

New Feature

This issue debuts a new recurring feature. The concept was created and developed by one of our own.

Kathy Porter introduces us to the **Prayer Corner**.

[Details on Pg. 6.](#)

Happenings

Happenings around the parish.

- **Musical Help** – We have our new organ, we have a grand piano, now all we need are the talented musicians to bring these instruments to life. Sterling has adeptly stepped in to fill the role, but we are in search of a new organist and musical leader.
- **Parish Council Meetings** – July 15th and August 19th @ 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall
- **Coffee Hour** – Wednesdays, 11 a.m. Parish Hall.
- **Keenagers** – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, every month at 10 to 11 a.m. – Civitan Hall.
- **Pray K7A** – July 26th @ 7:00 p.m. Location Assemblies of God Church, 54 William St., W., Smiths Falls
- **Community Games Night** – September 4th, Food @ 5:30, Games start 6:30

If you have any events you would like to have posted here you can drop us a line at:

stjohns.smithsfalls@gmail.com
"Events" in the title.



Embracing God Through His Creation

Embracing life IS embracing God's creation.

Spring, Summer, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, these are all seasons, signs and times of renewal and rebirth. They are also signs of the glorious world we live in, rich with the Holy Spirit.

God's creation at this time of year is enthusiastically striving for birth and growth. From the greens of our lawns, the yellows of our dandelions and many bright colours of our tulips, followed by our pansies, irises, lilies and many other wildly coloured flowers, from the dark grey of rainy skies, the brilliant blue of clear azure skies, and the orange glow of spectacular sunsets, the wonders of this world the Lord has made abound.

As we move through the world we cannot but help to be moved by it all. But moving too fast is the problem. As these seasons of spring and summer remind us, it is necessary to slow down and experience and appreciate all that we have. For in embracing the wonders of nature, in springtime or summertime, we are embracing God's creation.

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Follow the Hyssop

(Editor's Note: This edition spans both Easter and Pentecost, both themes are featured in this issue.)

I would like to share with you a truth from God's Word centered on a small plant known as hyssop.

The current state of the world may be mystifying and troubling; at times even frightening. Yet the power of the Cross, the resurrection, and the promised Holy Spirit, has never been more evident than it is today in many countries around the globe. Jesus foresaw this. Which is why He confidently stated to His disciples, "I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not prevail against it." And in missions today, this is exactly what we are witnessing, success, just as He promised and foretold!

The following is a revealing teaching that I invite you to reflect on during Easter season and beyond.

Scattered throughout Israel, there is a small, common plant known as hyssop. It is a brightly coloured shrub that ranges from 30 to 61 cm in height. It is referred to only 12 times in the Bible, but each with great significance:

- ❖ In Exodus 12:22 hyssop was used to apply the lamb's blood to protect on the night of the Passover.
(continued on Pg. 2 – Hyssop)

From the Pastor

Excerpts from a recent letter from Thomas to our Bishop Rt. Rev. Kathryn Ottley,

"I would like to thank you all for your kind support of Cheryl, our children, and me as we have discussed with you Cheryl's recent acceptance to the Bora Laskin School of Law at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. While we are delighted by Cheryl's success, and while we are more than happy to support her in answering God's call to a new vocation, we all regret and are saddened by the fact that this will require our family to move from Smiths Falls to Thunder Bay, resulting in my need to resign from the position of Incumbent of the Parish of Smiths Falls."

And later in the letter

"I am deeply grateful for my time serving in our Diocese of Ottawa, and for my time serving God's people at St. John's and the community of Smiths Falls. I believe this parish and congregation to be a community of deep faith and joyful service. I believe the calibre and devotion of the leadership of this parish is unparalleled. And I believe the Holy Spirit to be vibrantly active among the people of St. John's in countless ways. I am delighted by the work we have undertaken together. I will always proudly declare that I had the chance to be the incumbent of this very special community of our Lord's faithful people."

If there is ever any other way in which I might be of service to our Bishop, our people at St. John's, or the community of our Diocese of Ottawa, please do not hesitate to ask.

Faithfully yours,

Rev. Dr. Thomas Brauer

Chancel is Underway

The chancel with the old flooring leveled and the new flooring laid down. It awaits the hardwood surface wood. The wood is on order and expected before the end of August.



Photo: D. Willis

(continued from pg 1 – Hyssop)

- ❖ In Exodus and Leviticus, Hyssop is used in purification rites.
- ❖ Kings 4:33 - Solomon speaks of plants "from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall."
- ❖ John 19:29 - where Jesus is offered sour wine on a hyssop branch during the crucifixion

In David's prayer of repentance (Psalm 51:7), he pleads with God, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." David was not asking merely for a ritual cleansing, but for a deep spiritual purification that would make his

Hyssop

life "whiter than snow." Because of Christ's victory on the Cross and the cleansing work of the promised Holy Spirit, His followers today can confidently pursue, like King David, a daily walk through life marked by clean living, pure thoughts, and gracious speech.

The human race, from Genesis onwards, has been diligently searching for a cure for the plague of sin. Jesus was that cure through His death and resurrection. And it was the lowly, little hyssop plant that was the quiet bystander at each event. Instead of "follow the money," let's change it to, "follow the hyssop." (C. Kerfoot)

Projects Progress

Our Parish Hall recovery continues to accelerate.

We are now at the stage of the removal of all designated substances and materials from the lower hall, basically a gutting and removal of everything to the bare bones.

Done are:

- ✓ Lower hall sealed.
- ✓ Keepable items saved
- ✓ Contractor selected and approved
- ✓ Clean out work underway

Thank you to all for your continued patience.

On the chancel front, as seen above, our rework has progressed and awaits the last surface materials. Meanwhile, the new organ is now in place and it sounds amazing! (L Arkell)

Ensemble Choir during the great Spring Sing!



Photo - D. Willis

Photo: L. Porter



A happy streamer parade to cap off our worship on the lawn. The BBQ is getting ready in the background.

Photo: L. Porter

(from page 1 – God's Creation)

Jesus said,

"I am the way, the truth and the life" - John 14:6

In that he intended for us to follow his teachings and his example. For only through him, through his examples of love, sharing, and good works, can we hope to reach the promised eternal life.

Like Him, we are not meant to just bide our time here. Nor are we intended to just sit here waiting for Jesus to come again. We are meant to spread the Good News.

By embracing the growing world, we are experiencing the renewal of life, the renewal of ourselves, and, most of all, the renewal of

the Holy Spirit in us. We renew our hunger for Jesus' heaven on earth.

Sure, there are challenges and dark things afoot in the world. But it is on all of us to each do our part to find our inner faith, the Holy Spirit within us, to be renewed by it, to share it and to spread the word.

For in the stewardship of Jesus' message, we do God's will. We push back the dark.

This message has been echoing and renewing us for the last two thousand years. For thousands of years before that, God's creation was there for our benefit, our appreciation. For many more years to come God's creation will continue to be

there for us. The duty is on us to notice it, protect it, and embrace it in all its glory!

Questions for reflection:

- ❖ What wonder(s) in the world did I experience today?
- ❖ What have I done in the last seven days to help spread the Good News, to help push back the Dark?
- ❖ How can I better embrace the world, embrace creation, embrace God our Father?
 - In my family?
 - In my community?
 - In my interactions with the world beyond?

In these growing seasons and beyond, it is both our joy and our duty to embrace God by embracing his creation!

(D. Willis)

Fellowship & Music Abounds

Fellowship is alive and well at St. John's. In the past two months we have held several events beyond our weekly worship and regular fellowship offerings, such as Wednesday coffee hour or Friday Games Night.

The games night team had an open BBQ to celebrate the end of the Spring session. Games night returns on Friday, September 4 in the Parish Hall.

This event was followed by the Spring Sing. Last year's 175th Finale was such a hit that it is morphing into a regular occurrence. It was well attended both by musicians and singers, and by avid listeners. Look for more details next issue.

Next up was the potluck dinner which was well attended. Yes this was the potluck dinner that was originally intended for the Fall of 2025. However, circumstances required it be delayed to the Spring. The delay did no harm. It was a resounding success, enjoyed by all attendees. There were even some unique games that followed the meal.

Last, but by no means least, was our annual Praise on the Lawn, where we embrace God's creation by taking it outside. The service was held on the lawn in front of the hall. It was less formal but just as meaningful as our traditional services. This focused on music, christian teachings and prayer. The service ended with a streamer parade with the children. A delicious open BBQ capped off the day with hamburgers, hot dogs, and ice cream sandwiches for any and all who dropped by.

(D. Willis)

Simply Christian

Why Christianity Makes Sense

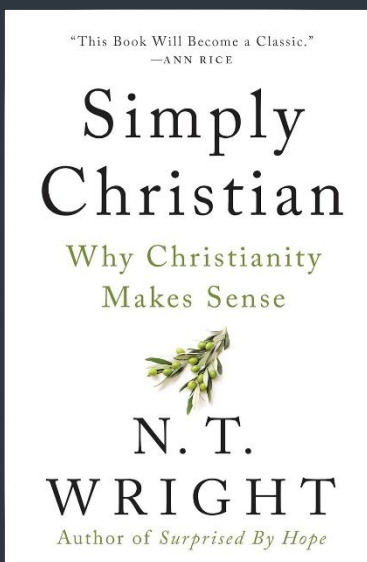
Author: N. T. Wright

N.T. Wright argues that Christianity makes sense by addressing fundamental human longings for justice, spirituality, relationship, and beauty, which he calls "echoes of a voice" pointing to God's purpose.

"Simply outstanding. It will confirm, challenge, and deepen your grasp of Christian faith and practice."—Christianity Today

Find it on the web at: [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) and [Indigo.ca](https://www.indigo.ca).

(D. Willis)



A Farewell Message from Thomas

15 July 2026

To the parish of St. John's, Smiths Falls

My dear friends,

As our family's final Sunday in ministry here approaches, it is now time to offer a few words to update you, and hopefully to encourage you as we all look to the future and what God will bring next.

I know that some of you will be wondering what is to happen in the weeks and months following our departure from St. John's. The Rev. Canon Jim Roberts will change roles from being Honourary Associate to being Interim Associate. Father Jim will take some Sundays and some Wednesday services and will continue to assist with pastoral matters. The Rev. Baxter Park will become the Interim Priest in Charge effective August 10th until December 1st. If further Interim ministry is required from there, The Ven. Brian Kauk will work with the wardens to sort that out. I have had the chance to know The Rev. Baxter Park a little. I know him to be an excellent and highly experienced priest, and trainer of priests. He's a real catch. Rest assured; our Bishop and our Diocesan leadership are already working hard to recruit the next incumbent of St. John's.

As a minister "under orders", there are a few standard notices I should let you know, as well. Often when there is a change in pastoral leadership some people will want to remain in contact with the previous incumbent, even after the new incumbent shows up. That is fine. You will still be able to reach me at my cell number and my email address going forward; however, I won't be able to assist with pastoral requests (i.e., I won't be able to return for or advise on baptisms, funerals, or weddings) unless the new incumbent directly asks me to. This gives the next incumbent the chance to build up relationships with you, just as you gave me that chance when I followed the Rev. Canon Catherine Ascah. We can certainly remain friends, but I can't remain your priest.

I also want to express my deepest appreciation and affection. I have loved being your incumbent. I have rejoiced often at the good we have done together. I try not to boast, but I will now if only to bolster my boasts about you—I have had the opportunity to serve as a priest in four Anglican Provinces (Ontario, Rupert's Land, Scotland and the Shetlands, and Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia) and to have served the church in lay ministry or extended ministries in four others (England, Uganda, South Africa, and Yukon). That's a total of 6 different countries over 28 years of ministry (21 of them, ordained)—I tell you this so that you will understand the fullness of what I say next: in my opinion,

A Farewell Message from Thomas (Cont'd)

the leadership of St. John's Parish Council and Corporation is second to none. St. John's Smiths Falls is an extraordinary parish with truly blessed and skillful leaders in mission and ministry.

I want to encourage you to trust your excellent leaders; your parish Corporation and Council, as well as your interim ministry team. Rely on them, pray for them, and support them in any way you can. Clergy transitions can be tricky at the best of times. During a major construction project, they are even more so. Please, find a way to lend a hand and share a word of encouragement for those who are working hard behind the scenes.

I also encourage you to remember and hold fast to the purpose statement you created. In it is a powerful reminder of who we are and what we are about:

God's love is the foundation of community.

As members of God's community, we are called to work together to lovingly share the good news of God's Kingdom: building relationships and discerning and meeting needs.

You are a community of God's people. It has been my great honour to serve with all of you, and I thank you, I thank our Bishops (past and present), and I thank God for the opportunity.

May God continue to bless you with thriving vitality as you reach out to grasp the hand of Jesus in all that you do.

Yours in His service,

Thomas

The Rev. Dr. Thomas C. Brauer, Incumbent,
St. John the Evangelist Church, Smiths Falls.

Prayer Corner

In this issue we introduce our newest feature series, **The Prayer Corner**.

This motivational section will appear on a regular basis, just as the **Interesting Reads** segments. This concept was suggested by our own Kathy Porter. To that end Kathy starts us off.

Morning Prayer

Lord help me to remember that nothing is going to happen to me today that you and I, together can't handle.

In Kathy's own words, "This is a Prayer so simple, yet so deeply meaningful and encouraging."

Sometimes a single sentence says it all. Thank you Kathy for this contribution and for the concept of the prayer corner.

For our readers, if you have a favourite or go-to prayer, one that you have encountered or one that you have written yourself. We hope you will share it with us. Please send it along, with your thoughts and insights.

Amen

(Staff & K. Porter)

Upcoming Events

- **Pray K7A.**
On the last Sunday of each month, the local Christian community gathers together for shared fellowship and prayers. It will be held on July 26th starting at 7 p.m. at Assemblies of God Church, 54 William St. West, Smiths Falls.
- **Games Night.**
Games nights happen regularly each month, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The next games night is on Friday, September 4th, starting with food at 5:30 and games at 6:30 p.m.
- **Parish Council Meetings.**
Next council meeting is in July, the meeting will be on Wednesday, July 15th and August 19th at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall.
- **Mid-Week Coffee Hour!**
A relaxing hour of sips and fellowship. Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in the Parish Hall. This is a weekly event.
- **Keenagers.**
Hosted by the First Baptist Church, this is a fellowship time of prayer, scripture reading, music and guest speakers for individuals 55+. At The Smiths Falls Civitan Club Hall. Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 10 a.m.-11am. All are welcome. Anyone needing a ride may contact Eric Wills 613-283-7007.

Times of Worship:

Sundays:

- 8 a.m. spoken eucharist.
- 10 a.m. sung eucharist. Coffee hour follows.

Wednesdays:

- 10:00 a.m. spoken eucharist.
- Bonus: Coffee hour follows at 11 a.m.

Parish Office:

- 9 a.m. to noon, weekdays; excepting Thursday. On Thursdays, 1 to 4 p.m. (613)283-1261

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St. John The Evangelist,
Anglican Church

2 George St. South,
Smiths Falls, ON, K7A 1X4
613.283.1261 ph
<https://www.stjohn-smithsfalls.com/>

Disclaimer: The thoughts and opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and are not meant to represent the views or positions of the Parish of St. Johns or the Anglican Church of Canada.

