

November 5, 2021

Dear Parishioners of St. Catherine's,

Our Stewardship Pledge 2022

We want to express our amazement and gratitude for your perseverance and courage through this second year of pandemic.

As with last year, 2021 has been a trying time for our parish. In the effort to stop the spread of COVID 19, we have continued to limit the types of gatherings, reduced our worship service attendance, and restricted the use of the building to rental groups.

Fortunately, the pandemic is receding because of the government's massive vaccination campaign. We are now able to meet again in person and the church has begun the slow process of reintroducing activities, albeit with some restrictions. We are hopeful that the signs of the pandemic being less of a threat continue, but we recognise we must plan carefully for an uncertain future.

A major activity in 2021 was the development of our Ministry Plan, which provides us clarity of vision for the future of the parish over the next 3-5 years. We thank everyone who took part in this process, which looked closely at St. Catherine's Mission, Vision and Values. Through extensive consultation with parishioners about our ministry, we identified priorities to guide our *worship, spiritual development, pastoral care, community connection, outreach, sacred spaces* and *financial sustainability*. We were able to develop a flexible timeline of activities to move us into the future, that was endorsed by Special Vestry May 2021 and adopted by the Parish Council in June 2021.

Since then, the following activities are underway:

- *Worship*: The Liturgical Advisory Committee, together with Rev. Sharon and Rob Gloor (interim musician and choir lead) are shaping two alternating liturgies on Sundays at 10 am. One draws on traditional sources and the other on texts, music, and liturgy from a variety of sources. We are also slowly re-gathering St. Catherine's singers and musicians from the choir, Joyful Voice and the bell choir after the COVID hiatus.
- *Spiritual Development*: The artists in the community are working towards an Advent project to express the four values of Advent to the wider Edgemont Community: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. A journaling group is working together to reflect on the psalms. We have identified learning about the residential schools as an important educational series that will begin mid-November after Sunday services on zoom.
- *Pastoral Care*: A survey was sent to all parishioners about how we wish St. Catherine's to stay in contact with each other and be cared for. In addition, we are working with Area Care Leaders who stepped up during the pandemic about their availability to continue providing care in different ways.
- *Community Connections*: With thanks to the Coffee volunteers, we have launched coffee time before the service in the slowly improving lobby space. The website has been refreshed to reflect St. Catherine's articulated values and ministry planning.

- *Outreach:* With thanks to the generosity of the St. Catherine's community and the work of outreach volunteers, we assisted 178 families on the North Shore with a \$25 grocery gift card over the thanksgiving weekend, partnering with North Shore organisations.
- *Sacred Spaces:* After a property maintenance review, the Administration and Finance committee have a plan for the maintenance required to create new rental opportunities and support parish ministry. We are working toward the goal of rezoning a portion of the parking lot for sale to upgrade the buildings to code.
- *Financial Sustainability:* The Admin & Finance Committee prepared a future Financial Planning Forecast and have begun preparation for the launch of a Major Gift Campaign in March 2022.

A brochure summarizing the Ministry Plan is included in this package and a detailed copy is available from the Church Office. We are grateful to the Diocese for its generous support of this activity.

The pandemic has considerably affected our financial situation in 2021, but by God's good hand, your generosity, careful management and developing our Ministry Plan, we have largely weathered these uncertain times.

In 2021, we received generous financial assistance both from the Diocese (apportionment waiver and Vicar wage subsidy) and from the Federal Government pandemic financial relief through wage subsidies and a loan (part of which must be repaid in 2022), as well as increased level of parishioner giving and a recent resumption of rental income. Parishioner giving has been almost 20% above budget, and our rentals income is currently about 10% over budget. Having started 2021 with a significant budget deficit of almost \$55,000, our accounts show a current budget surplus of \$4,600 as of end-August, and our operating cash balance stands at \$56,600 to cover any deficits for the balance of the year.

Yet we cannot rely on external financial assistance in future years. In 2021, the Diocesan and Government assistance have resulted in a net surplus at the end of the year. This financial assistance will no longer be available.

Although we have made considerable progress through the development of our Ministry Plan, our finances and income will continue to be a challenge given the age and condition of our facilities. To continue to grow St. Catherine's ministry, we hope to increase the hours committed to clergy time.

In order to sustain and grow our parish in the coming years we must increase our financial resources. Over the next three years our annual budget deficit is expected to increase significantly, from \$60,000 to \$74,000 annually. To meet these objectives, we are currently looking at two parallel courses of action:

1. a Major Gift Campaign to address our immediate needs, to build reserves and to provide bridge financing as we prepare for the sale of property; and
2. the sale of a portion of our property, with proceeds to restore and renew our worship and other spaces.

In addition, we are asking those who are able to increase their annual Stewardship pledge to St Catherine's. This year, Rev Sharon will increase her pledge by 15% and will be maintaining this amount, as well as planning for her contribution to the Major Gift campaign.

This year St Catherine's Stewardship campaign will begin on Sunday, November 7th, 2021 (All Saints Sunday) with a request for all pledge cards to be returned by Sunday, November 28th, 2020 (the first Sunday in Advent).

If you are new to Stewardship, please don't hesitate to ask any of our Wardens, Chris Wensley (cjwensley@gmail.com), Linda Robertson (lindakrobertson@shaw.ca) or Robb Watt (robertdwatt@hotmail.com) for assistance.

The Stewardship package you have received includes:

- This letter
- A summary of our Ministry Plan (brochure)
- A pledge card with instructions on mailing
- A return envelope

(If you would like to pledge using an online format, an electronic pledge card is available here:

<https://forms.gle/LYvzZPLG2132H4gp6>)

We request those who are not yet doing so to make their donations through the Pre-Authorized Debit Agreement (PADS). This streamlines the process for parish volunteers who process donations. To do this, mark "I would like to be contacted to set up PADS" and Alison Watt (envelope secretary) will be in contact with you.

St Catherine's exists to be a visible expression of God's love in our world, welcoming and serving others both within and outside our walls. Thank you for making this vision possible through your generous giving,

In faith,

Rev. Sharon

Robb Watt (Vicar's Warden),

Linda Robertson (People's Warden),

Chris Wensley (Associate Warden)

OpenToThe Light