Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise!

From the Rector's Desk

Dear St. James Westminster Family,

I am truly honoured to be your new priest. The warmth of your welcome has been a testament to the strength of this community, and I feel deeply blessed to be part of it. As we embark on this new chapter together, I can't help but think of "New Beginnings" and the profound significance they have in our faith.

Throughout the Bible, we find stories of individuals who faced moments of profound transformation and new beginnings. One such character is Abraham. God called him to leave his homeland and go to a new place. Abraham's journey symbolized the essence of faith – trusting in God's guidance even when the path is uncertain. Like Abraham, we are called to step out in faith, that trust can take the form of moving from Saskatchewan to Ontario, or maybe stepping into a new role in the congregation. Just like Abraham any new journey brings with it not only new hopes and possibilities, but also new challenges and uncertainties.

Leaving behind the familiar can be daunting, but it is through these moments of stepping into the unknown that we grow spiritually and deepen our relationship with God. Just as Abraham remained faithful in all his trials, trusting Gods promise, we too are on a journey towards the fulfillment of God's promises for our community. Those promises are rooted in love and a sense of service to help us and our communities grow in holiness, compassion, and service.

The ultimate example of new beginnings is found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. His triumphant victory over death reminds us that even in our darkest moments when all seems lost, unfamiliar, and uncomfortable, there is hope. As we embrace this new beginning as a community, let us remember the hope and transformation that spring from our faith in Christ who working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.

As we move forward together, I am excited to get to know each and every one of you, to listen to your stories, and to discern together how God is calling us to serve and grow as a church. Our journey may have challenges, but it is through our collective faith and love that we can overcome them.

I look forward to worshiping, learning, and serving alongside each of you.

Together, we will continue to build a vibrant and welcoming community where all are valued and cherished. I am looking forward to the blessings and adventures that await us and I hope you are too.

In Peace,
Michael Bruce+

Westminster Chimes - October 2023

Midweek Services at St James Westminster

In January of this year, a small group of Wednesday worshippers met to develop a plan for midweek services during our period with interim ministers.

We were able to find a lovely collection of Clergy willing to provide our group of 10 with a Eucharist service in the Westminster Room followed by a typically unstructured discussion of the daily readings each Wednesday at 10am. We also opened this up to a Zoom audience and had several regular attendees on that medium.

A huge thank you to those Clergy who visited us! Bishop Nigel Shaw, Rev'd Teresa Corrigan, Rev'd Michael Dekay, Rev'd Matthew Arguin, Rev'd Bill White and Rev'd Greg Smith.

In April, our group visited the Parish of St Michael and All Angels for their Wednesday service and Bible Study with Rev'd Greg Smith and they reciprocated the next week by visiting St James with Greg. We were very saddened that our exchange came to an abrupt end at the beginning of May with Greg's passing. Our hearts go out to our friends at St Michael's.

Our Wednesday services have continued this fall with Fr. Michael offering us Eucharist and discussion. Please join us if you can!

Libi Clifford and Barb Robinson

Candle Lighting for the Departed

We will hold a special All Souls Day service on Thursday, November 2 at 7pm where we will again remember our loved ones that we see no longer. If you have a relative, friend, or spouse that you grieve and would like us to remember, please let the parish office know. The departed do not have to be members of the parish or of St. James and can have passed away at any time.

Thanksgiving Decorations

We are looking for items to decorate the Altar for Harvest Thanksgiving (October 8): pumpkins, squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cornstalks, apples, watermelons, and Fall flowers. Please feel free to bring them in **anytime before Saturday, October 7 (9:30am).** Thank you!

Also, please join our Altar Guild (even if you are not a member) to decorate the church on Saturday, Oct 7, at 9:30 in preparation for our Thanksgiving service on Sunday Oct. 8th. *The Altar Guild*

Doors Open at St. James Welcomes 300 Guests

St. James Westminster opened it doors on September 16th and 17th as part of the city's Doors Open festival. Over 300 people experienced many facets of our ministry - history, architecture, outreach, music, theatre, food, hospitality, family activities, and an invitation to join us in the future.

Many volunteers helped make the weekend a success, serving as tour guides, greeters, monitors, and in hospitality. A play about Westminster Township (which our neighbourhood was originally called), was written and performed by Alvego Root, a theatre company led by Adam Corrigan Holowitz.

Special thanks to the committee that researched and prepared the historical and display materials - Mary Lou Anderson, Libi Clifford, Harold Ford, Donna Hefferton, Wayne Macpherson, Janice Mayne, Steve Mayne, Barb Robinson, Julie Ryan and Patrick Ryan. John Sizeland led the hospitality team. Stephen Holowitz organized a cast of musical performers to delight our guests in the Great Hall.

What a great way to kick off the celebration of our 150th anniversary!

Steve Holowitz and Amy Barten perform in the Great Hall.

A young guest and his family learn about our organ from Steve Holowitz.

Alvego Root performs *Bright Blooming Days*, a play about the history of Westminster Township.

Sarah Mills and Carolynn Fryer baked hundreds of cookies to serve to our appreciative guests.

St James Westminster - 150th Anniversary Weekend

Friday, October 20 / Saturday, October 21 / Sunday, October 22

One hundred and fifty years ago, the St. James Chapel was constructed on our Askin Street site for $2,500. Over the past century and a half, St. James has been a place for people to come together to explore and grow in their faith, and to support each other and the broader London community.

We invite you to celebrate this special anniversary as we reflect on the blessing of the past and our hopes for the future. We are planning a great party to both celebrate our anniversary and officially welcome our new rector, Father Michael Bruce.

On **the Friday and Saturday evening, October 20 and 21,** we will host a Gala Dinner and Concert in the parish hall. Doors will open at 6:00pm with dinner at 7:00pm. A cabaret style concert featuring Steve Holowitz and our wonderful vocalists will follow the dinner. As seating is limited, the program will be repeated each night to allow as many guests as possible to join in the celebration.

We have attempted to keep the ticket price very accessible at $35 per ticket. However if you feel so moved and would like to extend your generosity, we will gratefully accept additional donations at this time in honour of this great milestone in our parish's life. Additional anniversary donations may be made through the Sunday collection, or also in the office. Please make cheques payable to St. James Westminster, but note in the Memo "Anniversary donation".

Tickets may be purchased by cash or cheque after the Sunday services starting October 1 or from the church office during the week. There will be a limit of 90 tickets for each night so we encourage you to purchase yours soon. E-transfer instructions are available on request.

On **Sunday, October 22**, at both the 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. services, we will celebrate our 150th Founder's Day. That evening the Induction service for our new rector, Father Michael Bruce, will be at 7:00 p.m.

In between these services, as a gift to the neighborhood, a special free Mini Concert will be presented by the Amabile Choirs from **1:15 -2:00 p.m.**

We look forward to celebrating our parish anniversary with you and hope you can reserve these dates to attend these special events: **Friday, October 20 /Saturday, October 21/ Sunday, October 22**

Project Hope

St. James Westminster Church has been making 60 hot meals each Tuesday for Project Hope.

What exactly is Project Hope? It started during Covid in March 2020, when Wortley resident, Kait Symonds (who works in Social Services), saw the gap between what the government provides and what is needed. She started providing meals and support for young moms and went from there.

Project Hope now does four stops each Tuesday with hot meals, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, as well as granola bars and water, providing food for approximately 250 people. In addition to giving meals, they provide blankets, tents when available, and hygiene products. They do stops at Dundas and Clarence (downtown), behind Ark Aid Mission off of Dundas, at the Men's Mission, and finally at the Salvation Army. There are those who are outside these locations each day since there are more people living on the streets than there are beds available.

We want to thank our faithful volunteers for making those hot meals each week (even during the hot summer months).

Induction Service for Fr. Michael Bruce

Join us here at St. James Westminster Church on Sunday, October 22 at 7:00pm for **Fr. Michael Bruce's Induction Service**.

Have you met our new Rector, Fr. Michael Bruce?

We are grateful for the ministry of Reverend Michael Bruce here at St. James Westminster. Michael grew up in the Anglican tradition. After confirmation class, a few members of the congregation sensed a calling in him to ordained ministry. His sense of vocation grew throughout his high school years, and by graduation, he was certain of God's call in his life.

With a combined B.A. in History and Conflict Resolution Studies from the University of Winnipeg and Menno Simons College, as well as a Master's of Divinity from Trinity College (Toronto), Michael has been actively leading congregations for over a decade. He began his ordained ministry in his home city of Winnipeg and then then spent 8 years in southern Saskatchewan, serving the Diocese of Qu'Appelle as priest, regional Dean, and youth ministry developer. In addition, he served on various committees such as the Provincial Executive and the Episcopal Search Committee. He also accompanied Bishop Rob Hardwick on a cross-country cycling pilgrimage to every church in the Diocese - over 2500 km!

Michael believes that God has bestowed gifts upon each and every one of us, and these gifts can be used in various forms of ministry. He writes: "God's gifts to us become our passions, and our passions are what we should use in the service of God. Each person is a unique and invaluable creation reflecting a distinct aspect of the face of God - we are not all alike, and working together isn't always easy, but through sharing ideas and collaborating with others, we can help build God's Kingdom, which is so much more than the sum of its parts."

While Fr. Michael enjoys reading and working in the office, he finds great joy in sharing a cup of tea (he doesn't drink coffee but is delighted if you do). Please don't hesitate to reach out and save him from paperwork!

Looking to get involved?

Bridge Club

Join us every other Monday, 1 pm to 3pm for our Bridge Club. There is no need to sign up and no need to have a partner. The cost is $2 each day you come and the money goes towards our Christmas lunch. Questions?? Call Betty at 519-434-7469 or email bettymathers@rogers.com

Book Club

The Book Club meets monthly (usually the third Wednesday at 1:30 p.m.) to discuss a variety of books selected by the members - current fiction and non-fiction. To confirm dates and books, please contact Barbara Thamer at 519-672-1016. October's book is "The Librarian Spy" by Madeline Martin.

Special Music Dates at St. James

Sunday, Oct. 1 at 2:00 pm

St. James Chamber Music Series
Featuring "Grace Lou" - erhu
Admission by donation

Sunday, Oct. 22 at 1:15pm

Amabile Youth Singers and Prima
"Special mini-concert"
Free admission

Sunday, Nov. 12 at 2:00 pm

St James Chamber Music Series
featuring Eliza Lam and Alexandre von Wartburg
Admission by donation

Saturday, Nov. 25 at 7:30pm

London Pro Musica present
"**Messiah" by G.F. Handel**
Tickets available at https://londonpromusica.ca/

Family Ministry

St James Baby Boom… the search for a nursery!

You may have noticed on a Sunday morning there are more sounds of cooing and little feet. By March of 2024 there will be at least five babies in the pews! Writing as one of these new parents, it's been wonderful to have so many St James friends loving on my little one. We've heard it takes a village to raise a child; St James is definitely my village, and I hope it is for all our young people too. For now these little ones are happy to cuddle with mom or dad in the pews, but soon it would be nice for them to gather to play, explore, and learn during the first half of Sunday services.

A nursery space would provide that for children not yet ready for Sunday school. It would also mean that parents could offer their gifts by participating in worship (singing in the choir, reading or leading prayers, or worshipping from the pews) without a babe in arms.

I love teaching, both in public schools and Sunday school. It is harder and potentially problematic to teach with my son close by, just like it's harder for choristers to sing with a baby in their arms. A nursery supervised by non-family members would increase the village supporting these young parishioners, and provide a safe and quiet space.

A Proposal:

A nursery should be close to the sanctuary so parents can be retrieved quickly if necessary. We suggest the back of the parish hall, where the children's space is now. Sunday School will be taught in the main part of the hall or the Westminster lounge. Ideally we would install glass bifold doors, or some kind of permanent divider, but for now, we can use temporary room dividers. We will look for low shelving for toys and books, a bassinet for sleeping babies, and other baby toys. The space by the freezer and the space by the table and chair storage room would be kept clear. Other safety measures will be implemented as well (e.g. blocking corners with furniture).

We need volunteers! If you love cuddling and playing with babies, or playing and teaching older children, sign up for a Sunday. Parents are also encouraged to take a turn, since they are part of the St James village. Ideally two people, adults and teens, would supervise the nursery space and two others would teach Sunday school each week. In past practice, parents drop off children in the nursery, fed and dry, and pick them up at the exchange of the peace before communion so parishioners of all ages celebrate the Eucharist together.

Please consider this proposal and let us know what you think! Speak to us, a member of the parish council, the wardens, or Father Michael.

Laura Manias with Gerry Adam & Judy Jones

Other Family Ministry reminders

Sunday School continues to meet in the parish hall each week with either Laura Manias or Mary DeKay (we hope to add two more teachers so we have one for each Sunday of the month). We explore one of the readings for each week (usually the gospel), pray, play, and create in response to the readings.

While we continue to develop our Sunday School and Nursery programs that occur in the Parish Hall, we remind everyone that the Prayground, a cozy corner in our worship space, where little ones and caregivers can participate in the service, will continue to be available.

Laura

Good news from Camp Huron

As we start to feel that nip in the early fall mornings and watch the leaves put on their fall colours, here's a look back on this past summer at Camp Huron.

Special thanks to our very own St James young folks who participated this summer - four campers, five Leaders-in-Training, and staff members, Aidan Dawson, Gabe Sizeland, and Lily Ryan. We are also grateful for the generous bursary support from our ACW and for our nurses, Esther Sizeland and Julia Marchesan, who help get us over the finish line at summer's end.

It was also wonderful to see parishioners at several of our closing Saturday morning Eucharists. Your participation and support mean so much.

Look for us on Facebook Instagram and TikTok, where you can see more pictures and videos. Check Huron Church News for stories, especially this October where you can read the closing homily by Brother John, our chaplain.

It remains my great joy to journey alongside children and youth from our church, diocese and beyond and I look forward to our continued adventures! *Gerry*

Financial Health and Your Role in Stewardship

St. James Westminster is, at long last, beginning to bounce back after the pandemic. It is uplifting to see our weekly attendance grow, and one can't help but feel this is a time of new possibilities that we would love to engage with. But to do so, we need your help! Have you thought about your current level of giving lately?

We recognize the challenges of budgeting both at home and for our congregation and we thank you for your continued generosity. St James Westminster would not be the place it is with out your support. As we emerge from the pandemic and are presented with new opportunities for outreach and ministry, we would love to be able to put more resources towards building the kingdom of God in our community.

There are many ways to help! When you increase your support of St. James Westminster in the form of your time, talents, or treasure, you participate in building the world God envisions. Having the ability to support the current programs at St James Westminster is a wonderful thing. As you consider additional support, know that you are not just giving money to a non-profit organization; you are supporting an incredible community and are giving back in a way that will help realize an exciting new future.

Pre-authorized giving through one's bank is a convenient way to do this, and is the best way for St James Westminster to be able to anticipate our cash flow, plan for new ministries, and respond to the increased needs of our community. Of course, envelopes are available, as well as credit card and etransfer donations. Offering your time and talents are also extremely helpful and we encourage you to look for opportunities that interest you. There are many committees and groups where you can volunteer, build friendships, and be a blessing for the church and the community.

Yours in faith,
Barb, Jim and Michael+
Church Wardens and Rector

Warden's Update - September 2023

June, July and August were busy months around the church building and 105 Askin (our tiny house).

With Michael and Heather due to arrive in August, 105 Askin was cleaned and painted from top to bottom including the basement floor. Michael and Heather arrived on schedule and moved into the house, which is to be their temporary living quarters until their permanent house situation is settled. A hearty welcome to Michael and Heather!

In the church, the broken window in the door in the Sterling Vestry was replaced and the crash bar mechanism was replaced.

Sunday School supplies and materials were moved from a basement room at the bottom of the back stairwell to a newly painted storage room under the parish hall. This allowed us to update the rooms at the back to allow the Infinity School to rent some more space. Jim and Barb and Barb's trailer took a few loads of excess items from these rooms to Restore, and to the dump.

We have welcomed a couple of new groups to our Parish this year. Earlier in the year, London Pro Musica Choir moved their music inventory into another of the storerooms downstairs. The choir will be practicing and performing at St James on a regular basis. The Celebration Dance Collective group have applied for and been granted space to practice weekly in our hall. Inspired by their dance in honour of Greg Smith in May and with interest from congregations to see them dance again, they have decided to revive the group. We welcome Pro Musica and the Celebration Dance Collective to St James.

The new TV screens/stands/electronics were delivered in August and the wiring under the church has been installed. The electronic system and the three TV screens are now working. The original stands were defective (faulty lift function), which caused a delay in getting them in place, but this has now been resolved. The large projection screen has been safely packed away in its original case.

The hearing assist units remain available at the church entrance and have been used by a few parishioners with success. An extra wi-fi option will also be available.

We are looking forward to our upcoming celebrations of our 150th Anniversary. Plans are in the works to have a dinner and music on the weekend of Oct. 20-21, in the Great Hall. Food, music, and Sunday Services will culminate with Michael's Induction Service on Oct.22, 2023 at 7:00 pm. Hope you can attend.

Barbara and Jim - Churchwardens

Orange shirts for National Truth and Reconciliation Day.