



## Ministry Report June 2020

There is not much to add to last month's report, in the sense that many of the activities put in place for these COVID-19 times continue, and updates for other parts of what we have discussed at PC recently are dealt with elsewhere in the Agenda.

### The Big Question

Not the meaning of life, but "When are we re-opening?" – many of you will have read or heard that the Diocesan Administrator, Dean Ansley Tucker (Who stands in place of the Bishop whilst we are in Episcopal Vacancy) has, in consultation with Synod Staff, Archdeacons and Regional Deans, said that Churches are allowed to consider physically distanced gatherings from Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July. It is already possible to open offices, again subject to physical distance requirements, and allow a limited number of staff to work from there, but we are still encouraged to work at home as possible.

There are, following the guidelines of WorksafeBC and BCCDC many regulations that go alongside any re-opening. There are stringent requirements both regarding the Parish House space, and the main Church area. Andrew Gates and Graeme Brown have, with the property group, already paid a huge amount of attention to this process, and with new guidelines from the Synod Office are seeking to put together a workable plan for St John's. For more details of the regulations, and just how much needs to be considered, please go to [www.bc.anglican.ca](http://www.bc.anglican.ca) to read the updates. I am very grateful for the hard work that Andrew, Graeme, and others have been putting in all through this Pandemic, but even more so as they consider the feasibility of our possibilities for gathering.

My own view at this stage is that we should not rush into gathering just because there is some leeway to do so. The limit of 50 at any gathering will remain in place for the foreseeable future, all those who attend a gathering will need to be kept track of, physical distance and hand hygiene requirements will have to be adhered to, as well as being able to clean the Church after use. We will not for the time being be able to sing together, sharing the Eucharist will be limited to wafers alone, our upper limit of 50 will have to take account of leaving space for visitors and drop-ins as well as those who are facilitating the service, masks will have to be provided (they are advised but not compulsory), we are being asked to gather for less time in order to lessen risk of spreading infection, and of gathering for Coffee Hour is impractical and can't involve any coffee or refreshments!

The possibility of opening from July 12 is an invitation, but it is not expected or mandatory. Certainly we will be considering how we might continue with online connections to our Sunday Worship even if some of us are able to gather in the building. We as a Parish Council can consider whether we want to aim for sometime around that week, but it will be the final decision of myself and the Wardens as to whether we feel it is possible or wise to do so.

If we are going to move forward with a gradual re-opening, I am inclined to start with a midweek gathering or two, which will give us time to explore the logistics and practicalities before we even begin to move towards Sunday regathering. These conversations, I know, will continue and I appreciate all the



consideration being given to the issues by our community, and am keen to hear people's opinions and concerns about re-opening the Church.

### **Security and the Court**

I was disappointed at some of the correspondence that I received or was shared with me around security and the safety of residents in the court at St John's – particularly those which intimated that we as PC, or the wider community of St John's was ignoring requests or did not care about the residents of the Court. We know that such important concerns take time to address, and I continue to be grateful for those who are continuing to consider how we can move forward. We do, however, have a process, and that includes having to convene (possibly virtually, maybe physically distanced) a Parish Meeting, and then forwarding on our request to the Diocesan Finance Committee and Diocesan Council if we are seeking to make any major changes to the grounds of St John's – and there are no guarantees that even then that a major project will be approved. The work continues, and we are moving as quickly as we can.

### **Welcome to the Team Stephanie, and thank you Kevin**

I am very glad that the nearly-Reverend Stephanie Wood has joined our team, having been authorised to act in the role of Curate and Deacon-in-Transition from June 1<sup>st</sup> – as we move towards the possibility of her ordination in the very near future. Stephanie is making time to come to as much as she can online, and we hope we'll all get the opportunity to meet her face-to-face sometime in the not-too-distant future.

In order to make it possible for Stephanie to join our staff, Kevin Arndt has graciously agreed to drop his paid hours in the Parish, and we are very grateful he was willing to do so. Kevin continues to be a much valued member of St John's and I am thankful for his wisdom and dedication as Priest Associate, and hope this will continue for a long time to come!

### **Last not least**

Again, many thanks to you all, and to my staff colleagues who along with the clergy and lay leadership team constantly prove how extraordinary, dedicated, compassionate and gracious this community is. Your hard work and your leadership is much appreciated

With thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

Alastair