

Annual Vestry Meeting

Sunday, February 5, 2023 12:30 pm



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VI. Questions and Clarification (if any)
Motion to Adopt the Reports

VII. Unfinished Business

We propose the following Agenda items from the 2020 and 2021 Vestry meetings, which were deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, be referred to the Advisory Board for consideration and appropriate action:

- A. Natural Church Development (parish life development)
- B. Prayer Mission
- C. Community Dinners/ Hospitality

VIII. New Business

A. Presentation: Indigenous & Non-Indigenous Anglican Relationships

B. Small Group Discussions:

Evangelization & Sunday Worship

Parish Covenant

Pipe Organ

Furnace/ Roof Fundraiser(s)

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C. Any Other New Business

IX. Elections

X. Budget 2023

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XI. Closing Prayer

Motion to Adjourn

“Side by Side” Song

(excerpt)

Oh, we ain't got a barrel of money
Maybe we're ragged and funny
But we'll travel along singing a song
Side by side.

Indigenous Declaration

We will begin this worship service by acknowledging that we are meeting on aboriginal land that has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. In particular, we acknowledge the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Nipissing First Nation Anishnabe. This territory is covered by the Robertson-Huron and Upper Canada Treaties.

We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

O Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of all people, give us opportunities for reflection, and the grace to use all time wisely. Your desire is for the whole world to be reconciled through Jesus Christ, and that we would leave behind all habits and desires which do not honour you. In this season, we are invited to ponder relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Help us to be agents of reconciliation and heralds of your truth, that your kingdom may come, and your will may be done, on earth as it is in heaven. All this we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, by whose Spirit we can accomplish all that you desire. Amen.

St. Brice's On-Line Vestry Meeting Minutes

February 6, 2022, 1pm

- I. Opening Devotions by Rev. Peter Armstrong: Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes)
Opening Prayer and Territorial Acknowledgment: Rev. Peter Armstrong.
- II. Appointment of Vestry Clerk- Fay Ivany nominated Wendy Richard (Accepted)
Regrets: Amanda Adams, Dennis King, Rob McDonald, Rose Savage.
Attendance (via Video): Rev. Peter Armstrong, Debra Young, Sue Robineau, Rev. Marie Loewen, Art and Mary-Ellen Page, Fay Ivany, Eva Black, Nancy Armstrong, Kenneth Drysdale, Danielle and Tracy Lewis, David and Billi Onley-Lewis, Bill and Anne Burton, Diane McCaskill, Don and Barb Bonenfant, Janet Parfitt, Marion Russell, Aase Jensen, Sheldon and Wendy Richard.
- III. Motion to Adopt Agenda
Moved by: Debra Young
2nd by: Aase Jensen
Carried **Rev. Peter asked to speak briefly about Lawn Maintenance under New Business.
- IV. Motion to Adopt the Minutes of February 20, 2021 Vestry Meeting
2 Vestry Meetings last year-see Page 4 of Annual Report
Moved by: Don Bonenfant
2nd by: Sue Robineau
Error/Omissions: Page 5 of Annual Report - Section B, Paragraph 4 there is a

spelling error: Word “sprint” should be changed to “Spring”.
Carried unanimously.

V. Motion to Receive Reports as a block

Moved by: Diane McCaskill

2nd by: Fay Ivany

Carried.

VI. Questions and Clarification

Rob McDonald noted on Page 11 of the Rector’s Report that referred to “no-in person Sunday worship from Christmas 2022-mid June 2021” should be changed to “Christmas 2020”

Motion to Adopt the Reports as written

Moved by: Nancy Armstrong

2nd by: Debra Young

Carried.

VII. Unfinished Business

This business identified at the 2020 and 2021 Vestry Meetings has been deferred until after Covid-19 pandemic:

A. Natural Church Development (postponed)

B. Prayer Mission (postponed)

C. Community Dinners/Hospitality (postponed).

New Covid Guidelines announced:

50% capacity in church building if wearing masks and can maintain social distance (=approx. 69 people)

When infections are below 80 in 100 000 in our district we can sing and resume coffee hour.

VIII. New Business

A. Insurance Deductible

Rev Marie spoke

-Our deductibles have gone up

-Some things have a \$10 000 deductible (Sewer Backup)

-\$2500 deductible on other things

-\$5000 deductible (on some wind damage)

Propose to address at the meeting of New Board for 2022 which meets on Feb 24, 2022

Question by Art Page: Do we have check valves on our sewer lines? Rev. Peter did not know the answer

Report this question to the Property Committee to explore answers and costs.

Rev Marie spoke to the importance of “Reporting” regarding any possible future liability. Liability issue could be person abuse. Let Rev. Peter know immediately if there is a fire or theft in the building. Reporting documentation is vital in case of future liability claims against the church. Let the insurance company know if there is somebody who could possibly sue us (this is not a claim). Rev. Peter

mentioned there was some graffiti that we want to follow up with the North Bay Police.

B. Presentations

1. Anglican Foundation of Canada-presented by Rev. Marie Loewen
National group that responds to needs of the church
60 years since it started up
Its given just under 1 million dollars in Grant money to Anglican churches
They provide money for Physical plant (e.g., roof repairs) and Programming
(ie. to fund a school of ministry or children's ministry; e.g., Teen Lunch Program benefitted from this in 2021).

We have been members of the Anglican Foundation for many years for the small fee of \$50/year

The foundation manages benevolent funds ie. Hymn Books or Music equipment

Each Diocese can make 3 grant requests/year

Applications go through the local Deanery officials, meaning they are first presented at Executive Committee. It can take 6 months or longer to be approved and the requests are reviewed twice/year.

They have been very generous over the years. As parishioners we may want to consider the Anglican Foundation in our givings.

2. Primate's World Relief & Development Fund-presented by Marion Russell
PWRDF is a community-based organization that began in 1958 in Springhill, Nova Scotia

Its nice because as a donor, we can tell them where we want our money to go, to what countries, to what programs -- ie., perhaps a women's initiative to start up a small business or start a farm in her community.

If a community in Africa needs a well for drinking water-they approach somebody locally and then it moves forward to the wider Fund

They also have programs on Preventative Health Care, Women's issues, Food Security, Indigenous Programs. \$150 000 went to Northern Ontario reserves in Deer Lake. (Go to pwrdf.org to check it out!)

Question from Marion Russell- Could we set up a little box for donations? Marion offered to be caretaker of the funds and deliver the funds to Primate's World Relief.

Response-Fay Ivany said that there used to be envelopes in the back of the church for PWR Fund and you get a tax receipt for those donations.

C. Proposed Exterior Sign: Financing

A decision has been made not to proceed with the new sign until all or almost all funds are collected. The board (and a previous Vestry) agree it's a good idea and think it should be done and would be useful to the church.

The amount collected so far for in the new sign "cookie jar" is \$6302. The sign will cost about \$11 000 plus approximately \$4 500 for installation which totals almost \$16 000.

Question from Billi Onley-Lewis-If there is unused money from the roof can it be used towards the sign? Response from Don Bonenfant: \$8 600 was excess not used on the roof

\$4 300 went toward the new sign “cookie jar;” \$4 300 went towards Missions so there is no additional money left to put towards new sign.

Question from Eva Black-How was the \$4 300 to Missions distributed? Don Bonenfant: \$1 000 went to Camp Temiskaming; \$3 300 to ACW to distribute to different missions (see Page 40 in Treasurer’s Report).

Rev Marie suggested we may be able to apply to the Anglican Foundation. It might be worth speaking to the Executive Committee at the Diocese. The next Grant cycle is reviewed in May.

D. Parish Covenant

Revisit the Covenant on an annual basis as written in the Annual Report Pg 44-45.

E. Announcement by Rev. Peter: We need more volunteers to help with the lawn mowing

Debra Young did more than half the lawn mowing last year taking turns with Bill Burton, Rob McDonald and Rev. Peter

F. Rev. Peter suggested that things may not return to the way they were in 2019 before the pandemic. He proposed breaking into small groups to discuss “What is 1 thing you’d like St. Brice’s to work on even during the pandemic?”

Room #1: Auction would be a good idea but there are some concerns to work thru first

Room #2: Talk to somebody you haven’t seen in awhile, meet for coffee or go for a walk together. Do outdoor gatherings for music.

Room #3: Get people back to church. Perhaps people return in small groups on a rotational basis. Reach out to people we haven’t seen in awhile.

These suggestions will be sent along to the Board or Spiritual Development Committee.

IX. Elections

Rector’s Warden Amanda Adams

People’s Warden Fay Ivany

Deputy People’s Warden Bill Burton

Treasurer Don Bonenfant

Advisory Board Members

Nancy Armstrong

Jennifer Auger

Quinn Clement

Cathy Howe

David Lewis

Tracy Lewis

Rob McDonald

Synod Delegates Jennifer Auger & Nancy Armstrong

Alternate Synod Delegate Art Page

(There is unlikely to be a Synod in 2022 but we must be prepared in case the Bishop would call one.)

X. Budget 2022

Lease for copier in Office ends in April 2022. Plan is to keep the copier and buy it outright and eventually by a smaller model.

Motion to Adopt the Budget as written

Moved by: Don Bonenfant

2nd by: Bill Burton

Carried

Art Page added that "Don is doing a great job."

XI. Closing prayer by Rev. Peter Armstrong

Motion to Adjourn at 2:45 pm

Moved by: Aase Jensen

Carried

Respectfully submitted by Wendy Richard.

Rector's Report

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1: 2-6)

Dear Friends,

As in most of his letters, Paul begins his Letter to the Philippians by expressing thanks to God, because of their contribution to the work of the gospel. Paul does not claim that their work is finished, but his orientation is one of thanksgiving and joy in Christ's ministry.

In the same way, I want to begin this year's report by expressing gratitude to God for the privilege of serving among you, as we exercise ministry together. Often, parish life and events -- and annual reports -- are about the details. But all of this is under the umbrella of God's on-going mission to the world through the ministry of the Church, through the lens of the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and empowered by his Holy Spirit. We cannot do our ministry without God's abiding grace; and God chooses to use ordinary people like you and like me for his glory and his kingdom. Thanks be to God; and, thank you -- for who you are, and what you are doing.

I have chosen to divide my report into different sections. I will make comments which I hope are helpful, to understand the direction I believe God is calling us. Some people might choose to divide the sections differently. (For example, when I'm writing about the new exterior sign to engage with the community, is that a "Property" item, or an "Outreach" item?) However, I will try to cover all the bases.

I welcome feedback and engagement with what I have to share.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERNAL MINISTRIES
Sunday Mornings

Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a group of parishioners, who work behind the scenes to help ensure that things go relatively smoothly for our Sunday services. When the Altar Guild members are doing their job, almost no one notices. If there is a minor slip-up -- I can't think of a single one since I've been here as your rector -- *then* people often notice!

I especially want to express my appreciation to Susan Robineau, and the leadership she provides. Susan's attention to detail, and her organizational capacities, are astonishing. I believe that Susan and the other guild members would appreciate if there were one or two more people to contribute to their ministry.

Guild members are divided into teams. Contributing to the team means helping out once every four or five weeks. The hours are flexible, and the work is not difficult. I'd like to think

that I am not a fussy and demanding priest, and try to make decisions which are easier for the Altar Guild members. If you want to give this a try, or want more information, please talk with Susan.

Layreaders & Other Liturgical Ministries

As we all know, different people take turns helping things run smoothly on Sunday mornings, including reading Bible passages, greeting people as they arrive, displaying the PowerPoint slides, assisting at the altar, and leading Prayers of the People. All these ministries have value. When we contribute together, it helps bring home the point that we are *all* ministers, lay and ordained. Different ministers have different roles.

I note particularly that the parishioners who prepare the Prayers of the People seem to put a lot of thought and effort into the litanies they prepare.

For better or for worse, when an Anglican liturgy is underway, it's not easy to stop the train without some disruption. While I have some sense of what will be happening next, sometimes a layreader or eucharistic minister is trying to guess if my subtle signal during worship means, "Please extinguish the altar candles" or "Please get the processional cross," or "I think the burse is crooked," or whatever. As well, just about every priest has a few habits or details which another priest might not do.

I have been giving this some thought. I think it would be useful for me to review what happens during a typical Sunday service with some who minister on Sunday mornings. Incidentally, along with everyone else who helps on Sunday mornings, or who have taken on new roles, I mention particularly Kenneth Drysdale, who is assisting at the altar in the rotation now.

Rev. Marie Loewen

The Rev. Marie has been connected with St. Brice's in one way or another for decades, and her call to holy orders in the Church was discerned as she served here as a lay minister. The Rev. Marie has outstanding ministry charisms. I note particularly her teaching scripture, prayer practices, and spiritual gifts.

After the Rev. Marie retired from serving at St. Mary Magdalene's parish, Sturgeon Falls, we welcomed her back to St. Brice's. It was also a chance for Marie and Rob to ease into semi-retirement. However, God had other plans! After a few months, the Rev. Marie was approached to serve in an interim position in a parish in Bermuda. She and Rob have been there since last November, and their stay has been extended to around the end of April, 2023. After she returns, the Rev. Marie will be looking after another congregation for a few weeks, and will be the chaplain at the upcoming diocesan synod.

I don't think I'm speaking out of turn: The Rev. Marie is not one to "toot her own horn," but I received some feedback that her ministry in Bermuda is deeply appreciated. We continue to pray for her ministry, and look forward to seeing her, as the weather gets warmer.

Musicians

We are blessed with the contributions of a number of volunteer musicians: Members of The Band, Billi Onley-Lewis and Bob Burke all contribute to music here. We are blessed with a variety of musical styles.

Although her contributions diminished in the last year or two, Danielle Lewis also filled in occasionally on the guitar. Danielle is grateful to God that her health is significantly improved, and she has been able to return to work. Danielle and Tracy discerned this past summer that the Lord was calling them to ministry in a different direction. We sincerely wish them both very well.

9am/ 10am/11am

Attendance at all our services diminished during the pandemic, and while we ended the year with a slight increase in numbers for 10am and 11am, they have not reached our pre-pandemic levels. Of course, we want everyone to attend worship who can, and encourage folks to come. (We aren't meant to be solitary Christians – see Hebrews 10: 25 *et al.*).

When new people are integrated into parish life, they tend to come to the 11am services, or the joint 10am services at the beginning of each month. Attendance at 9am has dropped significantly while I have served at St. Brice's. I have been pondering the implications of this. There are folks who suggest that perhaps we not offer a 9am service at all. On the other hand, there are others for whom the worship style at 9am, or 11am, is not to their taste. I am sincerely concerned that reducing the opportunities for worship will *reduce* attendance, rather than increase it -- which of course is our goal, along with discipleship.

I strongly suspect that evangelisation has taken a back seat during the pandemic, in many parishes in North America. I think part of the problem is that if there are just a few people in the nave at the 9am service, the space can seem weirdly mostly empty, and perhaps a bit uncomfortable. At least as an interim step, I want to explore if there are ways in which we can make the 9am service more appropriately intimate for folks who do attend. I expect we will be talking about this further.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: INTERNAL MINISTRIES

During the Week

Quilters

In this era, when many people demand that their Amazon packages be delivered within hours, and politicians try to deliver five-second sound bites for the evening news, it is refreshing to see people engaged thoughtfully in a process which takes weeks, even months, to produce a finished result. The quilters group who gathers on Mondays continues to produce quilts, and cards, to benefit local charities. I am sure that anyone who is available and wants to learn quilting would be welcome.

Take Home Meals

Two or three teams of cooks meet about once a month (at different times) to produce healthy frozen meals. These meals are intended particularly for people who are living alone, are recovering from a hospital stay, or are otherwise in need of receiving simple home-cooked style meals. Since the pandemic began, the meals have been delivered on the first Tuesday of each month. Diane McCaskill coordinates this ministry, and provides the recipes. This initiative is a modest fund-raiser for St. Brice's, but also benefits the people who receive the meals.

Cooks have to take the provincial Food Handlers Course. (If needed, the parish will cover the cost of taking the course.) People can come to cook just about any time when the kitchen is

not otherwise in use. I believe that Diane would welcome more teams, to spread out the work.

Bible Study

When the pandemic began, the Tuesday evening Bible study switched to an on-line format. We meet for about an hour, starting at 7pm. We read a few verses, talk about them, and move on. This past year, we read through the Book of Revelation, and then First Corinthians. In late January 2023, we will begin reading the Book of Hosea. Different people know the contents of the Bible more or less well. One certainly doesn't have to be an expert to benefit from Bible studies. All are sincerely welcome. We are free to express our own opinions.

Evening Prayer

Like most of us, I have my own rhythm of personal daily devotions. Among them, I regularly use the older lectionary (systematic way of reading through scripture), which reads more of the Bible through the year. (I read the longer lectionary passages, not because I am more pious, but because of my deep need for God's work in my life!) As part of this devotional pattern, I offer a short service of Evening Prayer each Wednesday evening, beginning at 5:15pm.

There are a few faithful people who come to these services. I'd like to encourage others to come as well – at least to try it out. As a parishioner said to me a few weeks ago, amongst all the bustle of daily life, it's good to take time to slow down, and to focus especially on God's presence.

Food Bank

The Food Bank Ministry at St. Brice's has been offered at St. Brice's for many years, with Aase Jensen doing a wonderful faithful job at the helm. This past year, Aase decided to retire, and Shane and Jeneffer Auger are now overseeing the Food Bank.

Shane and Jen have taken on this job with some wonderful enthusiasm – promoting this ministry in a local store before Christmas (including receiving donations of hats and mittens), acknowledging clients' birthdays, offering personal hygiene kits, and collecting food "rescue" donations. The Food Bank hours are now Thursdays, 9-11am. Non-perishable food donations are always welcome.

Teen Lunch Program

During the pandemic, schools went to on-line learning for a time, and this certainly affected attendance at the Teen Lunch Program, which is offered every Friday lunchtime when school is in session. Attendance varies from week to week, but is now in the range of 30-50 hungry students.

Under the stewardship of Eva Black, the program is very well run. What particularly impresses me is that the volunteers see that this is not only a program to feed students with healthy meals, but is a ministry to demonstrate Christ's love. Each week begins with a devotion, after the meal has been prepared, and the parish hall has been set up for the students.

The volunteers at the Teen Lunch Program are not only from St. Brice's, but from several local churches. Volunteers were saddened by the death of Neil Wigney, one of our energetic volunteers, this past Christmas.

A.C.W. & Men's Group

St. Brice's Anglican Church Women's group has undergone a transition this past year. The pandemic prevented having the Spring Tea and Fall Lunch. Some older members have died, and the remaining members did not want to take on leadership positions. Cathy Turcotte and Andrea Campbell now provide leadership for the St. Brice's A.C.W., missions were supported financially at the end of the year (please see the Financial Report for details), and meetings are now being held regularly. Donations during funeral receptions are a revenue stream for the A.C.W.

There are plans to hold a Spring Tea and Bake Sale on 22 April, 11am-2pm, and already there is talk about offering another fund-raiser in the fall. All the proceeds which the A.C.W. raises goes to support missions work – locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Men's Group has not met since before the pandemic, but there are plans for some guys to put on a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper for parishioners, on Tuesday, 21 February, 5-6pm.

Prayer Chain

This is a group of people who pray regularly for people in need, or who give thanks to God. This Prayer Chain ministry is coordinated by Mary Ellen Page. Mary Ellen does a great job of passing on prayer requests, often with a suitable Bible verse or short devotional comment.

Confirmation/ Reception

After a delay because of COVID, Archbishop Anne Germond came to the neighbouring parish of St. John's last fall, for a service of Confirmation and Reception. Several candidates were confirmed, or received from other another Communion. A couple of candidates missed the service due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. We hope that Archbishop Anne will visit St. Brice's in the spring, for another service of Confirmation. As a gift to the parish, she gave us a number of tulip bulbs.

Messy Church

Messy Church started in the Church of England, and is designed to meet the needs of folks for whom a regular Sunday morning liturgy is not practical, or does not meet their needs at this time. It often includes ministry with children. This expression of Church is "messy" in two ways – first, when there are creative projects or crafts, sometimes that can get a little messy. Second, it is an acknowledgement that our lives can be "messy" – "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

From September to June each year, we typically meet on the third Saturday of each month, beginning with a short, informal prayer service; then have games, themes or word puzzles based on the theme that month, and an informal meal together. There is a strong emphasis on belonging to a community, and communicating the good news simply and clearly. All are welcome.

Games Night

Games Night is simply a gathering for friendship and fellowship, on the third Saturday of each month, beginning at 7pm. (Please note, there will be no Games Night on the third Saturday of February 2023, because The Band will be putting on a concert.)

Website & Social Media

In today's world, a parish having an on-line presence is an important way to connect with people, and for them to learn about our ministries. For some time, St. Brice's didn't have an active on-line presence. Thanks especially to the hard work of Tara King, St. Brice's website is up and running. St. Brice's website includes sermon recordings, the monthly calendar, information about COVID, a place for feedback, and information about our common life. See: <https://www.stbriceschurch.com/wordpress/>

Tara King has taken on a new job, and had to step back from her role as webmaster. Kenneth Drysdale took over this role a few months ago. Thanks, Kenneth!

I don't use social media very much – I don't have the time. However, Paula Albrechtas maintains our presence on Facebook and Instagram. Thank you, Paula!

Lent

Lent is the season of 40 weekdays before Easter. It's a traditional time for self-examination, prayer, and developing good spiritual habits (or reducing our bad ones!). In 2022, we encouraged parishioners to read Bishop Tom Wright's book of meditations on the Gospel according to St. Luke. This was very well received, and we have ordered 20 more copies of the Bishop Wright's meditations on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, for use in Lent 2023. This year, the season of Lent begins on 22 February. The books on Matthew are now available in the office. We are asking for \$19 to cover the cost of the books and shipping costs. We encourage everyone to get a copy, and to read it each day.

Advent/ Christmas

Advent and Christmas seasons is a busy time at St. Brice's. In 2022, our observances included the parish dinner (thank you, Fay Ivany and others, for offering this), the Blue Christmas service (thank you, Doris Brown, Carrie Birtch, and Bill Burton), the Advent Carol Service (thank you, musicians). I think these all went very well, and am grateful for everyone's contributions.

COVID-19

As already noted, the pandemic has had a significant impact on parish life. It seems to me that 2022 was a time of re-building, while learning to live with COVID-19. We often focused on what we *had* to do to keep parish life rolling. I hope that we can keep re-building in 2023, including:

- Having Sunday services which meet our spiritual needs well,
- Effectively sharing the good news in a larger culture which is largely uninformed about the good news of the gospel, and in which many people are suspicious of institutions like the Church,
- Learning to help one another walk more deeply as disciples of Jesus Christ.

I have made a particular effort to keep people informed about parish life during the pandemic, including producing newsletters periodically. For parishioners who do not have access to the internet, we hand-delivered some copies. Thank you to Art and Mary-Ellen Page, Bill Burton and Deb Young, for your help with deliveries. Although these newsletters are often time-consuming to produce, I think they are worthwhile. I have sometimes gotten positive feedback, so I know some parishioners are reading the material.

Office

Diane McCaskill works, usually Tuesday afternoons and Thursday mornings, in the outer office. I am deeply appreciative of Diane's administrative skills, and also her "people skills." Diane is carrying out an important ministry, contributing to the well-being of the parish. I am sure that Diane does far more than the four hours a week we pay her, and I am very grateful.

In 2022, we bought out our photocopier lease. Our aim was to reduce office expenses. So far, the copier has been working well, and we hope it keeps on working well, long into the future!

Although it took some time from when the photos were actually taken, the parish photo directory was printed and circulated this past spring. Thank you to everyone who had their photos taken for this project.

While my computer files are pretty well organized, my office is rather cluttered, and I never seem to be able to have the time to organize it all before more reading material comes across my desk. I hope that I will be able to make strides in this area in 2023.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT: OUTREACH

Alpha

A healthy parish not only looks after our common life with one another. We are called to engage in the world around us, to help make the world a better place, and to invite people into fellowship with Christ in the Church. When parishes are under stress, the temptation is sometimes to reduce or to cut off our work in the world, but withdrawing actually makes such a parish less healthy. I am pleased for the outreach work we do, and want to encourage us all to do so with greater consistency and confidence – but not to be overwhelmed by taking on too much.

We want more people to know Christ's love, and to be drawn into our common life, but many of us are unsure how to do this. We feel ill-equipped, and perhaps we forget that it is only God who can bring people into fellowship with himself. We are only providing an environment to help make this happen.

One relatively easy way to enable people to explore Christianity for themselves is the Alpha Course. Each Alpha Course lasts for about ten weeks; each week focuses on a particular topic (for example, "Who is Jesus," and, the problem of evil). If we haven't taken the Alpha Course, I encourage everyone to try it. If we *have* taken the Alpha Course, I encourage people to invite a friend, and attend the course with them. (This way, your friend can be reassured that he or she will know at least *one* person.)

We offered the Alpha Course on-line at St. Brice's during the pandemic. Late in 2022, I began having the impression that while I was trying hard to invite people into our common life, most parishioners were not putting the same amount of effort into invitation. Perhaps we invited someone once or twice to come to Church with us, and after an initial refusal, gave up. I want to encourage us all to invite people to come join us on Sunday morning, or to an event like an Alpha Course, or to an event like the upcoming music free concert (February 18, 7pm), or Shrove Tuesday pancake supper (February 21, 5-6pm). My hope is that these invitations would not be one-off efforts, but a natural part of our Christian life, as we know Christ's love more deeply for ourselves.

We decided to offer the Alpha Course again on Wednesday evenings, beginning in late January 2023. The format is (1) a simple meal together; (2) watching a video; (3) taking part in a discussion. We can talk about as much or as little as we like. The Alpha Course is good not only for a review, but to support people who are trying to work through life's big questions in a safe, non-judgemental environment. If people are unsure if they want to take the course or not, I encourage them to attend one gathering and then to decide for themselves. No one will chase after anyone if they try Alpha for one night, and then decide not to pursue it at this time. For more information about the Alpha Course, please get in touch with me.

Camp Temiskaming

As many people know, Camp Temiskaming is the Deanery [regional] residential camp, located on the Fairy Lake, west of New Liskeard, ON. The property is rustic but well cared for. I think the Camp Board has made some shrewd investments in the camp.

The camp could not run during the pandemic, but plans to offer camps for children ages 8-13, and women, in 2023. It's a tremendous investment of time for the volunteers who run the camp, but with strong spiritual dividends for the children who participate.

The most significant costs for this camp are insurance, and the regular water testing. St. Brice's contributes about \$1000/ year toward the ministry of Camp T, mostly from our Linger Lunches on the first Sunday of each month. Donations are tax-deductible.

Community Engagement

As I am able, I have tried to engage with the local community. For example, I try to follow what is taking place in the City Council. I have visited The Gathering Place and talked with its director, Dennis Chippa. I have engaged with staff and volunteers at the Indigenous Friendship Centre.

Concerts

To help promote fellowship and worship, St. Brice's hosted a concert by local musicians Rory and Dana Force last fall. The Band at St. Brice's will be hosting another concert, on Saturday, February 18, 7pm.

Cursillo

Cursillo – literally, a “short course” – has been offered in the North Bay area for years. It takes the form of a weekend retreat, led predominantly by lay people. When Cursillos are offered, there are also frequent gatherings -- of informal worship, fellowship, and teachings -- called Ultreyas, for Cursillo alumni/ae. As well, people who attend a Cursillo are encouraged to join a small group, for fellowship, on-going Christian growth, and accountability. Cursillos are overseen by a local kind of executive committee, called a Secretariat.

When I was interviewed by the Concurrence Committee (so I and the committee could discern whether or not God was calling me to serve here), it was notable to me that six of the seven committee members had participated in Cursillo.

Cursillo has not been offered in the area since before the pandemic. I realize that it takes quite a bit of work, and people resources, to put on a well-run Cursillo weekend. I do think, though, that there are some folks at St. Brice's who would really benefit from attending a Cursillo, and hope that one can be offered some time soon.

First Aid/ Health Workshop

The neighbourhood around St. Brice's has evolved in recent years. There is now a significant population who are homeless, dealing with addictions, suffering from mental illness, or a combination of these factors. As well, a parishioner with diabetes had some difficulty at a Sunday service in the spring of 2022.

One response by the parish was that several parishioners took an Emergency First Aid course, which was led by Rob McDonald (thank you, Rob!). As well, we asked two members of the local health unit to address the parish, to help equip us all in how best to engage with vulnerable populations. Both these events took place in December 2022.

Hospice

Since September 2021, I have been visiting in the local hospice on a weekly basis. While I don't hide that I am an Anglican priest, I don't trumpet it either. I am mindful that people who use the hospice when they are dying, and their families, come from a variety of faith perspectives. I would like to think that I have been able to help some folks there.

Hospital

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I visited in the local hospital twice a week, and Aase Jensen visited regularly as well. Of course, during the pandemic, regular community clergy visitation was stopped. At one point, I could only visit parishioners who were palliative. Slowly and carefully, these visiting restrictions have eased up. The tentative plan now is that community clergy can visit parishioners, beginning in March 2023.

My understanding is that the old hospital computer system kept track of people's religious denominations when they were admitted. For example, a person being identified as "Anglican" or a parishioner of "St. Brice's" was kept in a file to which I had access. However, a new regional computer system was implemented in area hospitals, and people's religious affiliations were deleted or somehow not included. This means that the hospital chaplains have a mammoth task of trying to enter religious affiliations in hospital records by a manual process, for all of the tens of thousands of patients who are seen in the North Bay hospital each year.

Please do not assume that I know that a parishioner is in the hospital. I would far rather be contacted twice for the same person, than for them to be in the hospital without my knowing and visiting him or her.

Refugees

St. Brice's has sponsored two refugee families since Syria descended into a civil war, and I have been previously involved with about nine refugee sponsorships. In December 2019, Fardowsa Muhumed arrived in North Bay with her four children. While our legal responsibilities concluded in December 2020, Fardowsa and her kids could not function without a degree of on-going guidance, even after the formal sponsorship period concluded. The family was originally from Somalia. Fardowsa has been accustomed to community support and guidance for herself and for her family, to a far greater degree than is customary in Canadian culture.

Fardowsa gradually learned more English, learned how to use the Canadian banking system,

got a job, learned how to use the internet for research and government forms, and learned how to work with teachers for her children's education. Fardowsa gradually arranged medical and dental care for herself and her children, with a minimum of guidance. Nonetheless, I think it is fair to say that this family was the most challenging sponsorship with which I've been involved.

Early last summer, Fardowsa decided that she wanted to move to a more urban centre, where there is a greater variety of ethnic foods, and a Somali diaspora. She decided to move to Ottawa in late July. I agreed to help drive her on moving day itself, and two young Somali men from Toronto came to North Bay to help as well. Fardowsa had significantly underestimated how much she was moving to Ottawa. It turned out to be a very long day, with the happy climax being served a Somali meat dish (camel? lamb?) in a Somali restaurant in south Ottawa, about 8pm.

Four days later, my wife Nancy called the older daughter, only to learn they had changed their mind, and moved to Hamilton two days previously! You could have knocked me over with a feather. After a bit of a bumpy start, however, Fardowsa and her kids are happily settled in Hamilton. Fardowsa has enrolled in a post-secondary education program, and occasionally sends me short videos of the family, such as her younger daughter blowing out the candles during her 12th birthday party. She is proud that all family members are becoming Canadian citizens.

Seniors

When I came to St. Brice's, it was agreed among the clergy that I would be responsible for providing services at Casselholme, the Empire Living Centre, and Barclay House. All of these services, and visits, were disrupted during the pandemic. I offer monthly services at the Empire, and services twice a month at Barclay, and occasionally, when I am allowed, at Casselholme. Sometimes these services are disrupted because of outbreaks.

These services are simple celebrations of Holy Communion, with familiar old hymns, and sermons which are somewhat shorter than what I offer on Sunday mornings. These services seem to be appreciated by the people who attend. If anyone wishes to join me to help during these services, they are welcome.

THE WIDER CHURCH

Anglican Communion Alliance

This is a national organization which strives to increase Biblical literacy in the Anglican Church of Canada. It is somewhat on the conservative direction of the Anglican spectrum. I took a year off serving on its Board of Directors in 2022, but have been approached to serve again, and have agreed.

Deanery Visit

The Archdeacon, the Regional Dean, and the two lay delegates of Temiskaming Deanery are supposed to visit each parish in the Deanery annually. The intention is to see how parishes are doing, that the property is being looked after, and that appropriate records are being kept. We hadn't had such a visit for a while, but it took place this past fall. We received a positive assessment.

“Descent of the Dove” Conference

Charles Williams wrote a short book about the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, in 1939. The “Descent of the Dove” conference was held this past July at Pusey House, Oxford, U.K., on... (no surprise) the person and work of God the Holy Spirit. Thanks in very large part to the generosity of the Grace Foundation, warden Amanda Adams and I attended the conference. It was an intensive conference, packed with the presentations of papers, responses, fairly high-Church liturgies, and English hospitality. I thought the papers were all of very high quality. The speakers were all English-speaking (thankfully!), but represented a broad spectrum of Christianity.

What I got most out of the conference is to try to see more – not what the Holy Spirit is doing *in the Church* – but *in the world*. How is God now wooing people to himself, and how can we cooperate with God, so the Church is an instrument of his eternal kingdom?

Diocesan Synod

This will be the first in-person synod since 2019. It will be held on May 10-13. I am not aware of any significant motions which will be presented. The delegates’ handbook is expected to be available in early April.

A few delegates from each diocesan synod are elected to serve as delegates for General Synod, the national gathering which takes place every three years or so. It might be of interest to some parishioners that my wife, Nancy Armstrong, was elected to serve as a General Synod delegate, at the last Diocesan Synod. General Synod was postponed due to the pandemic, but is now scheduled for 27 June to 7 July. It will be co-terminus with a national gathering of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, a denomination with which we are in full communion.

Indigenous Relationships

For the past 30 years or so, the Anglican Church of Canada has embarked on a long and sometimes painful process, to examine the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, in the light of the gospel.

It seems to me that there have been two kinds of changes. First, there have been changes on the “macro” level, as self-directed indigenous territories are being established on a national level, alongside our customary diocesan structures. Second, there have been changes on the “micro” level, as parishes are seeking to listen and to engage with indigenous voices, with the medium-term aim of healthy reconciliation. At St. Brice’s, the Advisory Board has already taken some modest steps in this direction (for example, the slides which are displayed at the beginning of our services using PowerPoint, and the Declaration which is printed elsewhere in this Annual Report). No one is required to join in the conversation, but we want to *invite* people to learn to listen more acutely, to pray, and to learn. All of this, of course, is in the context of being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Tri-Parish Auction

This is an annual initiative for “outreach.” It is a very nice dinner, followed by a “live” auction, and a “silent” auction for some items. In 2022, it was held on 19 August. St. John’s, Christ Church, and St. Brice’s all participated. Thanks to the hard work of chair Dawn Clark, St. Brice’s representatives Amanda Adams and Jen Auger, and others, it was a great success.

PROPERTY

Cleaning

Most of St. Brice's is cleaned by volunteers. Thank you to those who tidied the basement office area in 2022, and the Altar Guild, who ensure that the Church building is beautiful. People who use the kitchen are responsible for cleaning up after their cooking, and putting away items.

Parishioner Beth Ranger cleans the parish hall, the kitchen, and the main bathroom, bi-weekly, and she receives a \$500 honourarium (the maximum allowed) for her work. St. Brice's ran a deficit in 2022, and we project having another, somewhat smaller deficit in 2023. One of the things we'll be talking about at the Vestry is, if we can afford to pay Beth for her work.

Exterior Sign

As most parishioners know, it's been a long-standing project to install a new exterior sign. Like the monitors installation (see below), it has been what our treasurer calls a "cookie jar" project. We did not set some money aside in our annual budgets, but people made donations as they felt led. We were greatly helped by receiving matching grant funding from the Anglican Foundation of Canada, for which we are deeply appreciative.

There was a small task group which planned the design of the sign, and its exact installation, for the best price. In the initial stages, Brian Summersby and Sheldon Richard helped guide the project. Later, Gary Thoms (chair), Tracy Lewis and Dennis King all helped make the sign a reality. Thank you also to Rob Loewen and JaCon Construction for installing the base and the posts, and for Rob McDonald who arranged the electrical work for the sign.

The sign is programmed using software on the parish laptop computer. I would like a few other people to learn how to program the sign. I welcome ideas about messages to put on the sign.

I've received positive feedback about the sign, not only from parishioners, but from a neighbour, and people in the community who have noticed it. I'm glad about this.

Heating, Furnaces & Insulation

We want to reduce our fixed costs, including utilities, because we had a financial deficit in 2022. Last fall, we arranged for the furnaces to be serviced, and for their efficiency to be assessed.

Furnaces, 2022: There are three gas furnaces in St. Brice's: The furnace in the Church building is fairly new and very efficient. It is a "two-stage" furnace – it produces about 80 000 or 140 000 B.T.U.s of heat, depending on the need. We can't tell the efficiency rating of the furnace in the hall. This furnace was the oldest – about 33 years old! (A gas furnace typically lasts about 15-20 years.) Still, the furnace is in good condition for its age.

Furnace Must Be Replaced: The furnace for the middle section, though, was worn out, and needed to be replaced immediately. It produced 60 000 B.T.U.s of heat, for the office area upstairs and downstairs, and the narthex – the entrance area to the Church building. There is also an air conditioning feature for the office area, which engages only when it is very hot. After some research, this old furnace was replaced on 24 January 2023, with a "Napoleon" unit which produces 70 000 B.T.U.s. I haven't seen the invoice, but the cost to the parish will be about \$5000. Donations to offset this cost are sincerely welcome. We also want to do a

fundraiser in the spring to pay for the furnace, but haven't yet decided what this will be. We will probably talk about some ideas, at the Vestry meeting.

Other Heating Options: Since the furnace had to be replaced anyway, we looked into alternative heating methods – first, having electric heaters; or second, installing heat pumps. We explored these options for two reasons. First, we wondered if a larger initial investment would pay off with lower operating costs over time. We really want to reduce regular costs. Second, since burning natural gas contributes to global warming and environmental problems, could we work toward a better solution?

Some people might not be familiar with heat pumps. Heat pumps take heat which is always in the air (even when it's very cold out), and transfer it inside the building. Hydro costs go up, typically about 30%, but the gas bill is very largely reduced or eliminated. There are two kinds: A “ductless” kind, which would work in the parish hall, which is good to about minus 25 degrees Celsius; and a “duct” kind, which would be required for the office area, which is good to about minus 15 degrees. Some supplemental heating system is still needed, for very cold days. Some provinces provide government grants for commercial properties like ours, for heat pumps to be installed. However, the Ontario government does not currently offer this option.

We got a price quote for a heat pump installation for the parish hall (about \$17 000), a combination of heat pump and natural gas furnace for the office area/ narthex (about \$12 000), and a natural gas furnace for the office area/ narthex, for which a heat pump could be retrofitted later (about \$7000). We felt all of these options were too expensive for us, so we went with the Napoleon gas furnace installation of \$5000. In my view, I don't think St. Brice's or most other churches will go the heat pump route without some government grant support.

Regarding the electric-only option, our present electric service is at about a maximum capacity. It wouldn't be feasible to install baseboard heaters or the like without a substantial investment for a new electrical service.

Another challenge is that we cannot accurately predict future hydro and natural gas rates. If we invest in a new technology, how long would it take for the investment to pay for itself?

Temperatures: Right now, the Church building is kept at a temperature of about 67 degrees Fahrenheit. This is partly because the pipe organ goes out of tune if there are fluctuations in temperature. The office area is kept about 67 degrees F. The parish hall is kept at 59 degrees F, although parishioners can temporarily turn up the thermostat if the hall is being used. Please turn down the heat when you are finished. (If people forget to re-set the thermostat, it eventually goes back to the default setting.)

Increased Efficiencies: We also looked at the building envelope: Jen Auger, Dakota Brant and Nancy Armstrong put plastic sheeting on the interior stained glass windows, to reduce heat loss there. Most of the Church building – ahead of the pillars – is *un*-insulated. However, it's not feasible to insulate that space. A preliminary estimate put the cost at about \$80 000 to insulate that part of the Church building. It would take years, or even decades, to recover the initial investment.

The back of the Church building is insulated with about 5 and a quarter inches of loose fill

insulation in the attic. The parish hall is insulated with about 7 and a quarter inches of loose fill insulation in its attic. The present insulation standard for homes in Ontario is 20 inches of attic insulation. We are asking a company for a price quote to add insulation in these attic areas, and might have information for the Vestry meeting. As well, the double trap doors to access the parish hall attic are not insulated. We are definitely proceeding with insulating the parish hall attic access.

Kitchen Use & Organization

The kitchen cupboards and drawers were re-organized in 2022. Thank you to Diane McCaskill and others who made this happen. When a lot of people use the same space, different people have different standards of tidiness. For example, there are two kinds of mugs in some upper kitchen cupboards – the mugs are very similar, but not the same. (There are also nice mugs for special events in the hall cupboard, and matching cups and saucers in the basement.) Most people put all the mugs together, but I know at least one parishioner prefers to sort the two different but similar kinds of mugs. In my opinion, getting all the mugs washed, dried, and put away in the same cupboard is something of an achievement. I don't think we have to sort the mugs, myself. The same is true with a few other small items.

Minor Property Work: Electrical & Eavestroughing

We have had an on-going problem with pigeons roosting in the Church building around the eavestroughing. Thanks to Rob McDonald and a friend, we got some new soffits for much of the Church building, and the pigeons' free rent contract was abruptly terminated. There was also some minor electrical work done in 2022, in the Church building.

Archbishop Anne gave us tulip bulbs to plant last fall, when she was in the area for Confirmation. Unfortunately, the bulbs didn't get planted in time, but we still hope to have some tulips blooming in the spring of 2023.

Monitors

It has been a long-standing project at St. Brice's to replace the LCD projector and the screen with video monitors. This was discussed at least as early as the summer of 2015 by the Advisory Board. Like the exterior sign or the commercial dishwasher for the kitchen (also done), it was agreed not to pay for this project through the parish budget, but for people to contribute as they felt led. Thanks in large part to a financial donation last summer, the monitors project has gone ahead.

The monitors are hard-wired (for near bulletproof reliability), and can be attached to the parish laptop. There are two large monitors on both sides of the nave, and one smaller monitor near the pillars at the back. Thank you to Don Bonenfant and Gary Thoms, for their substantial work on this project. I recall that the hardware costs were in the low \$2000s range.

In the future, there is the option to add small monitors for the Church chancel (for the priest, layreader, and organist), and a large monitor for the parish hall (when there is overflow from the Church building).

Pipe Organ

The pipe organ at St. Brice's was installed about 1982, and it was assembled from organ parts around Ontario, some of them dating back to the 1920's. It has served us well, but its

condition is deteriorating. The organ was serviced last spring. After getting a verbal report about the organ's poor condition, I asked the technician to provide a written report of the organ's condition, which we received.

There are two main problems. First, an electric motor pumps air into a leather chamber or "chest," and when certain valves open, air flows into pipes, producing sounds of a certain pitch. The chest, connections and valves need to be substantially refurbished, at the cost of about \$18 000 per side. Second, as the organ was assembled from different parts, that makes it challenging to service it, and some quirks about playing it. Like so many things these days, most modern organs, including pipe organs, are run digitally with computer hardware and software.

The Advisory Board decided not do to anything at the time, because of the substantial costs involved. However, we can't keep putting off a decision. We need to decide if we want to refurbish the instrument, or begin making plans to get a different one. Another consideration is that there are not as many people trained to play an organ as was true in earlier times – although we are very grateful for Billi Onley-Lewis and Bob Burke playing for us.

Sharon Paris played the organ for Bill Moulton's recent funeral. Afterwards, she spoke with me about the challenges of missing notes, while not playing the organ too loudly to try to overcome its setbacks.

There is a fund in which money is set aside for organ repair, but that fund was mostly used up when the organ was serviced several years ago. As well, I understand there is at least one parishioner who contributes financially for the care of the organ.

In my view, planning nothing and doing nothing is unwise. I would like to slow or retard the organ's deterioration, by having it serviced – this would be more than a tuning job, but not a full-on restoration. I can't say in advance how much this would be, but I would make an educated guess of a cost approaching \$1000. I think it would be wise to tell the technician the limit we're prepared to pay, before he begins the work.

In the medium term, the cost of a good new digital organ, I understand would be in the \$20 000 range. We could likely get a gently used organ at a discount. To maintain and to use our current organ long-term, I think it would take a pretty strong financial commitment from folks who especially value this instrument.

If we got a replacement organ, the present instrument could stay in place, but not be used. I'm aware that some congregations have taken the steps to get full-on refurbishment jobs. In contrast, St. John's parish has given up using their pipe organ, and are using a keyboard instead. Calvin Presbyterian church is currently assessing how to replace their current organ.

I hope we can talk about this during the Vestry meeting.

Roofs

As most people know, the main part of the Church building has a steel roof, which will last for decades. The parish hall roof was re-shingled just a couple of summers ago, and I believe one of the small roof planes or angles for part of the narthex or office area was done at the same time.

Before snow covered the roofs, it looked to me as if some roof work needs to be done for the narthex/ office area, and for the back of the Church building. It will be assessed in the spring. If the work needs to be done this year, I believe it is a project we could do with volunteers – the pitch of the roofs is shallow, and not far from the ground. I suppose we need to decide whether we want metal, shingles, or a combination of both.

I hope we can talk about this during the Vestry meeting.

Theft, Security & Exterior Doors

As the neighbourhood has changed, we now have a number of folks who hang around St. Brice's. People dealing with addictions, mental illness, or homelessness, or a combination of these, has significantly increased. Some people come for worship, or because they need something. There has been some minor property damage.

We realize that *everyone* is among the neighbours we are called to love in Jesus Christ. *How* to love our neighbours is a process we are all learning. I think there are two main issues: Some people are concerned about their personal safety, and garbage is sometimes left lying around.

We have taken several steps to ensure people's safety:

- We have increased security, making it more difficult to break into the property. For example, it's now nearly impossible for anyone to break into the building through any basement window;
- We now have video feeds inside and outside the building (for privacy reasons, the audio feature for inside has been turned off), and an alarm system;
- We asked for, and received, a 2022 provincial government grant of \$7500 to increase security on the property. The hall exterior doors, which had sustained damage and which were completely worn out, were recently replaced. We would like to repair the main exit doors – the glass inserts were destroyed by a vandal this past summer. Some of the remaining grant money could be used for the main exit doors repair, further video feeds, or other investments;
- New lights have been installed in the front alcove, which are to be on all the time when it is dark;
- We had people from the local health unit address some members of the congregation this past December, and a handful of parishioners have received emergency First Aid training.

It can be helpful to remember that while we might be alarmed by people who are different from us, they are more likely to be afraid of us, than we are of them. Here are a few tips about engaging with people who might be mentally ill, and/ or dealing with addictions:

- If you are uncomfortable meeting with someone alone, be in the company of others. If you want to walk between your car and the exterior door or mailbox, wait until someone else is nearby, call me or another parishioner to come with you, or as a last resort, call the police;
- Smiling briefly at someone, or making some light comment about the weather or something, is never threatening. If you can learn someone's name, please use it;
- If you have time to talk, be prepared to listen a lot. If you don't have time to talk when

- asked, simply tell someone you cannot right now;
- If there is a lot of external stimulation (dogs; loud music; lots of people milling about), and someone is becoming anxious, invite people to go to a quieter place;
 - Don't block an exit, so people can leave if they want;
 - Don't argue, even if you disagree;
 - If people want something (for example, food), don't promise that you will provide it, but say that you will try. Contact me, or someone connected with the food bank. If the person has a cell phone or other way to reach them, please ask for it, so we can follow up with them later;
 - Don't provide your own contact information or provide cash. Encourage people to use the parish number if they want to talk again;
 - People can use the washroom if needed, but discourage people from staying a long time in the washroom. Feel free to knock on the door after a moment or two;
 - People appreciate things, but what we need most of all is the sense that we are respected and loved. If you have time to walk with someone to Tim Hortons to buy a cup of coffee and a doughnut, that can be of more value than ten sermons.

Garbage has been a problem. We empty the outside garbage can regularly. In fairness, most people try to use the garbage can, and some users will even get after others who are sloppy.

If you happen to notice any drug paraphernalia, there is a disposal container in the rector's office. Please don't handle material if you don't know how to handle it safely.

Rob McDonald, Gary Thoms and Don Bonenfant brought in the outside bench. I think because the weather is colder, fewer people are hanging around outside, but I think the same issues will re-develop with warmer weather.

FINANCE

The financial giving relative to our budget was consistent from when I came to St. Brice's in 2015, through 2019. One year, I remember, we were short a few hundred dollars; in the other years, we received a few hundred dollars *more* than we took in. Given that our budgets were in the \$150 000 range, our estimations were remarkably accurate.

In the years 2020 and 2021, during the pandemic, we also experienced a balanced budget, but with an important caveat: Like all the parishes in the diocese, and like many businesses across Canada, we received a pandemic wage subsidy from the federal government. However, this program ended at the end of October 2021.

At the last Vestry meeting, in February 2022, treasurer Don Bonenfant cautioned us that some expenses had gone up, and collectively we would need to increase our financial giving. For example, I recall my stipend had been raised 2% (stipend levels are set by the diocesan Executive Committee), insurance premiums were up in 2022, and my housing allowance had been raised \$100 to \$1300/ month, which just about breaks even. Speaking only for myself, the treasurer's warning went out of my head until I saw the substantial deficit increase, at the end of August 2022.

In September 2022, the parish wardens and I wrote a letter to parishioners, laying out the

position we were in. My impression is that a number of people became aware of our financial situation, because a number of people asked me about it. I also know that some people sacrificially increased their financial offerings. This had a significant effect, but we still ended the year with a deficit: Our expenses were about \$157 700, and our overall income was about \$140 800, leaving a deficit of almost \$17 000.

We are not in debt – yet – but left unchecked, a deficit will lead to a debt. We have about \$17 400 at the beginning of 2023, which is not already earmarked for “cookie jar” items like the Teen Lunch Program, A.C.W. Missions, *etc.* Legally and morally, we cannot use money for anything than what it was donated for.

We do have the Wardens Directed Fund of about \$11 000, which can be used for special projects. It could be used to cover revenue shortfalls, but in my opinion, this would not be a prudent use of the Wardens Directed Fund.

I deeply appreciate the work which Don Bonenfant does as treasurer. I am very confident that we are careful stewards of our expenses. We might be able to save \$50 here and perhaps \$100 there. Essentially, though, we have a revenue problem, not a runaway-expenses problem.

In the past, the Finance Committee has constructed the annual Budget by calculating the expenses very carefully, and then putting whatever income figures are needed to equal “zero.” More realistically, this year, the Finance Committee is presenting alternative budgets, which plan for what we think are realistic income increases, but showing another deficit in the \$6000-\$11 000.

The process is being set up this year that we have to intentionally make a choice, about what kind of a future we want to have. There is not simply a budget which we can “take it, or leave it.” We will have to make a choice, collectively, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have limited flexibility. One item will be whether or not we continue to have Diane McCaskill as the office coordinator; and if so, for what hours. The Finance Committee also thought it was appropriate to decide whether or not we ask Beth Ranger to do the cleaning work, in exchange for her honourarium. (Both Diane and Beth know these will be items for discussion at the Vestry meeting.)

What can we do about our financial shortfall, to increase revenue?

There are several short-term steps we can take: Some households might choose to increase their financial giving; we can encourage the hall to be used by an outside group, in return for donations (technically, we don’t charge rent, as we don’t charge taxes), *etc.*

We will be having a discussion about this at the Vestry meeting. Making a balanced budget is not a matter of tweaking a few items, but will require a substantial adjustment of thousands of dollars.

If the parish chooses to go this route, I would go along with fund-raisers, reluctantly. In my assessment, this approach is a lot of work relative to the income needed, and often doesn’t face the core issue of the financial shortfall (which I address in the next paragraphs!). In my personal opinion, I don’t want to go the route of fund-raisers for regular operating expenses.

(I don't have a problem for fund-raisers for special projects – for example, to pay for a roof or a furnace.)

Overall, though, I think the main challenge facing us is effective evangelization. We don't want people to join St. Brice's because they will prop up the institution. We want people to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to become dynamic disciples. As part of this process, we learn how to become generous, joyful sharers of the resources God has allowed us to have... including, our money.

I believe that throughout Canada, and perhaps throughout North America, evangelization has taken a back seat during the pandemic. However, surely this pandemic is not a surprise to the Lord, nor does he tell us to go and “make disciples... except during a pandemic.” I feel that I am working quite hard to introduce people to Christ's love, and support them in the process of being integrated into their adopted Church family. However, I cannot do this alone. I need your help; and (if I may be so bold), I believe God wants your help. Please do not be afraid to invite – and to leave the rest to the Lord.

I sincerely ask for your prayers, that we may be guided during the Vestry meeting to do all that the Lord wants us to do, with nothing more or less; to one side or the other.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Armstrong

Notes from the “Dogs in Church” Policy
(22 September 2022 Advisory Board meeting)

Dogs in Church Policy:

- Animals cannot be loose;
- Animals need to be controlled at all times (maximum 6 foot leash);
- If someone wants Communion and has an animal, the animal is not to be brought up to the altar. The person with the pet needs to tell a sidesperson, and the rector will come and administer Communion;
- If an animal is unruly or disruptive, the pet and owner may be asked to leave the building.

Organ Report 2022

Original email from Gary Schmidt:

I hope this e-mail finds you well. My apologies for the delay! Just a busy time for us. These are some of the concerns we have involving the organ:

1) ORGAN CHAMBERS PROPER: The organ has deteriorated with age and use. The chests are not easy serviceable they were installed.

Some of the relays are extremely difficult to access due to the installation. The organ valves, relay action and the stop valves all

require re-leathering. This requires completely dis-assembling all the organ chests and returning the valves boards etc to the shop

then re-installing. A rough estimate could be 18-20,000 per side. The organ chambers are divided in sides. For example Great/Pedal left and Great/Swell right side of chancel.

The chests use Ventil action. Manufacturers have not used Ventil actions since early in the 20th century.

The electrical should have solid-state conversion. This is a separate cost over and above the mechanical work mentioned. This requires further research and documentation.

2) ORGAN CONSOLE PROPER: The old 1918 Casavant console all though has stood the test of time it is deteriorating fast. It uses old style pneumatic action and is NOT user friendly to the modern organist. For example there is NO general cancel, auto pedal, Swell to Swell etc., etc. Converting the console to a solid state system requires all new electricals, combination action, stop motors, pistons and stop controls. Rough estimates 50-75,000
Many notes and stops, accessories are failing.

3) OUR RECOMMENDATIONS: Based upon the current worship needs we would recommend installing a new entry level digital Viscount Chorum or Eminent organ console and organ sound system with optional Schmidt Classique Digitally Activated Pipes (c) 2006 The costs could range for this package 20-30,000

OR: We have currently a reconditioned ALLEN AP-4 organ in stock which is in pristine condition. The organ has external tone cabinets than can be mounted in the chambers. We could also activate some of the pipe chests with our Schmidt Classique Digitally Activated Pipe System (c) 2006 at slight additional costs. This package could be done for around \$10,000 plus delivery surcharge to North Bay.

This Allen Organ AP-4 was well looked after by our church client and is building a new church and installing a new pipe organ.

I will forward some links regarding the new instrument and also a picture of the Allen AP-4

4) OPTIONAL: It is possible should choose to reduce the size of the pipe chests retaining a portion of the pipework cosmetically this work would run 3500-5000 per side. OR can be retained.

5) The old console will require dis-assembly and removal. Electrical disconnects are required by a qualified electrician.

We are very happy to help with this process and look forward to answer any concerns or questions in this regard.

Wishing you a Blessed Pentecost Sunday!

Blessings!

Gary

Rev. Gary R Schmidt

President/CEO

Wardens' Report 2022

A common definition of a “warden” is: one who is chosen by the congregation to help the priest of a parish with administration and other duties.”

At St. Brice's in 2022, the wardens' roles included:

- Assisting the Rev. Peter and the other members of the Advisory Board in making decisions on matters such as property items such as:
 - Grounds upkeep, including snow removal, garden, lawn
 - Building maintenance (furnace, spring flooding and much more)
 - Updating communications systems and new security measures

(Please note that most of the actual “work” for most property matters has been covered by St. Brice's Property Committee.)

- Meeting with Deanery officials to discuss:
 - church property
 - congregational health & vitality -- including worship, stewardship, congregation in the community and the future of the congregation.

Our heartfelt thanks to the Property Community and to the many others at St. Brice's who contribute their time, effort and resources in so many other ways that continue to help to make St. Brice's a safe, comfortable and welcoming place.

Thanks be to God!

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Burton, Amanda Adams & Fay Ivany – your friendly neighbourhood wardens

Alpha Course

The Alpha Course started in Holy Trinity, Brompton parish, in west London, U.K., in the 1980's. Originally presented as a Bible study, the organizers discovered that people who wanted to explore Christianity usually didn't know the Bible well, and were fearful to participate. Under the guidance of the Rev. Nicky Gumbel, an assistant on the staff at H.T.B., the course evolved significantly to its present format of a meal together, a presentation (either live or by video), and a discussion.

Each week there is a different topic. The intention is to cover the basics about which almost all Christians agree, on what it means to follow Christ. Typically, there is also a short retreat about halfway through the course, on the person and work of God the Holy Spirit.

These parish presentations were recorded and shared, and became immensely popular, beginning in the 1990's. The Alpha Course has now been viewed by millions of people worldwide, from a wide variety of Christian denominations, and has been translated into a number of languages.

The Alpha Course is particularly suitable for people who want a review of the basics, or who would like to explore Christianity, or who have deep questions about our purpose in life. Everyone is welcome, and no question is foolish.