



# Pennies & Sparrows

CENTRAL SAINT JOHN COMMUNITY MINISTRY

September 2020

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# Annual Report

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Central Saint John Community Ministry  
2019/20 Annual Report

It's been six years since we moved to central Saint John with some general notions about what we could do the community. Looking back, we realize both how much we had to learn and how incredibly blessed we have been with the teachers, colleagues, and friends who have shared their lives and experiences with us.

Our first few years focused on learning as much as we could about the community. We met with non-profits, community leaders, faith groups, and anyone who cared to share about the assets and needs of Saint John. We sought opportunities to volunteer; we got to know our neighbours, and eventually we started some programs of our own. We failed at some things, succeeded at others. Through this whole process we have been attentive to God's direction and to the voices of the members of the community - especially those who struggle to fit into main stream society.

We will never completely understand what it's like to have to choose between paying for heat or for food. We are unable to fully grasp the anguish of being denied opportunities or services because of education, language barriers, or criminal records. We can't fully comprehend the desperate struggle to overcome addictions, or the loss of dignity that comes with being 'in the system.' We do, however, know that our work, and the partnerships we have with our volunteers and other organizations, are making a difference for people in these situations.



Our Emmaus Way teams are providing individuals and families with support networks and resources to get through unstable circumstances. Our English-as-a-second language classes and Bible Studies are removing language barriers and building community for newcomers here in Saint John. Our Art of Prayer program is providing a way for people of all walks of life to connect to God. Our Kids Lead and Jeunes Leaders en Action programs are teaching kids and youth how to lead change in the community. Our drop-in programs are providing social connection and engagement in a way that benefits both the volunteers and the attendees. And our presence on boards, initiatives, and training ensure that we are continually listening, learning, and offering insight where we can.

This is slow and often multi-layered work. We are grateful for the individuals and faith communities who make this work possible through prayer, volunteer hours, and financial donations. We value all of the encouragement and support you offer as together we seek to meet needs here in Saint John. We truly can't do it without you!

It is an incredible experience to have a small part in what God is doing in Saint John. We have been incredibly blessed by the individuals and opportunities that have come our way. We are so grateful for the people in our community who share their lives with us and we hope to be here for many years to come.

Rev. Terence and Rev. Jasmine Chandra





## A Year Unlike Any Other

This time last year, when we were planning our programs and projects, we had no clue as to what would be coming. At first, things were off to a good start: We held a Kids Lead program; enjoyed praying with women in recovery at Sophia House through the Art of Prayer program; taught English language classes, and expanded the English Language Bible Study. By the time February came around we were even exploring some new projects and possibilities. In early March, however, we scrambled with the rest of the world trying to figure out how we could keep connected as things slowed down or stopped all together. But we discovered new ways of being community. Our ESL Bible Study group began to meet online via Zoom. We kept in touch with our friends in the community through phone calls and social media. Terence got pretty good at video editing. We developed new opportunities and made new friendships. None of this would have been possible without the care and guidance of our Lord and the community that surrounds us (physically and spiritually).



## Pre-Covid

In the Fall of 2019 we were busy with a lot of things: Jasmine went to a conference in Chicago for female clergy in the Anglican and Episcopalian church called “Leading Women”. It turned out to be a valuable experience to meet other women in ministry and to identify some areas on how to fine tune what we do.

Terence got busy teaching at the Saint John Newcomers Association and leading a couple of Bible Study groups for people learning English as a Second Language.

Jasmine partnered with Sophia House Recovery Centre for an Art of Prayer Course. At one point there was an impromptu singing of “Jesus Loves You” by two of the attendees. Far from being a Sunday School rerun, this was a beautiful and emotional moment that made us all realize just how close Jesus is to us.

With help from Erin Rideout of Saint John Inner City Youth Ministry we ran our 3rd Kids Lead program. This time the kids worked on projects for the Family Resource Centre - a centre that offers supportive services for families and children; Safe Harbour House - a transitional home for youth; Coverdale - a women’s shelter and half-way house; and Fresh Start - an organization that supports vulnerable women.

Our Emmaus Way Teams were hard at work providing support to two single moms and a man undergoing cancer treatment. We also formed an oversight committee that met on a regular basis to make sure these three support teams had the guidance and resources needed to run smoothly.

In the beginning of 2020 Jasmine started working with the three grade 8 classes at the Centre Scolaire Samuel de Champlain in a new program called “Jeunes Leaders en Action”. This program involved doing a session on Community Development followed by a day in the community where the kids connected with various non-profit organizations in the city. The kids then picked from 14 different projects that would support these non-profits. Some of these projects were still finishing up when the schools closed. There was hope that “Jeunes Leaders en Action” would be an annual event, but we will have to see what happens.

In January we saw the wonderful results of months of work as we were able to partner with the Diocese of Fredericton and Sexual Violence New Brunswick to provide Sexual Assault Intervention Training for 9 front-line workers in Saint John (including Jasmine). We were joined by 20 others from around the province at the Villa Madonna Retreat Centre for a 5 day intensive training. It was an intense week but so very helpful and has given us the right resources to be able to respond when we hear stories of people who have experienced sexual harm.

Just before March break we ran our first Friday Night Supper Club at St. John the Baptist King Edward School. The program gathered families from the school to cook together and eat a meal together. With volunteers from the Anglican and Catholic Church this IARCCUM initiative aims at strengthening the community through building up families. We’ve had to pause this program for now, but hope to return to it in some form.



*The 2019 Leading Women Conference in Chicago*



*The “Jeunes Leaders en Action” group listening to a presentation from Coverdale at Stone Church.*

## Zoom Mania

We thankfully had been using zoom for a couple of years before these challenging times hit. Jasmine's Kids Lead Program was scheduled to start March 16th, the very next weekday after all schools and programs were cancelled. We quickly had to adapt a community oriented program to an online format. It was not easy and it was definitely not the same, but we still had 8 kids join us on zoom chats where we explored what community development meant. We also created an imaginary community called "Awesome City", and we invited guest speakers to share how their organizations were handling things. Our final session took place outside where we were able to celebrate the kids who took part.

Terence also was able to get his ESL Bible Study going on Zoom. Not only were most of the regular participants able to attend, but a few additional people joined, thereby making the virtual group larger than the actual live one! When it had finally been declared safe to do so, the group met at the park for a last meeting before the summer break. It was so great to have people from 7 different nationalities come together. Some people from the group had never even met in person before!



## The Greater Saint John Emergency Food Program

It soon became apparent that sourcing food would be a major issue for people during the lockdown stage of the pandemic. Inner City Youth Ministry and the staff at Saint John the Baptist Kind Edward School responded swiftly by providing bagged lunches the two first days the school was closed. Although the school was ordered to stop everything, they managed to come up with a new plan. In the end, Erin Rideout the Director of ICYM gathered a team of representatives from various non-profits and the Greater Saint John Emergency Food Program was born. We helped out as we could, packing groceries, serving on the leadership team, and looking at how to keep up food security support once the program ended. In the end we made 1736 food deliveries to 966 different households helping 2960 individual people obtain food throughout the COVID-19 lockdown phase (about 14 weeks).







## New Name and Logo

We are so grateful for Zack Ingles who has helped design our new logo and website: [www.penniesandsparrows.org](http://www.penniesandsparrows.org). When we started this ministry in 2014 we were given the name “Central Saint John Community Ministry”. Although we continue to use this name, we also go by “Pennies and Sparrows,” the name we originally gave to our quarterly Newsletter. We’ve gotten a couple of hoodies made with our new name and logo and already have had some people on the street asking us about what we do.

## Stone Church

For the past six years, we have been attending Stone Church - a Christian community that has been an enormous source of encouragement and support to us. We, in turn, have been happy to serve this church any way we could, by covering services, preaching the occasional sermon and helping out in the Sunday School. Therefore, when Rev. John Paul Westin left Stone Church to focus on prison ministry, it was only natural that we would fill in as interim priests. Apparently it was a good fit as we applied and were offered the job of priests-in-charge. This is a part-time position that we share, so we still have lots of time to do our community work. Stone Church has always been very focused on serving the most vulnerable members of the community. It’s vision of being “the heart of Christ in the heart of Saint John” fits in naturally with our ministry at Pennies and Sparrows.

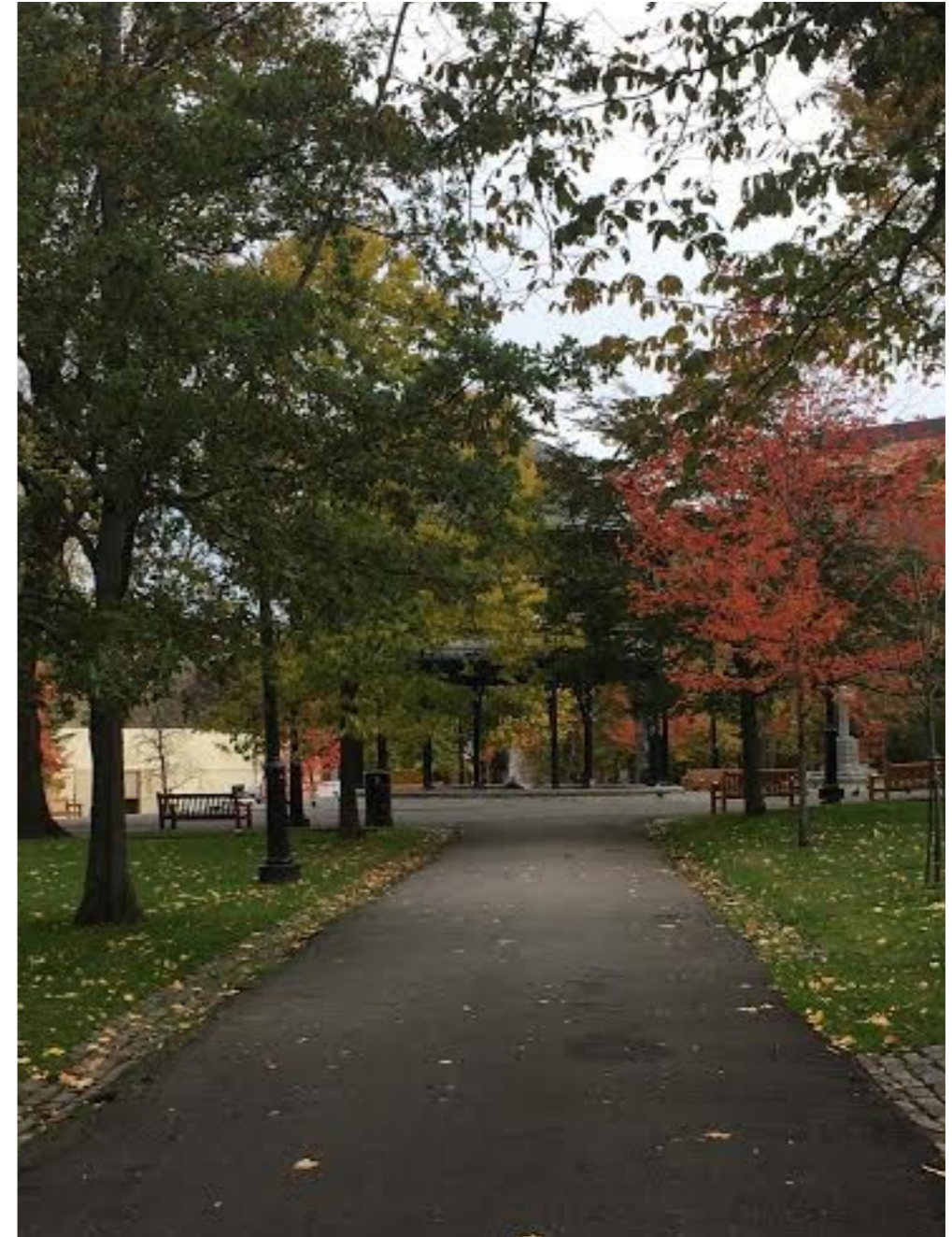


## Walking the Neighbourhood

The streets became eerily quiet and deserted in March and April. Then, as restrictions relaxed and as people got out more, we started once again being able to see people from the community. We usually say that it takes us an extra 10-15 minutes to get places when we are walking because of the conversations we end up having. There were a number of people we had no way of checking in with during the lockdown, so it was such a great feeling to be able to go out again reconnect after weeks at home. We continue to make walking in the neighbourhood part of our weekly routine and we now know just how valuable those encounters are.

## Ongoing Partnerships

We deeply value the relationships we have built with organizations and individuals in the community. We volunteer, serve on boards, and we delight in bringing people together. While some things have been stopped or stalled, we are committed to supporting the efforts that are helping to reduce poverty and build social connection. Thank you to all our friends at the Saint John Newcomers Association, P.U.L.S.E, The Waterloo Village Association, ICYM, PRC, The Elizabeth Fry Society, Avenue B, Fresh Start, Safe Harbour, Horizon Health, Crescent Valley Resource Centre, the Uptown Ministerial, Coverdale, The Boys and Girls Club, FRC, The Food Basket, Romero House, the Carleton Community Centre, Outflow, and the many other organizations in the city - we're in this together!







## Funding

Thanks to some generous donations we were able to start out the year with a bit of extra funding. At the time it made us wonder what God had planned for it - a question that was answered when COVID -19 hit. Thanks to this cushion we were able to weather a financially uncertain time knowing that we would be provided for. We continue to raise 80% of our funding through donations, with the Diocese of Fredericton contributing the other 20%. Donations can be made to the Diocese of Fredericton with a note that funds are to go to Pennies and Sparrows. There is also a donate button on our web site: [penniesandsparrows.org](https://penniesandsparrows.org).

Detailed financial information is available upon request.

## Thank you!

We hope this report gives you an idea of the breadth and scope of our work, but more importantly, we hope that through it you see all the amazing things that God is doing and what He can do through His people, the Church. We could not do any of this without our amazing volunteers and supporters!

For more information please contact Terence and Jasmine at [contact@penniesandsparrows.org](mailto:contact@penniesandsparrows.org)