

MESSAGE FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH



Newsletter for August 2023

Priest's Message: Discretionary Fund & Outreach

During the last three Sundays of July, the Gospel each week included a different parable, each of them focused on sowing seeds and producing crops. For those who may have missed my sermons (and I know you all have *very* good reasons why you did...) let me summarize them quickly here: 1) God is generous in distributing his blessings, "sowing seed" even on those that don't at first appear to be good soil; we should be as generous 2) although God's field will always contain a mix of the good (wheat) and the bad (weeds), we are to focus more on sowing good seed than on tearing up what we assume to be bad; 3) God can take the smallest offering made in faith and do something incredible with it – love, kindness and generosity have a way of spreading!

There are very generous people at St. John's, amongst our local and our online communities. I am very thankful for all that people give of their time, skills and financial resources, towards the ministry here. One way many of you have made a big difference in other people's lives is through the Priest's Discretionary Fund. There are however some misunderstandings about what this is, how it works and what it's for, so I thought I would discuss this Fund in the newsletter. Get comfortable, this will take a while....

Why is it called "Discretionary"?

It is called a *discretionary* fund, because it's at the discretion of the priest alone to decide for whom, and for what purposes the funds collected are used. This allows members of the congregation and others in the wider community to make requests and be assisted discreetly, while protecting their privacy. Although the information is not shared, I do keep a log of who I have assisted, how much was given, for what purpose and on which date. This is so that I can ensure funds are distributed fairly and judiciously.

How is the money accounted for?

As with any other donation to the church, when someone contributes to the discretionary fund, the amount is processed through our treasurer (Lori Corbett). She deposits it, adding the amount to my available funds and recording it so the donor will get a tax receipt for it. In cases where cash has been given to me directly (which we discourage), the money is turned over to Lori and the same process occurs. It is imperative that proper records are kept and transparency maintained with regards to the amount of money received. There is always a record of how much was given, who gave it and when. This info is available to our auditors as well as to our churchwardens. If money is donated with the stipulation that it go to the Discretionary Fund, it does. We do not use it for any other purpose.

Can the priest spend it on himself?

NO!!! (Given that James and I are taking a trip to Portugal and Spain in October, I want to make that *very* clear!) Funds are not immediately or directly available to me. Donations are deposited into the bank and when I wish to draw on the fund, I request an amount from the churchwardens, who must then sign a cheque for the amount. Though I never disclose information on *who* the funds are going to, the Churchwardens can and have asked questions about the amount requested and what it is being used for. They understand and respect that I always protect the confidentiality of the one receiving assistance.

What is it used for?

The Discretionary Fund is meant to be used for emergencies in temporary or transitional circumstances when other sources of assistance are unavailable. Requests for discretionary funds vary widely, but generally fall into the categories of 1) food and shelter; 2) medical / health needs; 3) unexpected costs.

Amounts given depend on the need. Depending on my familiarity with the person(s) and what the funds are being requested for, evidence of need may need to be supplied. If a large amount is requested, this generally indicates a systemic financial problem that I try to address with the person; finding other community resources or programs that can assist them. **The fund is not meant to furnish families or individuals with *ongoing* financial assistance.**

Is it only for parishioners? Do people pay back what they are given?

I am careful to ensure that funds are always available to assist members of our own community, but occasionally people outside our congregation are assisted with small amounts – generally for food and shelter needs.

Many people who have received funding *do* offer to pay some or all of it back, and if they wish to donate to the church it is accepted. However, it is *never* expected nor is it a condition of receiving. Generally, having to pay back a grant from the Discretionary Fund would simply put the person into more financial need down the road. Jesus told his disciples: “*You have received without payment. Give without payment.*”

Is a request ever refused?

Yes. Sometimes I am unable to meet the full need, but can provide partial assistance. Sometimes I feel it would not be a legitimate use of the fund. Sometimes the person has already received assistance and it would not be fair to give the same person more within a specific amount of time. Sometimes I do not know the person well enough and cannot get enough information to be able to validate the request. Sometimes I simply have nothing in the fund at the time of the request.

Are gift cards part of the Discretionary Fund?

Yes, and these can be very helpful. As with cash donations, the amount of the card is credited to the donor for tax purposes. Cards are kept by me. I’m able to use these cards (rather than giving out cash) to help with food and other needs. All gift cards are welcome, but I find the most useful are those from places like Walmart, where they can be used for a variety of needs in one place: food, clothing, personal items.

Tim Hortons cards are also helpful for transient people needing a meal. Every little bit helps, but keep in mind that a card with only \$5.00 on it can’t purchase very much and I generally have to give an individual more than one card to get them a meal.

If donating a gift card, *PLEASE* ensure that the amount on the card is written down, either on the card itself or on the receipt given to me with the card.

What is the difference between the Discretionary Fund and Outreach?

Outreach is the pastoral ministry of the whole parish which seeks to address community needs *outside the church* with the resources of the congregation. Our support of organizations like the Mississauga Food Bank and the Open Door are examples. We also provide Outreach by providing free space for other groups like the Mississauga Seniors Program and Guides and Scouts. Needs *within* the congregation are generally dealt with through the Discretionary Fund.

Prior to the pandemic, St. John's had an Outreach Committee which oversaw the annual distribution of a budgeted amount to different community programs, as well as raising funds to support other initiatives. This fall we are meeting with a diocesan consultant to do a needs assessment of our community, matching them with the resources we have available. Based on this we can look at new outreach initiatives and whether we need a standing committee for Outreach, or simply 'task forces' for specific initiatives.

In past years, the Outreach Committee granted the priest an automatic amount towards the Discretionary Fund. In the absence of an Outreach Committee, the Churchwardens have continued to budget the same amount of \$1500 each year for Discretionary. The rest of the funds are donated by parishioners. Unlike other budgeted items, money in the Discretionary Fund, can be carried over to the following year if not entirely used – although most years any remaining funds are used up over the Christmas season. Money is never taken out of General Operations to be used for Discretionary or Outreach purposes. Only donations given specifically for these purposes are used.

If you are able to do so, please consider making a contribution to the Discretionary Fund from time to time, alongside your regular offering. This allows us to help so many within our parish and in the wider community who are struggling.

Daniel +

Refugees and New Canadians

Due to a variety of causes – political instability, climate change, poverty and persecution (religious, sexual and ethnic) – mass migration is becoming a reality. Under the law, those claiming refugee status must be accepted into Canada while their claim is being investigated and processed. Many refugees are coming from Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda, as well as South India and Sri Lanka. They are housed in temporary shelters, but due to a lack of availability, many are being housed in motels.

In the recent past, we have assisted three families settle in Canada. We are currently assisting two more. We have not officially "sponsored" families as this requires a congregation to become legally responsible for a family *for at least three years* and that is not something we feel able to do.

Through your generosity, we have assisted and continue to assist new Canadians in finding housing, providing furniture, clothing and household items and finding employment. Our Administrator and I have put together information on local programs that can assist those who have newly come to Canada with legal aid, finding housing, food, assistance for new mothers etc.

St. John's proximity to a large shelter on Cawthra Road, as well as to several small motels along Dundas means we are seeing many people newly immigrated to Canada – some, though not all, claiming refugee status. Many are Anglicans and naturally seek out an Anglican church upon arrival. Wherever people are from, whatever brought them to Canada and wherever they are staying, **they are always welcome to worship with us and become part of our congregation.**

That said, there are many needs presented to us that we simply cannot meet. I have the difficult task almost every week of meeting with newly arrived immigrants and having to explain the limits of our ability to help. In many

cases, refugees have been given inaccurate information regarding what to expect when they arrive. Many are told they will be given “a house”, when what they are given is temporary housing in a motel room. Many are told they will be able to work – when getting a work visa takes months and all they can do in the meantime is work for those who will pay them “under the table”, which leaves them open to being taken advantage of. Many are preyed upon by people posing as “immigration lawyers” who take their money, promising to get them work and to bring their family to Canada, only to see that “lawyer” disappear with all the funds they have. Most have no idea of the cost of renting even a small apartment in the GTA.

We will continue to welcome all who come to our doors and assist where and as we can, but the need is great and the amount of time required is proving prohibitive for a church with one priest. We will be looking at partnering with other churches and community programs to provide more coordinated assistance. If you have any interest or expertise in this area, I would love to speak with you!

Daniel +

Children’s Ministry

As previously announced, Janice will be stepping down from leading the Children’s Ministry. She will continue to be a part of our community. Kate Bastarache will be joining us as the new Children’s Minister. Please welcome Kate and her family (husband Mike and son Matthew) when they join us in September. Kate is looking for people interested in assisting with the children’s program. Due to her other work as a librarian, Kate will be away one Sunday a month. She will still organize the lesson/activity for that Sunday but will need assistance covering that Sunday. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Fr. Daniel or the church office so we can put you in touch with Kate.

Message from Janice Kretchman

I can't tell you how wonderful it's been being a part of building the children's ministry here at St. John's. I've loved every minute of it, and every child I've gotten to know. There are now other demands on my time, and I no longer have the creative energy to lead and plan for it on a weekly basis. Having Kate around to do that, while I stay involved in a more supportive role, is the best of both worlds. Thank you to the children, parents, care-givers and members of the congregation who have all been so supportive of me as Children’s Minister.

Janice

Choir

The choir will be on hiatus for the summer months of July and August. The choir will be resuming September 10, 2023. During the summer months, it has been decided by the Corporation to employ one soloist for each Sunday of the summer to help to lead the singing during the choir’s absence.

The Choir Needs You!!!

Calling all singers! We are looking for more members of the choir!! No matter your experience, if you enjoy singing, or would just like to become more comfortable with singing, please consider joining this friendly and fun community. As music plays a large role in Anglican Liturgy, it is a very important and valuable way to participate in church life while offering your talents. Come hone your singing skills while making new friends! **Reading music is not a requirement.**

Jeff makes practice tracks for music anthems that we learn, so you can hear and practice exactly what your part is from the comfort of your home. Please don't worry, you will never be put in a position to do a solo. There is also the option to join only for the music heavy seasons of Advent and Lent - but you might have so much fun that you decide to stick around for the entire year. We rehearse weekly on Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm.

Finally - many anthems include parts for other instruments such as trumpet, flute, violin or cello, and I'd love to know if anybody has any hidden talents that they'd love to share!

Please speak to me after one of the services and let me know if you'd be interested in lending your vocal or instrumental talents! You can also email me at jeffreymcleod@gmail.com

Jeff

St. John's Auxiliary

Thank you to Jean McQuaid and Rosemary Birch for leading the St. John's Auxiliary over the past several months.

Jean and Rosemary have decided to step down from leading this group and after conversation with Fr. Daniel it was decided to disband the Auxiliary as it is currently structured. Jean and Rosemary will focus on the upcoming Christmas Bazaar to be held in November and will continue to run regular meetings of the Craft Group.

A new Advisory Board, consisting of parishioners representing the diverse demographic of the parish will begin meeting this fall and will take over some of the "visioning" work that began amongst the members of the Auxiliary. We are sincerely grateful to Jean and Rosemary for their time and work in reinvigorating the laity's involvement in the ministry of our church.

Pop Tab Collection

Alice Dods will continue to collect pop tabs for the Legion Branch # 382. You may find a large can for depositing these in the Parish Hall on the far table by the double doors. Please leave tabs there.

Milk Bag Collection

We are no longer collecting milk bags for the weaving mats program. Please don't leave them in the church for our disposal.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

Wednesday Holy Eucharist Services

We will **not be** holding the Wednesday service during the month of August. This allows us all to come back refreshed and ready for the upcoming fall. We will resume this service On September 13th at 10:00 a.m. with an optional Bible Study to follow.

Fr. Daniel's Holidays

This year Fr. Daniel is splitting up his month's holidays into two weeks at the end of August which will be including the Sundays of August 27th and September 3rd. He will also be taking two weeks in October which will be announced later. While he is off in August, we will be offering Morning prayer for these two Sundays.

EVENTS INFORMATION:

Mississauga Service to Seniors Program:

We will continue to support the Mississauga Service to Senior program in our Parish Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 – noon. Please understand our only involvement with the program is providing the space but it seems a few of our parishioners have become involved and enjoy the interactions with them. Their literature is available on the table outside the office and on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall under Senior Group.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Tuesday Night Zoom Bible Study

We will be holding this group for the first two weeks of August on the 1st and August 8th. After this it will be discontinued for the remainder of the month. We will resume on September 12th at 7:00 p.m.

Prayer Group

We will be suspending Prayer Group for the month of August as well. It will resume on Thursday September 14th at 10:00 a.m.

Open Door

Each month, we are collecting for either the Open Door or the Mississauga Food Bank. Each month we alternate between the two, **August is Mississauga Food Bank Month.**

The Mississauga Food Bank is looking to supply their clients with non- perishable, non- expired, unopened food products. If you would like to contribute to this very needed organization, please leave you donations on the table in the hallway outside the church.

Donating To The Church

Just a reminder, during the season of summer holidays, we have many options in order to ensure your contributions get to the church when you can't. We do accept e-transfers now. You just have to use the email address of church@stjohnsdixie.com There is no need for a password we have auto deposit. You can also donate through Canada Helps, though there is a small administrative fee which is taken off your donation. Their website is www.canadahelps.org or you can use the QR code provided below. Of course, you can always mail in your offering at St. John's Anglican Church, 719 Dundas Street East, Mississauga, ON L4Y 2B5. Please do not send cash in the mail!



LINKS TO PROGRAMING ABOVE:

St. Johns Church website

www.stjohnsdixie.org

YouTube Sunday School link:

<https://bit.ly/3ah5XpW>

Online Coffee Hour Zoom Link: Zoom Meeting at 11:30 a.m.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83962667012?pwd=UGljbnZ2WUIMaVlzNlRtU0Q5SmxxZz09>

Meeting ID: 839 6266 7012

Passcode: 112233

Online Bible Study Zoom Link: (Zoom Meeting only Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82570649568>

Online Prayer Group – Thursday at 10 a.m.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86710167010>



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If you would like to receive this Newsletter by email, please call 905-277-0462 or email church@stjohnsdixie.com