# Spiritual Growth

“Go into your inner room and pray.”

*Jesus (St. Matthew 6:6)*

This is where it all starts. Our parish encourages people to develop rich lives of prayer in accordance with our Anglican tradition.

In the last year during COVID weekly videos on Wednesday evening called the parish to pray for the needs of the town and the world, and provided teaching on prayer and Christian spirituality. An Alpha course was offered earlier this year and another is being planned for January. A virtual Quiet Day on the theme “Transfiguration” was held in February. A Bible study on the book of Ruth was held via Zoom during the Spring. A transition workshop to help people deal with change was held via Zoom in June.

Some of the small groups have found ways to continue their activities during COVID. The hiking group has continued to gather for hikes following COVID protocols. As one of our hikers has commented, hiking provides physical activity and nourishes the soul. The photography group has continued to share photos online and by email.

# Support, Direction, and Pastoral Care

“Bear one another’s burdens.”

*St. Paul (Galatians 6:2)*

Where do people receive support and encouragement? It is no surprise that people who attend church regularly have a healthier well-being on all levels. There are good reasons for this. We know what our lives are for. We know how to encourage one another during good and difficult times. In our parish we take pastoral care seriously. The priest provides guidance and support in good times and in bad. We also create, in a multitude of different ways, an environment and community where people will support one another through our prayer group; through small group ministry; through friendly greeters; through arranging our environment so that people will spend time together after the Eucharist; and through our prayer shawl ministry.

As a result of COVID, numerous parishioners volunteered to keep in touch by phone with other parishioners, to help reduce the isolation caused by the pandemic. Many parishioners have also remained in touch with one another through their small group communities, providing social and prayer support for each other.

Healing ministry is provided through our teams of intercessors who continue to pray for particular needs as they are identified and communicated to the team. Healing services are planned when in-person services can resume and COVID restrictions allow. Clergy also visit parishioners when they are in the hospital.

Fr. Tony has set aside times when people can contact him to talk about anything. Clergy have contacted parishioners in seniors’ residences, in-person when restrictions permit and by phone when personal visits are not allowed.

16% of our expenditures to August 31, 2021 have been spent on Spiritual Growth and Support, Direction and Pastoral Care. This includes adult Christian education material such as Lenten booklets and 25% of clergy ministry expense.