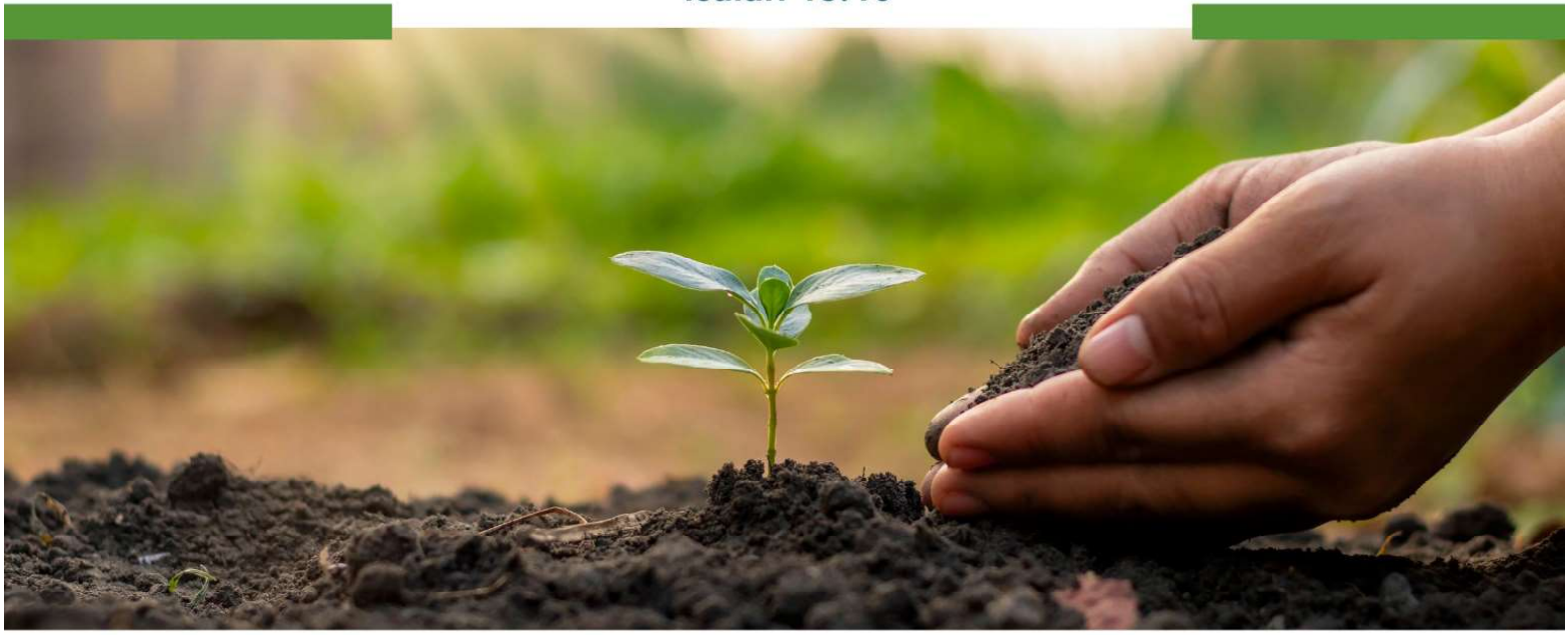
WESTMINSTER CHIMES AUGUST 2024

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
Isaiah 43:19



Mark September 15th on Your Calendar!

Upcoming Events: Ministry Fair and Blessing of Backpacks

We are excited to announce two special events coming up in September!

Blessing of Backpacks, Bags, and School Supplies

During the service, we will hold a special **Blessing of Backpacks, Bags, and School Supplies**. As the new school year begins, we want to offer our prayers and blessings for all students, teachers, and school staff. Bring your backpacks, bags, or briefcases to receive a blessing as we embark on this new academic year together.

Ministry Fair

Join us after the service on **Sunday, September 15th**, for our **Ministry Fair**! This is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the various ministries and activities within our church. Whether you're interested in joining a new group, volunteering your time, or are simply curious about what we do, there is something for everyone. Come and explore the many ways you can get involved and make a difference in our community.

A chili lunch will be available, just like the chili we make every week in our support of Project Hope.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and sharing in these moments of community and support.

Blessings,
Michael Bruce+

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- *Our new Associate Priest*
- *What's happening next door at 105 Askin?*
- *Sanctuary*
- *Paying it forward*

St. James Westminster Anglican Church

115 Askin St.
London, ON
N6C 1E7
519-432-1915
office@stjameswest.ca

Updates from our Wardens

To all at St. James,

Welcome as we move closer to autumn and return to two services. We trust you had a good summer, and it was terrific to see many of you each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Our Wednesday service continued with consistent attendance.

As we "reconvene", we are reminded that Michael and Heather have been with us for a full year now. It is safe to say that they have settled into their new home and have become comfortable in their new parish. We are blessed and thrilled to have Michael's leadership, and we hope that our path continues forward.

We welcome the Reverend Ann Webber as Associate Priest with Responsibility for Children and Families (half-time) at St. James Westminster effective September 1, 2024. Please join us in welcoming her to the clergy team!

New chairs have been delivered that suit our choir members (they ARE comfortable) and also give us flexibility in our worship space by having them in the front rows.

Our Building Improvement Group (BIG) has been busy with small repairs around the premises. A new aisle across the middle of the church allows for easier access and relieves a bottleneck when exiting. Thank you to the "BIG" for their commitment to our projects and maintenance. We appreciate your talents.

We are close to hiring a cleaning company. We have been examining our custodial needs and we are confident that a schedule can be made that satisfies our situation. Without a fulltime sexton, we have a **new way** going forward. This includes hosting events or using any of our many spaces. Please have a setup and cleanup plan. **Let's work as a TEAM.** If you or your team gets something out, please ensure it is put away. If you are needing furniture out, seek assistance and plan ahead. If you dirty it, ensure that it is cleaned.

If you notice that toilet tissue or paper towels are missing from the bathrooms, or a garbage container is overflowing or if you added something to a garbage container that might attract bugs or create unpleasant odours over the next week, please inform a Warden so that things may be dealt with in a timely manner.

A strong and understanding congregation can certainly make this work. We thank you for seeing it similarly.

Jim sercombe@rogers.com,
Barb bbr.robinson@sympatico.ca

Ernie Stepan painting handrails

Pete Van Geest repairing the Bruce Street entryway

Our Assistant Priest—Ann Webber

I am delighted to be joining you at St. James Westminster as the Associate Priest. I have had the opportunity to worship with you off and on since February and I have experienced your friendly and welcoming inclusion of newcomers. Thank you for your hospitality!

I was ordained a priest in 2022 and have spent that time serving in the towns of St. Thomas and Aylmer, as well as filling in at various parishes around our diocese. During that time, many people have shared their concerns about their children and grandchildren with me. “Parenting seems harder these days” is a phrase I hear often, and it echoes my own experience. My husband Mike and I have two children, Evelyn (10) and Charlie (7). We have found parenting while living through one unprecedented global event after another to be more challenging than we had dreamed.

I was raised in a suburb of Ottawa, Ontario. We didn’t have family close by, so the other families in our parish became our extended family in a very real way. We were able to find ways, both big and small, to support one another. The parish was already worshiping in a rented space in a school when we joined the community. My experience of being raised in a faith community that had to work together in an active way has shaped my faith and my parenting in a profound way.

I was already married with children when I felt God call me to the priesthood. I fell in love with Biblical Studies and Liturgics during my theological education. These are the academic approaches to understanding the Bible and our worship together, respectively. I am delighted to bring this knowledge and my love of learning with me to St. James.

Having the opportunity to share and learn with you, all while supporting the children and families in our parish and in the wider community, fills me with joy. Our parish is in my prayers, and I ask for your prayers for myself and my family as we begin this new ministry together.

Thank You!

A big thank you to everyone who brought in donations and who sent packages for our Back to School Supplies Drive! We are still collecting up to Sunday, September 1st, so feel free to drop by with more!

Paying it Forward

By Terry McSpadden

As our elder daughter, Heather, travelled north on Wonderland Road heading towards Southdale, she ran over something purple that caused her car to "bump". Intrigued, she stopped after parking and went to look to see what she had run over. Lying flat on the road, was a big fat wallet… and what a story it had to tell! Inside, beside various credit cards and the other usual wallet fillers, was a family's life story consisting of health cards, driver's licence, and photo ID's not just for Emily, the mom, but also her three children. A treasure trove, one might say… and an incredible opportunity for someone with nefarious intentions.

Now, here's the kicker…stuffed in there was $835 in cash. So, what was one to do? Even though there were names and an address to go by, there was no phone number. But knowing that her dad is a Realtor and might have access to resources that would help us to track down the owner, Heather gave me a call.

After several hours of computer searching through land registry records, phone lookup software (remember that Canada411 doesn't list cell phone numbers) and various internet sites, a number matching the Driver's Licence address was found. What a relief. We're on our way to doing the right thing, maybe.

But wait a minute… What if this is a family fleeing domestic violence and looking for a safe harbour? In calling the number obtained that matched the address on the Driver's License, a degree of caution would certainly be in order. With this in mind, a call was made to the home that was listed on the license and confirmed in the Land Registry Office. When the gentleman answered the phone, he was asked to put Emily on the line but he indicated that there was no one living there by that name. He went on to say that yes, that was the right number for the home, but that he had lived there for many years and there were only men living in the home. Now the situation is becoming very uptight since this seemed to fit in with our fears surrounding domestic abuse. Do we call the police at this point or do we continue to try to find Emily using other means? If there was domestic abuse underway, and the police were to enter the scene, that could make the whole situation worse. Compounding this feeling was the large amount of cash in the wallet being a possible clue that the mother and children were on the road to seeking help and needed "escape" funds to do that. If it turned out to not being a case of domestic abuse, it would prove cumbersome for Emily to get her wallet back.

Where do we go from here? By this time, several hours of searching had passed and there seemed to be no option except to call the police and seek their help. Then out of the blue my wife, Cheryl, got the idea of checking Facebook to see if a match could be found. The difficulty through all of this was that the mother's surname was a compound name and this had made it challenging for searching purposes using the various resources at hand.

Through Facebook, Cheryl did find a contact that matched the city showing on the licence. Hallelujah! However, the Facebook picture didn't quite match the wonderful portrait that the Ontario Ministry of Transport gives you. Nevertheless, and exercising a fair degree of caution, a message was sent to the Facebook contact. Within a few minutes, a response was received giving a cell phone number that could be used to make contact. And what a contact it was!

After asking a number of questions to ensure that we had the right person, we were more than satisfied that we had reached "mom". Through her tears and sobbing, we learned that she had been praying all afternoon that someone would find her wallet which had dropped off the back of her vehicle while she was busy loading the kids. Her first question was: "Was there any money in the wallet?" We asked her if there should've been and, if so, how much? Wouldn't you know it, she said she thought there was over $800. We said: "How about $835?" She couldn't believe that the money was all there and said how happy she would be to give us a reward.

There is an unexplained mystery though. Why was the address on the Driver's Licence wrong which led to the wrong telephone number for the home. Emily asked who answered the phone and we said it was a man. She asked if he sounded young or old. We said he sounded older. She said it was her grandfather who suffers from dementia. That was the clincher but, oh boy, did that ever lead to a lot of extra work to find her. Sometimes persistence pays, as was the case in this instance.

There was joy all around when she, her husband and the three kids showed up the next morning to collect the lost wallet at Heather's home. Melanie still insisted on paying a substantial reward but my daughter said, "Absolutely no! Just "Pay it forward some day". Can you understand how happy that made us to know that our kids were raised in the right way? Nothing beats a good affirmation sometimes.

Vision SoHo Development Looking Up

Aerial shot looking north from South Street. The underground parking garage forms a "T". The building in the front middle is being built by Zerin Development, and will be completed by fall 2025. The buildings on Hill Street are in various stages of construction. (photo by Southside Construction)

The Vision SoHo development at the old Victoria Hospital grounds is progressing well. In the spring *Chimes*, we reported that the St. James Westminster Foundation invested $75,000 into the project, through the London Community Foundation's Social Impact Fund.

In summer 2023, construction began on this project, the largest affordable housing development in London. Six nonprofit housing developers have come together to create 680 new apartments, 55% of which will be affordable. The remaining units will be leased at the low end of market rate.

The development will have seven buildings in total. Six buildings – four new construction and two heritage buildings – will be on the block bordered by Waterloo, South, Colborne, and Hill Streets. The seventh building will be on the east side of Colborne, across from the War Memorial Children's Hospital.

A large shared underground parking garage will form the foundation of the four new buildings on the main block. The garage is being constructed separately under each building in accordance with the construction schedule, and will be joined together when complete.

Zerin Development's building, located between the two heritage buildings on South Street, is the farthest along. This 119-unit building has a target opening of fall 2025. The rest of the buildings will be ready for tenants between 2026 and 2028.

Construction on the War Memorial Children's Hospital begins in September. This former hospital, built in 1922, will be converted into 42 studio and one-bedroom apartments. Indwell will offer deeply affordable, supportive housing at the building, with a planned opening in early 2026.

The Social Impact Fund has provided critical bridge funding for the project. All of the developers will receive grant and loan funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, along with the City of London. However, these sources of funding can be slow to be paid out, so the bridge funding allows the construction to progress much more quickly.

Soon these buildings will be home to nearly 1,000 Londoners, thanks in part to St. James Westminster.

The main floor hallway at the War Memorial Children's Hospital, with a painting of Mickey Mouse peeking through the plaster. (photo by Gabriel Ramos)

Backside of one of four funerary urn sculptures on the War Memorial Children's Hospital. These will be restored and uncovered as part of the heritage restoration. (photo by Gabriel Ramos)

Introducing Hilary House: A New Neo-Monastic Community

Fr. Michael, Philip Benmore, Elise Lafleur, and Benjamin Vazquez in front of "Hilary House'

We are thrilled to announce the establishment of Hilary House, a new Neo-monastic community at the little house next to St. James Westminster. Our mission is to create a spiritual home for Huron theological students and our neighbors in South London. Guided by Acts 2:42, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers", we will live by a rule of life centered on prayer, service, study, and celebration.

Our community will serve two groups: a small group living in the house and a larger dispersed community across the city, including Huron theology students, members of the wider London Anglican community, and general seekers. We hope to partner with St. James Westminster to host monthly community meals, reading groups, and other activities. Regular reports to the parish council will ensure ongoing collaboration.

We have chosen Hilary of Poitiers as our patron saint, inspired by his commitment to scholarship and thoughtful, kind responses to critics. Look for opportunities this fall to learn more about Hilary.

The possibilities that we are excited about include:

- **Guest Room:** A smaller bedroom will serve visitors and distance Huron students needing accommodation.
- **Vegetable Garden:** A backyard vegetable garden will provide sustainable produce for the house and community meals.
- **Monthly Meetings:** We will hold monthly meetings to discuss community business & plans.
- **Little Free Library:** A library box on the front lawn to share books and community literature.
- **Bulletin Board:** Announcements for reading groups and activities will be posted in the Lynch gate.
- **Book Study Groups:** Readings of Hilary of Poitiers' works and Diarmaid MacCulloch's history of Christianity.
- **Daily Prayer:** Using the new Daily Prayer book from the national church to guide us.
- **Shared Meals:** Daily shared meals and prayers for those living in the house.
- **Eucharistic Service:** Considering offering a Eucharistic service for our community on Sunday afternoons.

We look forward to building this community and welcoming all who wish to join us in this journey of faith and fellowship.

From the desk of your Family Ministry Team

We hope you've had a great, relaxing, and fun summer and are looking forward to the return to school. Mary and Laura are excited to gather with children in Sunday School and hearing all about your summer adventures!

Sunday School begins September 8th at the 10:30 service. This year we continue with Mini-Revolutions curriculum by Illustrated Ministries. It features interesting story videos, beautiful prayers, and engaging activities that are pretty simple to lead. If you would like to join the teaching team, or be an extra set of hands, please let us know!

The nursery is getting ready to open again. Children under 3 years of age are welcome to the small room we share with the Infinity School where they will be cared for by a team of volunteers. If you are interested in joining a team, please speak to Becky Seagram.

Please continue to keep our young people in your prayers.

Laura Manias, Mary Dekay, & Gerry Adam

Contact us! laurajmanias@gmail.com

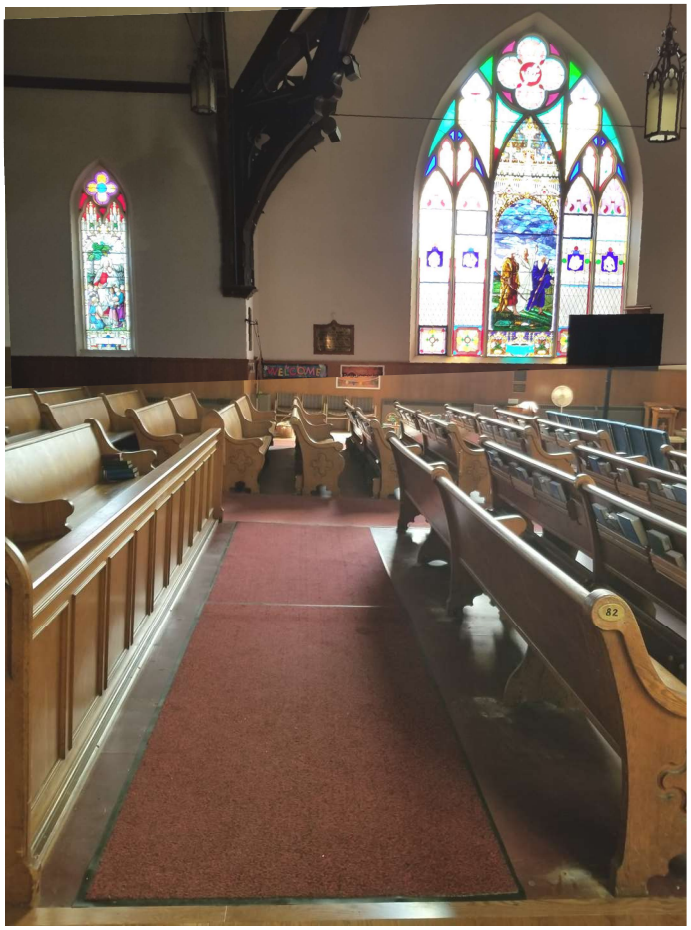
Altar Guild: Please join us for our next Altar Guild meeting on September 24, 7pm, in the Westminster Room. All are welcome, including those who are potentially interested in joining.

Good News from Camp Huron!

Another summer filled with faith, fun and friends has come and gone! We are grateful for the prayers and support of so many here at St James and beyond!

Gracious God, we give thanks for our week together in Christ, friendships made, new skills learned, games played, art created, stories told. May we find new beginnings when we share these gifts which we carry home. May this time at camp burn in our hearts long after the glow of our final campfire dies. Amen. (Collect for Friday Evening Prayer, G Adam)

Stay tuned for more updates in the Huron Church News, our website www.camphuron.ca and follow us on Facebook and Instagram



New walkway in the church

Sanctuary of Love and Light

By: Ash Kerr

In prayers whispered, in nights alone,
I sought a place to call my own,
A haven where my love could thrive,
Where judgment ceased, and faith was live.

For years I hid, in silence bound,
Afraid my truth could not be found,
But then a beacon shone so bright,
A church that welcomed love and light,
St. James Westminster, bold and free,
A sanctuary meant for me.

With open arms, they called me near,
In words of love, dispelled my fear,
A space where diverse forms of love can bloom,
Within God's house, there's ample room.

In this dear church, my heart found peace,
A place where doubts and sorrows cease,
Where love is holy, pure, and grand,
And diverse forms of love and
couples proudly stand.

We gather here, in joy and grace,
No need to hide, no mask to place,
In vows of love, we find our way,
In God's own light, we proudly stay.

For St. James Westminster, kind and true,
Sees love as love, in every hue,
A haven where our faith can soar,
In unity, forevermore.

New Chairs in the Sanctuary: An Ongoing Discussion

You may have noticed and perhaps even sat on one of the new blue chairs in the sanctuary. I'd like to explain how these chairs came to be here and begin a discussion on whether we should acquire more chairs for the choir and congregation.

Over the past year, I've noticed a few growing pains regarding our beautiful sanctuary. Our Wednesday morning services at the Murry Altar have grown considerably, requiring us to expand our seating options to accommodate up to 20 people comfortably and inclusively. Additionally, at the "Mass for All Creatures" concert hosted by the St. James Choir and London Pro Musica on Earth Day, space was tight for singers, musicians and the audience, not to mention the fire marshal's concerns.

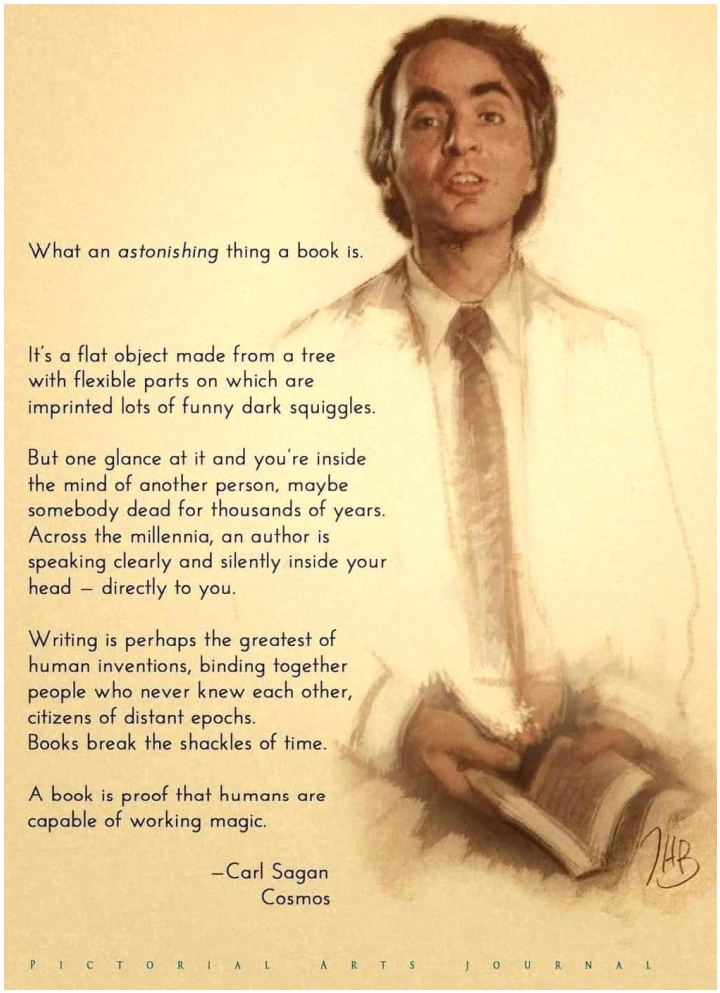
While I am the first to reject change for the sake of change, I believe the aesthetics of the church are a gift to be cherished. As a pew fan, I have a long list of criteria for any new seating:

- **Aesthetic:** They should look good and not disrupt the appearance of our well-ordered Anglican church.
- **Book Holders:** They need to have space for the BAS, BCP, and Music Edition Hymnbook, as well as visitor cards and offering envelopes.
- **Candle Holders:** These are important for Christmas, Easter, and other special services.
- **Kneelers:** They should have kneelers.
- **Stability:** They need to be safe and not tip over.
- **Comfort:** They must be more comfortable than our current options.
- **Canadian Made:** Ideally, they should be made in Canada.

This is not an easy list to meet, but I've been exploring available options. When 14 chairs, which I believe are the best option, became available at a reduced cost of $65 per chair, I asked the Wardens to make the purchase. This allows us to try them out and make a more informed decision about any further purchases. The chairs were extremely well received by the choir, so much so that if we didn't get chairs for the altos, tenors, and basses, we might have had a mutiny! We will ensure the choir is happy, and by September, the sanctuary should be equipped with the new seating arrangements, retiring the old red chairs.

This provides an opportunity to continue a conversation about the use of our worship space, weighing flexibility with tradition and aesthetics with functionality. I look forward to those conversations in the year ahead.

Michael Bruce+



"Why We have a Book Club"

St James Book Club meets the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 1:30 pm. Why not come out and go on an adventure with us? All are welcome!