

Annual Report #8 - July 2021 to July 2022

Pennies & Sparrows

Since 2014



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2021/22 Annual Report - Pennies and Sparrows
Prepared by Rev. Terence and Rev. Jasmine Chandra



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Thanks for taking the time to read our annual report!

Over the last year we have seen a lot of change in the city of Saint John. While there has been a steady stream of construction and new developments, there is also a growing homeless population, increased drug use, more violence and more people dying from overdoses. Against this backdrop, it's not surprising that our greatest challenge was running an overnight emergency out of the cold shelter this past February— a temporary shelter which we opened in response to a grave need. We are deeply grateful to the many volunteers who allowed this shelter to run, along with our M.L.A., Arlene Dunn, who helped us obtain Provincial funding. Our experience taught us that a much greater response to the homelessness crisis in our city is necessary. For a more detailed reflections on the subject, we recommend that you check out our blog post on penniesandsparrows.com entitled “Can Churches Double as Homeless Shelters?”

As we've gone in and out of lockdowns, navigating our way through a myriad of rules and restrictions we have managed to support our neighbours in the community through our various programs and connections. We are thankful for all the partners and partner organizations we've had the honour of working with. We thank the Diocese of Fredericton for giving us the support and freedom to do this work and the church congregations that keep encouraging us. We also give our love and appreciation to Stone Church for providing us with the space to do our ministry and the resources to make this work a joy.

We remain especially grateful to those who have contributed to our ministry through volunteering, prayer, and financial giving. As you read this report, may you claim the work that we do as your own. After all, none of this would have been possible without you. Thank you again for all the support that you have given us this past year.

Ministry to the Community:

The Emergency Shelter and Community Drop-in:

During the Emergency Shelter we housed 41 different people who stayed with us anywhere from 1-36 nights. Of those 41 people, the vast majority struggled with addiction and mental health issues. We had to close the shelter after 5 weeks because that was the amount of time we had committed to. It was also the length of our contract with the security guard company. That said, even if the additional resources were available, continuing such a ministry long term would have been unfeasible. We ourselves were burning out and, as for our wonderful team of volunteers, even they were stretched too thinly.

The good news, however, is this: When the emergency, out of the cold shelter came to an end, we were able (with the help of our volunteers) to transition into a new ministry; that is, a drop-in program which we ran on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. This gave our friends in the community a place to escape from the cold during the day. It also allowed us to work more closely with them, providing some practical solutions. We've been able to offer bus tickets and rides to addiction treatment, connections to other services, and most importantly somewhere to go and someone to talk to.

We continue to be engaged with different levels of municipal leadership, government, as well as other non-profits and churches, advocating for the needs of those in the community. Together, we're trying to put together a winter plan- one which ensures that we won't find ourselves in the same crisis that we did this past winter. There are many non-profits doing amazing front line work and it's our hope that we can uplift what they do and ease the burden of the tremendous needs that we see.



Above: a picture of emergency services responding to a fire in the early hours of January 25th 2022. The fire was caused by people trying to stay warm. They were sleeping in a tent next to the historical general store in Saint John. It is believed that they lit a fire and the fire spread to the building causing extensive damage. We had just opened the emergency shelter at the time and saw from this incident how important our role was.



Neighbourhood Groups:

Our involvement with the Waterloo Village Neighbourhood Association helps us to stay in dialogue with various non-profits and to stay informed on the different programs and services that are offer in our neighbourhood. It also gives us the opportunity to sit in on meetings with the other priority neighbourhood groups, the Chief of Police, and city planning groups. We use this involvement to raise concerns about specific issues that we see in the community and to partner on projects and solutions.

An example of this collaboration is when the city of Saint John hired a consulting group to help them draft an affordable housing plan, we were asked to survey members of our drop-in program. We were able to collect 30 surveys which along with the other 90 surveys from the 4 other priority neighbourhoods gave them a fuller picture of the housing needs of the city.

We partner on a number of projects with Penni Eisenhauer who is the Waterloo Village Community Navigator. Her years of serving the non-profit sector have given her valuable insights and wisdom that help us to address pressing needs. Together we actively seek solutions to the issues we see in our community.

Jasmine continues to connect to the South End Neighbourhood through packing groceries for the Food Purchasing Club, and staying connected with their programs and services.

Many of our communities have been grappling with what to do about increased housing costs, an insufficient number of subsidized units, and the many factors that cause people to be homeless or underhoused. We participated in a housing lab that looked into what housing solutions could be created for adults with intellectual disabilities and as we explored this specific issue we found that much of our discussion as well as our solutions could be applied to a much broader population base. For example we hosted an exercise exploring co-living with a wide range of participants. Participants answered questions and chose images to illustrate what they were looking for and what they were willing to contribute in their ideal home environment. Pictured above is a co-living visioning board that was produced during this exercise. Creating new and innovative housing solutions is just one of several pieces that are necessary in addressing the growing issues and the growing housing need.

Our Ongoing Programs

ESL Ministries:

Throughout the course of the year, Terence has continued to partner with the Newcomer's Resource Center in offering a Tuesday morning, English conversation group to various immigrants and refugees. As in previous years, he has also offered a weekly Bible Study, specifically geared to people learning English as a second language. Conversations are often lively and interesting, as different people from different cultures always bring new, fresh insights into the Word of God.

The Emmaus Way Teams:

This year, we launched an Emmaus Way support group around two small families who recently emigrated to Canada from a country in East Africa. Moving to an entirely new country, learning a new culture, picking up a new language can be terribly difficult. However, it can be a lot easier if you're surrounded by a team of caring people, rooting for your success. We extend thanks to the members of this team, all of whom are making a big difference in the lives of two newcomer families.

Seniors Learn and Groove:

Thanks to the New Horizons for Seniors grant, we are able to offer a monthly seniors program that focuses on socialization, fun, and learning new things. We have musical entertainment, snacks, door prizes, and guest speakers. The program is entirely directed by the seniors and we simply help facilitate it. Our speaker this past year have addressed; dementia and Alzheimers, elder abuse, seniors resources in the community, heart health and stroke prevention, Art, nutrition, mental health, and social housing. Our seniors have plans to discuss much more!



Melissa and Brian - our dedicated drop-in volunteers



A very well attended Community BBQ at Stone Church



The Seniors Resource Centre explains the different services and items they have to help seniors in the community.



In Honour of Mary Larder: Mary attended our Art of Prayer Program and had great insight into the prayers and the exercises we did. She journaled and spent time with Jesus and her eyes and her smile would light up as she talked about it. We didn't expect her to take up residence in heaven so soon, but we will always treasure the love and joy that flowed through her.

Mary and her husband Rick started volunteering with us from the very beginning of our ministry in Saint John. She helped in so many ways and as a person of action she could always be counted on to do whatever she could for others. We will deeply miss Mary but we can't deny that what we see as her end, is really her beginning.

Family Connection:

Our Family Connection Program ran until the end of December. We delivered boxes to 23 families each month. The boxes contained food for a meal, snacks, a craft, a board game or puzzle, a book, and discussion questions to have a family night. We heard from all the families how much they appreciated these deliveries. Often the conversations in the doorways and on the front steps kept us connected at a time when getting together was either not possible or was a risk. We partner with Inner City Youth Ministry to make this program happen and we look forward to starting it back up soon with a new cohort of families.

The Art of Prayer Program:

The Art of Prayer is an opportunity to share a time of prayer while learning different methods of prayer. Most of these methods focus on creativity, music, or movement. We were able to offer several sessions that opened up some meaningful prayer time and some deep discussion. Beth Vail has been a faithful volunteer who started to lead some of the program and who has found a real ability to connect with those who attend.

Kids Camps:

We are about to run two kids camps - one as an adaptation of our Kids Lead Program that teaches kids about community development and another one for children of recent immigrants to help them learn some English before they start school. We'll have a lot more to say about these camps in our Fall Newsletter.



Future Opportunities

In September 2021 We were invited to speak in a workshop at the RADVO conference in Dallas Texas. It was an opportunity for us to share what we do and to encourage other church leaders or potential church leaders in their own community involvement. It was also a time that encouraged us to see that we are indeed following God's leading and that our work holds value even outside of Saint John.

It is our ongoing hope that Pennies and Sparrows would be able to expand the vision and hope that we have of caring for members of our communities in supportive and creative ways. As Emmaus Way teams have expended into Fredericton, we are looking at how other communities may also benefit from this Program and how potentially our Pennies and Sparrows work could also extend to other areas of New Brunswick.

All of these things are in God's hands and we would ask that you would pray with us that we may have the wisdom and the faith to move forward in the possibilities that come our way. Please also pray for those who may consider doing this work with us, as Luke 10:2 says: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Financials:

Annual Donations	
Diocese of Fredericton	\$15,000
Stone Church	\$7,000
Monthly Donations	\$9558.85
Usual Yearly donations	\$12676.88
Other donations	\$80,445
Total income	\$124,681

Employer Costs	
Employer amounts	\$16251.89
Payroll	\$38586.60
Program expenses	\$5173.73
Office Equipment	\$1845.74
Total expenses	\$61,858

Balance	
Surplus designated for potential part-time staff	\$30,000
Surplus designated for our extra hours	\$12,000
Surplus designated for expanding programs	\$5,000
Reserves	\$15,823
Total Surplus Balance	\$62,823

We are so grateful for your donations! Your encouragement helps us to consider how we can expend this ministry with God's guidance and direction. As we launch into our 9th year we are excited about the possibilities and partnerships that are beginning to be discussed. We would appreciate your prayers as we carefully plan to grow where God leads.

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 in several ways:

1. Online through Canada Helps (using the drop down tab on the page to select Pennies and Sparrows) <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/13778>.
2. By cheque sent to the Diocese of Fredericton with Pennies and Sparrows in the memo line - 168 Church Street Fredericton, NB E3B 4C9.
3. By cheque sent to Stone Church with Pennies and Sparrows in the memo line - 87 Carleton Street Saint John NB E2L 2Z2.
4. By etransfer to Stone Church with a note that the funds are to go to Pennies and Sparrows - stjstone@nb.aibn.com.

Closing Remarks

Every year when we look back, we feel so incredibly privileged to be living in Saint John and to be doing this work. God's continued guidance and presence, and all the support we have received has helped us to do more than we thought we could.

We still face some major issues and we see our communities struggling with overwhelming needs, none of which has an easy fix. Yet, we find hope in the small shifts and changes, in the passion of many on the front lines who seek to make lasting change, and in all those who are trying to work together to repair the ripped social fabric of our neighbourhoods.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or need more information on our work. We are always looking for volunteers, so if you fell passionate about any of the issues we are addressing or any of the programs we are offering, let us know!

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