

All Saints' Kingsway

Anglican Church

November Newsletter • 2023

A WORD FROM THE RECTOR

There is a tension in our Christian life

that we are all feeling a little more deeply of late and it's this: we live as people of the light amidst the darkness of this world. That's a tension because sometimes it's hard to see the light in the midst of that darkness, or sometimes—for me, at least, in my more cynical moments—it feels as if the darkness is outworking the light, even threatening to extinguish it.

The news narrates one horror after another, but we don't even have to look that far. We have our own darkness to scuffle with: navigating our own mental and physical health, negotiating relationships, traversing our own internal struggles and sins, not even to mention the darkness enclosing those close and dear to us. The struggle is real and some days it's hard to see the light, let alone to live as people of the light.

In his letter to the Christians in Ephesus, St. Paul writes this: "for once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Walk as children of light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true" (Eph. 5:8). Paul knew darkness the way we do. He knew the horrors of life, but he also knew that the light that is Jesus Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome him (John 1:5). Notice that Paul doesn't say "try really hard to find the light." Rather, he says that by virtue of the light that is Jesus Christ, *you are light*.

This is the grace to which I'm

brought back again and again. In the midst of news cycles, in the midst of the caprices of existence, in the midst of our own darkness and struggles and those around us, is this truth: we have been made light by the light of Jesus Christ, shining in the darkness. It's not for you to find, it's for you to be. That difference makes all the difference in the world.

This is why I'm so glad we light candles in our liturgy and even more so during Advent. It's not ornamental. It's metaphysical. It's theological truth. To be light means to be an Advent people, a people of memory and of expectation, a people who know and remember the light that is Jesus and who expect the fruit of his light in all that is good and right and true. An Advent people is a people who expect our Lord to good the bad, to right the wrong, and to true the false and to walk in the wake of his light as it dispels the darkness.

So this advent season, live into the light you are, and darkness will scatter. Sure, it will encroach

Contents

From the Editor	2
Welome Rob Petkau	
From Denier to Decaon	3
ASK Delegates to Synod.....	4
Trunks and Treats	5
The Blessing of the Animals	6
Pop Can Tabs Collection	8
Greeting from Mongolia.....	9
Town Hall Meeting [SPIT]	10
Growing in Christ Together: Strategic Plan 2024-2026	12
Social Justice	14
Don't Be A Victim	
Christmas at All Saints	
Seeking Refuge	15
September Barbecue	16
Blessing of the Back Packs	
ASK Friend and Neighbour ..	17
ASK Refugee Experience.....	18
Taste of the Kingsway	19
Once Upon A Christmas	
Advent Services	
All Saints' Kingsway Staff	20

Remember

Remember to bring in the pull tabs from your Beverage cans. They really do help to buy wheelchairs.

upon the periphery of your light, but it cannot extinguish the light that you are. Not because you are somehow really good at shining but precisely because it is not your light, it is the Lord's, the one who has come and will come again. We live in his light in this world, and we walk in it, working for its fruit in our common life together. Here in these pages, you will see and read about that fruit as it grows in and through our life together. For this we give thanks to him who was, who is, and who is to come, Jesus Christ.

Yours,

Patrick +

From the Editor:

I thought that this edition of the ASK newsletter might be a slim one as sometimes it is difficult to get submissions from the parish community. Was I ever wrong! You will find this edition chock full of news and photos from the many events that have taken place since our last edition. Some articles highlight parish members, presenting their interesting stories. One of these is an introduction to our current theology student intern from Wycliffe College. There are several examples of the ASK community reaching out to our neighbours from far and wide. And, of course, there are articles about the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons. Again, I thank all people who contributed to this edition; it makes my job much easier if I don't have to search for items to publish! Please keep those articles coming. Happy reading.

JR

YOUTH WORSHIP

Night

Worship
Prayer
Devotional
Snacks
Games

Friday, December 8 from 7-9pm

All Saints Kingsway 2850 Bloor St W, Toronto

All are welcome!

Welcome Rob Petkau

(On September 17, All Saints' Kingsway welcomed our new Theology Student Intern, Rob Petkau, and his wife Karen. Rob will be with us for the academic year 2023-2024 and will assist with the services and where needed. A brief biography which follows traces his journey from being an agnostic to seeking ordination. The photo below records the moment when Rob and Karen were welcomed to ASK.)



From Denier to Deacon *Rob Petkau and his amazing journey.*

Born in Red Deer, Alberta, in 1971, Rob and his family lived in several communities in that province and, of these, he considers Drumheller to be his home town. He and his two siblings were introduced to the (United) church by his mother but were never baptized and, because of all the family moves, were unable to put down roots in a church community. In Rob's words: "... when I was 11, I was basically agnostic", with no interest in religion.

Rob pursued a career in journalism, being a reporter for 10 years in Hinton, later becoming city editor at the Fort McMurray newspaper in 2003. (This is very intimidating for your editor!)

In 1994, Rob met Karen, a fellow reporter and they married in 1996. They have two sons: Heath who is studying psychology and neuroscience and Ian who is studying history with a view to becoming a high school teacher. Both of them are at university in Lethbridge.

In 2005, the family moved to Calgary where, for 12 years, Rob was a writer and editor for Agrium which became Nutrien after merging with PotashCorp. Karen also worked in the reporting business as a newspaper and magazine reporter and editor. She added graphic design skills to her CV and worked as a Project Coordinator for the Calgary Herald's Special Projects dept. from

2005-2014 after which she followed her heart and became a middle school librarian.

In 2014, Karen published a children's book, *If Heaven is So Great, Why Can't I Go Now?* — a book about grief and is available on Amazon. Her first novel, *The CurE*, is about to appear.

Unlike Rob, Karen, who was raised in Newfoundland, grew up in the Anglican church and believed her children should be raised in the faith. The family started regular church attendance in 1999, after Heath was born. Rob, the agnostic, went along to support Karen and to be part of his family's experience.

Surprisingly, Rob liked the church experience and, both he and Heath were baptized. When they moved to Calgary, they attended a contemporary-style Anglican church and found that their faith became even stronger, leading to increased involvement in the life of the church: Rob led the music, maintained the web site, wrote for the church newsletter (more intimidation!) and served

as a warden. Karen directed the church Sunday school, family movie nights, and was the ministry head for 10 years.

In 2010, Rob began to wonder if he was meant for the ministry and, three years later, discussed it with his parish priest who endorsed the idea. In 2017, he became a postulant for ordination and in 2018, started attending seminary part-time and on line at Ambrose Seminary in Calgary. In December 2021, Rob was ordained as a transitional deacon and served as a student intern in Calgary. In July, 2023, he and Karen ran a most successful Vacation Bible School at Holy Cross church.

Rob quit his day job on August 11, 2023, Karen and he put their possessions in storage, and they headed to Wycliffe College where Rob had transferred his credits and where they now live. Rob is particularly interested in youth ministry. He plays guitar, mandolin, ukulele, and banjo. He can be found on Instagram; his handle is @baldymcstrums.

ASK Delegates to Synod



(Left to right: The Rev. Brian Suggs, The Rev. Patrick McManus, Sheri Cameron, Mary Anne Huggins, Kristina Suggs, The Rev. Deacon Jennifer Cameron)

Trunks and Treats



Organized by Naomi Suggs and her helpers, the Children and Youth Ministry tried something new this year by reaching out to the surrounding community with Hallowe'en treats. Parishioners gathered in the parking lot of the church with their car trunks facing the middle of the lot and piled high with Hallowe'en candies and other treats. Children of the neighbourhood were invited to come and receive this "loot" and between 50 and 60 did so. For its first time, this event was considered to be a great success and, as the word spreads, it is anticipated to be even more successful in the future.



The Blessing of the Animals



On September 24, the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, a ceremony was held on the ASK lawn for the blessing of the animals. Several pet owners came to have their pets blessed in the short ceremony.



MARCH OF DIMES CANADA

Pop Can Tabs Collection Programme

March of Dimes Canada collects aluminum Pop Can Tabs and the recycling of these tabs generates revenue that benefits their [Assistive Devices Program](#) that helps buy, repair, and maintain a wide variety of mobility or assistive equipment (including wheelchairs), and their [DesignAbility® program](#) that modifies and custom builds products, to help increase independence, that cannot be found on the market.

What is a Can Tab?

A Can Tab is the piece of metal that opens aluminum cans. Like the can, the Can Tab is recyclable. It's a small piece, yet a refundable piece.

Why Collect Can Tabs?

Can Tabs are an easy way to recycle and help others. It is a task that people of all ages can do. However, only the uppainted tabs are acceptable for recycling.

***The collection box at All Saints is at the top of the East Entrance stairs, just outside the Choir Room.**

Why only Can Tabs instead of the whole can?

Well, the tabs are made of different quality

aluminum than the cans and may be more easily recycled. They are smaller and cleaner than collecting cans. They are also easier for the Charities to handle when receiving large volumes. The amount of money received is determined by the weight of aluminum collected. These pop can tabs can make a big impact when collected in numbers.

This Year's results?

Recently I dropped off at March of Dimes just over a total of 18 pounds of Can Tabs that had been collected over the past year from ASK parishioners and from a number of my family, friends and neighbours. You may be interested to know that 1,267 Can Tabs weigh 1 pound, so that means +18 pounds is more than 22,806 Can Tabs! That's a lot of Tabs! This is a picture of the Can Tabs just before they were taken to the March of Dimes.

(Editor's Note: The original goal for this year was 20 lbs. so, if we all remember to collect tabs over the holidays, we should be able to reach that goal.)



Greetings From Mongolia!

Doris & Derek Burrows

Doris's and my Big Mongolia Adventure started in December 2022, when Doris applied for, and was accepted for a teaching position at an international school in Ulaanbaatar. We had always wanted to live abroad but hadn't found the right opportunity or timing over the years. With Doris having only two more teaching years left before retirement, and me being retired, the right time was now. I think, in many ways, Mongolia chose us. We certainly didn't know what to expect.

Doris is teaching a grade one class with 24 Mongolian students who haven't had much, if any, English language instruction. Before 1990, Russian had been the second language in Mongolia. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Mongolia pivoted to English as the second language.

Mongolia has a population of approximately 3,000,000 people. Ulaanbaatar is the capital of Mongolia. However, the population of UB has grown from 500,000 to 1.5 million in only 15 years. Historically a nomadic people, families moved seasonally as the herds moved, packing up the family's ger (yurt) in less than 2 hours. Today, almost half of Ulaanbaatar's population still lives in gers, the traditional Mongolian circular tent-like structure.

We arrived in Ulaanbaatar in August for the start of the school year. We have a lovely apartment across the road from school which is very convenient. The school and the staff (who are indeed international) have been incredibly supportive.

When we moved to Mongolia, we both knew that we wanted to ride horses, as Mongolia is one of the only true horse cultures still in existence. A week after our arrival, we went on an "introductory" ride (a 53km two-day ride, overnighing in a tent on the steppe). I was then invited on a week-long horse trek in September. This experience allowed me to participate in Mongolian nomadic culture, where we moved over 200 horses and cattle from summer to fall pasture grounds. I lived in a ger for the week (as it was already well below zero overnight). It was a wonderful introduction and immersion into Mongolian culture.

Technology allows us to stay connected to friends and life in Toronto. However, a 13-hour time difference means that, the Sunday morning service live stream is after our bedtime. I have, however, connected with the Thursday evening Compline service over Zoom (technically not Compline but Matins for me). The service of Compline, which



Deacon Jennifer leads weekly, has always been one of my favourites. It is also a wonderful opportunity for me to connect with All Saints each week.

Through riding, Doris and I have had the pleasure to connect with the founder of the Veloo Foundation. This Foundation has been working with the children of families who survive as garbage pickers/scavengers at the Ulaanbaatar landfill site. In the last ten years, the Veloo Foundation has built two kindergartens for the children, a community centre, a lending library, a sewing co-operative, and a summer camp. I had the opportunity to visit one of the kindergartens in September, and Doris and I volunteered at the library just this past Saturday. We are both amazed at the good that is being done in an area with



limited social services, no running water and a school system lacking in teachers, technology and space. One of the major fundraisers for the Veloo Foundation is the Gobi Gallop, which is a 700km-10 day horse trek. I have committed to participate in June 2024 (if you are interested in obtaining more information - <http://www.veloofoundation.com/dereks-gg-fundraising-page.html>).

Doris and I are both embracing this adventure with open arms. We have started our Mongolian language lessons (a Cyrillic alphabet of 35 letters is quite daunting). Going shopping now, we can say good day (sain behno) and say we are from Canada, which seems to be enough to garner a smile and begin a conversation to buy potatoes or reindeer boots. It is -24C and not yet December. But Canadians aren't afraid of the cold.



Town Hall Meeting about SPIT

On Sunday, November 19, a Town Hall meeting was held in the church's auditorium to discuss the next steps of the Strategic Plan Implementation Team. Mary Anne Huggins chaired the meeting and participants sat at tables to discuss various aspects of the plan, putting the results on chart paper which were then reported to the assembly. A delicious lunch of sandwiches and veggies was enjoyed by those present. Below are copies of some of the slides that show results of the recent survey and the directions we should be taking in the future. For those who could not attend the meeting, I have included copies of the two pages that outline the Strategic Plan. All members of the congregation are encouraged to suggest ideas of how to accomplish the stated goals; please send any ideas you might have to wardens@allsaintskingsway.ca.

JR

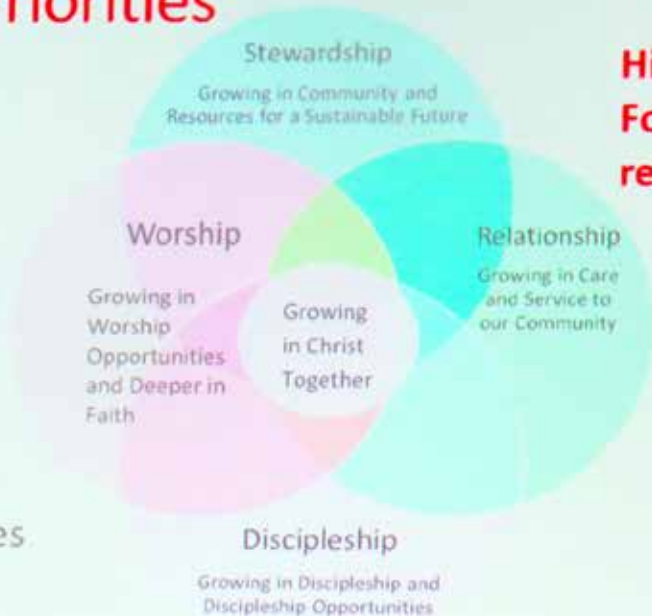
Strategic Plan #3: 2024-2026 High Level Areas of Focus, Goals and Priorities

2024-2026 Priorities

Continue what was developed in
Plan #1 and Plan #2

5 Priorities for 2024-2026

- Steward our Resources
- Nurture our Children and Youth
- Grow our Community of Disciples
- Strengthen our Community partnerships and engagement
- Broaden our Outreach and Mission



Small Group Work

- Are we on the right track?
- Do the Priorities capture where we should be focusing our attention?
- What strategies should we consider to work toward our goals?
- Anything to add? Anything missing? Anything you would change?
- What excites you about this new plan?
- Where do you see yourself fitting into the Plan?

Results of Congregational Survey

- Are the 4 areas of Focus still valid?
 - Most respondents said yes
- What should we stop?
 - nothing
- What should we continue doing?
- What ideas should we consider for our goals for 2024-2026?
 - The answers were the same for both questions:
 - Outreach, OOTC, Connection to community, Faith Formation, fellowship, growth, children and youths, worship services in person and online, pastoral care, refugee sponsorship, financial sustainability, fundraising, partnerships with community, stewardship, creation care



Growing in Christ Together:

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2026 AT-A-GLANCE

High Level Goals	STEWARDSHIP Growing in Community and Resources for a Sustainable Future	RELATIONSHIP Growing in Care and Service to Our Community	WORSHIP Growing in Worship Opportunities and Deeper in Faith	DISCIPLESHIP Growing in Discipleship and Discipleship Opportunities
5 Priorities 2024-2026				
Steward our Resources	Grow our Community and Financial Resources <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase Total Givings by a cumulative 26% from 2020-2026 as per MAF Grant 2. Increase income 3. Increase the number of people giving 4. Explore and implement additional/new fundraising opportunities 			
	Steward our Buildings, Grounds and Assets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a vision for our buildings and green space to serve our mission, including accessibility, garden project and re-development 2. Outline a plan for short-term, medium-term, and long-term projects 			
Nurture our Children and Youth	Develop a Capital Plan and Capital Campaign for our Growth and Sustainability <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise a Capital Campaign to raise the funds for the vision and plans for our building and grounds (short term, medium term, and long term) 2. Develop a Sustainability Plan for our capital funds for the future needs beyond the current strategic plan 			
	Engage the Community <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage with the community to get support for our plans for our building and green space 2. Implement Communications Plan 			
	Increase engagement of children and youth in Church activities <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement strategies to encourage our children and youth to be more involved in church activities 			
	Explore ways to enhance worship experiences for children and youth that contribute to faith formation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop our worship services and Sunday programs to be increasingly invitational and participatory for children and youth 			
	Ensure faith formation programs for children and youth are available as appropriate to their stage of development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop our worship services and Sunday programs to be increasingly invitational and participatory for children and youth 2. Strengthen Tuesdays@ASK faith formation programming for children and youth 			

Grow our Community of Disciples	Grow our community of disciples—attendance and engagement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of people attending our online and in-person worship 2. Increase the number of people attending our discipleship programs and engaging with other aspects and activities of the church
	Further develop and encourage an engaging culture of hospitality, welcoming, fellowship, and belonging to the community, including new members <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the teams and programs that build community and support fellowship (Hospitality, Sidespersons, Seniors Program, Pastoral Care, Social Justice, Outreach) 2. Improve newcomer identification and engagement 3. Promote opportunities to engage in church activities and teams 4. Communicate with the community and neighbourhood to inform and invite by implementing the Communications Plan
	Offer Anglican worship experiences that are inspiring and sustaining and create disciples deeper in faith <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the availability of a variety of services to enable people to worship God in a way that is meaningful to them
	Implement discipleship opportunities for people all along their faith journey <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further develop and offer faith formation courses from foundational to deeper exploration of faith 2. Help people engage in church activities as a way to serve
Strengthen our Community Partnerships and Engagement	Implement the Missional Action Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nurture community partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stonegate • All Saints Sherbourne • Christ Church Food Bank • Faithworks 2. Position ASK as an integral part of the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and develop new partnerships 3. Implement the Communications Plan to inform and invite the community
	Engage community through volunteer experiences
Broaden our Outreach and Mission	Implement the Missional Action Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Live our mission into the community through programs directly addressing the needs of our neighbours, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OOTC • Community Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dementia care ○ Bereavement 2. Develop environmental stewardship policies to care for God's creation—Property Committee
	Engage community through volunteer experiences

Social Justice

Protest calls attention to healthcare privatization

Thousands of protesters including a contingent from ASK gathered on the lawn of Queen's Park on Monday, September 25th to show their opposition to the privatization of healthcare as the legislature resumed following a summer break.

The protest was organized by the Ontario Health Coalition, an organization dedicated to protecting public health care. Some 4,000 people arrived at the site via approximately 70 buses from around the province, including North Bay, Sudbury, Cornwall, and Niagara.

Organizers estimate attendance at the event reached between 5,000 and 10,000.

"It is the opening day of the legislature so those in attendance want to send a very strong message to set the tone for this legislative session, the Ford government has no mandate to privatize. No one got to vote on that," Ontario Health Coalition Executive Director Natalie Mehra told CTV News Toronto.

The Ontario government [passed a bill in the spring](#) allowing private clinics to conduct more OHIP-covered surgeries and procedures to free up health-care capacity.

Premier Doug Ford, however, has previously insisted that Ontarians will continue to be able to access health care using their OHIP card and has rejected concerns that the legislation will lead to a

privatization of health care.

Those at the protest included patients, doctors, nurses, and union members who believe the Ford government is dismantling local public hospitals in favor of privatizing them.

More than 500 emergency departments have closed. Dozens of birthing units in public hospitals, ICUs are working terribly short-staffed, and yet they are shunting literally hundreds of millions of dollars of public money over to private-for-profit clinics to privatize our hospitals.

Also in attendance was a contingent from the Minden, Ont. area, who had their local hospital close in June. Their nearest hospital is now a 25-minute drive away. In a cardiac arrest, those minutes count.

"While sitting in the legislature (Sept 25), I could hear the thousands of protesters gathered outside," said Thunder Bay-Superior North MPP Lise Vaugeois in a statement provided to TBNewswatch.

"The Ford government refused to meet with the protesters, but they certainly could hear them from inside the legislature," he said. "It's time for the Ford government to listen. The people of Ontario are demanding the end of the Ford government sell-off and the restoration of funding to our public health care."

Sheri Cameron



Sheri Cameron and Evelyn Clarke, representing All Saints' Kingsway, joined concerned citizens at Queen's Park to protest against the Ontario government's plans to privatize public hospital care services.

Don't Be A Victim A Cautionary Tale

Close friends of mine, of similar age, education and life experience, recently ALMOST fell victim to the “Grandparent Scam”. Without names, they have encouraged me and others to tell their story. As you read, probably with some incredulity, please believe me: If this could happen to these people, it could happen to anyone, including you!

They answered an evening call on their landline. The male caller immediately announced himself as an RCMP officer and without a pause said that their grandson had been pulled over, found in possession of drugs, and was in custody. They somehow tricked my friend into revealing their actual grandson’s name. The spiel continued with the following:

He’s been crying so won’t sound like himself if you speak to him.

We’d prefer not to charge him; you can help.

We’ve got a Judge standing by – if you could provide the bail - \$XXXX.xx in cash, we’ll let him go.

I know it’s late, so we can have an officer come to pick it up.

They agreed to all the terms and gave the caller their address.

They obtained the cash.

Now that you are shaking your head, I will tell you that before the fraudster arrived, the light began to dawn! Fortunately, their home is an apartment building (not local but equally upscale to the

Kingsway), with a sharp concierge who called my friends to say he didn’t like the look of the person asking for them. Access was denied, the guy took off and that was that.

The grandson was of course just fine – doesn’t even have a car. The parents were called and the police notified. I refer you back to my comment above – it COULD happen to anyone! Why this scam works as often as it does (in Ontario over \$5M paid out in 2022) is that these are professionals who know how to override reason by creating emotional panic.

There are many online resources about ways to protect yourself and the seniors in your lives from this and other types of financial fraud. (2022 Ontario online and telephone scams overall total - \$200M.) There is a CBC series called The Cost of Fraud and the series CBC Investigates has also dealt with the subject in detail. An OPP source offers the following tip:

“Take 5, tell 2: If you get a pitch from someone, take 5 minutes to think about it and talk to 2 other people about it before doing anything.”

Stay safe everyone. Blessings.

Sharon Conway

A poster for Christmas services at All Saints. The background is dark blue with white snowflakes and silhouettes of people. The text is in white and red. At the bottom, it says "All are welcome" in a cursive font.

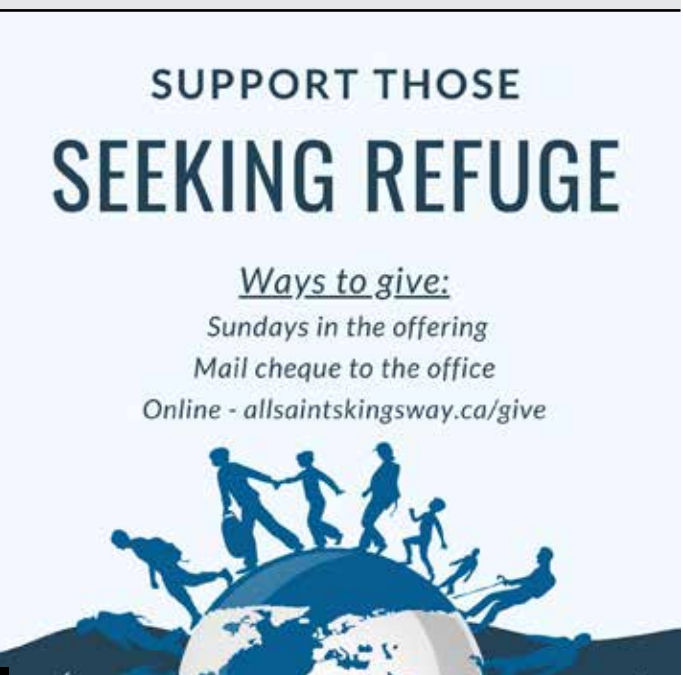
Christmas at All Saints

Christmas Eve at 4pm
This service will include our Christmas Pageant, Holy Communion, and candlelight singing. Our nursery will be staffed for those 3 and under.

Christmas Eve at 7 & 11 pm
These services will include Holy Communion and candlelight singing.

Christmas Day at 10am
This a service of Holy Communion

All are welcome

A poster titled "SUPPORT THOSE SEEKING REFUGE". It features a blue background with a white globe and silhouettes of people carrying bags, symbolizing refugees. The text is in white and blue.

**SUPPORT THOSE
SEEKING REFUGE**

Ways to give:
Sundays in the offering
Mail cheque to the office
Online - allsaintskingsway.ca/give

September Barbecue



September 10 was not only the second day of Taste of the Kingsway, but it also marked the beginning of the new season of worship at ASK. To mark the occasion, a barbecue lunch was held, this time on the Bloor St. lawn, with the Scouts of the 219th Toronto group responsible for the cooking, serving, and cleaning up. Generous parishioners provided salads and desserts to accompany the hamburgers and hot dogs that were served.



Blessing of the Backpacks

On September 10th the traditional blessing of the backpacks took place.



My ASK Friend and Neighbour on the fifth floor.

It is my good fortune to have met Bette Bradshaw here at the Old Mill Towers and at All Saints Kingsway

She has been a mentor in so many ways, especially in the art of gracious hospitality and in graceful living.

Having moved from East York to Etobicoke in retirement, it should come as no surprise that this lively lady would be open for most anything including playing bridge with my Lutheran friends.

Bette walks, is faithful in attendance on Sundays and appreciates history including her ancestors. She has a curiosity to know. She enjoys children, friends and a commitment to serve and to share

She is a joy and a blessing to know and, in her 10th decade, she is indeed a treasure. You can meet her while enjoying coffee and conversation any Sunday.

Joanne Colbourne



All Saints Kingsway Refugee Sponsorship Experience

The Saoud Family of 3: Mohamad, his wife Baraa Maklouf and son Zayn (age 3)

Country of Birth: Syria. Education: University of Damascus. Mohamad - degree in Architecture. Baraa – degree in Engineering.

Escaped to Iraq in 2016 when legal government in Syria overthrown and country at war. Applied to emigrate to Canada as refugees. Accepted by the Canadian government but wished to be sponsored privately. At some point they were relocated to Turkey to await travel to Canada.

All Saints Kingsway, having already successfully sponsored one family, the Hamads, began accumulating the necessary funds (\$35,000 approximately) to begin the process again.

The application of the Saoud family was presented to All Saints Kingsway by AURA (Anglican/United Church Refugee Association) in early to mid 2018 and readily accepted. ASK volunteers began in earnest to assemble furniture, housewares etc and to look for suitable accommodation. Through the never-ending generosity of the ASK community, all was soon in readiness – except for an apartment – in short supply in the affordable range!

Then out of the blue, with less than 2 weeks warning, the Sponsorship team and ASK Executive was informed that the Saoud family would be arriving at Pearson airport on the evening of December 23rd, 2018, two days before Christmas!

Being the Season of Miracles, a suitable apartment was located and available for occupancy on January 1, 2019! Hotel accommodation for the interim period was arranged.

At that time, I was an ASK Churchwarden and as such had certain legal and financial responsibilities for this little family. So I was part of a team that was at Pearson to meet that flight; watching the board that said Turkish Airlines Flight XXX from Istanbul had landed,

and then waiting for what seemed a very long time for them to emerge – of course we only had a very vague idea of their appearance! Processing time by Customs and Immigration is lengthy but refugees leave the airport with Landed Immigrant status, a health card and other Canadian ID, and possessors of Canada's precious Constitutional Rights and Freedoms. Worth the wait!

Finally we saw them accompanied by an Immigration officer who made certain she was releasing them into the correct hands. After warm greetings and some welcoming gifts, they were quickly taken to their hotel for much needed rest. The next morning (Christmas Eve), my fellow warden and I met with Mohamad and Baraa and went through the necessary paperwork related to the ASK sponsorship agreement with them. Fortunately Mohamad's English was already very good and Baraa's much better than she thought it was! Clearly quite "westernized", chatting with them was very easy. After enough business was concluded we just talked and got to know each other - there was clearly a connection of affection and trust between us right from the start.

I could not bear the thought of them alone at the hotel all Christmas Day and after debating with myself about what was proper, I blurted out, "Would you like to join me and my family for Christmas dinner?" Faces lit up and answered with a loud "Oh yes please!"

My young family sprang into action gathering a few small gifts for Zayn; we obtained a halal chicken and other goodies to go with our turkey. When we picked them up at the hotel, I discovered that later on Christmas Eve day, they had bravely made their own way by public transit from the hotel on Airport Road to Cloverdale Mall, arranged for cell phone service and had acquired chocolates and a Christmas card for us!

It was one of the most special Christmases of my whole life. God was present with us all that afternoon and evening – Mohamad and I both said a blessing – he in Arabic. We listened and learned so

much and ended the day with new members of our extended family, and yes, with hugs all round!

After moving into their apartment, with the help of many ASK parishioners and “connections”, they quickly started to settle in. Zayn started a preschool program, Baraa found an local ESL class and Mohamad found a full time job related to his profession and started courses that would eventually lead to his full licensing as an architect in Canada earlier this year, 2023.

Just a few months after their arrival, the Saouds came to a 10 AM service at All Saints Kingsway where they were welcomed with cake (of course!), and where Mohamad spoke to express gratitude for bringing them to Canada and giving them a new safe life. Months later they helped at a Spring Sale and Mohamad assisted overnight at Out of the Cold several times – eager to give back. To this day, they never stop saying “Thank You”.

During Covid, they bought their first vehicle and went camping; becoming real Canadians! They also moved to Ottawa, a career move for both. Zayn is now 8 and a smart, funny typically active boy. They

became Canadian citizens in 2022 – how I wish there had been an in-person ceremony! They have recently bought their own home – another exciting first.

Although I don’t see them face to face as we once did, we are in regular touch, and they share their adventures and milestones with me. They consider me their Canadian grandmother and I am thrilled to be so.

I hope this story demonstrates what a wonderful experience this has been for me as well as the new life we have given a young family. I pray that as a church community, ASK can find the means to give the same opportunity to another family – the pain of war and suffering hangs over even more of the world now than in 2018. Lord, in your Mercy.

Sharon Conway

NOTE: *If you are considering making a before year-end charitable donation, please consider donating to the All Saints' Kingsway Refugee Sponsorship.*

Taste of the Kingsway

For the first time in several years (COVID-19), ASK had a booth at the annual Taste of the Kingsway Festival. Passers-by were welcome to inquire about church services, our involvement in the community, and about the Out of the Cold program that the church hosts during the colder part of the year.





All Saints' Kingsway Staff

Incumbent:

The Reverend Patrick McManus

Associate Priest:

The Reverend Brian Suggs

Deacon Associate:

The Reverend Jennifer Cameron

Lay Pastoral Assistant:

Natania Friesen

Theology Student Intern:

The Reverend Rod Petkau

Music Director/Organist:

Gerald Loo

Associated Minister for Children & Youth:

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All are welcome to join the fun at our Once Upon A Christmas Family Fun Day on Sunday, December 17 from 2 to 4 pm. There will be a petting farm and hot chocolate for all to enjoy outside so dress warmly. Inside there will be cookie decorating, crafts, a Photo Booth, and crèche displays from around the world. We hope to see you there!

If you have any questions, please email Naomi at childrenandyouth@allsaintskingsway.ca

