

ST. JOSEPH'S PARISH



ANNUAL REPORT

October 4, 2020

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** All reports included in this document were voluntarily submitted by ministries who chose to provide an update on their activities.*



Pastor's Report

Contact: Fr. Jim Bleackley, OMI

This year's Annual General Meeting will be an important time for parishioners to see how the pandemic has affected St. Joseph's Parish and as we deal with the new normal to try to plan for our future in this radical changing world. How do we continue to witness to Christ's mission and presence in a way that brings hope and meaning to the people we are called to serve, especially those who are feeling fragmented and displaced by the Government's restrictions and the necessary church's protocol which has limited our outreach and educational programs?

It is important to remember that effective planning must be rooted in the mystery of the church: the church loved, the church believed, the church perceived by more than merely human vision. Once more we hear the message: "As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." (Matthew 10:7-9) The goals and priorities we set for ourselves this coming year must be based on this invitation even in light of the ongoing pandemic.

As you read the reports you will see how even during the pandemic this sense of mission has compelled many to continue to volunteer to serve the church and community in a variety of ways. To all of you I am truly grateful for the time and energy you spent to make our parish a place of prayer, of learning and of witnessing to the gospel message.

When I joined St. Joseph's Parish in November 2019, it was this spirit that guided me as I acquainted myself with the staff, leaders of the ministry clusters and parishioners; truly a gifted and talented group of people committed to proclaim the good news in word and deed. The "Come and See" phase of my introduction to the parish came to an abrupt end by the closure of the church in March, which suspended or limited most of the parish's ministries.

During the closure, the leadership team's main concern was to find ways to connect with parishioners by means of the internet, especially the Sunday Liturgy of the Word which the staff prepares every Friday. The pandemic has pushed us to explore new ways to proclaim the Gospel and share the parish's vision of church with those beyond our parish's boundary -- Something I hope we will continue after the pandemic ends.

When the church reopened after the government's restrictions were lifted, we once more began to celebrate the Eucharist with protocols to ensure the well being and safety of those attending and in a limited way continuing to provide the Parish's



outreach and educational programs. I think this will be the new normal for many more months.

As you live these days to the best of your ability, may you experience the presence of Christ walking with you and overwhelming you with unconditional love.

Stay well & God bless.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Bleackley, OMI



Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

Parish Pastoral Council Contact: Brian Ouellette, Chair

The Mission of the parish guides the work of the Parish Pastoral Council.

From July 2019 through the end of February 2020, we witnessed the Mission of the parish lived out through the four clusters that are made up of the various ministries of the parish (the ministry reports can be found in this Annual report).

Covid-19

Looking back at the reporting year, July 2019 to September 2020, we can say with certainty that this past year started out in normal fashion, but definitely did not end in normal fashion. What we knew as normal ended in March 2020 when the province of Ontario shut down due to COVID-19. Weekend Masses, Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Confirmations, etc. were not able to be celebrated. Our various ministries were not able to meet (in-person at least) and the Supper Table and Women's Centre shuttered their doors. This abnormal situation forced the parish, Supper Table, and Women's Centre staffs to brainstorm new ways of serving the community (see respective reports). Under the guidance of our pastor, Fr. Jim, our Executive Director, Chris Adam, and Liturgy/Music Director, Jamie Loback, weekly online resources were made available to provide some spiritual nourishment and they continued to work to find ways to slowly begin to open St. Joe's up as the province allowed. Many thanks to the Women's Centre Director, Marsha Wilson, and the Supper Table Manager, Ryan Mitchell, for finding ways to provide services to those who are most vulnerable in our community, especially during the lockdown. The Spirit of service that is at the core of what we believe, was and continues to be lived out at St. Joe's and for that I thank all those who have worked to ensure that St. Joe's doors, although physically shut for a while, were really never closed. I, like the many, look forward to being able to celebrate Mass as a full community as well as seeing the many ministries ministering to our community once again.

Pastoral Care:

New Pastor Appointment: At the end of October Fr. Richard Beaudette, OMI was appointed vicar of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and Fr. James Bleakley, OMI, was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's. The transition was smooth and the parish offered their thanks to Fr. Richard for his time at St. Joe's and welcomed with open arms, Fr. Jim. Parishioners had the opportunity to say "goodbye" to Fr. Richard and "hello" to Fr. Jim at the 5:30 Saturday pot-luck, and after the 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Masses on the weekend of October 25/26, 2019.



Flourishing Parish Survey: St. Joseph's participated in the "Flourishing Parishes" survey conducted by the *Flourishing Congregations Institute at Ambrose University*. The purpose of the Institute is "to bring together academics and practitioners to research the factors surrounding flourishing congregations in Canada, develop tools and resources to help congregations flourish, and share our research findings with congregations that wish to flourish." (Introduction to the St. Joe's Survey Results). 133 parishioners completed the survey and the results have been provided to the PPC, Executive Director, Pastor, and staff, whose plan was to use this information to continue to improve and create programming that will foster a flourishing community at St. Joe's; however, COVID-19 hit and a pause was placed on the survey in order to focus on providing for the parish during the pandemic. This report will be distributed to the parish once things return to some sense of normalcy.

Community Building and Social Gatherings

Saturday After-Mass Pot-Luck: The 5:30 PM Saturday Mass group continued to hold their monthly pot-luck suppers after Mass which were well attended and provided an opportunity for socialization and good food.

Christmas Fair: Once again St. Joe's held a Christmas Fair in the parish Hall on Sunday, November 3, 2019 and was well attended.

Volunteer Appreciation: Due to COVID-19 the volunteer appreciation event, sponsored by PPC, was cancelled. Hopefully an event can be held in the near in order to show our appreciation for all that our volunteers do for St. Joes. All of our volunteers are truly appreciated and are an indispensable part of the smooth operation of St. Joseph's. THANK YOU!

Care for Creation Working Group: On January 19, 2020, approximately 30 parishioners met to discuss how we at St. Joe's could reinvigorate our efforts to take better care of the Earth and to do so while embracing the rich and ever evolving social teaching of the Catholic church. Parishioners were invited to consider participating in the Citizens for Public Justice campaign, *Give It Up for the Earth*, as part of their Lenten observance. As well, they were asked to consider signing a letter urging the Government of Canada to take swift and concrete steps to address the climate emergency as part of a "Catholics United for Climate Change" campaign. Other events and actions that parishioners were invited to participate in virtually included Laudato Si' week, including the world-wide moment of prayer, in May; and the Development and Peace pledge for *Our Common Home*. We hope to be able to offer other opportunities to better care for creation in the coming year. For information, contact Joan O'Connell at joanoco@rogers.com.



Administrative Work

Finances: The Parish Financial Council (PFC) Treasurer, through monthly attendance at the Parish Pastoral Council meetings, kept the PPC apprised of the state of the parish's finances. Working closely with the PFC, the Parish Pastoral Council provided input to the PFC concerning the draft budget prepared in the Autumn; the PPC ultimately approved the finalized budget for the year 2020 (see Financial Report). The annual audit took place prior to the COVID-19 shut down (see Annual Audit Summary).

City of Ottawa Grant for the Women's Centre: We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of The City of Ottawa to the St. Joe's Women's Centre, provided through the Renewable Community Funding Agreement, in the amount of \$359,712 for 2019.

Membership in the Parish Pastoral Council: At this time, we bid goodbye to two members of council, Tim Phelan (member-at-large) and Brian Lee (Young Adult representative). Both are thanked with tremendous gratitude for their presence and their work provided to the PPC and ultimately to the Parish.

- *Members leaving:* Brian Lee (Young Adult Representative) and Tim Phelan (Member-at-Large)
- *Nominees:* Jenny Lemon (Young Adult Representative)

As there are two open positions and one nominee, this nominee is acclaimed.

I thank all members of the PPC for their continued hard work and dedication to St. Joseph Parish Pastoral Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Ouellette
Chair, St. Joseph's Parish Pastoral Council



Finance Committee

Ministry Contact: Robert Sykes, Treasurer

Introduction I would like to begin by thanking all of the staff at our parish for their patience and continued efforts while we dealt with the new year upheaval caused by COVID disruptions. Both those that continued to work through our closure, and those that graciously stepped aside while we dealt with the social and fiscal complications it presented.

As a parish, we should also recognise the not-insignificant role that the City of Ottawa, the Ottawa Food Bank, and particularly as a result of COVID, the federal government have played in the continued financial health of the parish. Without their support our social programming would look very different.

Financial Overview

As 2019 predates the effects of COVID we did manage to finish the year with a balanced budget. It is worth noting that our \$186k surplus was primarily the result of \$156k in bequests, so while we finished especially strong, this was made possible because of a particular one-time gift. Overall our parish financial assets were up, and our operating costs down.

Once again, we passed our audit without any major concerns. It is worth noting that this year's audit was more daunting both because of COVID restrictions and simply the process of changing auditors. However, the end result was positive.

The most notable concern in the audit is the prospective impact that COVID restrictions will play on the future year(s). The fundraising subcommittee will no doubt have their work cut out for them as our financial reality continues to evolve. This subcommittee is working particularly on promoting donations by highlighting the tax benefits of donating marketable securities. Additionally, the Finance Committee has revised our Parish Spending Policy to align it with generally accepted practices for controlling expenditures, and is working with the Parish Pastoral Council to review the Committee's mandate generally. Of course, the Finance Committee will continue to work with both Father Jim and E.D. Chris Adam, as the parish's new normal is realised.

Year-To-Come

Members of the Finance Committee whose were to expire this year have agreed to be reappointed for the coming year, this will help to preserve continuity as we continue to adjust to our changing practical concerns.



For those concerned about the financial impact COVID has had on the parish; as of September 2020, government wage subsidies (roughly \$150k), as well as reduced operational overhead, and special grants to the Women's Centre and Super Table, have allowed us to remain on budget. This does pose a problem for the following year, as such subsidies are unlikely to be available, and reduced staffing overhead usually means reduced services. However, such concerns will be taken into consideration during our recovery plans. With this in mind, programming and new forms of outreach will need to be part of our financial commitments in the coming year, both as a responsible pastoral response to the hardships we will face as a community and those felt individually in the community at large. Thankfully, the new resources mentioned above have played a substantive role in expanding community programs for those most impacted by the year-to-date hardships, as indicated by the various other reports being submitted today.

Unfortunately, slowing of parish activities does not slow Mother Nature nor Father Time. In this regard, Finance Committee's Building Working Group has determined that we must move forward on repairs to the front entrance, most notably the safety of the steps themselves and accessibility issues the historic design presents. It is not anticipated that these will be small, or cheap, as initial (professional) assessments of their condition are not good. However, we were expecting this expense and we are in a good financial position, all things considered, to deal with it. At this time, I would like to, as a member of the Working Group, invite any members of the parish whom are architectural or structural engineering professionals to contact me if they feel they could offer us any support with the project.

A separate, and otherwise unexpected, capital project that we are completing – thanks essentially to grant money – the Super Table has begun significant renovations which will bring our kitchen more inline with health and functional expectations of contemporary industry standards. This should be a valuable boon to their staff and volunteers, as well as their guests.



Executive Director's Report

Contact: Christopher Adam, Executive Director

The past twelve months have been marked by many transitions. This began with the departure of Fr. Richard Beaudette OMI in November 2019, to become the Vicar General at OMI Lacombe, and the installation of Fr. Jim Bleackley OMI as our Pastor. Fr. Jim is the third pastor that I have had a chance to work with during my eight years in this position in the Parish. Each pastor has come with different gifts. With Fr. Jim, I have very much appreciated the genuinely contemplative nature of his homilies and his pastoral gentleness. Both of those gifts have been greatly valued in this time of pandemic, particularly this past spring when the sudden stillness of our parish community -- usually such a vibrant, bustling place -- as well as the social isolation and profound uncertainty weighed heavily on us. While the pandemic continues, we seek ways to live safely, both individually and as a parish community.

Many of our parishioners have continued to volunteer even during this period. Below, I refer to some volunteer-led initiatives. I am also especially grateful to members of Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee, who have remained active during this time, as well as the counters who have continued to assist with the offerings at Sunday Masses, all those who continue to be engaged with our liturgical ministries and parishioners who have come in during the week to help with programs.

Caring for our Property

The generation that rebuilt our church after the fire of 1930 left us a great gift -- a space in the heart of Ottawa where we gather as a faith community, and which a handful of choirs and community groups call home as well. Each year, we invest in this space to the extent allowed by our Capital Asset Renewal Reserve, recognizing our own obligation to the next generation. In 2019 and early 2020, our two main upgrades were the complete rebuilding of the rectory deck and the installation of a new second floor kitchen. Both projects were spearheaded by our maintenance staff, notably Nick Cacciato and Dan Handfield. The deck was both rebuilt and expanded; once we are able to gather more fully again, we see this used as a space for barbecues and outdoor meetings, available to all of our church ministries.

The Oblate kitchen renovation was also due, as our cabinetry, counters and appliances were over three decades old. We completed this in February 2020, installing new cabinets, a granite countertop and purchasing new appliances. Ministries that book the Oblate Lounge for meetings will have access to the new kitchen to both prepare and serve meals as soon as we can once again share meals safely.



Parish volunteers have played a major role in maintaining both the church grounds and the sanctuary. Even during the pandemic, our dedicated volunteer gardeners planted flowers, herbs and vegetables and continued to help our maintenance staff in keeping the grounds beautiful during the summer months. Similarly, parishioners helped to get the interior of the liturgical space ready for our reopening in June 2020 and they continue to make the church welcoming. We are grateful for their care and dedication.

Parish Staffing

As of September 2020, the Parish employs a staff team of 16 full-time and part-time employees, including both Women's Centre and Supper Table staff. In June 2019, the Parish hired a new bookkeeper, Georgeta Mutu, who works three days per week. Kathleen Strader was hired to work in the front office in August 2019. In May 2020, Margie Cain retired from her part-time position as Supper Table Team Lead. Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, we have not filled this position. We also reduced our front office hours, suspending the Saturday shift, which had been filled for a number of years by Miranda Landry. Many of you will know that Jimmy Morrow assisted our maintenance team for well over a decade until the pandemic hit. We expect that Jimmy will return to St. Joe's at a later date.

During the spring lockdown and over the summer months, 7 staff members were placed on unpaid leave and were able to collect CERB during this time. Many of our duties have changed as a result of the pandemic and I am grateful for the willingness of the staff team to adapt to new circumstances, embrace new challenges and approach our work with openmindedness and flexibility.

Parish Communication

In March 2020, we suspended the publication of a print bulletin at the same time that our church closed due to the lockdown. Public Masses were suspended for three months and during this time, we learned the importance of using technology more than we have previously done to bring as much of our church to our parishioners as possible. We began video recording both homilies and lay reflections, and we now know that this is a practice which is here to stay. Thank you to many parishioners who have contributed to this effort with their reflections, readings and music. We also shared Liturgy of the Word scripts for use at home and provided weekly news updates from the Parish.

In March, our Parish website was viewed 6,323 times and in April this number increased to 7,806 views. This represented a significant rise in the use of our site, compared to the 3,980 views in January or the 4,715 views in February. For the months of May through August, we averaged 5,500 views per month. Part of this increase was driven by a greater use of Facebook in sharing material on our website. During the lockdown, I used



Facebook's advertising services to target specific demographic groups in the Ottawa (ie: Facebook users who have an interest in Catholic content or in social justice initiatives) with our weekly updates. The link to reflections or liturgical content on our site would then appear in their Facebook newsfeeds. We have seen an increase in the number of people following us on Facebook and thanks to volunteer young adults, we also have a parish Twitter account.

Collaboration with Paroisse Sacré-Coeur

This summer, we started meeting with representatives of our French Oblate neighbour parish across the street to discuss new forms of collaboration with St. Joe's. One of the things that came out of these discussion was a desire on the part of Sacré-Coeur to have the St. Joseph's Parish maintenance team assume responsibility for both the interior and exterior maintenance of their property too. This fall, our maintenance staff have started working part-time hours at Sacré-Coeur, for which St. Joe's is being reimbursed by our sister French parish. Our staff are not being asked to work more hours, but we are reviewing their tasks at St. Joe's, and in some cases reassigning or prioritizing them, in order to give them time to help across the street too. We expect that in 2021, this collaboration will extend to sharing administrative staff between the two parishes as well. In a time of financial uncertainty brought on by the pandemic, the sharing of staff between the two parishes may prove a prudent change in how we operate.

Challenges Moving Forward

Over the past six months, the Parish—like all church communities, other NGOs and small businesses—faced trying financial times. From April through August, we lost all of our parking lot revenue, due to the closure of the University of Ottawa. Nearly all of our facility rental revenue has been eliminated as well. Together, these two areas represent a loss in revenue of over \$80,000 during this period, and we know that parking income will not recover to pre-pandemic levels this calendar year. We are grateful for the continued generosity of parishioners that Sunday offering revenue has decreased by a smaller amount – a decline of approximately 20% compared to the same period in 2019. Despite these decreases, St. Joe's remains financially healthy at this time, thanks to a reduction in expenditures, as well as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy through which the Parish has received \$150,000 in federal assistance to date, and also an increase in private contribution revenue, mostly in the form of grants for the Women's Centre and Supper Table.

One of our most important challenges, both now and thinking ahead post-pandemic, will be to rebuild the St. Joe's community. Every church, many already in a weakened state, will face the profound task of rebuilding a community after months of full closure and



many more months when parishioners have not been able to return to public liturgies and on-site volunteering. At present, less than one-third of our parishioners have returned to attending Mass. While we continue to offer online liturgical content and some St. Joe's ministries have been meeting using our Parish Zoom account, others are exhausted by work and school also taking place on Zoom and from behind a computer screen more generally. The novelty factor of this online content also wears off. On the flipside, during the pandemic, we are seeing some new faces attending Mass at St. Joe's –often people whose own churches have not reopened. We hope that they will find a home here. How will our community look like once we near the end of this pandemic? In the coming months, this is a question that we might begin to consider as a community.

Thank you for all your patience and graciousness these past several months, and thanks for your kind words of support.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Adam

Executive Director



St. Joe's Supper Table

Contact: Ryan Mitchell, Manager of the Supper Table

What an amazing year for the Supper Table. We had exciting times at our dinner services, saw steadily reliance on our food bank, and created new therapeutic programming to help our guests with mental health and addiction issues. We held several fundraisers including an amazing gala totaling \$35,709. For the first time in over a decade, we were not only able to balance the budget, but were able to end the year with a surplus of \$782.00!

The creation of new partnerships with *Food Rescue*, and other organizations brought new ways to save food and reach the diverse communities around Ottawa. The strengthening of old partnerships taught valuable lessons and shared skills while trying to create a sustainable social service. We believe that these partnerships were a strong factor in balancing our overall budget, with access to grant applications and shared incomes through broader funding streams. While creating an outward focus on our guests' needs, we were able to better understand the issues and needs of those in lower incomes. Especially those who are new families to Canada within the last 5 years. We discovered that access to culturally appropriate foods is difficult. We then met this need by establishing purchasing power for ethnically appropriate foods, and the response was heart warming.

We held multiple fundraisers over the course of the year. Multiple home-made jam sales were a great contribution to our baking supplies, the Christmas market where we sold our home-made chocolates and fancies helped provide coats to over 50 of our guests. Our fall Gala raised \$22,000 for our food budget for this year and Loaves and Fishes provided us with our much-needed financial backing to support our kitchen renovation that has just been completed. We are grateful for the continued generous support of the Canyon Foundation, through the Community Foundation of Ottawa, in the amount of \$30,000.

We faced early challenges as our bread provider, Rideau Bakery, shut their doors after countless years serving the heart of Ottawa. Partnerships with Cobbs Bread in Barrhaven helped ease the loss of our primary bread provider and allowed us to organize other ways of accessing bread for our 200 bagged lunches every week. We also saw an increase in numbers starting in early April; this may have been attributed to the quality of nutritional meals handed out compared to other social services located around us in the downtown core. Because of this we started seeking funds for needed renovations and repairs. Our services allow the access of services to 5 hot nutritious meals weekly. We offer a monthly brunch on the third Saturday of the month, thanks to the Secular Franciscans. Additionally, we offer food bank at two locations, the first being our primary location at St. Joseph's Parish, the second is in Strathcona heights located at 300 Wiggins Private. In total, access to our services included nearly 975 guests weekly. Our floors and kitchen surfaces



needed to be renovated to create a safer and more sanitized environment for food preparation as well as creation of a functional multipurposed space for our programming initiatives. We started seeking funding opportunities through grant writing which was extremely successful with private contributions totaling \$115,996.

Through tireless hours of research and grants writing the Supper Table was able to bring in much needed additional funding to help stabilize our yearly books. Some of this funding was used for the purchase of healthy fresh foods, culturally appropriate meats for those who are restricted to religious and Halal diets. We started programming intended for those suffering mental health. The creation of a monthly art program specifically designed to push people's boundaries involving community; the program creates the idea that small groups are okay -- the idea being that those who suffer from social anxiety can enter a safer space with less people. These spaces were created for those who have multiple grades of social anxiety. We limited group sizes to no more than 8 people, this allowed those who are comfortable with smaller groups and those interested in expanding into any form of social interaction. We saw amazing results both visually as local artists emerged like flowers in the spring, we also saw an increase in social interaction, from non-verbal to full communication. We entertained 30 guests for several movie nights over the year offering additional entertainment that may not be accessible to them. We also offered 4 games nights allowing for friendly competition and strategy games. This helps seal any friendships within the Supper Table community.

The creation of an assistant kitchen manager position added an additional staff member to our team to help coordinate the extra programming and additional numbers that have created such a busy operation. On top of a new staff member we employed a summer student and assisted 40 community services workers complete their hours and help create promising futures full of opportunity that can create jobs, change lifestyle choices, and alter negative perspectives and attitudes.

At the start of 2020, we started an outward focus on the community around us and have every intention of keeping this vision. We want to create community for those who have none, or do not know how to access it. We have face hurdles with COVID-19 in ways that are unimaginable. Having to create appointments for our guests who have no access to proper communication channels or devices. The reduction of volunteers to keep safe physical distancing measures in place has been a challenge to keep our moral high and volunteers active. We have engaged in a new online platform that harmonizes all our social media and information updates, volunteer interactions, and donation opportunities. We understand these are dramatically different times, however for those we serve there has not been much change or reduction in income. The reduction of services accessible has greatly changed. This is the change we are combating. Ensuring that we are being excellent stewards of the tithes and offerings of this church and ensuring they are put



towards faith-building ministry. We have taken on the responsibility of engaging in more grants opportunities to ensure the mental health and therapeutic programming will continue to benefit those accessing our services from all areas of Ottawa.

We hope that this year will bring new opportunities to meet the growing need here in Sandy Hill, especially with the development of a more stable food bank in Strathcona heights, new partnerships with ethnocultural services such as the Aid Society of Ottawa, allowing us to create stronger partnerships that help grow our loving and diverse community.



St. Joe's Women's Centre

Contact: Marsha Wilson, Director

Accomplishments

Total Visits: 9, 275

Total Meals Served: 8, 180

Total Amount of Grocery Hampers: 1, 782

School Snack Program, "Snack in my Pack": 303

Pet Food Cupboard Distribution: 350

Back to School Backpack Program:

- Elementary Bags: 30
- High School: 12
- Total: 42

Christmas Sponsorship Program: 22

Thank you to the Ottawa Food Bank for their generous support towards our grocery and meal programs.



New and Existing Community Partners

New Day

AIDS Committee of Ottawa

Algonquin College

Around the Rainbow – Family Services Ottawa

Caldwell Family Centre

Canadian Association of Music Therapy

Centre 454

Centre 507

Cornerstone Women's Shelter

Immigrant Women's Services

Kids Up Front

Minwaashin Lodge

National Art Gallery – Art Therapy Program

Ottawa Food Bank

Ottawa Humane Society

Ottawa U

Royal LePage Team Realty

Royal Ottawa Hospital

Sharing and Caring Exchange

Shepherds of Good Hope



Shoebox Project for Shelters
Sophie's Place
St. Joe's Supper Table
St. John's Ambulance – Pet Therapy Program
St. Joseph's Parish
St. Luke's Lunch Club
Stepping Stones
The Well/La Source
Tungasuvvingat Inuit
Youville Centre
And many more!

Challenges – Pandemic Update

Our hours of operation and services have gradually increased. A maximum of 6 clients are able to access the Centre for one hour at a time. Food Bank, hygiene products, baby/children necessities, washrooms, showers, phone calls, supportive counselling and to-go lunch and beverages are offered. These services are being offered under the guidelines of the City of Ottawa and Ottawa Public Health, all while practicing social distancing and with use of PPE

In the beginning of the pandemic, St. Joe's Women's Centre, although closed, continued to support our participants and community. In office supportive health check-in sessions became online sessions, phone call check in's, email and social media support. Meetings with City representative, public health and community partners became phone conferences and zoom meetings. Our Food Cupboard, Hygiene Program, Baby Supplies & Pet Food Program may have been halted but we ensured these items were donated to initiatives who had the capacity to deliver to our participants and those most vulnerable. In emergency situations, staff delivered essential to those in need. For those that are alone and isolated, a friendly face and wave is unmeasurable.

On May 21st we opened our doors for pick up services of food and other essentials. Seeing the rapid number of clients in desperate need of services, the decision was made to open Monday to Friday starting on June 3rd.

Finances

2019 City of Ottawa Grant Funding \$ 359, 712

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support The City of Ottawa.



2019 Major Financial Contributors:

- Fundraising Initiatives: \$44,002
- Private Donations: \$51, 466
- Estate of Katia Black: \$14, 000
- *Upper Room Home Furnishing* has made a one-year commitment to \$2500 monthly totaling \$30, 000 for the year
- Private Bequest: \$150, 000

Thank you to all community members and parishioners for your continued support to the Women's Centre through monetary donations.

Year Ahead

This year will feature a series of virtual fundraising event:

Night at the Drive-in: A fun filled evening showing one movie per night to be hosted over two evenings. Venue parking lot may be as a result of a partnership. Tickets will be sold online in advance of the event per vehicle and positioned as a fundraiser for the Centre. We may be able to secure sponsors for night of that will be able to show their marketing piece on the big screen.

Quality of Life Virtual Awards: "Awards night at home." A ticketed event that will commemorate those worthy of recognition in the city for their work to improve the quality of life for those in our community. We will produce a virtual event that will include the standard awareness pieces – a short video with interviews from one or two ladies at the Centre. Entertainment that will engage such as video DJ, soloist etc., a door drop that presents food and beverage for a cocktail. We would host virtual rooms for sponsors to engage attendees as well.

An Evening with Sheila: A virtual comedy night with Canadian artist Sheila Williams. Sheila has been working on building a customized show for St. Joe's Women's Centre.

Bequests: A private bequest of \$150,000 was donated to the Centre from a former supporter who passed away in 2018. The bequest will support a new program called "Women Moving Forward" to be launched in 2021. We have established a working committee who consist of Terry Byrne, Dona Bowers, Jodi Mosley, Chris Adam, and



Marsha Wilson. The committee have worked on the Terms of Reference and a Funding Application Criteria. We aim to support women who require financial assistance to enhance their quality of life to assist them in reaching their personal goals. These may include, but are not limited to education, employment assistance and skills development training.

We look forward to sharing more information about this innovated program as it progresses.



St. Joseph's Young Adult Ministry

Ministry Contact: Andrew Pump

Accomplishments

University Mass: 7PM every Sunday from September to April

- Average attendance about 80-100

Weekly Game Nights

- Attendance ranged from 4-6 people

Weekly Evenings of Reflection during Special Seasons

- Advent Discernment Dinners (with Karen Johnson)
- Lenten Soup Suppers

Monthly Brunches after the 11:30 Mass

- Attendance between 6-10 people

Spring/Summer Catechesis after the 11:30 Mass each week

- Speaker, Breaking Open the Word and discussion each week
- Excellent and consistent turn out, between 10-12 people

Church Crawl, part of Welcome Week in early September

- Attendance about 100 students
- Wonderful parish volunteers

Catholic Student Week (Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)

- Special University Mass, Prayer Service for Christian Unity

Weekly chaplaincy office hours on uOttawa campus

- shared between Fr. Richard and Andrew Pump

Special Meals

- Easter Feast – well attended with around 12 students
- Thanksgiving Brunch – 6 attended after the 11:30 Mass



- Christmas Dinner - 4 of our international students

Twice Yearly Teacher Gathering

- Teachers and Student Teachers come together once in the Fall and once in the Spring to share experience and reflect on the vocation of teaching
- Spring 2019 cancelled due to lack of RSVPs. Fall 2020 good turn-out with 15 or so

Challenges and Setbacks

2019 was the first year for our new coordinator Andrew Pump

For the Winter Semester of 2019, we moved from monthly events to weekly activities

- These weekly events had a good start, but interest and participation declined over the course of the semester
- weekly events were continued for the first part of the Fall Semester of 2019, but were later abandoned
- The Spring/Summer weekly catechesis sessions were well attended

Increasing attendance at events

- The biggest challenge to the ministry is how to get the over 80 students who come to mass interested in our activities and events

Coordinating University Mass

- In 2019 we continued coordinating positions for Mass using a Sign-Up sheet passed around the week before
- We tried to get regular and more consistent participation from more active students/young adults, but this was difficult to achieve

Finances

Private donations from special benefactors cover the costs of food for events and activities

Year Ahead (2020 so far)

Looking at some of the failures and discerning what was learned in 2019 we started trying a number of different things before the COVID lockdown. The goal was to maintain a number of consistent weekly activities that could slowly be built up over time



- Young Adult Health and Nutrition Program:
- Swimming at Ottawa U – twice a week, around 5 of us
- Vegetarian Cooking Classes – Saturday afternoons in the Supper: TableThis was a nice success with lots of help; we cooked enough food to supply the Monday meal for the Supper Table and also feed all the students at the end of the University Mass with a reception. When we are able to have food and receptions we will start this again
- Weekly Writing Café each Thursday afternoon: Since Kathleen, one of our Front Office staff was using the library to write her thesis, we decided to invite any students who needed time and structure to join us and get some work done. For most of the semester it was just two people, but we will see about trying that again when we are able
- Weekly Chaplaincy Office hours at Ottawa U each Wednesday morning
- University Mass: Before the Lockdown we were getting our usual 80-100 person attendance. Finding people to consistently participate was still an issue. In September 2020 we have formed a Young Adult Ministry Leadership Team who help coordinate the University Mass and we have done away with the Sign-Up Sheet system. We were worried about University Mass turnout with COVID and the students not coming back to in-person classes; but in the second week we are already at 40+ attendees

Activities and Events

- Our Spring 2020 Teacher Gathering happened right before the Lockdown and we had a good turnout of over 15. Fall 2020 might be a socially distanced prayer service for educators
- The Young Adult Ministry Leadership Team consists of over 12 students and young professionals who coordinate University Mass and plan the events and activities
- Young Adult English Conversation Group for our international students and newcomers to Canada – 5 of us that meet every Sunday before University Mass
- Scripture Study after the University Mass each week – a small faith sharing group mostly consisting of the Leadership Team themselves (10 or so each week)
- We will also have a reflection and faith-sharing program for Advent this year

When we are able to safely provide more events (and events with food and cooking) we will continue with new ideas and events



Welcome Ministry

Ministry Contact: Maria Virjee (2019); Patricia O'Grady (2020)

Accomplishments

- Greeters at the doors at all four Masses (University Mass during the school year)
- New parishioners who have filled in a Registration Sheet receive a welcoming letter on parish stationery.
- This welcoming letter is followed up by personal contact if desired by newcomer – initial meeting over coffee, opportunities to ask questions about St. Joe's, meeting other parishioners over a relaxed meal at somebody's home.
- Keeping statistics on welcoming letters, successful follow-up meetings, welcoming dinners, and parishioners involved at those dinners
- Guest book entries are followed by email or phone call and some new members join the parish by this route
- Welcome Desks at all three Masses to provide information to newcomers, visitors, and parishioners. Various binders help the Welcome Desk volunteers stay informed and organized.

Challenges

- Ensuring adequate numbers of regular greeters at all three Masses (University Mass coordinates students for that Mass).
- Recruiting more parishioners to help with welcoming letters, personal follow-up and hosting welcoming dinners
- Raise awareness among established parishioners to look beyond their usual circle of friends to include newcomers and visitors
- Ensuring adequate rotation of volunteer presence at Welcome Desk. Finding effective processes to communicate with the Parish Office are always needed.
- Recruiting new volunteers for the 5:00 Saturday Welcome Desk. This effort has been going on for quite a while but so far without success. There has been no response to notice in the bulletin so far.



Finances (if applicable)

No parish funds used so far for hospitality expenses, and there is no plan of doing so in the foreseeable future. Money to pay for the stamps for welcoming letters is provided by the parish and the letters are mailed out directly by Maria.

Year Ahead

There are no hard and fast dates and/or numbers for this Ministry. The “challenges” give a good idea of what continuous efforts are required to keep this Ministry functioning effectively. After coordinating the Welcome Ministry since October 2012, I handed over this ministry to Patricia O’Grady 613-421-1488, pogradym@icloud.com

And a few figures

- Welcome letters sent: 19
- Number of welcoming meals: 1
- Number of new parishioners at welcoming meals: 2
- Number of welcoming parishioners at meals: 4



Sacramental Faith Formation Ministry

Ministry Contact: Andrew Pump

Accomplishments

14 children received First Eucharist in 2019

- Children were paired with EM's during Mass
- Children were actively engaged in First Communion Mass
- Parents of children also participated in parent faith formation sessions

Our First Reconciliation Retreat was held on June 1st, 2019 for these families

5 Children were confirmed on February 3, 2019

We had one Baptism and 2 Receptions at our Easter Vigil, 2019 (RCIA)

3 Adults received Confirmation at the Cathedral on June 8th, 2019 (Adult Confirmation)
6 young adults helped as catechists for Confirmation, First Eucharist and First Reconciliation.

Challenges

2019 was our new coordinator Andrew Pump's first year on the job and there was a lot to learn

Finances

Registration fees helped offset cost of books, supplies and gifts. May need to increase the registration fees of programs.

Year Ahead (2020 so far)

- Confirmation Mass took place on January 19th 2020, and we confirmed 7 children
- Registration for Confirmation Class is taking place over September and classes run November through December
- We have 3 adults that have been catechized and are ready to be received into the Church, as they could not be received since the Easter Vigil was cancelled
- We also have 3 Adult Confirmation Candidates that were not able to be confirmed at the Cathedral for Pentecost Sunday this year. We will celebrate their confirmation in our parish at a later date



- First Eucharist and First Reconciliation were modified due to COVID.
 - First Eucharist preparation was completed before the lock-down in March
 - Celebration of First Eucharist could not take place in the Easter Season, but each individual family came over the summer to our smaller noon celebrations for a more private First Communion celebration
 - The First Reconciliation Retreat for 2020 was also cancelled, and families are making arrangements with Fr. Jim to celebrate the sacrament



Ministry Name: Marriage Preparation

Ministry Contact: Andrew Pump

Accomplishments

- Spring 2019 Marriage Preparation Course had 13 couples
- Fall 2019 Marriage Preparation Course had 9 couples
- 5 parish couples volunteer as “facilitator couples” during the Marriage Preparation Weekend Course
- 4 FOCCUS Facilitators work with couples on their FOCCUS Inventories

Challenges

- Finding new couples to help facilitate sessions for the weekend courses

Finances

- Registration fees helped offset cost of supplies.

Year Ahead (2020 so far)

- Spring 2020 Marriage Preparation Weekend was cancelled due to the lockdown
 - Most couples rescheduled their weddings to 2021
 - For those who still needed their Marriage Preparation done (5 couples), we ran a course over Zoom in the early summer
- Fall 2020 has a lot of couples registered (most carried over from Spring 2020). It looks like it will also have to be held virtually over Zoom



Infant Baptism

Ministry Contact: Kathy Crowne (crowne@sympatico.ca)

Accomplishments

The baptism preparation team welcomed “with great joy” the addition of 2 new volunteers in the persons of George and Joan Lajeunesse who have now been fully initiated into the ministry. Thank you, George and Joan!

- 15 children registered for baptism in 2019
- 13 children registered for baptism January- September 2020. Some of these had planned baptisms in the Easter season but had to be put on hold due to the pandemic

All children registered in 2019 were baptized, the last was in February 2020 (pre-Covid-19 shutdown). Baptisms that were pending since April have resumed as of July 2020 under Covid-19 protocols which include the following:

- Baptisms are celebrated outside of weekend liturgy times
- The baptisms happen with one family only at any given celebration
- There is no full immersion of the child being baptized
- All Covid-19 protocols are followed including face coverings, social distancing etc.

5 children have been baptized since July 2020 under the above protocols.

The remaining children who are registered are still pending waiting for the parents to choose a date. (note one child has been registered pre-birth)

Challenges

Adapting to COVID-19 restrictions.

Year Ahead

Baptism preparation sessions for families who need it continue on an as-needed basis, often one family at a time. The preparation team did offer a group session in July of 2020 with three families participating. This session was done using Zoom technology. It worked very well and will probably be the format for future sessions for the foreseeable future.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Crowne



Altar Linen Ministry

Ministry Contact: Gail Hillier

Accomplishments

Gail and Eleanor continue to care for the altar linens weekly.

Year Ahead (optional)

The planned project is to make more purificators as time allows.

Respectfully submitted

Gail Hillier

Coordinator



Eucharistic Bread Baking Ministry

Ministry Contact: Clara Nasello CND

Accomplishments

Every year in October, I ask those who committed to baking the bread for the Eucharist, if they wish to continue in this ministry. There are usually 15 or 16 bread makers for the year. They are scheduled to make bread 3 times during the year.

Challenges

Inability to use homemade bread at Mass during the pandemic.

Year Ahead

The new schedule starts in January and goes through to December. A new schedule will not happen until we receive word that we can use bread for the Eucharist.

Respectfully Submitted

Clara Nasello CND

Coordinator



Children's Liturgy of the Word Report

Ministry Contact: Toni Tarasco-Myers

Accomplishments

There has been increasing numbers of children participating in all age groups, with relatively more families attending the 9:30 am mass. The Children's Christmas Pageant (2019) received positive feedback and was a great success!

Challenges

- Lack of consistency with availability with current volunteer roster.
- Recruiting new (student, parents, or other) volunteers to get involved with leading and/or assisting gatherings.
- Abrupt end to gatherings in March 2020 due to COVID-19; not sure when gatherings will happen again.

Year Ahead

Looking for a new coordinator; Jason Jacques able to share responsibility as coordinator



Gospel Players Ministry

Ministry Contact: Sr. Connie Goulet (cgoulet58@gmail.com)

About the Ministry

The Gospel Players are children who help bring the Gospels to life by acting them out. In this way, the message of Jesus becomes more alive for them and helps them spread the Good News. They present the Gospel dramatization from the Children's Lectionary at the 9:30 Family Mass the 3rd Sunday of each month and they like participating in the Christmas and Good Friday Service.

Two short practices usually take place--one after the 9:30 Mass the preceding Sunday and the other at 9:10 just before the Family Mass. My assistant, Jason Jaques, and I welcome the help many parents often give their children.

Accomplishments

Accomplishments of the Gospel Players are best highlighted by their comments:

- I was scared the first time. But I'm not scared anymore. It's fun and you learn more about the Bible.
- It's nice helping the little kids to know Jesus better.
- The people seem to like us doing this.

Challenges

A big challenge we face is that many children are involved in sports, dance etc. on Sunday mornings. So, it is hard to find "actors" and especially when the Family Mass falls on a holiday weekend. COVID-19 caused the ministry to cease but we look to resume once restrictions are lifted enough to safely allow participants to once again participate.

Year Ahead

Anyone interested in joining the "Gospel Players" or in learning more about the Ministry, please see Connie Goulet or Jason Jacques at the 9:30 Mass. We warmly welcome interested children, their families and anyone who would like to volunteer in the Ministry.

Blessings of good health on each of you and your families!

Respectfully submitted,

Sr. Connie Goulet

Ministry Coordinator



Eucharistic Ministers

Ministry Contact: Angela McCanny angela.mccanny6@gmail.com 613 567-1552

Accomplishments

When we share the Eucharist with our community, we are nourishing and nurturing – helping people to become one body by sharing the gift of Jesus' body and blood.

- In Fall 2019, there was excellent participation by the Eucharistic Ministers from the 5:00, 9:30 and 11:30 Liturgies in a ministry training renewal.
- Pocket cards with a summary of the roles of the various positions were made available, along with a revised Eucharistic Ministers handbook.
- Currently, there 8 Eucharistic Ministers for the 5:00 pm Mass; 22 for the 9:30 am Mass; 29 for the 11:30 am Mass. Several more people were in formation for the 5:00 Mass when the COVID-19-Pause occurred in March.
- From mid-March to the end of June 2020, there was no need for Eucharistic Ministers to serve in the absence of weekend liturgies.

Challenges

Maintaining enough Eucharistic Ministers at each of the Masses so that the need to serve does not become too frequent for anyone, is an on-going challenge. In the months ahead, only one or two Eucharistic Ministers are required at each of the weekend Liturgies. However, given the age and health concerns of many of our ministers, many committed volunteers are not able to return to service during the pandemic. We may need to do some outreach and formation of new ministers so that the burden to serve is not too heavy on anyone. New folks are welcome!

Year Ahead

The Eucharistic Ministry team will adjust to the changing practices for the distribution of the Eucharist, required for the safety of all ministers and parishioners.



Liturgical Environment

Ministry Contact: Wayne Moyle, waynemoyle8@gmail.com

A new Liturgical Environment Committee was established in late 2019 and accepted the difficult (nearly impossible) task of continuing the work that John Weir and Dorothy Collins have done for the past many years in establishing a liturgical environment that is conducive to the prayerful celebration of the Eucharist. Committee members are Terry Byrne, Joanne Lee, Helen Zettel, Bob Zettel, Henri Van Zandvoort, Andrew Pump, Jamie Loback, John Sommers, and Pat Malikail. Wayne Moyle co-ordinates the work of the group.

Although committee members assisted in creating the Liturgical Environment during Advent and for Christmas, the committee's mandate was only officially underway with the beginning of Ordinary Time January 19, 2020.

The LEC adopted a set of principles many of which were explained in several bulletin inserts in January and February. Generally, in each liturgical season the Liturgical Environment Committee seeks to establish an environment that guides the eye to four centres of liturgical action – the entrance to the Church, the ambo (the area used for the readings and homilies), the altar, and the presider's location. Care is taken to enhance these spaces, not overwhelm them.

The LEC had made wonderful plans for Holy Week/Easter. Of course, these plans were promptly shelved when COVID -19 brought weekly liturgies to a halt.

Once normal liturgies resume the LEC will continue its work. We can always use more hands. If anyone is interested in joining our group, please contact committee coordinator, Wayne Moyle – waynemoyle8@gmail.com



Ministry of Music and Liturgy

Ministry Contact: Jamie Loback, Director of Music and Liturgy / Concert and Rehearsal Rentals

Reporting on the year 2019 and 2020 (March-September)

Easter 2019 and Christmas 2019 were notable successes for Music and Liturgy. The quality of singing and quality of repertoire that the Music Ministry contributed to the two Celebrations were prayerful and enhanced these high liturgical seasons. The Music Ministry is fortunate and grateful to have had the generous support of Tom Fagan who played the organ at the Easter Vigil and Christmas as well as Jim McIntyre who accompanies the choir on guitar. The Music Ministry is also supported by Kathleen Allen who serves as our choir librarian. Kathleen and her team have contributed enormous amounts of time maintaining the organization of our resources. Nancy Keyes, Risa Tonita, Deborah Dorner, and Jillian Beacon are also to be thanked for filling in for the Music Director when he is away. The Music Ministry's annual Christmas Concert raised \$2000 for St. Joe's Supper Table.

The Liturgical planning committee is to be commended for their thoughtful approach in planning our liturgical celebrations. In 2019, our dedication liturgical environment team lead by Dorothy Collins and John Weir stepped down after well over a decade in this role. Many, many thanks to John and Dorothy for their generous and creative contribution to our parish life and liturgical environment. Wayne Moyle kindly stepped forward to fill the need for a new coordinator and has established an excellent team of volunteers who work collectively in planning the décor in the church. Many thanks to Wayne and the new liturgical environment committee.

For the first time in the history of our Parish, we were not able to gather as a community for Easter 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which required the church to close its doors in March 2020. Liturgical resources were provided to the community for home usage and Tom Fagan is to be thanked for providing recorded preludes on our historic Casavant organ.

Since re-opening the church for in-person liturgies in June 2020, there has been an average attendance of 40 people at each mass. Every precaution and procedure have been implemented per government guidelines and restrictions to ensure the safest possible environment for the community. We continue to provide liturgical resources for those who are not able to return to mass in person and the reflectors have been essential in keeping our physically distanced community together in spirit through their recorded reflections that are sent out each week to our parishioners and beyond.



Due to the pandemic, our weekend masses look and feel quite different from normal times. The manner in which we must celebrate is antithetical to what we have worked so hard to develop for the past several decades. The absence of congregational and choral singing has created a void that we have attempted to somewhat fill with instrumental music. The Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, and Communion Hymn are sung by a cantor. Liam Kennedy-MacDonald from the 9:30am mass choir has served as cantor since June 2020. Recently, we have begun involving student musicians who play either cello or violin during the liturgy. Tom Fagan continues to provide organ postludes and preludes and I provide accompaniment on the piano. We are currently considering ways in which to safely integrate a physically distanced choral component into the liturgy; however, congregational singing will not be possible for the foreseeable future due to government restrictions. Abiding by the Vatican II principle of “full, conscious, and active participation” all responses and acclamations are spoken by the community. We have a dedicated team of Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers who have been ministering at each weekend mass.

The University Mass resumed on the first weekend of September. Andrea MacWilliams is serving as cantor at this mass and I will be providing piano/organ accompaniment for the foreseeable future.

All rehearsals and concerts scheduled to take place at St. Joseph's in the spring and summer were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This represents a significant loss of revenue for the parish. Some of the choral groups are planning to resume rehearsals in the church on weeknights while following strict procedures and requirements monitored by parish staff. With this, some revenue will be generated but not to the same extent as 2019. Music



Reflections Ministry

Ministry Contact: Eleanor Rabnett rabnete@gmail.com

The members of St. Joe's Reflections Ministry are lay parishioners and ordained clergy who through their Scripture Reflections share their own experience of God as they 'break open the Word' of God for our Sunday liturgies. The reflectors are asked to share in their experience of God as it pertains to the Scripture Readings of the day and how it is current, relevant in today's world; in doing this they try to shed a light on all as we share in our journey as members of our St. Joe's familial community. Reflectors are active and faithful parishioners, called and drawn from within our faith community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demanded that we adopt some new ways of sharing the Good News and breaking open the Word of God. At the beginning of the pandemic Churches were locked down along with most other institutions and businesses. The Reflectors at St. Joe's were asked to continue sharing their reflections by recording them, using their smart phones or coming into the church offices to video them. Later when St. Joe's was able to resume our Liturgies of the Word and the Eucharist, the practice of continuing to video their reflections was adopted for those unable to join us at our Sunday liturgies, as well as to share them aloud during our Masses.

As it is throughout the parish with her many ministries there are some in the Reflection Ministry who are uncomfortable returning to St. Joes during the ongoing pandemic; this has offered us the opportunity to actively pursue our process of inviting new members to join us in this ministry.



One-on-One Healing Touch Ministry Report

Ministry Contact: Clara Nasello CND

Accomplishments

One-on-one Healing Touch was offered once a month until the lockdown began in March 2020. There are four facilitators that take turns offering this opportunity: Helena Robb, Colette Chartrand, Norah McMahon, and Clara Nasello CND. It is offered regardless of how many people attend. In general, 1-4 people have shown a response.

Challenges

Inability to meet due to pandemic.

Respectfully submitted
Clara Nasello CND
Coordinator



Funeral Ministry

Ministry Contact: Andrew Pump (Sharon Gravelle 2019)

Funeral ministers are privileged to help the families of deceased loved ones as they come to us with overwhelming pain. We enter the lives of families at one of the most difficult and sorrowful times of their lives when the ache of loss is so profound. We strive to be attentive to the pain in their hearts as we walk them through the funeral preparations. Our goal is to ensure that grieving families are welcome, accepted and comfortable as we help them prepare the funerals of their loved ones. We strive to bring compassion, comfort, and support and to ensure that funerals are meaningful, positive, healing experiences for families.

We guide the family in the selection of the readings, the prayers of the faithful and their choice of music and logistics of a funeral. We are present to support, guide, and assist the family at the funeral with all that a funeral entails. We are often called upon to assist the family for a wake and the reception in the church.

Accomplishments

The funeral ministry team assisted 10 families with funeral preparations in 2019. 18 parishioners signed up for a Funeral Preparation workshop for May, 2019. We had some other requests from people wishing to pre-plan their own funeral or that of a loved one. Our annual Memorial Mass, usually held each year on All Souls Day, was cancelled to let our new pastor Fr. Jim Bleackley get accustomed to St. Josephs.

Challenges and Setbacks

Our long-time coordinator, Sharon Gravelle, handed over leadership of the Funeral Ministry to Andrew Pump in 2019. There was a lot to pass on and learn for our new coordinator and Sharon has been a big help in the transition and continues to serve this ministry as one of the Head Ministers.

Finances

Funerals, along with Weddings, are a source of revenue for the Parish.

Year Ahead (2020 so far)

Before the COVID Lockdown we have performed 5 funerals. We could not perform funerals during the lockdown. We are able to perform funerals, but the families wishing to use our services would rather wait until some of the restrictions around gatherings are lifted to make for a more meaningful celebration of the lives of their loved ones. This year's Memorial Mass on All Souls Day will again be cancelled, this time due to COVID.



Refugee Outreach Committee Report

Ministry Contact: Jane Armstrong (ROC Secretary) and Angela Murphy

ROC Leadership Team and Membership

The Leadership Team once again consisted of co-chairs Margie Cain and Angela Murphy and treasurer John Weir. The remaining members are Dona Bower, Deborah Dornier, Jennifer Gallant, Connie Goulet, Benoit Saulnier, and Jane Armstrong as secretary.

Our 7-member Settlement Support Team complements the work of the ROC in helping to integrate newcomers into Canadian society.

All members are required to obtain police checks, sign acknowledgement of the Pastoral Code of Conduct, and be familiar with the ROC Terms of Reference and its confidentiality clause.

Accomplishments

Over this period, we have worked with **5 families consisting of 8 adults and 16 children** in different stages of sponsorship application, confirmation of status, and settlement and integration processes.

Sponsorships

St. Joe's sponsorships and co-sponsorships take place under the auspices of the Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI), in partnership with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese, which is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) with the federal government.

1. In October 2019, the ROC was delighted to welcome a Syrian family of seven who arrived in Ottawa from Jordan. The newcomers have family members here who were privately sponsored through St. Joe's and who collaborated closely with us on the settlement, with the ROC taking responsibility for all settlement costs. The new family arrived to a rental home that was fully furnished and equipped, including bedding, groceries, and toys. ROC members immediately helped the newcomers settle into their life in Canada. Among the activities in the first few weeks were:

Paperwork – assisting with applications for SIN numbers, Ontario ID cards and OHIP.

Education – arranging for school registration and school visits, facilitating communication between parents and teachers and administrators; providing after-school tutoring in ESL and math for the children, as well as ESL tutoring for the parents.



Technology – acquiring computers and phones

Medical – arranging for medicals, vaccinations, finding a family doctor, dental visits – including covering the costs of dental work thanks to the contributions of a generous parishioner.

Learning about services in the community – the first visit to the library to get library cards and sign out books, becoming familiar with public transit, engaging in winter activities.

The new family has adapted to life in Canada remarkably well, no doubt aided by their close family ties here. The children have adjusted to school and enjoy being with their cousins, the parents share driving, shopping and other duties, and they are all grateful to be together in a safe place where they can grow, learn and be productive members of society.

2. Through a partnership with Jewish Family Services, we applied under the BVOR (Blended Visa Office Referred) program and were matched with an individual who arrived in Canada in January 2019. This sponsorship ended in January 2020. The resettlement costs were covered by the Shapiro Foundation and private individuals.

3. A co-sponsorship application for a family of three, relatives of a Syrian family we previously hosted at the request of the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, was successful. When the family arrived in Canada, St. Joe's released the funds provided by the Muslim Association of Canada, kept in trust. Settlement support is being provided by the sponsoring family and friends.

4. A co-sponsorship application remains in process for a family of four Eritrean refugees living in Israel who are unable to safely remain there or return home. The ROC is holding in trust the sponsorship money contributed by a family member, to be dispersed upon the family's arrival. The sponsoring family member will assume responsibility for the settlement plan. Unfortunately, the refugee sponsorship system has come to a standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic and this application could be undetermined for some time.

Hosting

We continued to host, at the request of the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, a single mother of four with children ages 8 and under who are awaiting confirmation of their Permanent Resident status. ROC and Settlement Team members continue to support this family through library visits, outings, facilitating a week in August 2019 at Waupoos



family camp and city run day camps in 2019 and 2020, mentoring, tutoring, skating, biking, etc.

Beginning in September 2019, also at the request of Catholic Centre for Immigrants, ROC provided support to an individual, including practice using OC Transpo, advice on budgeting, food shopping and introduction to food banks, furniture resources, etc., as well as a listening ear. This resilient individual has since built networks in the community and gained much greater independence.

Assisting and Advocating

One Inland Claimant we have been assisting is awaiting a hearing date regarding Protected Person status. A scheduled hearing was cancelled because of the pandemic, prolonging the uncertainty.

Another Inland Claimant was denied Protected Person status and has submitted an appeal. A decision is pending but cases such as this one sometimes take a long time, again creating stressful uncertainty.

We also continue to provide support to a family of three who were reunited in May 2019 and are Permanent Residents.

The ROC and the Settlement Team have assisted all these individuals with basic needs and connections to services and resources. They have come to our country to be safe, leaving homes and loved ones behind. Their commitment to build productive lives here, and to contribute to our parish and society, never fails to inspire us.

Collaborations

Joan O'Connell remains our cluster representative for pastoral care and social justice. We are very appreciative of the support and interest we have received from Parish Council.

One of our families benefits from the OMRA grocery card program, co-ordinated by Donna Rietschlin and generously supported by parishioners. The program is run by the OMRA Shelter Alternatives Corporation, a small non-profit working with community organizations to provide housing subsidies for newcomers from refugee backgrounds who are settling in Ottawa.

Participation in Community Events

A highlight this past year was the organization of a winter celebration. Many of our families joined with ROC members at the Nectar Centre in New Edinburgh for a potluck



lunch, followed by outdoor activities across the street on the grounds of Rideau Hall. For some, it was their first real introduction to Canadian winter activities, and both the indoor and outdoor activities served to put a positive light on how much fun the season can offer. There were also individual outings to various Winterlude events.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The ROC acted quickly in the face of the pandemic. At the outset, members stepped up to provide education at a distance during March break and this continued for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, through the summer and into the fall. This initiative, guided by Deborah Dorner, tapped into educational websites and platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp and FaceTime to engage children and parents working on their ESL. ROC continues to tutor about a dozen students of all ages.

In addition, during the pandemic ROC has:

- Provided for summer day camps for four children, including a special needs camp for one youngster
- Provided financial support as needed due to employment being disrupted
- Provided food as needed from the St. Joseph's Food Bank
- Engaged with families in outdoor settings, including outings on bikes.
- Provided a bike safety course
- Provided ongoing help with navigating Ontario Works and CRA websites
- Provided furniture and moving help as needed
- Donated fans and air conditioners.

Our sponsorship responsibilities for our family of seven continued, with our regular monthly review meetings taking place via Zoom.

The year ahead

COVID-19 – Job loss or uncertainty, isolation, health concerns both COVID and non-COVID, schooling at home, long summer days to fill, these factors that affect all Canadian families are also serious concerns for newcomers.

General outlook for refugees – The pandemic has greatly slowed the processing of refugee claims in Canada and around the world. Potentially there could be a large



increase in numbers of people seeking asylum in Canada when the border with the United States is re-opened. This in turn could lead to a strain on ROC's resources.

Membership – Our ability to respond to ongoing demands and the new needs that inevitably arise depends on having enough members, and we are always looking for new recruits. In addition, the leadership team has been in place for several years and wishes to have a succession plan. The use of ROC interview guidelines ensures a good fit between ROC goals and needs and the expectations, time and talents of potential members.

Finances

We are incredibly grateful for the financial support we have received from parishioners and other community members. Between January 31, 2020, and August 31, 2020, the ROC received over \$9,000 toward its ongoing activities.

Financial support is gratefully accepted through the following link:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/131771990RR0006-saint-joseph-parish/>

Monthly or one-time donations can be made by credit card choosing **Refugee Outreach Committee** from the drop-down menu under **APPLY YOUR DONATION TO A SPECIFIC FUND SET UP BY THIS CHARITY**. Complete the Donor, Tax Receipt and Payment information and receive your receipt immediately. Contact John Weir jhnwr99@yahoo.ca for more information.

Conclusion

We are deeply committed to continue working with those needing our support. In this challenging time, ROC's role may be needed more than ever. We are extremely grateful to St. Joe's Parish, The Supper Table and The Women's Centre whose support allows us to respond to those who are most in need of our services.

Prepared by Jane Armstrong (ROC Secretary) and Angela Murphy (ROC Co-Chair)

Submitted by the Refugee Outreach Committee Leadership Team, September 2020



St. Joseph's Parish Mission Statement

We who choose St. Joseph's Parish are called, as part of the Body of Christ, in the Archdiocese of Ottawa to be:

A **Proclaiming Community**, which is a living witness to Christ in the inner city and in partnership with the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, proclaims the Good News to the poor.

A **Welcoming Community**, which is gathered together in weakness and strength by the Spirit of Jesus to nurture its faith by sharing the Word and breaking the Bread, remembering and celebrating God's love for us.

A **Discerning Community**, which inspired and led by the Holy Spirit on a journey of Faith, encourages the gifts of individuals to flourish.

A **Ministering Community**, which serves the needs of its people and reaches out in solidarity, especially to those who are poor and marginalized in the community at large.