

# St. Augustine's Anglican Church

Biblical Stewardship 365

Bulletin 3 November 2021

*Stewardship is about how we use the gifts God has given us to collaborate with God to make the world a better place, to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth.*

**Behold!**  
***I am making all things new.***  
*Rev. 21:5*



## Stewardship of Our Parish

### What is God doing here at St. A's?

Just as God has given each of us gifts to enable us to be good Stewards, so has God given our Parish gifts for the same reason.

To begin with, why has God gathered us together into a community fondly called St. A's?

First of all, God is always present with us and will give us all we need to keep our Parish healthy and working with God to serve God's people. It would be extremely difficult for any of us to do the work of Stewardship alone, no matter how hard we tried. God knows that we need each other for support, encouragement, vision and ideas. And when tragedy strikes, or things go wrong, we need each other more than ever and when we experience the joy of a job well done then we celebrate together. *(We must do this virtually in Covid times, but just wait for the celebration when we can all get together again!!)*

**Through our Parish community, God ensures we have the support, love, inspiration and human contact that we need. (More about this next time.)**

**The Church is God's gift to us. The Parish Community of St. A's is also God's gift to us.**

**Q How do we know all this?**  
**A From a very authoritative source, Jesus.**  
**"I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly."**  
(John 10:10)  
**"And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Amen."** (Matthew 28:20)  
*('Amen' means 'Let it be so.')*

So that it can operate in its supportive role as God intended, it is up to us to look after and cherish this gift, so through it we might be strengthened and enabled to be the presence of God in our communities. To be 'God with Skin on' for other people as we collaborate with God to build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

### **This is Stewardship of our Parish.**

Together, inspired and enabled by God, we can do the work of making the world a better place by doing what we can, with what we have in the place where God has put us.

**'Behold I am making all things new!'**  
**Why are we using this theme?**

**A story I have treasured for a long time.**  
**(This version by Rev. Anne Robertson)**  
***A little boy reached that terrifying time of day when his mother would turn out the lights in his room and leave him for the night. Afraid of the dark and of being by himself he cried out for his mother to stay. Being a woman of faith, she reassured her son that God would be with him through the night.***  
***'But, Mama,' he cried,***  
***'Tonight, I need God with skin on!'***

**Robertson is interested in exploring the extraordinary ramifications of the Incarnation, and she makes it clear that we may be "the only Jesus some people ever meet."**

**For whom are you 'God with skin on?'**  
**This too is Stewardship!**  
*Even stewards in biblical times sometimes had to stand in and represent their masters.*

## God certainly seems to be moving here in our Parish. Can't you feel it, even though some of us are worshipping on-line?

The last many months of Covid could certainly have been a disaster. Our building has been deserted most of the time. Many beloved members of our congregation have been unable to meet there for the best part of two years. And those who do gather in our building are few in number, masked, and sitting socially distanced: not exactly a recipe for community building! But it has not been a disaster! Not only that, but an increasing number of people are joining us for worship on-line. We have often heard that the Church is people not buildings, and during this last period of time God has shown us how true this is.

### So, what is going on?

As promised in our theme, God is gifting us with much that is new and unexpected. It seems that we are called to use those gifts to strengthen God's gift of our Parish so that the Parish can strengthen and serve us in our various ministries. So, what are some of those gifts?

By a strange but wonderful coincidence we have new parishioners, both those who attend our services in person and others on-line. The freshness and talent they bring to our community is certainly a gift. Interestingly, our very ability to worship on-line is due in large part to their incredible skills. (And donations from you to purchase tech. equipment.) Could this really be a coincidence?



We always knew that our clergy were talented. The loss of our beloved Father Dan has saddened all of us, but what an amazing legacy he leaves, a gift to the parish and to each of us! Dan has shown us what courage means; a fine example of a life dedicated to God! We are so blessed to have the clergy we have. They are spiritual leaders with open minds, who really listen to us, encouraging and enabling us to develop the spirituality that each of us has been given by God. Ours is a parish of open minds and open hearts allowing God to be the guide. What new understanding is God drawing us towards? I've heard this called an 'Owned Faith'.

Have you seen the Sunshine Garden this year? Its fruitfulness and beauty have graced our surroundings and provided food for the gardeners and others. There have also been many out-door events including Holy Communion on the lawn in front of the Church, activities for the children, hot dog roasts around the fire-pit and heart-shaped tributes to the lost indigenous children. Could God be encouraging us to use all the resources we have been given?

**These lists are by no means exhaustive. There is lots more that points to God's promise of newness.**

As I write this, I have been at a Sunday service with more children than adults. These little folk read both the scriptures and the prayers, and after the service parents and children had fun carving pumpkins. We have a new on-line Kid's Time on Sunday mornings run by volunteers, and for the last two years there has been a summer camp for children. I remember a time, not too long ago, when we had no children worshipping with us! What is God doing here? Remember the words of Jesus. Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such that the Kingdom of God belongs. (Matt. 19:14)

For many years now we have been concerned about the state of the annex building and we have been concerned about how to best use the land on which our Church building is built. However, our ideas and plans never seemed to go anywhere. Earlier this year we were surprised to learn that the 'derelict' annex was a sound, useful, building, that just needed some work on the roof. Then, during a Visioning Group meeting, the participants collectively realized that both the building and the land are gifts from God to our Parish, to be used as all God's gifts should be used, to help make the world a better place. 'Behold I am making all things new!' With God's help, we have made a start with the mural, the fire pit, and the garden, but there is so much more we can do! Currently your opinion is being sought for ideas, and there are plenty! How will this land, these lovely trees, and this under-used building, become part of God's plan for our Parish over the next few years? (An Arts Centre? A Memorial Garden? A Labyrinth, A Community Meeting Place, ????) Pray about this, talk about it, listen for inspiration, and share your ideas.

**People of St. Augustine's, God is ready to lead us into an amazing future. Are we ready?  
St. Teresa reminds us that Christ has no body now on earth but ours.**