

Pennies Sparrows

Newsletter by Terence and Jasmine Chandra



Offering Welcome

This painting by Dale Cook entitled “Welcome” captures a sense of the activity that happens on a daily basis at Stone Church. After several challenging years of social distancing and periodic lockdowns, it’s certainly a joy to once again be able to offer a welcoming place to people of all walks of life. Anyone who welcomes people into their space - whether it be into a church, hall, home, or any other meeting space - knows that welcome is not always easy or straightforward. Balancing those who come through the doors full of open vulnerability and those who come distraught or on edge can get complicated. Staff and volunteers may have to be firm and unflinching in one moment and caring or comforting the next (sometimes with the same person). There are days when navigating difficult interactions can be draining. Indeed, we often find our patience slipping. However, we are always conscious of the importance of providing each person with a worthy welcome.

By being born as a baby, God performs the ultimate act of welcome. In Jesus, God does not introduce Himself with wealth, or power, or even wisdom, but with soft frailty. He lays everything down to make it possible for us to connect to God (Philippians 2:7).



In observing God’s unimaginable act of welcome, we see just how much more we can put into our own welcoming and how much we may have to shed to truly welcome others.

May this season be a time where we make room to welcome Jesus into every aspect of our lives, and where we consider how His example brings us to welcome others more fully.

Terence and Jasmine Chandra

Foodie Fridays



Miriam Westin, the newest addition to our team, has been working hard. She created a new program called “Foodie Fridays”. This is a cooking class where participants learn new recipes, prepare a meal together and then invite family and friends to share in the feast. So far the team has made chicken dumpling soup, fresh pasta, sweet potato shepherd’s pie, and sweet and savoury crêpes. Participants come from all walks of life. It’s wonderful to see them grow in confidence and ability.

Updates

The last couple of months have been quite active. It feels as if we are all trying to make up for all the times over the last couple of years when things had to be postponed or cancelled. Our **English classes** - beginner and intermediate levels - have a steady attendance of 5-10 people per class. We have students representing countries from all over the world learning and laughing together. Our **Youth connection program**, run in conjunction with Saint John Inner City Youth Ministry, has been steadily meeting weekly and has been able to participate in lots of great activities such as the Rev. De Soyars Chess tournament and attending ‘Miracle on 34th street’ at the Imperial theatre. **The Seniors Learn and Groove** sessions have been going well. We even had 20 seniors come out in the snow to spend time socializing, learning about how to stay healthy, and listening to Delbert play some well-loved tunes. **The English Language Bible Study** continues on Zoom, with roughly 5 students in attendance each Tuesday evening.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

As an emergency shelter opened on December 5th at the Hilton Belyea Arena on the Westside of Saint John. A bus comes and picks people up from the Salvation Army in the evening and takes them to the shelter, then the bus takes them back to the Salvation Army in the morning. From what we hear, the shelter is currently at half capacity. There are still several tent encampments around the city (such as the one pictured here). We see a steady flow of homeless people attending our drop-in programs and doing their laundry at the church. We hope that the shelter will be able to accommodate the need this winter and that those in tents and encampments stay safe as temperatures drop.





Extended Drop-In Times

For the last month, we have added a couple of extra drop-in times to the week in order to meet the needs of people looking for a place to warm up or somewhere to relax during the day. The need has been higher since the Salvation Army started to focus on their kettle fundraising campaign and had to temporarily close their morning café. For the few weeks that the Salvation Army Café is on pause, we will offer 5 *drop-ins* a week. We are grateful to all our volunteers who make this possible and to Miriam who has increased her hours to be able to lighten our load. We will run our added drop-ins until December 23rd and will reassess in the new year. We are aiming to make sure that there are places for people to go during the day, especially as the weather gets colder. This involves coordinating with other organizations and churches to hopefully cover most of the daytime hours during the course of the week.

Saint John is averaging 1200 orders a month. A survey run by the South End and Waterloo Village Neighbourhood Associations saw that out of 63 respondents 41 said that they had recently gone hungry or didn't eat in order to feed their children. The Outdoor Food Pantry is a small way of trying to help those who are riding it hard to feed themselves. Donations can be dropped off anytime. The pantry is pictured here after Cooke's Aquaculture generously filled it for us.



Food Needs

The outdoor pantry located in the Stone Church courtyard is getting a lot of use. The need is so high that it typically is emptied of all contents every day. Food security continues to be a major barrier for people. The Food Basket which serves central



Family Connection

In Partnership with Saint John Inner City Youth Ministry we are now delivering Family Connection bags to 15 families around the city. Each family gets a bag once a month that contains a game, a book, discussion cards, food for a meal, and snacks. The purpose of the program is to encourage families to spend quality time together. One of our participants proudly posted the above picture of the contents of her bag. We run the program from September to May.



Thank you to all those who make this work possible: those who volunteer with us, pray for us, support us financially. We can be contacted at any time in the following ways:

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Phone: (506) 634-1474

Location Address:
87 Carleton St.
Saint John NB E2L2Z2

We hope you have a wonderful Christmas and great start to the New Year!

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 in several ways:

Online through Canada Helps (using the drop down tab on the page to select Pennies and Sparrows) <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/13778>.

By cheque sent to the Diocese of Fredericton with Pennies and Sparrows in the memo line - 168 Church Street Fredericton, NB E3B 4C9. Or by cheque sent to Stone Church again with Pennies and Sparrows in the memo line - 87 Carleton Street Saint John NB E2L 2Z2.

By etransfer to Stone Church with a note that the funds are to go to Pennies and Sparrows - stjstone@nb.aibn.com.

Financial details such as budget and expenditure information is available upon request.



