



Connections

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts: let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Colossians 3: 15, 16

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Closing the door on 2020 - a year of heartache and heroism, of fear and faith

The month of January is named for the Roman god Janus, whose symbol has two faces, one looking backward and the other, forward. He was the god of transitions, doors and beginnings.

As we look back through the 32 issues of *Connections* since last January, we see a year like no other since the flu epidemic a century ago. Our small parish is just a dot in the overall picture of Canada's experience, but it shows the resilience of people determined to live our faith through all the restrictions this plague has brought on us. And with the vaccines now being developed, we can look forward to a better year ahead.

JANUARY

We started 2020 with a headline that said "New Year - New Ideas". We welcomed Bishop Kevin Robertson to set us on a year of growth, and we planned a Vestry meeting for February. There was no mention of COVID-19; it was just a local problem in China.

FEBRUARY

The Vestry meeting was well attended. We voiced our hopes for 2020 and chose a full slate of people to lead all the committees needed to meet them.

We passed an important motion on climate change. We looked toward to Lent, with our usual pancake supper and a Bible study of Jesus' "I AM" declarations.

It was Black History month, and *Connections* quoted Jean Augustine, as she said "Black history is not just for Black people. Black history is Canada's history."

MARCH

March brought International Women's Day, World Day of Prayer, and St. Patrick's Day.

The first mention of the virus, now spreading in Europe, came with a pastoral letter from Bishop Asbil to be read at each service on March 8 and then published. When it appeared in these pages, telling us that there would be no more wine at the Eucharist and no close contact at the Peace, we

knew we had entered a new phase of church life. We devoted most of the March issue of *Connections* to an outline of Holy Week and Easter observances, and told about a youth event coming up to equip young people hoping to enter the job market. These and most other activities never happened, because as of March 15 the virus was upon us. A special issue of *Connections* went out with **URGENT MESSAGE** sprawled across it.

The Lenten Bible series became home study only, augmented by phone calls with Fr. Roy.

We increased our email list of parishioners to make sure the fellowship stayed informed. Pastor Pam redoubled her efforts to provide spiritual support to her people with encouraging articles in *Connections*.

We struggled to retain some sense of normalcy. Hyacinth and her team tried to continue the monthly community meal, but found this impossible with the spread of the virus in the community.

The Deacon's Cupboard food bank continued and grew, as more people than ever before needed this ministry.

APRIL

Springtime came, and with the warmer weather came the realization that we were officially in a



What part of "STAY AT HOME"
did you not understand?



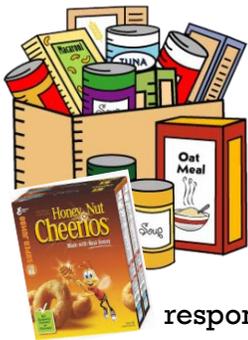
pandemic and that Canada was not exempt. Pastor Pam wrote in *Connections* “If Jesus endured the journey that was the cross, we too can endure, holding on to the God of grace. He is our hope and light, both now and at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel.”

We embraced modern technology this month, and the parish turned a corner. We began to offer our regular worship services online through our website. Music, sermons, prayers, scripture and the welcome faces of our clergy and readers all came to us on our phones or computers and even ingeniously hooked up to our TVs.

Our treasurer used these pages to express appreciation for the diocese’s generous initiatives in covering some of our parish expenses, and for the steadfast financial support of the members of Christ Church.

MAY

As summer brought relaxation and outdoor activity, we were settling into a new kind of living. Masks, once a novelty, were becoming a normal part of our attire. Children had been home for a while as schools shut. They were learning by computer, and some of their parents were also working at home. Family schedules were not always easy to arrange.



Our food bank changed its restriction of one visit a month to weekly, understanding the worsening financial position of its clients. More space was made in *Connections* for Deacon Jacquie to tell this story so as to invite more donations in cash or kind. People responded generously to the need.

JUNE

The first wave of the virus seemed to be easing, but we were warned that a second wave would be inevitable.

We stepped up *Connections* from two issues a month to three, emailed where possible and sent by post to those without computers, in order to keep everybody informed.

We turned our attention to the children, sharing articles about their needs and devoting pages for them on Mothers’ Day and Fathers’ Day.

Connections gave a page to many voices speaking out about racism, as chaos to the South of our country brought this sin into clear focus. We quoted Desmond Tutu, who said “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

JULY

For a church that was closed, there was a lot going on in July. One *Connections* has pictures of our new outdoor sign, a newly laid sidewalk and freshly painted windows. Work was happening on the roof too, and - oh my goodness - Bill Wilkins grew a beard!

The children shared in the Christ Church “virtual” experience with an online Sunday School. Some parents struggled with the technology, but the youngsters had no problem with it.



AUGUST

About now we began to think about getting ready to reopen for in-person worship. Guidelines were sent to us by the diocese and a Re-opening Task Force was appointed to implement them when the time came. Everything from sanitizing to keeping attendance records to marking the pews for social distancing was deliberated, and the information passed on to everyone in the parish through these pages. A form was placed in *Connections* for people to tell us their plans for returning when it became possible.

SEPTEMBER

On September 13 the doors opened. 43 people came to the two services held that Sunday, and most returned every Sunday for the eight weeks we stayed open.

OCTOBER

Most fundraisers were cancelled by the virus. Our bazaar, dinners and concerts were all deemed too dangerous, as we would be crowded into close proximity to one another. We noted in *Connections*, though, that our backpack program went on as usual and the Thanksgiving dinner (take-out this year) was enjoyed as always.



A generous gift from the Barbadian Overseas Community Canada allowed for the refurbishing of the Fellowship Room, where the Sunday School, Parish Board and other gatherings are held..

Another Christ Church group got into the Zoom mode in October, when the young people began a series of virtual meetings. Open to youth from other parishes, this was a new venture for Christ Church.

NOVEMBER

Connections remembered our parents and grandparents, whose fight was not with disease, but with hatred and political intrigue in wars,



as Canada stopped to honour them on November 11 with the traditional silence of sorrow and pride..



This month also gave us the unhappy news that there would be no more in-person worship for several weeks. In letters from Bishop Asbil and Pastor Pam, we learned that the spread of COVID-19 had made it necessary to limit

the numbers at any gathering to 10 people, mostly for the purpose of providing livestream or other online services.

We were now deep into the second wave of the virus, alarmed by the rising infection and death toll, but still hoping that things would improve before Christmas. However, as Advent began, it was obvious that this was not likely.

One of the concerns *Connections* has always had is that this paper is a one-way communication. For people living alone in lockdown, it can be a difficult period, so we wrote an article asking for



volunteers to be part of a telephone ministry. The response was minimal, but we did get a surprise when we followed up, to find that many of our members were already phoning

lone people and shut-ins. Sometimes you don't have to organize; ministry just happens among Christians. Our November issues contained a different kind of Advent calendar - food for the Deacon's Cupboard every day instead of a chocolate in each little door. Good for the waistline and a bonus for the food bank. This month *Connections* noted that our own Deb Anthony had earned the Sladen Award for Volunteer Excellence, given for her work with the Sunday School and her genuine love for the little ones. Bravo!

We didn't want to think about a Christmas without worshipping together, and in fact had announced in our November issue that we might possibly be back in our beautiful church on Christmas Eve. Sadly, this could not be done under the strict rules imposed by the province to keep us safe, but Christmas would still happen. The child would be with us wherever we worshipped at Christmas.

DECEMBER

Advent! Hope, peace, joy, love.

Lessons and Carols! Uplifting, majestic, soul-stirring.

Christmas! Tender, quiet, the Lord has come.

We lit a candle, each in our own home, and we sang Silent Night, Holy Night. And Jesus our Saviour stood among us. Alleluia!



Please pray for these members of our community and their families

Anita & Dave F	Jenille L
Anna Mary K	Joan N
Anne S	John J
Annet K	Judith R
Beverly Barber	Ken K
Christina & Joshua	Lennox &
Connie & David M	Leonora Y
Corinne P	Leonora B
Dave M	Linda & Robert E
Deb A	Margaret B
Deborah T	Madhuri M
Ebun D	Moureen N
Gwen P	Philip I
James Y	Robbie & Bev R
	Sherri-Ann & Ron

and for all those affected by COVID-19, racial discrimination or any injustice



Scripture readings

January 10 (Baptism of the Lord)

Genesis 1: 1 to 5

Psalm 29

Acts 19: 1 to 7

Mark 1: 4 to 11



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