



Outdoor service

September 12



# St. Aidan in the Beach Fall Newsletter

September 2021

Dear Friends,

After a summer break we're now up and running again, with lots of programs and events for the season ahead. Please read on for all the news!

In many areas our activities never stopped. The church renovation has continued, our church services on Zoom continued, outreach continued, and we kept on finding new ways to carry on in a time of pandemic and uncertainty. I gave thanks to God and to you for this faithfulness and hope.

Our Advisory Board has been meeting with Janet Marshall, Director of Congregational Development for the diocese, to do some visioning and planning work to take us into the next chapter in our life and ministry together. St Aidan's is blessed with many gifts and opportunities. As one person put it, "Good things happen here!"

That phrase has stayed with me: *Good things happen here.*

In the midst of the difficulties and suffering that life can bring, good things happen when we walk together, pray together, serve together, following Jesus' way of compassion, justice and trust in a loving God.

Good things have been happening at St Aidan's for more than a century, as times have changed, needs have changed, congregants and neighbours have changed, but God's faithfulness in the midst of it has stayed the same.

I'm excited about the year ahead. Let's keep making good things happen here, by the power of God's Spirit at work in us and in the world around us.

Lucy



*From tent church to tent church!*

St. Aidan's began as a mission of St. John's Norway in 1891 with services being held in a tent on the south side of Queen St. near Balsam Ave and later at the foot of Spruce Hill Rd. 130 years later found us once again outdoors under a canopy when we held our Sunday evening services and meetings of a bereavement support group behind the school over the summer.

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## Children's Ministry

Our children and families at St. Aidan's have been so resilient over the past few months. Switching from Zoom programming, to pre-recorded videos, and back to in person, they have continued to stay connected and really show us what community is all about.

After a break from live Sunday school over the summer, we are excited to be holding our children's ministry programs outdoors this fall! Each week we will meet outside at 11:30 am at the church, and head down to the beach for some outdoor fun. We can't wait to meet from a distance and enjoy some activities and stories while we continue to learn about following Jesus together.

We are especially thankful for our volunteers who are willing to return this fall and support the ever-changing program ideas we throw at them. We love our kids!

Gemma

## Music at St. Aidan's

As the rest of the congregation, the choir and the musicians are eagerly waiting for our re-opening of the church building later in the fall.



Meanwhile, singers and instrumentalists generously give their time to record quality videos for the digital services.

After a long break, on September 12 we had our first in person morning outdoor service and that was a real fresh experience for us being and worshipping together.



Thanks to our faithful singers, Urla and Michael, the band and everyone who participated. We are definitely planning a few more outdoor services before re-opening.

Looking forward to some changes and new beginnings,

Yvette

## Rectory Updates

Last summer the rectory had all new windows put in, to increase the efficiency of the building. This summer the old furnace was replaced with a high efficiency one, and air conditioning was added for the first time. As climate change brings more extreme weather to this part of the world, an efficient way to both cool and heat the building is important.

A new fence has been added to the SE of the lot, shared with our new neighbours at 69 Willow Ave. We have also had the driveway and paths resurfaced with pavers, and the front fence and bushes removed, with new turf laid to create an open aspect onto the street.

As soon as it's safe to do so there will be an open house in the rectory again!



## Renovation Update

Our building site is busy as finishing work begins in the building, and the handover of the building from the general contractor is now likely to be some time in December due to unforeseen delays. Work on our new roof will begin in October so that it can be completed before winter.

As we prepare for re-opening we will be calling for specific furniture donations and volunteers to help with our moving projects, re-opening celebrations and community open house! (Dependent on Covid-19 restrictions.)



# WEST GARDEN

The St. Aidan's West Garden Committee is developing a plan to transform the open space on the west side of the church into an accessible garden/woodland area for use by the parish and the community. The vision protects and enhances the natural beauty of the space and includes secluded meditative space, a small natural children's play area, and a meeting area to accommodate church activities.

To help transform the committee's vision into reality, IBI Group, an architecture and engineering firm and long-time supporter of the Out-of-the-Cold Program, has donated design services to help develop a west garden plan. We have had presentations of three different designs (photos below). The Committee will present a design to the parish in the fall as part of the Capital Campaign launch.



## The Season of Creation: “Connecting with the Land”

Each year in the Season of Creation churches and faith communities around the world offer a special focus on the miracle of creation. What opportunities and obligations does the baptismal ministry of caring for creation require of us?

Our theme at St. Aidan's for this year, September 19 to October 16, is “Connecting with the Land.”

Each Sunday beginning September 19, the prayers, hymns, readings, the homily, and coffee hour discussion will reflect this focus:

Sept. 19: homilist Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo of Emmanuel College, University of Toronto (Assistant Professor of Theology, June Callwood Professor in Social Justice, and Special Advisor on Indigenous Issues) will reflect on the Indian Act and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land.

The following Sundays, Sept. 26, October 3, and October 10, we will be led in reflections by Jeff Nowers (the theology of land and earth), Lucy Reid (our connection to the earth) and Grace Rockett (making peace with the earth).

Michael Van Dusen will lead a hike at Tommy Thompson Park (Leslie Street Spit) on Saturday morning Sept. 25 to strengthen our community's connection with nature.

On Sunday October 3, in addition to our regular 9.30 a.m. Zoom service, we will have an outdoor service at 11.30 a.m. with the blessing of the animals, in honour of feast day of St. Francis of Assisi Oct 4.

Saturday Oct 16 Lucy will lead a Retreat on Toronto Island.

Other related activities during this important season of reflection and action will include our individual exercise of our ministry of care for creation, the involvement of the children, our participation in the Toronto Climate Action Network, the advancement of the West Garden

project, and a congregational survey on how we move forward over the next year. Please join us as you are able.

Eco-Spirituality Group

## Out of the Cold will Morph this Year, Still Serve Our Local People

The pandemic brought an end to the city-wide Out of the Cold (OOTC) program in March 2020. St. Aidan's version of the program, (which by then was operating out of Beach United Church because of St. Aidan's reconstruction) started in January, 2006 with 12 overnight guests. By March, 2020 we were welcoming people to snacks, social time, entertainment and dinner for roughly 60 people from the community plus 25 overnight guests on Monday nights from November to the end of April.

As the pandemic forced a review of health, safety and efficacy of shelters in Toronto, the OOTC programs did not meet the standards required moving forward from any of the 3 parameters, and serve the least amount of people on any given night, with no continuity. Thus, funding has been appropriately re-directed to funding more permanent shelters and work on supportive housing.

Despite these setbacks, the St Aidan's OOTC program has continued, serving Teasdale Community Centre and Encampment folk through May 2021, and continuing to explore ways to re-open and serve our local community. The team is working on details for re-opening as a new form of Out of the Cold - a warm, invitational evening of community and social interaction. In short, a scaled back (no overnight guests) and re-imagined version of our previous program. The program will commence once we have re-opened our doors.

Keep on the lookout for how you can be part of this gift to the community of radical hospitality.



## PARISH FINANCIAL UPDATE - General Funds

Thank you for the attention and support to our mid-year update and request - a number of people got “caught up” or made extra donations to reduce our deficit by about half, and help us get closer to our 2021 target to support our ministries. We are still tracking behind our 2020 parish offerings and our 2021 budget, but now only by about 7.5%.

We appreciate the extra effort required to keep up your financial stewardship when we aren’t meeting in person. If you would like to move over to our monthly Pre-Authorized Giving program, there is information and forms on the “Giving” tab on our website: <https://www.staidansinthebeach.com/giving> Your donation amount can be easily adjusted or stopped at any time should your circumstances change.

Below is an updated report of St. Aidan's 2021 General Offering Income vs the 2021 budget-to-date, and the 2020 actuals for comparison, up to the end of August. (Directed Giving for Special Funds is not included.)

### January 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> - Income from General Offerings

<u>2021 - actual</u>	<u>2021 - budget-to-date</u>	<u>2020 - actual (Jan - Aug)</u>
\$146,963	\$159,000	\$161,843

<b>Below 2021 budget to date</b>	<b>\$12,037</b>
Below 2020 actual to date	\$14,880

Our 2021 budget target for General Offerings is \$260,000.

*The wardens and treasurer*

## Update from Jeff Nowers Associate Priest

Earlier in the spring I attended a diocesan Zoom session on youth ministry and raising up young leaders. At the end of the session I mentioned that St. Aidan's has a large number of families with children in elementary school. I then asked about how St. Aidan's might begin a youth ministry. The response came back loud and clear: *Start now! Lay the groundwork, and seek out potential leadership.* To that end, Lucy and Gemma and I approached Grace Rockett, who grew up at St. Aidan's, about whether helping start a junior youth ministry program was of interest to her. Grace responded with an enthusiastic yes. Next, we secured a diocesan YMAP (Youth Ministry Apprenticeship) grant, which will fund Grace from October 2021 to June 2022. During that period, Grace will work with Gemma and receive support from the YMAP coordinators. You can expect to see and hear lots more of Grace in the coming months as she builds relationships with families and youth in our parish.

I'm also pleased to announce that Bishop Andrew Asbil is appointing me Co-coordinator of Interfaith Ministry for the Diocese of Toronto (in addition to my appointment at St. Aidan's). The other Co-coordinator is the Rev. Roshni Jayawardena, parish priest of Trinity-St. Paul, Port Credit. Together Roshni and I will co-chair a new Bishop's Committee for Interfaith Ministry, and we'll be the first point of contact for all things related to interfaith ministry in the Diocese. What exactly is “interfaith ministry”? It involves reaching out to communities of other faith traditions (e.g., Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists), approaching them as equals to establish cooperative partnerships. The goal is to understand each other better, to cultivate friendships, and ultimately to strengthen bonds of peace. I'm looking forward to finding ways to help St. Aidan's participate in this important work.

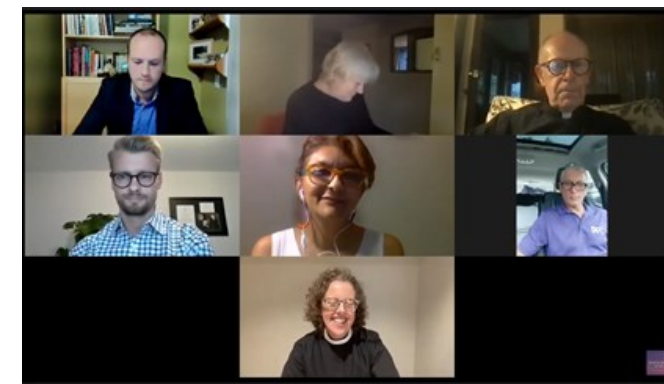
## Candidates from Beaches-East York give their views on Social Equity and the Climate Emergency

On Tuesday September 14<sup>th</sup> more than a dozen faith communities united to present a zoom meeting with four candidates for the Beaches-East York riding in the federal election. St. Aidan's had a significant role in hosting the event. More than 60 people attended at least part of the discussion and 50 stayed for the whole two hours.

The session was recorded and can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuQkhwPaGpl>. Have a look before you go to vote to hear how the candidates view core issues of our faith: social equity and the climate emergency.

Candidates were invited if their party had a seat in the House of Commons or had candidates running in 80 percent of the country's ridings. The attendees were:

Reuben DeBoer, The Green Party  
Nathaniel Erskine Smith, Liberal Party  
Radu Rautescu, People's Party of Canada  
Alejandra Ruiz Vargas, New Democratic Party  
(The candidate from the Conservative Party withdrew from the race.)



Rev Julie Burn, Priest-in-Charge at Church of the Resurrection, opened by explaining why churches were involved in the process. Then the co-moderators, Patricia Elkerton from Beaches Presbyterian Church and Rev Michael Van Dusen from St. Aidan's, described the theological framework for two main themes of social equity and the climate

emergency. The candidates answered a series of questions on the two topics. Questions from the zoom attendees were compiled and asked of the candidates. John Brewin, Chair of the Eco-Spirituality Group, contributed considerably to articulating the questions. Rev Julie closed the meeting with a reminder to the Candidates that as people of faith, we would be praying for them.



## St. Aidan's becomes a Partner with Toronto Urban Native Ministry

Rev Jeff Nowers is both busy and persuasive. One of his jobs outside the parish, is as a director of the Toronto Urban Native Ministry (TUNM), an ecumenical ministry dedicated to serving Indigenous people living in the Greater Toronto Area, a population estimated to be more than 95,000.

Jeff asked St. Aidan's to consider becoming a “partner in ministry” with TUNM. This partnership would involve St. Aidan's designating an annual amount in its budget for TUNM, with an initial undesignated donation of \$3,000, to start. The Outreach Committee considered the request, and unanimously passed a motion supporting the request and forwarded it to Corporation, which approved the allocation on St. Aidan's behalf in July, 2021. Future allocations within the Outreach budget and/or from the parish will be voted on at Vestry.