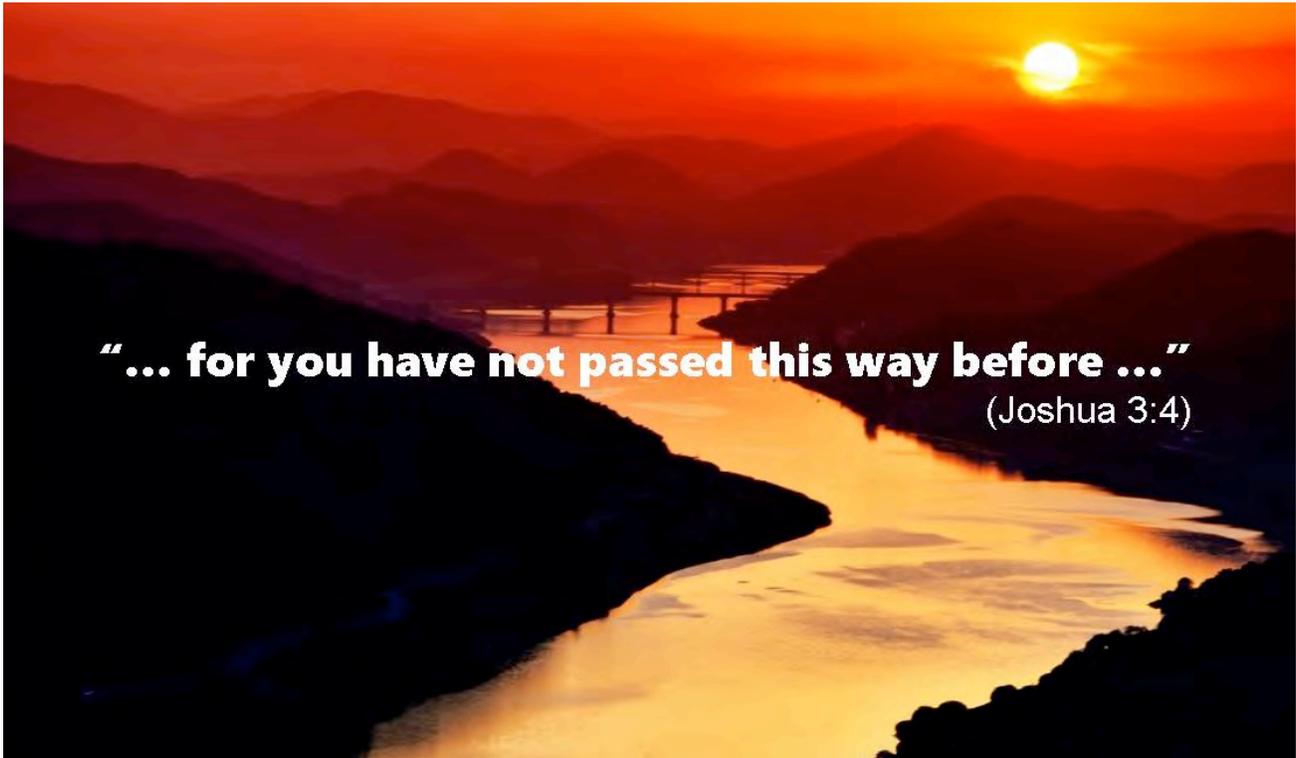


2017 INCUMBENT'S REPORT



A. Introduction

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

This year's Report will follow the above theme from Joshua 3:4, and do something different – I'm going to be (relatively) brief! (This year's Report has 1,732 words – 478 less than last year, which itself had 817 less than the year before – *baby steps!*)

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 (till May), Rick (since May), and Murray, for your outstanding leadership! Your passion for our Parish shows that “we got it right” having you in these positions! It's wonderful to serve with you as St. Paul's leadership team!

Thank you to everyone else: Parish Council, our Assistants, Laura Anne Fink, Dan Brisbin, Linda Penton, Paul Bourgeois, Anne Lowry, and all other Parish leaders, both those with titles, and those without, for the excellence of your service. week in and week out, at St. Paul's.

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 2017

This past year at St. Paul's was an awesome experience of God's amazing grace in our midst!

The highlight of the year had to be the safe arrival of the Al Jbawi family in Calgary, and the incredible privilege of walking together with them as they begin their lives in our beautiful country. If the Lord should allow me to live to 100, I would look back on my life and say that one of the things I'm most proud of is that I was part of a Parish that sponsored a refugee family from Syria. Thank for, Jennifer Solem and all NeST members (which includes the welcome addition of Sarah Knowles), for following in your Master's footsteps in such faithful, creative, and joyful service!

Here are some other highlights for me:

We were blessed to welcome Charles Alexander as one of our Assistant Clergy! Charles has blessed us with his musical gifts and sense of humour. And he has a prophetic fire, which I believe Our Lord will continue to use to help set us ablaze!

Starting in the Fall of 2017, we were most blessed to have monthly Celtic Services and Creation Group Art Classes at St. Paul's, led by Margaret Anne Knowles. Each Service and Art Class is crafted with great care, skill, and time, to pave the way for awesome worship encounters with our God. I encourage us all to come and take advantage of these opportunities.

I was so impressed to see that our income increased in 2017 by 4.1% over 2016 (our expenses rose by only 1.8%, or -0.3% less than we had budgeted, so our net was 2.2%)! This would be excellent in any year, but it's particularly noteworthy in our present economy in Calgary!

In 2017, our Men's Breakfast continued the practice of having men from St. Peter's attend our Breakfast, and a bunch of our men going to attend theirs. The participation in this has been tremendous!

It was great to see our new outreach venture at AgeCare Seton have the participation in 2017 of Charles and Verna Alexander, Heather Johnson, Bob Mummery, Leona Zadour, and myself as part of this outreach team.

I began to use Twitter in earnest in 2017, as my Statistical Report shows. If you aren't following our Parish account, please consider doing so: its handle is @stpaulscalgary. I'm posting all our activities, with photos, on it, so it's a great way to stay "in the loop" about what's happening at St. Paul's.

I continued to develop our pre- and post-Service music in 2017. Regarding the pre-Service music, the aim is that as soon as someone enters the Sanctuary, they're surrounded by an atmosphere that invites and draws them into worship. I took a long time each week to choose music that fit in with the theme, plus exposed us to contemporary Christian music that we couldn't reproduce ourselves, to do this. The Order of Service shows this intent by including the music on screens as part of our "Pre-service Music", and adding: "Please join in this time of worship as we prepare for the service."

I know that for some of us who are used to having conversations in the Sanctuary before the 10 a.m. Service, this has been an adjustment. The change in mindset I'm asking you to make is from "Please keep the music soft enough so that we can carry on our conversations," to "Let's keep our conversations soft enough so that people can hear the music." We're blessed at St. Paul's to be able to offer pre-Service fellowship and pre-Service music to prepare us for worship at the same time, but the ideal situation is for the bulk of the fellowship to take place in the Hall (with those who attended the 8:30 Service being included).

I do invite everyone to try, at some point, sitting quietly before the Service, with the music bathing you, so to speak, and helping guide your pre-Service prayers – to see if this might help enhance your Sunday worship experience. (Those who'd like to prepare for worship without music are invited to spend time in quiet in our Chapel.)

Other highlights for me in 2017 were the care Julie Wilson put into the New Members' bags, and Robbie Collier put into the Chemo Care Bags, for this new ministry of love; the growth of the number of youth helping with our Nursery ministry, the addition of Stephen Ford to the Soundboard ministry, and Verna Alexander and Gloria Ford to our Pastoral Care Team; and the regular, once-a-month meetings of our Youth Group.

Lastly, a highlight for me in 2017 was the support I received in my health challenges from people throughout the Parish, and our Wardens in particular (including such thoughtful practical support as slippers). From May onwards, I faced increasing pain in my legs and feet, from a reaction to the hydroxyurea medication I'd been taking since 2011 to keep my platelets under control. As a result, I discontinued using hydroxyurea and began taking interferon injections. The legs will take some time to recover, and it will also take some time for my body to adjust to the new medication, but I'm deeply thankful to be able to share that I'm on the path to healing. Thank you all for helping this to happen!

C. Looking Ahead to 2018

The beginning of this Report has a quote from Joshua 3:4. The larger passage reads: "At the end of three days the officers went through the camp and commanded the people, 'When you

see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God being carried, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before.”

The people were about to cross over the Jordan River into the Promised Land. They're not told the details about what's going to happen when they do this. Instead, they're told to follow God – to follow the Ark of the Covenant wherever it goes. The Lord is doing something new in their midst – they have not passed this way before. If they stay near God, then and only then will they know the way to go.

I'd like to suggest that this is our situation at St. Paul's. The year ahead will present us with many changes, as we face the financial challenges set forth in our 2018 Budget. "Business as usual" is not an option for us. So we'll have to change some of "the ways we've always done things" at St. Paul's, and be open to new ministries the Holy Spirit stirs up in our midst. We "have not passed this way before." But if we commit ourselves, each of us, to stay close to God in 2018 – closer, in fact, than we have ever stayed before – then we shall be guided into all that God has in store for us.

And remember: what God had in store for those to whom the words of Joshua 3:4 were spoken was *the Promised Land!* Hallelujah!

D. 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 28, 2018