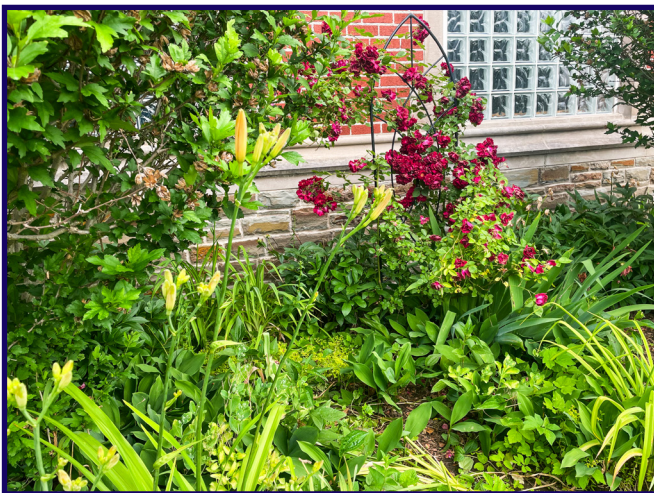
Since the pandemic, gardening has become a popular activity in Ontario. According to Statistics Canada, in 2022, Canadians spent \$2.9B on their gardens, a 4% increase from 2021 and is 14% higher than the average of the past 4 years. And about 50% of that came from Ontario.

Gardening is a great activity for the young and the not-so-young. It promotes physical health. It gets you outdoors, uses muscles that you didn't even know you had. And you get to work with dirt.

Yet, in Ontario, many don't have the chance to garden. Nearly 20% of Ontarians live in apartments. So how can this segment of the population join the gardening-party?

You can buy planters/pots to plant things, but it is not the same. Join a community garden where you rent a big planter and plant away. Or, a cheaper alternative, one can volunteer to help in a church garden. Church gardens are a great way for those who don't have access to outdoor space to work on the land. Church gardens are the responsibility of the congregation and unless your church has oodles of money, it is maintained by volunteers.

This year, more people have shown not just interest in the gardens at St. John's Dixie but are actually participating in its growth and beautification. We almost have 10 people volunteering in some capacity. We have pulled numerous weeds, trimmed bushes, tilled the soil, fertilized the grass, and planted veggies and herbs that everyone can enjoy come the Fall.





Getting to know... Fr Daniel Brereton, Incumbent

When did you start working at St. John's?

I first came in November of 2012 and filled in for Fr. Stephen Mackison for 2 Sundays while he had chicken pox. He asked me if I would be willing to join St. John's in a part time capacity as an Associate. Following Vestry of 2013 the Churchwardens made the position full time. When Fr. Stephen left in 2015 I remained as the Interim-Priest-in-charge while the Parochial Committee interviewed possible candidates to be the Incumbent. As a member of staff I could not apply for the position according to diocesan rules. In 2016 Bishop Philip Poole appointed me Priest-in-Charge and in 2016, Bishop Jenny Andison appointed me Incumbent. So I've been here for going on 11 years and have held four different positions!

What's the best part of your job?

I love the relationships you build with individuals and their families over many years, seeing kids grow up and walking with families through life's various milestones.

What do you wish people knew about your job?

That it isn't just Sunday mornings and preparing for Sunday. In this work you wear many different hats – priest, counselor, social worker, administrator, teacher, officiant, fundraiser, accountant, etc. And juggling all those different skill sets and competing demands time can be challenging.

What is your favourite hymn / composer / style of music?

When it comes to church music I'm a traditionalist. I like grand, triumphal sounding hymns with lots of alleluias. For All the Saints is a hymn I love though there are so many verses we don't often sing the whole thing!

What is your favourite bible verse / character / story?

One favourite is the parable of the Prodigal Son. I love the way God is portrayed as a loving father desperate to reunite his family. And I appreciate the way Jesus shows the relationship between the brothers, the father's love for both and that he leaves the story open ended, not telling us whether the elder brother is able to get past his anger and join the feast.

You can (hypothetically speaking) invite three people, real or fictional, to a dinner party. Who would they be and what would you serve?

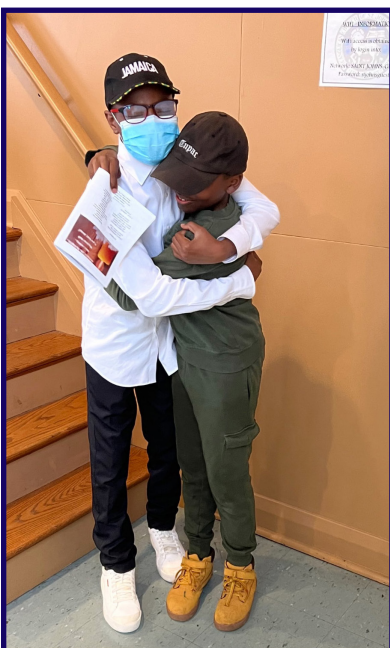
Jesus, Siddartha Gautama (Buddha), and the Prophet Mohammed. I'd have it catered because I wouldn't want to miss a word of the conversation between them.

St. John the Baptist Day, 2024



St. John's Dixie
@StJohnsDixie

So much happened today we're losing track! We also dedicated a new aspersorium and aspergillum (water pot and sprinkler) which we then used to bless the crosses for the children. Thank you to Susan and Carol Finlay for this lovely gift to the church.



St. John's Dixie @StJohnsDixie · 23 Jun

We honoured 4 parishioners for their dedicated ministries to the church and wider community: Sebastian Fryfogel, Parveen Mehta, Joseph Nugent and Ethel Reid. 2/4

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