



ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND NEWCOMER MINISTRY



NEW PROGRAMS
FAMILY CONNECTION
SENIORS HELPING SENIORS



UPDATES AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

PENNIES & SPARROWS

By Terence and Jasmine Chandra



New Life

I've had to keep reminding myself over the last couple of months that one day - hopefully soon - we will no longer be in a global pandemic. We will travel to see family without concerns of rules or isolation. We will celebrate milestones with as many people as we like. We will sing congregational hymns in church again. We will have potluck meals and scoop things out of the same dish. We will be able to cough in public without fear of spreading a deadly virus. We will hug and kiss our older friends and relatives. And all of these things will probably give us a renewed sense of freedom and life.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

John 12:24

Indeed, this is what Easter is all about. Jesus' death and resurrection brings a new way of being - a way of being that is no longer defined by the tyrannical rule of sin, fear and death but by freedom and life.

Unfortunately, our experience of that freedom is not yet total. Here, in this present life, we continue to struggle against the forces of sin and death; we continue to contend with what the Apostle Paul referred to as "principalities and powers." We have yet to witness the ultimate consummation of Christ's victory. However, from time to time, we do see glimpses of the Kingdom of God breaking into our mundane reality — giving us little glimpses of what life might be like in the Resurrection.

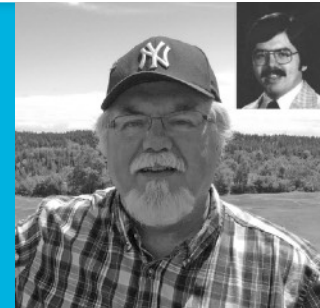
That's at the heart of our ministry at Pennies and Sparrows: Following the way of Christ, working with the Master in such a way that others are offered some insight into the Kingdom of God. As we continue to serve the poor, the stranger, the lonely, the hopeless, we strive to offer a taste of resurrection hope— not only to ourselves but to others.

English Language and Newcomer Ministries

I (Terence) continue to lead an English conversation group in partnership with the Saint John Newcomer's Resource Center. Because these conversations all take place on Zoom, I've been able to welcome participants, not only from Saint John, but from all around the world. One of these participants is from a country in Eastern Europe while another is from North Africa. Both plan to immigrate to Saint John, New Brunswick once the the situation improves with the pandemic.

Each Tuesday night, I offer an English Language Bible Study to a group of roughly 4 to 6 newcomers. My students have an opportunity, not only to practice their English conversation skills, but grow in their knowledge and understanding of the word of God.

Sadly, this past February, the man who partnered with me to launch the English Language Bible Study (Steven Owens) died of cancer. From the very beginning of Pennies and Sparrows, Steve was a huge supporter of our ministry. Not only was he involved in our work with newcomers but he was also a significant help with our community drop-in. More importantly, however, Steve was a good friend — one whom we respected immensely. In partnership with Lina Gharbiya from the Newcomer's Resource Center, I was recently able to offer an online vigil, where people from the community could come and share stories about how Steve



From top to bottom: an example of what you would get in a \$25 Food Purchasing Club order, children working on a craft for the Family Connection Program, the second floor space at Trinity Church after we moved our office and program space to Stone Church, and Steve Owens.

impacted their life. There were a wide variety of participants — some from his church community (Stone) some from the Newcomer community, and others from his immediate and extended family. “Rest eternal grant to our brother, Steve, O Lord, and may light perpetual shine upon him.”

New Programs - Family Connection

On January 29th 2021 we (Jasmine and Erin Rideout from inner City Youth Ministry) dropped off our first set of Family Connection boxes to 20 households across Saint John. It was wonderful to catch up with people on their doorsteps, and hear exclamations of joy as children peeked in to discover what we'd sent along. Each box contains food for a family supper, snacks, a board game, a book, discussion cards, a craft, and a letter from us. The aim of the program is to encourage quality family time. One grandmother was expecting her grandkids for the weekend and, when she opened the door and saw the box, she said “Now I know what I'm going to do with them!” We do our best to match the games and books to the kids — many of whom we know through other programs such as Inner City Youth's Summer backpack program, Kids Lead, and meeting people in the community. These 20 households will get a box on the last Friday of every month.

New Programs - Seniors Helping Seniors

We just received news that we have obtained a grant in partnership with the Waterloo Village Association and Social Development to run a Senior led Alzheimer's and Dementia Program. The program would involve a working group of about 8 seniors planning and implementing 6 events over 6 months to help seniors cope with Alzheimer's and Dementia. These events will be hosted by Stone Church and will be entirely planned and run by the working group. We already have a number of people who are interested in being on the working group and we are excited to see what ideas they bring to the table.

Updates

After 5 years of enjoying a beautiful, rent-free space on the second floor of Trinity Church, we have moved out. Given the fact that we are both priests-in-charge at Stone Church, we felt that it would be simpler and more efficient to run all of our ministry programs out of this church instead. We are very grateful to the generosity of Trinity Church for providing this space on their second floor — a space that became a tremendous blessing to many of our friends from the neighbourhood. You can now visit us in our office space at Stone Church (87 Carleton Street) where we hope to be able to once again offer some of our programs that we've had to put on hold due to Covid-19. We're especially looking forward to getting a drop-in going again as well as starting a Kids Lead program in the Fall.

The Emmaus Way Program: We currently have 4 teams on the go. One team was formed to support a single mom who recently gave birth to a healthy baby boy; the second around a man struggling with alcoholism and the third around a refugee family. The 4th and most recent team (just launched a few weeks ago) was created to support a homeless man suffering from substance abuse issues. The team has just recently helped secure a space at a rooming house for him. Our deepest hope and prayer however, is that, with the support of this new group of friends, he'll be able to stay off the street. All in all, we are deeply impressed with the volunteers on each of these teams, particularly given the fact that they've managed to offer their support even under the challenging conditions of a global pandemic. Please pray for them as they continue to minister to the Lord and his people in this way.

We will soon be starting our drop in at Brunswick Court seniors apartments. They have had additional restrictions during various phases of the pandemic but are now happy to have us come in. We can't serve food, but we will offer door prizes and bags of treats on the way out. We are very grateful to Rick Larder who helps with this program and offers his creative music trivia games for all to enjoy.

Jasmine continues to work in the neighbourhood helping with the Food Purchasing Club at P.U.L.S.E in the South End, Chairing the Waterloo Village Neighbourhood Association, keeping in touch with Food Security Groups in the city, and partnering with L'Arche Canada in looking at housing solutions for adults with intellectual disabilities.

Plans for the Future

Jasmine has been working on a national fitness certification through Fitness NB to be able to teach exercise classes. The hope is to offer a free fitness class with a positive and faith-based message. There are a lot of barriers to healthy living and yet we all know the great benefits to exercise and eating well. Jasmine has one last evaluation before she is certified. The class would be open to all levels and experience.

Our Family

We continue to enjoy life in 'Uptown' Saint John. While we haven't been able to welcome people into our new home the way that we anticipated, we are grateful for the space our townhouse provides for our active household. Naomi has been enjoying her time at preschool two mornings a week and has made a couple of friends. Her favourite things are unicorns, rainbows, and the colours pink and purple. She would like to be a mermaid when she grows up but if that's doesn't work out she's also open to going to the moon. Sam just finished his 5th season of hockey where he enjoyed playing defence. He's hoping to play soccer in the spring. The last time he played on an organized soccer team he was 3 years old and was afraid of the referee's whistle. Hopefully this times it goes better. Sam is an avid reader and would like to use his drawing skills in his career plans. He turns 10 years old this month which is hard for his parents to believe! We (Terence and Jasmine) continue to feel tremendously blessed in our work and life in Saint John.

TO SUPPORT PENNIES AND SPARROWS

We appreciate all those who have committed to praying for us. We could especially use prayers for the new projects starting up and the Emmaus Way teams as they seek to support people in unstable life circumstances.

We largely rely on donations to make our work possible. Tax receiptable donations can be made to the Anglican Diocese of Fredericton with a note that funds are to go to Pennies and Sparrows. This can be done through Canada Helps (using the drop down tab on the page) <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/13778>, by cheque sent to Stone Church - 87 Carleton Street Saint John NB E2L 2Z2, or by phone (506) 459-1801. Feel free to contact us at any time: jasminechandra@gmail.com; tjchandra1@gmail.com- (506) 721-8053.

We are grateful to all those who have been supporting us even through these strange times. Detailed financials are available upon request. Thank You!!

Wishing you a wonderful
Easter Season!

Terence and Jasmine

