



Diocese of New Westminster
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE DOWNTOWN EAST SIDE STREET OUTREACH MINISTRY

It is with both gratitude and hope that we write to acknowledge Fr Matthew Johnson's decision to retire at the end of September after 22 years as Street Outreach Priest, attached to St. James' Parish in the Diocese of New Westminster. Fr Matthew conceived and founded this unique ministry to the Downtown East Side and nurtured it for more than two decades with conviction, commitment and compassion.

The ministry is a direct and powerful response to Jesus' Gospel call (quoting Isaiah) "*to bring good news to the poor*" (Luke 4.18). Its purpose is to offer sacramentally rooted, front-line pastoral care to the residents of our community: to bring the altar to the street, and vice versa. Today, well over five hundred individuals are personally known to Fr Matthew and his team, and thousands more have benefited from their presence, walking alongside them, hearing their stories, and responding to their needs, both spiritual and practical.

We look forward to several upcoming opportunities to express our deep thanks to Fr Matthew, and best wishes for the next chapter in his life and vocation, including a parish celebration on his last Sunday at St. James' (September 27th), a by-invitation reception at the diocesan office on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29th), and an occasion for the DTES community at the Carnegie Centre (date TBA).

At the same time, we are committed to ensuring the continuity of the Street Outreach Initiative. During the forthcoming interim period, experienced members of Fr Matthew's team will continue regular walks through the neighbourhood. Over the summer, a Search Committee will be formed, with parish, diocesan and community representatives, to begin the process of seeking a priest with a heart for this work as Fr Matthew's permanent successor.

We want to take this opportunity to thank the many people who continue to support this ministry, including the members of the Operational Support and Advisory Group and numerous other generous donors. The Street Outreach Initiative continues to be financially viable, thanks to ongoing annual commitments from both St. James' Parish and the Diocese of New Westminster, as well as contributions from individuals and foundations.

Now more than ever, however, your gifts are needed to see us through the coming transitional year. As with many worthwhile causes, donations to the Street Outreach Initiative aren't keeping pace with the need to support our vulnerable brothers and sisters. Your donations have never been more important than right now. Please take note of the many ways you can give to ensure that Fr Matthew's legacy remains strong and sustainable in the future. Thank you in advance for your tax-deductible donation!

The Most Rev'd John Stephens
Archbishop
Anglican Diocese of New Westminster

The Rev'd Amanda Ruston
Rector
St. James' Anglican Church, Vancouver

Please consider making a gift to St. James' Street Outreach through any of these options:

- Access stjames.bc.ca/donate and select "Street Outreach Initiative" under "Fund."
- Make a cheque payable to the Diocese of New Westminster and add "Street Outreach" to the memo line.
- Click or scan the QR code:

