Faith Formation & Faith Rituals…

For three evenings last month, I spent time at on-line workshops led by Tori Smit and Robynne Howard exploring and learning about different ways to have Church School and support Faith Formation at home while we cannot gather in the Church building.

One thing that we talked about was ritual and how important rituals are in being a family, being a community of faith and in creating a sense of belonging. Rituals can be as simple as saying, “I love you”, or “be kind”, when people leave home for school or work. They can relate to special foods shared for holidays or stories that are shared before bed. They can be a song that is sung each week in Young Children and Worship or a blessing offered.

One of the three evenings last month, Robynne shared a simple ritual from Camp. At the end of the day, Camp Leaders take time to write in gratitude journals. They respond to three questions/prompts.

What are you grateful for?
I am proud of myself for…
I experienced God today in…

We talked about how the responses were shared, or not, depending on the feelings of each person. The whole process of writing and sharing takes about ten minutes.

I wondered about creating gratitude journals for home – thinking that it might fit nicely with the month of October as we celebrate Thanksgiving.

Maybe October can become a month of gratitude and thanksgiving. Maybe the month can lead into a daily, or weekly ritual for Church School or home.

I’m sharing this as an idea – not meaning it to be one more thing to do in this time when we are trying to balance and refigure out so many things.

I’m sharing mainly because it spoke to me especially as I reflect on the news that we are in the second wave of the virus and how life might start to feel more frightening and the world a bit smaller.

Maybe in the midst of it all, spending time reflecting on what I am grateful for and where I have experienced God each day – alone or with family – might be a bright spot.

For me & my family, it might take the form of a journal, or pictures, or conversations over dinner, or a wonder walk at some point during the week. Who knows? But I do know that, even in this very strange time, there is so much for which I am so truly grateful.
Ministers Message: Rev. Robert Royal

Here we are in the fall of a very difficult and challenging year. In May, I can remember wondering if we could re-open the church by summer, then by fall, and now Christmas is not too far away. Not only has the church had to put certain plans on hold, but you have too.

It’s hard for all of us. The apostle Paul must have known our affliction when he said to ‘let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times’. And we do pray, don’t we? We pray for safe passage through this pandemic time, and that when we emerge on the other side, we will be stronger, wiser, and more aware of what is really meaningful in this life.

Many of you have been asking for an update from the Re-Opening Working Group, and you will find that update in the pages of this Newsletter. We certainly look forward to re-opening when it is safe and appropriate to do so. Regardless of what the re-opening date will be, we need to have the safety protocols and procedures in place so we will be ready when the time is right. When that time comes, we will need a good number of volunteers to make the whole thing run smoothly, just as with the Outdoor Worship Service.

The Re-Opening Working Group continues to meet regularly, and will keep all of us updated as things continue to change. Meanwhile, the work of the church continues, as much goes on behind the scenes, and we continue to praise and worship God on a weekly basis by providing a video link that we may worship together, even if in the comfort of our own homes.

Outdoor Worship Service

On Sunday, September 27th, we enjoyed an Outdoor Worship Service on the property of Pickering College. With the blessing of York Regional Health, we implemented the protocols of our Re-Opening Working Group, and some 60+ worshippers attended. Thank you to the many of you who volunteered to help with the Outdoor Worship Service. To cap it all off, Jennifer Maddock took this picture of the cross in the sky. Jesus said, “where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them.”

Friends; we are in uncharted waters, and we hope and pray that you continue to find the comfort and strength that only God can give you, through His Spirit who abides in us, works through us, and radiates from us. May the Peace of Christ remain with you now, and in all your ways.
Financial Update to September 2020

Current Operating Account, as of September 30, 2020:

- Revenues: $159,878
- Expenses: $203,782
- Deficit: -$43,903

2018/19 Surpluses: $15,219
Government Subsidies (CEWS): $32,500
Net Balance: +$3,816

Revenue to other Accounts:
- Presbyterian Sharing: $15,154
- Property Fund: $5,049
- Donations to the Newmarket Food Pantry: $2,200

Preamble:

During the last 3 months of 2020 (July – Sept.), our church operating budget has continued to acquire monthly deficits. Fortunately, church members have continued with their monthly givings over the summer and we have also received $32,500 from the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) for our ministers and administrative assistant. This subsidy, along with our surpluses from the previous two years, has allowed us to reduce our operating deficit of -$43,903 to a net balance of +$3,816 to the end of September.

Thank You to Our Church Staff:

Many thanks to our whole church staff who have maintained their high level of competent work under very trying circumstances. A special thank you comes out to Robynne, our administrative assistant, who often works alone in the church office performing her many administrative and financial tasks.

Our strategy is to try to hold steady on our operating costs and increase our monthly givings:

The Finance and Stewardship Committee has taken the following actions confirmed by Session:

1. Revised our 3-month operating budget (Oct. – Dec. 2020) to guide us through the next few months. Some operating costs have been reduced and we will continue to receive government support (CEWS), though the percentage of support will be reduced over the next 3 months.
2. Robynne, our church administrator, will continue to work for the rest of 2020 at 75% of her role, working 5 hours each on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays.
3. Thomas, our organist, is adjusting his government support from the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) (ended this September) to the Canadian Recovery Benefit (CRB) which provides a similar level of financial support. Thomas volunteers to provide musical support to our virtual services.
4. Our caretakers continue to work a total of 6 hours per week (about 25% of regular hours), primarily focusing on documented sanitation of critical work areas and the oversight/maintenance of all church mechanical systems (heat, hydro, light, etc.).

We hope all of these actions above will help control our operating expenses. We also hope to increase our monthly givings by $2,000 – $3,000 per month allowing us to better handle our operating budget while government subsidies are gradually reduced through to December 2020.
What can our Congregation do to help?

To better carry our operating budget and to limit our deficit, we would like our congregants to continue giving their regular monthly offering to support the church budget. If your givings were lower than usual this summer, please consider resuming your regular monthly givings this fall. We recognize that some families may have difficulty with their offering as a result of possible lay-offs/reduced hours. Please give what you can. The more regular monthly offerings we receive, the less likely our deficit will increase. Please also consider giving to Presbyterian Sharing. This important work supports all of our churches across Canada and the world.

How can our Congregation give during the pandemic? (Ordered by preference)

**PAR is preferred** You can contact the church office on Monday, Wednesday or Friday and arrange to give through Pre-authorized Remittance (PAR). This will arrange for your givings to be transferred to the church account directly on the 20th day of each month. You may print the enrollment form from our website and deliver it with a cheque marked ‘VOID’ to the church or church mailbox. (With PAR, there is only 50 cents in administrative cost per givings per month.)

**New** Interac E-Transfer: Use our email address: info@standrewsnewmarket.org (Please ensure that you double-check your spelling.) It is configured with auto-deposit, so you do not need to use a security question. We will continue to keep track of your givings.

You can mail or drop-off your **monthly envelope givings to the church**. Please ensure to send a **cheque, not cash**. The church mailbox by the front door is secure and checked regularly. It would be good to receive these givings by mid-month. If necessary, you can contact your elder to pick up your envelope and courier it to the church.

**New** You can give your monthly donation through **Pay Pal** (Just hit the **donate** button on the church website). (Pay Pal charges 1.6% plus $0.30 per online transaction). PayPal will issue your Tax receipt.

Contacts for more information or questions:
For more information and any questions about our church finances, please contact John Hopkins, Convener of the Finance and Stewardship Committee, at john_hopkins@sympatico.ca or (905) 853-7131. Our church website provides up-to-date information at standrewsnewmarket.org

We hope, through everyone’s help, we can regularly support the church operating budget during this pandemic. Our church continues to provide a range of worship activities through its virtual programs, and provides ministerial support through contact with our ministers and elders. We continue to pray for God’s help to overcome this emergency and return to a more normal church life.

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A new program being introduced at St. Andrew’s is **Messy Church**. This is a missional ministry for the whole family, designed to reach out to families who are not ‘churched’, have fallen away from the church, or are simply more comfortable being re-introduced to worship that is not Sunday morning. The mission and objective of **Messy Church** is that it is for all ages, promotes creativity, offers hospitality, includes a teaching-time celebration, and is Christ-centred. It is a two hour monthly program which is all-inclusive, inter-generational, and non-denominational. This Bible-based ministry provides activities, crafts, teaching, and a meal.

We are pleased to say that St. Andrew’s, Newmarket is embarking on this outreach journey to serve God’s people in the greater Newmarket community. Now, we know that we are still in the clutches of COVID-19, however we look forward to your support and working with the Planning Team so that we are ready to launch when the time is right. In the meantime, have a look at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSc8fo7vral
The Working Group (WG) Carolyn, Barry, Cory, Dave, Laura and Robert, charged with the task of preparing a plan to re-open the church for worship have submitted the following document as a guide to re-open the church building for worship. The information contained in this document is based on recommendations of the local and Provincial Public Health Units which have been applied practically to our situation. These recommendations have been viewed and approved by our Session. Above all, the primary concern of the Session and the WG is the safety and well-being of those members of our congregation who may choose to return to worship at this time.

Guidelines for the re-opening of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Newmarket are as follows:

- A total of 76 people are permitted in the sanctuary at one time. This number includes worship leaders and ushers.
- **Pre-registration will be required prior to each service** (Details of this process will follow.)
  - If you have pre-registered and are unable to attend for any reason, please notify the church office so that others may worship in your place.
- Only persons with **no Covid-19 or flu-like symptoms**, or who have NOT come in contact with anyone with Covid-19 will be allowed admittance to the church building. Worshippers will be asked to verify their compliance with the Covid-19 self-assessment questions (to be provided at a later date).
- To allow for the time required to check in and be seated, worshippers are asked to arrive at the church no later than 9:45 am.
- **Wearing masks is required** in the church building.
  - You will be asked to use hand sanitizer, which will be available at each point of entry.
  - Access to the church will be available through both the north (front) and the south (parking lot) doors.
- **South Entrance**: You will be greeted in the parking lot and given directions concerning entering the church building after you have confirmed that you are compliant with the “self-assessment” questions.
- **North (front) Entrance**: You will be greeted at the front door and given directions concerning entering the church building after you have confirmed that you are compliant with the “self-assessment” questions.
  - To assist with contact tracing, your attendance will be verified against the pre-registration list.
  - The cloakrooms will be closed. You are asked to keep all personal items with you.
  - Bibles and hymnbooks have been removed from the sanctuary.
  - The Order of Service, announcements and the scripture readings will be displayed on the screens.
  - Ushers will assist with the elevators if required.
  - Greeters/Ushers will **escort worshippers to the designated seating areas**.
- Two metre social distancing will be observed.
- Families/Bubbles **arriving in the Sanctuary at the same time** may sit together.
- Singing will not be permitted during the service.
- Children will stay with their parents or caregivers during their time in the sanctuary. There will be no Church School or Nursery Care.
- Offering will not be collected during the service. Offering plates will be placed at the entrances to the sanctuary. To minimize contact with the envelopes and contents, online offering continues to be encouraged.
- To facilitate physical distancing, ushers will assist worshippers to exit the sanctuary starting with the rear pews and working forward.
- There will be **no gathering or fellowship time inside the church** building at the end of the service.
- Washrooms will only be available on the sanctuary level of the Church. Washrooms will not be sanitized after each use.
Volunteers Needed for Re-Opening

In recent months, we have often heard the phrase “we’re all in this together”. Once the decision is made to re-start the weekly Worship Services in the Sanctuary, we know it will take a number of volunteers each week to facilitate our safe re-opening procedures. While our Ushers and Elders will offer their help as they feel comfortable, we will need additional volunteers from the Congregation to assist with tasks such as:

- Greeting worshippers as they arrive in the parking lot and at the Church front door to verify Covid-19 self-assessment compliance and contract tracing information
- Seating worshippers in the Sanctuary ensuring 6-foot distances
- Elevator operation
- Escorting worshippers out of the Sanctuary ensuring 6-foot distances at the end of the Service.

If you are willing to help, please contact Rev. Robert Royal at robertroyal@standrewsnewmarket.org or (416)578-4854 with your name and any preference on how you can assist. High school students are welcome. Training in advance of the reopening will be provided. Our hope is that having a community of volunteers will distribute the responsibility more broadly beyond a few individuals.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration!

In Advent 2020, Presbyterians across the country are invited to join a denomination-wide book study on Amy-Jill Levine’s Light of the World: A Beginner’s Guide to Advent.

Guided by Levine’s knowledge of the New Testament, strong storytelling skills and deep love of the gospels, Presbyterians will journey through Advent reflecting on the birth of Jesus as it is told in the first two chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke.

There are a number of ways you can take part. You can read the book on your own. We can organize a group at St. Andrew’s to discuss the book or you can join the “Facebook Group” that the Presbyterian Church is hosting.

“Light of the World” is available from Amazon as a paperback or an e-book. If you need help finding a copy, let Laura, or Robynne, know and we can order a number through the Church.

If you would like to receive our newsletter and weekly communication notices electronically please forward your email address to the church office info@standrewsnewmaket.org
Church School by Zoom

We are planning to gather for Church School by Zoom beginning Sunday October 25th. Look for information in the Friday “Worshipping at Home” e-mails that have been sent to Church School students and their families, or contact Laura.

Student Care Packages Update from Laura

This is the time of year that start asking for names and addresses of our College & University students for our Exam/Christmas care package list. (I want to make sure that no one is missed).

As usual, I am asking for names of our College and University students so that we can prepare surprises that will be shared when they are working on papers and exams at the end of term. This year, though, we will do things a little differently – as so many things are being done differently right now. We are asking for donations of money, instead of shoeboxes and treats. (The donations can be directed to the Young Peoples Designated Fund.) One, or two people will shop for fun surprises and place them in gift bags. The gift bags will be available for parents to pick up in a contact free manner, or left at the students’ family homes on the porch.

We thought that it was important to continue to let our students know that they are cared about by the congregation. We also thought that we would find a new and creative way to make this happen.

Thank you!!!

Thank you to our amazing gardeners! The gardens around the Church have looked so beautiful all spring and summer. Thank you for your hard work and care.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in leading worship – to our choir members, musicians, our readers and storytellers.

Thank you to Ruth & Jordyn for recording and editing our Worship Services so that we can Worship together virtually. And thank you to Robynne who posts the Services to our website and Facebook page so that we can access Worship each week.

Thank you to Barry & Gord for continuing to keep our Church clean and safe. And thank you for the preparations that have begun for time we are able to regather in the Sanctuary.

Thank you to Janice for the beautiful flowers that brighten the Sanctuary as we worship each week.

Thank you to our dedicated Ministers, Rev. Laura and Rev. Robert, who reach out to us by phone or Zoom, arrange our remarkable worship teams and preach God’s Word every week.
In Memorium

Since we were last together in the Church building, in March, we have said good-bye to some dear members of the congregation.

Grace McCallum’s family gathered together to celebrate her life on June 2nd.

Dorothy Fraser’s family and a few close friends gathered to celebrate her life on Sept. 19th.

The funeral services, for both Grace and Dorothy, were live streamed by Roadhouse and Rose Funeral Home and are archived on their website.

Beth Milligan passed away on September 28th surrounded by her family. She was in her 87th year. No funeral service is planned.

There had been a hope that we would be able to gather at the Church to celebrate the life of Mazie Hopkins, who passed away on May 20th. We have been unable to do that, yet. Her family have included a Eulogy in the newsletter so that we can share in remembering her life, together.

St. Andrew’s “Phone-in Worship”

While we are not able to physically worship God in the church sanctuary, this does not mean we cannot still enjoy worshipping God together. At St. Andrew’s, we are introducing “Phone-in Worship” for those of you who do not have a computer or access to email. Beginning Sunday, November 1st, at 10:00am, you will be able to listen to the entire weekly Worship Service using your own home telephone through a program called Zoom.

This means that you can now listen to the entire weekly Worship Service using your own home telephone through a program called Zoom. It’s very user-friendly.

Here’s how Zoom works using your home phone:

1. At 9:55am every Sunday morning, dial (647) 558-0588 (The 647 number is long distance, so you can dial 10-10-100 first, for toll free access, then 647-558-0588) (The service actually begins at 10:00am)
2. You will be asked to enter some information on your phone: when asked to enter the Meeting ID, dial 810 9980 1789 when asked for Participant ID, you can ignore it when asked for the Passcode, dial 321148
3. You will then be connected to the St. Andrew’s Worship Service.
4. If you choose the speaker feature on your telephone, simply adjust the volume as needed.
5. Sit back, and enjoy listening to the Worship Service
6. At the conclusion of the worship service, simply hang up your telephone
7. Questions? Contact Robert at (416) 578-4854, and Laura at (905) 953-7811

(For those with a computer and email, video Zoom remains unchanged).
(Upon return to the church sanctuary for worship, instructions will be updated).
Mazie June Hopkins (Oliver)

Mazie June Hopkins (Oliver) was born on June 4, 1921 and passed away on May 20, 2020 in her 99th year. Mazie was born in Jackson’s Point, Ontario – the only daughter of William Wesley Oliver and Mary Catherine (Trivett). She had four older brothers – William Avery (Sadie), Elven Jay (Holly), Howard Samuel and Leon Edwin.

Mazie spent her childhood years between Jackson’s Point and the Oliver home farm on Old Homestead Road south of Virginia and attended the Methodist Church in Sutton West with her family. She could remember sitting in church as a very young child while the vote was taken to form the United Church in Canada. When Mazie was six, she and her cousin watched the Sutton St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church coming up the Dalton Road on large sleighs. The dismantled church came across the ice on Lake Simcoe from Innisfil and was erected on Dalton Road in Sutton where it stands today. Mazie developed a love for farm life that lasted her whole life through. She loved to tend to the horses, cattle and fowl.

In 1939 she was married to Walter Alex Hopkins and they started farming the Hopkins home farm on the Centre Road near Mt. Pleasant. She joined the Presbyterian Church in Mt. Pleasant where the Hopkins family worshipped. She worked alongside Alex on the farm for the next six years until the boys arrived. Alex raised beef cattle and Mazie was a shepherd and looked after her flock of sheep. She often said this was one of the best times of her life when her boys were young. “The boys” as she called them, were William (Sandra), John (Pat) and Murray. Mom always viewed her role as being the best mother she could be. Mazie went on to be a proud grandmother of Heather (Rick), Evan (Gisella), Matthew, Jason (Christine), Danielle (Josh) and Ryan and the proud great grandmother of Nicholas, Diana, Isabella, Tristan, Hope, Lilly, Ollie and Ella.

After the farm was sold she lived in Keswick for a few years and then moved with her family to Newmarket in 1959. There with her family, she joined St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. For the next several decades she was a dedicated member of the Women’s Association (W.A.), the Women’s Missionary Society (WMS) and taught Explorers and the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) until her granddaughter was old enough to join. Mazie was very involved in church life. She loved working with the youth and later with the seniors in our church community. Later in life Mazie regularly visited in the three local nursing homes. She visited not only church members but also residents who did not receive regular visits. She would also drive seniors who lived on their own to the grocery store to pick up milk and bread, etc. She enjoyed curling and kept playing until her early eighties. She always carried her curling corn broom in the back window of the car.

In their retirement years Alex and Mazie enjoyed their cottage on Lake Simcoe where family and friends would gather and she could watch her grandchildren play in the water. Mom often travelled to the cottage with her cat “Susie Q”. She would travel with Susie Q in a bird cage. The cat didn’t seem to mind until it was time to go home and she was nowhere to be found!

Mazie was a good shepherd to her family and kept them all in the fold –like the old gospel song “The Ninety and Nine”. Her sons Bill and John became elders at St. Andrew’s largely due to our church upbringing from Mom. In her declining years she resided at Bradford Valley Nursing Home where she received excellent care from the dedicated staff and she became friends with many of the residents. As we ‘the boys’ arrived at Bradford Valley to visit Mom we would often see her visiting with residents, especially those who didn’t often receive visitors.

Mazie was laid to rest beside her husband Alex in the Queensville Cemetery in a private family service. The Lord was her Shepherd.
Thanks to you, the **Lawn Chair Ministry** continues. Even during these cooler days and evenings, thank you for your warm hospitality. It has been a delight for me to meet with you face to face, and I look forward to scheduling more visits even as the days shorten. Please enjoy the Lawn Chair photo collage in these pages.