

2016 INCUMBENT'S REPORT



“Follow me.”

Matthew 4:19

**OUR RESPONSE
AT ST. PAUL'S
TO JESUS' SUMMONS**

A. Introduction

My dear fellow-members of St. Paul's Parish family, it's my great joy to share this, my tenth Annual Meeting Report with you.

As I do every year, I want to begin this Report with a great list of "Thank you's."

I want first of all to give my deepest thanks to Our Lord, who has continued to pour out his love upon us without measure, and whom it is the joy of my heart to serve as Pastor at St. Paul's.

Thank you to our Wardens, Allison and Suzanne, who have both served the Parish in an exemplary way. Your leadership greatly blessed our Parish, and it was a joy to serve with both of you.

Thank you to all of Parish Council, for being an *awesome* leadership team! Your commitment to serve the Lord and enrich our common life makes Parish Council meetings a joy.

Thank you to our Assistants, Cyril, Norman, and Bob, for enriching us with your presence, and my own life with your friendship.

Thank you to Laura Anne Fink, for all you do as our Parish Secretary. You go the extra mile in so many ways – and we all appreciate it greatly.

Thank you to Dan Brisbin for serving the Parish so faithfully and well this past year as our Treasurer and the Treasurer of MCES; and Debra Brisbin for faithful service as our Envelope Secretary.

Thank you to Linda Penton and all who are serving with Linda in ministering to our dear children and youth, from Nursery through High School. Your love in action has enriched the lives of our young people, and all the members of our Parish family.

Thank you to Anne Lowry (and others who help from time to time) for your commitment to keeping our building clean – no easy task with a building as much used as ours!

Thank you to Paul Bourgeois, for your superb service, week in and week out, as Music Director. We're greatly blessed by your dedication. Thanks also to Kathleen Robinson and all the Choir, Barbara-Jean Moore for playing once or twice a month at our 8:30 Services, and to Brianna Harvey, for pinch hitting when Paul was away.

Thank you to Jane Sandul, for your commitment to St. Paul's worship as Altar Guild Coordinator. We're grateful for all your work you and the work of our Altar Guild members, which, though out of the spotlight, enriches our lives every Sunday.

Thank you to Neil Brown and all the members of MCES, for all you continue to do to help our beautiful historic Chapel (now for over 131 years) to be a place where people can be still in God's Presence.

Thank you to Bob, Cyril, Norman, Laura Anne our Pastoral Care Team, our Shepherds, and all others who cared for one another, ministering Our Lord's love to one another, as together we

get through the hard times that have gripped our Province and city.

Thank you to Jennifer Solem and all members of NeST (our Newcomers Support Team) for all your incredible work to prepare us to serve effectively the family from Syria we're sponsoring.

Thank you to all other Parish leaders, both those with titles, and those without, for the excellence of your service.

Thank you to all who have ended your respective ministries at St. Paul's, for how you have blessed us with your gifts in these capacities, including Bianca Bolton (Nursery and Youth Contact on Parish Council), Dinah Breu (Worship Contact on Parish Council), Simon Evans (Outreach Contact on Parish Council), Laura Anne Fink (Pastoral Care Contact on Parish Council), Brenda Huber (New Members Contact on Parish Council), Frances Pike (Teacher of the youngest class in Sunday School), and Sarah Ramsay (Altar Guild)

A special Thank you to Simon for your decade of faithful service leading our Wed. morning Bible Studies with such skill and grace.

Thank you to all who began new ministries in 2016, including Bianca Bolton (Youth Contact on Parish Council), Gerald de Vries (Maintenance), Heather Johnson (Altar Guild and Stewardship), Twyla Peters (Parish Clerk), Mark Plummer (Altar Guild), and Murray Sykes (Christian Education). Thank you, also, to all who are beginning new ministries in 2017.

Thank you, too, to Paul Bourgeois (Communications Contact), Muyi Ekomwenrenren (Community Connections Contact), and Angela Richardson (Hospitality Contact), for agreeing to continue serving on Parish Council past your 2 year terms.

And lastly, I want to thank everyone in the Parish for sharing the gifts God has given you in ways too varied to mention. In your families, in our Parish, and in the wider community, you're touching people with the love of Jesus, as you, the Body of Christ, live as his hands and feet in the world. It's an honour to share this journey of faith with you!

B. Looking Back at 2016

All that we are about at St. Paul's can be put into 4 categories; and the importance and effectiveness of each activity in which we are engaged can be judged by how it forwards one of these 4 areas of our life. The categories are worship, discipleship, fellowship, and outreach. I am convinced that we're called by Our Lord to keep all 4 categories as our focus, not neglecting any of them. For us to be healthy as a Parish, we need to be developing all four of these areas of our life.

Here are some of the ways that we developed each of these 4 aspects of our life in 2016.

Worship: In 2016, we developed our worship in several ways. We added pre- and post-Service music to our screens, to help prepare us for worship and service, respectively. From May 1 onwards, I posted these, and other parts of each week's Sunday Services on my blog. The idea was to help us remember (or see for the first time, if we didn't attend the Service) what took place, and allow it to continue sinking deeply within us. Murray Sykes and Jeff Wray became our regular Screens' operators, and enabled the different parts of Screens' usage go smoothly. We

welcomed “Infinitely More” on Nov. 4, who led us in an evening of worship in song. We also offered 2 Workshops on the various Sunday worship ministries.

Discipleship: We enhanced our discipleship in 2016 through several new initiatives. Margaret Anne Knowles began Monday Art Adventures with our children. Our youth met regularly for weekly Sunday School. Our Wed. Morning Bible Study began to look at the readings for the upcoming Sunday. We offered the first 2 parts of the Church of England’s Pilgrim Course, on the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. And we began for the first time to offer free New Testaments on a resource table in the Hall. On the personal front, I began to use the Screens to add a visual component to my sermons, to add an additional way of communicating the Good News

Fellowship: We deepened our fellowship by being there for each other in difficult economic times. We struggled to respond to the increased pastoral needs through increased visits by me (80 more than in 2015), and visits by Bob and Cyril and our Pastoral Care Team. We also offered a Financial Literacy Workshop. The Fall of 2015 in our Parish was filled with bereavement, and we responded in 2016 with a Grief Support Group. To help us stay connected with one another, we added Twitter to our different communication tools, and continued to make full use of 4 Facebook pages (see my Statistical Report). We also had great fun together, with parties, Dinners, our Pageant, and what must be the most awesome post-Service refreshments in the city.

Outreach: We furthered our outreach in 2016 through the awesome work of Jennifer Solem and NeST, raising much more financially than the amount we’d aimed to raise in our 2016 Budget, and working faithfully to prepare for the arrival of the refugee family we’re sponsoring. Through Simon’s wise leadership, we disbursed our outreach tithe to people in need near and far. In the Fall, we began a monthly Service at AgeCare Seton. Our Facebook pages took off as means of engaging the wider community, with over 2,000 people being reached by some of our posts. And we enhanced the attractiveness of our building through the installation of a new floor, with great turn-out of support to remove and then replace all our Hall items, on Boxing and New Year’s Days, respectively!

2016 was a WONDERFUL year, filled with our God’s grace!

C. Looking Ahead to 2017

Normally, in my Reports, at this point I list things I’d love to see develop in the 4 areas of worship, discipleship, fellowship, and outreach in the upcoming year. This year, however, I thought instead I’d pause my Report to give each of us 10 minutes to write down the hopes that are on our hearts. The sheet says, “I would love to see, or be part of, these things at St. Paul’s in 2017.” There’s then room to write down what you’d like to see or be part of in each of the 4 categories. What you write is entirely up to you. There are no right or wrong answers. For example, regarding our worship, you could say you’d love to sing a certain song, or see a certain act incorporated into our liturgy. You could say you’d like to see us express our joy through clapping or raising our hands in praise. You could say you’d like longer sermons. (OK, this last one isn’t likely – but the point is that if you would like longer sermons, it wouldn’t be a wrong answer for you to put this down. You’re free to write down whatever would bless your heart!) After we do this, we’ll move on to the last part of this Report.

For me, what I would love to see or be part of in 2017 are more ecumenical worship and

freedom in praise; walking further into the Generous Listening process, and exploring new books in the Pilgrim Course; developing and expanding our Pastoral Care Team; and welcoming in person the Syrian refugee family we're sponsoring, and walking beside them as they begin their new life in Canada.

D. The Summons to Follow Jesus

This new year is filled with awesome possibilities for worship, discipleship, fellowship, and outreach. Parish Council and I will be looking at all you filled out today, as we move ahead to embrace the ways our Lord desires to continue to develop each of these in our life as a Parish family. When Jesus said "Follow me" to the first disciples, they had no idea to what he was calling them. They simply knew they wanted to go through life with Jesus, and it was enough to know he would be leading them. I believe the same is true with us. We don't know in January many of the ways our worship, discipleship, fellowship, and outreach will be deepened this year. (Who, for example, prior to the Fall of 2015 thought that in a few short months we'd be reaching out to welcome a family from Syria?) What we do know is that Our Lord is summoning us to follow him, to go through life with him leading the way. As members of the Body of Christ, let's allow our Head to guide us to use the gifts, the passions, he has given us to serve, developing these 4 areas of our life together as he desires. Indeed, let's commit ourselves to following Jesus so closely that we can know what *he's* passionate about by hearing his heartbeat.

E. Conclusion

As an expression of our gratitude to God for God's great faithfulness to us in the year that is past, and our commitment to live out God's mission for us in the year and years to come, I invite us to conclude this Report by offering our Parish Prayer together:

Our God of infinite grace, we give you thanks and praise for calling our congregation into being, and then continuing in loving relationship with us, in great faithfulness over the years, to bless, transform, and guide.

At St. Paul's, you have given us a mission that will never change with time, to live out your love as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is your will that, with your help, we will discover your Presence in Word and Sacrament; deepen our sense of Christian community; share your Word; nurture your people; encourage congregational and personal growth on our shared journey; act on your call for peace and justice; and build the foundation for tomorrow's Church.

Help us to respond to your love by dedicating ourselves with joy as a Parish family to this mission. Pour out your Spirit upon us, and work mightily in our midst to bring about its accomplishment. Fulfill your vision of opening hearts and minds to your grace, in us, and through us, now and for evermore. This we ask for the glory and in the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God bless you all, always!

Respectfully Submitted by
Your Brother in Jesus



January 29, 2017