
PENNIES AND SPARROWS

CENTRAL SAINT JOHN COMMUNITY MINISTRY

A HARVEST OF GOOD WORKS



Thanksgiving is, of course, first and foremost a harvest festival— a time of year when we thank God for the labour of our farmers and for the food which the land has abundantly yielded. However, it can also be a time to thank God for our *own* fruitfulness.

“Be fruitful and multiply,” was the original commandment given to our first parents, long before any of the “thou shalt nots.” And this commandment was more than just an injunction to have children. Indeed, being fruitful can be broadly interpreted to encompass many endeavours— from creating beautiful music to building furniture; from re-wiring houses to growing

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”.

Galatians 6:9

gardens; from programming computers to writing poetry. Being fruitful means being rich in good works: welcoming the lonely into our lives, feeding the hungry, tending to the sick and serving those in need. When we find ourselves fruitful in such ways, our first response ought to be gratitude—gratitude towards God for empowering us to do the things that fulfill our deepest longings as creatures, formed and fashioned in his image.

On September 22nd, we were blessed to celebrate 5 years of fruitfulness in our ministry here in inner-city Saint John. Of course, we are thankful to God. However, we're also thankful for the many supporters whom God has graciously placed into our lives: the many volunteers who serve along side us, financial donors, people who pray for us, bake for us, encourage us and otherwise make the kind of fruitful work that we do possible. We are constantly amazed at how God shows up and makes things happen. We have much to be grateful for.

The Emmaus Way

The Emmaus Way is a program we created to place teams of support around individuals/families living in unstable life circumstances. Each team meets once a month to share a meal, pray, read from the scriptures (or some other inspirational literature) and plan how to best offer support until the next meeting. At present, we have three such teams running. Two of these teams have been formed around single parents, struggling to raise children on their own. The third and latest team has been formed around an individual undergoing treatments for cancer. By the grace of God, these teams have brought blessing, not only to the individuals/families receiving support but all the members of the team whose lives have been enriched by the experience of community that this program brings. Please pray that, as the year progresses, we may be able to form more teams like the three we already have running.

Kids Lead

Through a journey of failed grant applications, Kid Lead has become the highlight of Jasmine's week. Now on its second installation, this program teaches kids and youth about community development. The group visits local non-profit organizations and each organization presents a 'pitch' to the kids. The kids then decide what project they want to engage in and they get help coming up with a plan and implementing that plan. We've also created an imaginary city to help us learn about what kind of places a community needs to thrive. In January Kids Lead will be part of a leadership program run by the Boys and Girls club. There are a couple of other places that are also interested in partnering with us to run the program, so we will see where these conversations go.

"Rainbow City" - by Kids Lead 2



"I like the program Kids Lead. It was fun. I like the part where we go and visit the organizations and learn about what they do."

- SOPHIE

English Language Bible Studies and Ministry to Newcomers

After a summer-long hiatus, Terence's English Language Bible Study has resumed. Each Tuesday evening at 6:30, roughly six to eight people from Asia, Latin America and Africa meet on the 2nd floor of Trinity Anglican Church to study the word of God, hone their English conversation skills, build their vocabulary and practice their grammar. This fall, they've been exploring the theme of life in the early church. Who were the very first Christians? Why did their faith grow and spread so rapidly during the first two or three centuries of the church's existence? And, most importantly, what can we learn from them? Special thanks go to our friend Steve Owens— an experienced English teacher with a love of God's word. Without him, this ministry wouldn't be the joy that it is.

In addition to hosting the weekly English Language Bible Study, Terence continues to teach an intermediate English course with the Saint John Newcomers Center. This gives Terence an opportunity to connect with the many immigrants and refugees who have come to our city over the course of the past few years. In the past few months, we've even had the opportunity to welcome some of them into our homes, sharing our dinner table with them and forging stronger relationships.



Some areas of concern:

As the cold weather hits, we have a couple of men who have been coming around the office in hopes of finding a place to live. They have been sleeping outside, in the woods, in dumpsters, wherever they can. In the last 6 months housing costs in Saint John have risen driving more and more people into a housing crisis. Our shelters are at 101% capacity according to the last Human Development Council point in time count. The two men we know have, for various reasons, avoided staying at the men's shelter overnight. One even opted to stay outside and face the elements during hurricane Dorion. We're doing the best we can to find a place for these men, but all our contacts are overstretched.

Sexual harm, towards adults and children is a very common experience here in Saint John. Many Front-Line workers in various organizations in Saint John do not feel they are adequately trained to respond to disclosures from those who have experienced sexual harm. These experiences have deeply affected individuals in our community and their ability to thrive. We are often offering other services to help them meet their basic needs without being able to adequately respond to disclosures and help them address some of the underlying issues. Jasmine is working with a team to offer a 5-day SACIT training provided by Sexual Violence New Brunswick to 10 Saint John Front Line Workers to better equip them to help those service users who have experienced Sexual Harm. We have applied for funding and things look positive, but we are praying that we will be able to help those in our community who are trying to process the harm they've experienced. The training will take place January 13th-17th 2020 at the Villa Madonna. We are currently looking for some funding to cover the training and accommodations at the Villa.

Other programs we are involved with:

We continue to run and participate in some other programs - Thursday Drop-In, "The Art of Prayer" at Sophia House, a New Drop-In program at Brunswick Court - a senior's apartment in Waterloo Village, IARCCUM's Dads and Tots group, Fit N' Fun, the Food Purchasing Club, and we sit on the Safe Harbour Board and the Inner City Youth Ministry Board. We are continually thankful for the great people we get to work and interact with and for the many volunteers who help us out.

Other News

One of our neighbours passed away at the beginning of September. She did a lot for the people of the building and will be greatly missed. She especially liked doing things for the kids and was known to decorate the front entrance of our building for each season. A number of us from the apartment complex hope to take up the mantle and continue what she did. Some of our neighbours already make sure our kids get all the treats they would need. We even get regular ice-cream deliveries!

Sam is now in grade 3. He is loving his French School - Samuel de Champlain and he told me that this year he got the best teacher in the whole grade. He has been elected grade 3 representative to student council and spends most of his recess time running. Naomi now rules the house with an iron 2 year old fist. She has no problem making her likes and dislikes known, although observant and quiet in public at home she is quite the entertainer.

Thank you for your interest in what we do! We hope this is a fruitful season in what you do.

TO SUPPORT TERENCE AND JASMINE

Please pray for our ministry and programs that they would point to God's inestimable love and for Saint John as it faces some complex needs.

If you are interested in volunteering with us, come by and sit in on a program or attend our Thursday afternoon Drop-In.

While we receive some funding from the Diocese of Fredericton (Thank you!) and Stone Church (Thank you!!), and free space from Trinity church (Thank you!!!), we largely rely on donations to make our work possible. As of the last financial update we have about \$15,000 left to raise by December 31st 2019. Thank you to all who make our work possible.

If you feel that this is something that you would like to help with, tax receiptable donations can be made to the Anglican Diocese of Fredericton with a note that funds are to go to Central Saint John Community Ministry. This can be done through Canada Helps (CSJCM is in a drop down tab on the page) <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/13778>, by cheque sent to the Diocese - 115 Church Street Fredericton, NB E3B 4C8, or by phone (506) 459-1801. Feel free to contact us at any time: jasminechandra@gmail.com; tjchandra1@gmail.com- (506) 721-8053.

