



Parish Update #31 – January 2022

Dear Parishioners,

It's been a while since the various Christmas updates were sent. And it's amazing how quickly we get to feeling distant from one another in these strange and isolating times! Hence this short update. Be assured of my constant prayers for each of you and for all of us as a parish family, that God will strengthen us to weather these storms.

This afternoon, Jan. 27, Bishop Sandra Fyfe lifted the suspension of worship for all parishes. This week's worship is already planned and so we will remain online for this Sunday, Jan 30. Beginning on **Feb. 6** we will return to limited in-person worship by invitation only. Physical distancing remains in place and the upper limit possible for attendance is 50. We will use the pool that was in place before October of 2021. So if you were attending by invitation then, your name will be eligible to be chosen again. You can always add your name by calling the parish office. As before, you will receive an email or phone call by Wednesday evening telling you that you are eligible for the coming Sunday's worship.

Our **Annual General Meeting** is scheduled for **Sunday, Feb. 13**. Again this year we will meet in person in the upper hall with a seating limit of 35 and physical distancing. We will also make it possible to attend by zoom if you wish. The meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m. Please email your intention to attend to the parish office or to me llramseyis@gmail.com by Feb. 10 and specify whether it will be by zoom or in person. Annual reports will be available in church and on the parish website by Feb. 6. Hard copies can be picked up at the parish office during office hours Feb. 7-10.

Our office is currently open to the public and Angela is in Mon-Thursday from 8:30-- 2:00. Please limit your visits to necessary business and remain at home if you are feeling unwell.

Our next installment of Friday Morning Prayer will be tomorrow, Friday, Jan. 28. It will be posted on our website and on YouTube by 9:00 on that morning.

The meetings that have been able to happen in the parish have been largely taking place on Zoom, though a few very small groups have met in person. Most programs have not restarted. Sunday school is currently on pause, as is Meditation. Lectionary Lunch is easier to host online and it has restarted with a zoom session at noon each Friday. Contact me if you would like to receive the link for that group.

We are about to embark on a parish process of discernment of ministry needs and opportunities. This comes as we have seen many changes in personnel in the last two years. Our discernment process runs parallel to the work of discernment in which two members of our congregation are engaged. Natasha Bejarano and Cory Lunn are discerning a possible call to ordained ministry. They have been working with the Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith, our Diocesan Vocations Coordinator for several months now. Rev. Frances visited our Parish Council recently and plans to be with us on Sunday, Feb. 27 to talk to us about the process. I've attached below an information sheet from Rev. Frances. (You'll note that she is looking for someone in the parish to help her with communications during this process. The job description is attached.) In the meantime, please keep Natasha and Cory and all of us in our various ministries in your prayers.

The parish has recently received the resignation of Maria Murphy as Cemetery Manager for Terrace Hill. Maria has served in this position for an incredible 40 years and has taken Terrace Hill from an average burial ground to one of the most beautiful and functional cemeteries you will ever see. I am sure you join with me in thanking Maria for her dedication and creativity in this role. She remains in the position until March 31. We hope to have a chance to gather as a

parish family to thank Maria publically at that time. In the meantime, the work of filling the position begins.

Looking ahead, Ash Wednesday is March 2 this year and another Lent will begin. It is difficult to say what our COVID situation will be by then. However, it is safe to say that our Lent program will likely be mostly held on line again this year, though there are some options for in-person events if they are allowed.

The program is called **"You are here"** and is produced by Barn Geese Worship, a group of Lutheran clergy in the U.S. A snippet from their introduction to the program says: **"We typically talk about Lent being a journey. And**

it is true there is movement in Lent. But what if Lent isn't only about journey? What if it is also about stationary place? The scripture readings for Lent this year (Revised Common Lectionary Year C) present a unique sustained focus on location and place." This has gotten me thinking about not spending Lent focused on "getting somewhere" (a journey) but rather focusing on being rooted in the place where we already are. Most of us live where we live for a host of reasons, but not usually by accident. To ponder where God is with us right here and what role God is asking us to take in our unique places is a holy undertaking. I'm looking



forward to the possibilities it offers. Stay tuned for more information about how you can participate in **"You Are here"**.

We'll also be taking part in **Lent Madness** again this year as a parish. I hope you'll join us on a wacky and wonderful 40 day adventure with some of the faith's more obscure and inspiring followers – the Saints! Sign up information for Lent Madness will be available in a parish update coming your way soon.

That's it for this installment. I hope and pray to see you all soon in person. In the meantime, I hope you stay safe and well. I hope you care for those near you. I hope you spend time with God, who faithfully wants to be with you. And may Christ's peace be in your hearts.

Rev. Lori

Rev. Frances's Document

So, what's all this about "discernment"??

The word discernment comes from a Greek root meaning "to sift through" - "sifting through" all the "noise," busy-ness, and distractions of our lives to discover what is most real, most true, and most authentic about ourselves. Discernment is a spiritual practice, requiring prayer and time.

A parish discernment process is an opportunity to seek together through prayer, reflection, and small group discussions, where God may be calling us as people of faith in this time and in this place. The purpose of this discernment process is not to create a strategic plan, a new mission or vision statement, or to figure out how to "fix" any of the problems or challenges we may face. While there are similarities to strategic planning processes, what makes discernment unique is that our parish will *not* begin by asking, "what do we think is best?" but instead by asking, "*God, what do you want of us?*" Strategic plans are good and important, but they are also devised and directed. A discerned plan is received from God, and is an invitation to respond to the One who calls each one of us in Baptism. In Baptism, God calls all of us to live lives of love and service and blesses each of us with gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The purpose of the process is the process itself – the reflection, sharing, listening, and learning we do will "plow the ground" and give us a better understanding of who we are and where we're going. This careful, prayerful work will enable us to be the community God calls us to be.

How is the Parish Discernment Process structured?

In this careful, prayerful work together, we will ask some fundamental questions. These will be addressed in three distinct components in a workshop setting.

1. a. Who are we? and b. Whose are we?

These are questions about identity and relationship. These conversations will reflect on the relationships and connections we have to God and our neighbours, within our parish community and as members of our wider community.

2. Why are we? This question is asking us about our “purpose”, our mission as a parish. Theologian Frederick Buechner says “the place where God calls *you* to is *the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.*” Like most “good questions”, this leads us to *more* questions! Why are we here in this place, at this time, in this particular community, with these particular people?

3. Where are we going and “who” do we need to take us there?

These are questions about the future. Having spent time praying, listening, and dreaming together, we have discovered more clearly who we are and what we value. This is where we will name what we have to offer in response to the needs we’ve perceived and identify the gifts among us to enable us to faithfully respond to God’s generosity and call.

I look forward to getting to know your parish better, to share in this work with you and to celebrating your gifts and strengths as you seek to serve God in your community.

With every blessing,

The Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith
Vocations Coordinator
Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Parish Contact Person for Parish Discernment Process: (job outline)

This role requires someone to coordinate things on the parish’s end, to liaison with Rev. Frances.

- computer skills would be an asset (for sending emails, setting up Zoom meetings, composing updates for parish communications, “advertising” – announcements etc.)
- ensuring notes are taken and shared
- setting up meeting details (for example, if in-person, ensuring Covid protocols followed, ensuring room set-up, refreshments, if applicable etc.)
- This person can certainly co-opt others to assist with tasks.

Once someone is identified, I’d be happy to go over this with them and answer any question. It should be an onerous task – but definitely necessary!!