**CONGREGATIONAL UPDATE**

**VISION, GIFTS, MINISTRY & MISSION**

Beginning with a parish retreat in November of 2018, St. John’s has been seeking to identify how God is calling us to serve our community. We were blessed in 2018 with significant financial bequests and through town halls, open meetings and discussions at Parish Council, we have been prayerfully discerning our baptismal ministry and how to use our gifts wisely, faithfully and effectively, ensuring fiscal sustainability for the physical structure and internal ministry of St. John’s while responding to our call to serve the wider community.

Approximately 25 people were present at the open meeting here at St. John’s on **Apr 25** where some of the needs of the community were shared by Aaron Tompkins from SF Police Services; Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Lanark Cty, Wendy Alford, Town Council, Rev. Christopher Ryan of Trinity Church, Pastor David Stead of First Baptist, Larry Allen of Rotary, and others. Notes from this meeting were taken. Paul Howard facilitated the meeting, explaining that St. John’s was looking to help the community in responding to serious need, and that the hope was we could partner with other agencies (private/public) to help make a significant, long term impact in order to help our Community. There was very positive energy and excitement generated in the possibilities that were presented. No decisions or promises were made. The meeting was an information gathering session only. Open discussion was held at the May Parish Council meeting reflecting on the information received.

Since then a working group comprised of **Canon Catherine, Karen Bryan, Brenda Ferguson, Paul Howard, Tammy Mulrooney and Kathy Porter** has been struck to investigate more fully further possible projects and areas of ministry in response to some of these community needs. Some members of the group met with representatives from Rideau Community Health Services to learn more about hopes for an integrated health hub and residential hospice and other people attended information sessions offered at Trinity United Church about Lanark County Community Resources, food security, emergency shelter and transportation needs.

**Next steps**

Members of the working group will continue to gather information around possible ideas, aligning the community needs with passions and assets that have been recorded by members of the congregation during these past months.

Corporation will meet with the Treasurer to develop a financial plan that will ensure fiscal sustainability for the parish while allowing us to invest in ministry and mission opportunities that will serve the wider community by sharing our possessions and possibilities.

Discussion around possibilities will continue at Parish Council. As a way forward becomes clear, information will be shared with the parish. Any decision around a major project will go to Vestry for approval.

Our Outreach Committee will continue to do its work in managing the disbursements towards local outreach initiatives.

**What can you do?**

This is an exciting time for the church and for St. John’s in particular. Your input and your thoughts are important. Please continue to pray about what we are called to do. Please continue to support the ministries that feed and nurture those who call St. John’s their spiritual home. Please share your ideas and suggestions with members of the working group and if you have any questions, please feel free to approach Canon Catherine or one of the Church Wardens.