

Parish

News



“The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 1.5

The Light of Jesus comes to us during a dark time. He comes as the Light that will never be extinguished in the hearts and minds of those who trust in God. Since light is associated with knowledge, this invites us to open our minds to the Word of God, to understand and know Him as our glorious Saviour, Jesus. Whatever darkness invades our lives, the Light of Christ illuminates and overpowers all.

The recent Provincial Government announcement imposes a limit of 10 persons in all churches in the province for the next four weeks, until at least May 20, 2021. The Bishop has therefore asked that all churches in our Diocese close, and that we hold no public services. St. Agnes is complying with these directives; Father James will hold only private Mass on weekdays and weekends.

Although our church door is closed for awhile, our new front door – the parish website – is open. Our Facebook page on the website will feature live streamed Mass at the following times:

Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. followed by Adoration

Saturdays 5:00 p.m.

Sundays 11:00 a.m.

We invite our families to join from home in these celebrations. If you miss the live streamed version, please celebrate the most recent Mass at a later time through the website at www.stagnesrc.ca. and scroll down to Facebook. You do not need a Facebook account to access the masses.

Many thanks to the Worship Task Force for organizing the worship leadership team that include a lector, cantor, sacristan, musician, and live stream technician. Father James celebrates Mass with his team totaling 6 persons in all, well within the provincial guideline.

COVID-19 Vaccine Bookings

- To book online, visit <https://covid-19ontario.ca>
- To book by phone, call 1-833-943-3900

Update from the Crisis Response Steering Committee

Co-Chairs: Cindy Jarvela and Beatrice Metzler

Discipleship: Maureen Van Dyk, Executive Lead

The First Communion Program is taking on a new look this year! For 23 Grade 2 students (and 8 more pending), the Google Meet program will include two sessions, one on April 25th and the second on May 6th. The virtual sessions also offer smaller break-out groups to encourage discussion. Parents are more involved this year as well, assisting their children with technical aspects of the new format.

Worship: Andrea North, Executive Lead

The Worship Task Force together with Liturgy Chair Carolyn Wiznuk debriefed on the Easter celebrations, concluding that the Triduum and Easter Sunday services were well orchestrated to the wonder and delight of all who attended in person and virtually. Everyone who played a role in creating these spiritually uplifting celebrations is commended for their attention to every detail. Thanks to the Atmosphere Committee, greeters, ushers, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, cantors, musicians, sacristans, live steaming technicians, and the sanitizing teams. A special thanks to Jean Joy for the Children's Stations of the Cross performance.

Father James offered outstanding leadership in guiding all these groups in their challenging tasks of providing deeply meaningful worship experiences, while abiding by health and safety restrictions.

As with most new experiences, we've learned much from being challenged to do things differently. Some new formats worked so well we've decided to repeat them in future Easter celebrations. The Youth Group, for example, distributed more than 500 palms in a drive-by & pick up plan. This worked so well, there is good reason to continue it.

Ministry: Sharon Bukovy, Executive Lead

Sharon Bukovy, Sylvia Kayzer and Brian Priscott-webmaster, are exploring the most convenient, affordable way for seniors who reside in retirement homes to connect with St. Agnes' live streamed masses. More information will be shared when it's available.

Evangelization: Karen O'Connor, Executive Lead

Alpha wrapped up its spring session on April 19th, and once again proved to be an enjoyable, effective way for participants to meet Christ and deepen their faith. Alpha is a wonderful program that allows the average parishioner to be an evangelist. It's that simple. Watch for details on our fall Alpha so you, too, can join in this experience.

Finance: Al Tennant, Executive Lead

Our Finance Council continues to monitor the parish budget, adjusting forecasts and expenditures as required. February revenues were 70% of budgeted forecasts while expenses were 50% of forecasts due to less active ministry programs. The *Giving* portal on the parish website shows increased activity, as promotion of its convenience encourages donors to use the portal for monthly or one-time giving.

Communications: Wanda Major and Beatrice Metzler, Executive Leads

The Steering Committee extends its sincere appreciation to Kim Coursolle who has transitioned to a more focused role with Alpha, Connect Groups and Life Groups. Kim has been very active since the Steering Committee was formed, helping numerous parish initiatives use social media effectively for program promotion. Thank you, Kim!

Statistics show that St. Agnes Easter services were viewed ‘live’ by 47 to 60 individuals or families. In addition, there was a range of 216 to 455 who engaged in virtual celebrations later. We are encouraged by the increased worship participation among those who join from their homes.

There has also been more website activity, with a 60% increase in viewers to the Sacraments page since January 2021, and a 13% overall increase in viewers.

Parish Policies: Cindy Jarvela

Last year, just after COVID-19 caused considerable changes to the way the Parish operates, several policies were put in place to guide parishioners on new processes. These policies are reviewed annually by Parish Council and the Crisis Response Steering Committee. This year, there were no changes to two policies - *Mandatory Use of Face Coverings* and *Use of the Church during Pandemic/Epidemic*. The policy on *Rites/Sacraments Celebrated in the Church* was amended slightly to reflect updated information. All 3 policies were approved as presented and can be found on the parish website.

Parish Council Update: Cindy Jarvela, Chair

Annual plans are in the final stages for three ministries that have partnered with Parish Council members in preparing their annual ministry plans. This is the first year using an updated planning format that is aligned with the parish vision. It is focused on outcomes, collaboration with other ministries, and communications. The three ministries who are “early adopters” of the new document are: Marriage Preparation led by Debbie and Andrew Migay, Confirmation Ministry led by Susan Tocheri Driver, and Alpha led by Kim Coursolle. Congratulations to these ministry leaders for their enthusiastic participation.

Sylvia Kayzer Receives St. Joseph’s Care Group Highest Honour



The Sister Dolores Turgeon Volunteer Mission Award recognizes someone who has made an outstanding contribution, exceeded expectations, and consistently demonstrated the values of Care, Compassion and Commitment in voluntary service to SJCG. St. Joseph’s Care Group is pleased to announce that Sylvia Kayzer is the 2021 recipient of the Sister Dolores Turgeon Volunteer Mission Award.

After retiring from teaching in 1995, Sylvia was recruited to volunteer with the Auxiliary to St. Joseph’s Care Group. Her successes in organizing and planning with the Auxiliary made her an excellent fit for positions of leadership, including Auxiliary President, Auxiliary and Foundation representative on St. Joseph’s Care Group’s Board of Directors, President of St. Joseph’s Foundation of Thunder Bay’s Board of Directors, and, member of Volunteer Services Advisory Committee. Sylvia has also led several major fundraising campaigns for St. Joseph’s Foundation. **Congratulations**, Sylvia, from your fellow parishioners!

At St. Agnes Parish, We Make Every Day Brighter for One Another