

Dear friends,

Welcome to our annual meeting of the parish.

2013 marks my fifth year at St. Paul's Church. As Incumbent, it is gratifying to see the many positive changes and movements forward that we have experienced in the last five years.

2012 had its challenges, but to reassure those who think the church is in dire straits, I share Mark Twain's famous quote who after hearing rumours about himself said, "The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated!".

The church still has lots to do, but let me say that St. Paul's has more activities, ministries and spirituality than it has had in many years!

With the strong leadership of your wardens, the ministry of this parish did not stall in the face of difficult challenges, but continued to excel and grow!

There are not enough words of thanks for the hard work and determination of your wardens- Barb Truax, Dave Golding and Frank Wills, as well as the dedication, hard work and support of the Parish council.

A special thank-you also goes out to all the volunteers who put in countless hours in supporting our church ministries and activities.

Into that great team, we welcome this year Donna Banks as Deputy People's Warden who will not only bring insights and experience to the leadership team, but will be a great asset to the parish.

As mentioned, the parish moved forward in 2012. New worship services such as the Advent Taize services and the Blue Christmas Service were added, as well as a bus supported Vacation Bible School which attracted 105 children, Youth ministry went full-time, and the city provided a grant to build an accessibility ramp into the hall.

A once a month Youth Sunday service began that included the participation of youth doing the readings and prayers. There was some music involving the youth, but it is hoped that a new music director will be able to do some teaching and expand the youth music program.

Our Youth Ministry keeps growing with the addition of a community garden and sports programs and we look forward to the youth mission trip to Glace Bay, Nova Scotia in August. A more detailed review can be found in the youth ministry report.

Through the financial support of Diocesan and Area grants as well as designated givings, Dave Edney was increased to full-time providing more opportunity to reach out to the youth in our community. He has done an amazing job in a very difficult ministry!

Financially, we have come a long way since I began in 2008. When I came to St. Paul's I inherited a deficit that resulted from years of dependence on income from the post office. No stewardship teachings or initiatives had been done during the seven years of additional income from the post office. There was no preparation for financial difficulties nor from loss due to an aging congregation.

Three years ago, we lost the income of the post office along with the loss of KPP from the Rectory at the same time, hitting us with a double whammy. We suffered a loss of revenue of almost \$40,000.

Faced with this new reality, over the last two years the wardens and parish council have worked hard to address the shortfall by paring back expenses and looking at new ways to increase income. A stewardship committee was started using Gerald Armstrong's "Call to Action" as it's starting point.

However, the committee had just started to meet when the focus had to be put on the Diocesan "Our Faith Our Hope" campaign in 2011.

With the campaign successfully behind us, in 2012 the committee came together again to set out to improve the PAR program and to put together a Narrative Budget to tell the story of our ministry in a clearer and understandable format.

The Narrative budget talks about what we do, how much it costs, and how many volunteer hours are involved in each ministry.

The narrative also explains how our time and talent make ministry happen and how your donations contribute to the ministries of our church.

The Narrative will be followed up by more information later this spring with suggestions on how you can help support our many ministries and programs and meet our goals and dreams.

The good news story is that from 2011 to 2012, the financial vacuum left by the post office dropped from \$35,000 to just over \$15,000! A decreasing of the deficit by a whopping 57% !

In 2013, we anticipate a better than balanced budget with a small surplus.

To ensure continued financial progress, a new financial committee will be formed to support the work of the wardens and parish council.

Members will be appointed by myself and the wardens to include representation from the wardens, as well as areas of stewardship, fundraising and investment.

In 2012, we moved one step closer to providing an Architectural drawing for a small building expansion into the courtyard that will provide main floor office space, a real front entrance off Russell St. W., and accessibility into the main part of the building.

With changes to the Provincial accessibility laws, the expansion will also include the long anticipated elevator to all levels of the building. More program space upstairs and new choir rooms are also planned.

The hope is to present the concept drawings in late spring for review, with a capital campaign to follow once revisions are approved at a special vestry.

Outside financial resources such as an additional C.H.E.S.T Fund grant from the City of Kawartha Lakes, a Trillium Grant from the Province and Diocesan grants will be explored.

As we move forward into the future, my goal for the parish has always been to ensure a well-rounded and comprehensive approach to ministry at St Paul's.

I have always believed a successful parish ministry should be inter-generational encompassing all ages.

As the city expands and the 407 Highway is extended, I believe more working families will be looking for affordable housing accessible to the Greater Toronto Area.

I experienced that phenomena during my 15 years in Barrie, but while I don't see the explosive growth seen in Barrie, I do see growth to our city and a gradual shift in the demographics of Lindsay and area.

Are we ready for growth? Do we have the facilities and programs? Are we ready to welcome new people?

I truly believe, that as the only Anglican Church in Lindsay, we have a religious and social obligation to the residents of the city. We need to become a multi-staffed program sized church. But we must continue to plan for the future.

We have established a Youth Ministry, but there are gaps in our overall parish ministry. With that in mind I propose the establishment of two more part-time positions.

The first is a part-time Senior's Ministry position to support the present Lay Pastoral Visitors program and the second is a part-time Children's Ministry position.

I envision the Senior's ministry position to include more home visits to shut - ins and nursing homes, more communion services, as well as the establishing of study groups in some of the many Senior's residences in town.

Included in the plan may be the establishment of more small groups to meet specific needs of seniors as well as to support the fledgling widow/ widowers group.

An expanded Children's ministry would bridge the gap between the nursery and our Youth Ministry.

A Children's ministry would include the set-up of a weekly children's club for elementary aged children and tie into the Sunday School classes. Oversight of the present King Albert Christmas and Easter programs would be included. Other groups would then be created and extend from those important ministries.

The new position would include oversight of an annual VBS and possible March Break program, as well as ministry to families and parents.

By providing these two important areas of need, St Paul's will be one of the only churches in the community providing active and in depth ministry and support from "nursery to nursing home".

As with the establishment of the youth ministry, I will investigate grant sources as seed money for both positions including new funds from the "Our Faith, Our Hope" campaign which become available this year. A provision for additional staffing for ministry was one of the goals of the Diocesan campaign.

In 2013 we will be looking at adding more programs to meet the needs of our parish family, including the addition of a new and exciting kitchen program to build upon the success of Cook's Fare. Please note that any ideas for new groups and ministries are always welcome!

In 2011, when we celebrated our 175th anniversary I pointed out that we currently enjoy the benefits of the hard work of past generations. A strong foundation was laid by hard working and dedicated individuals allowing us to worship and do ministry today.

The torch has been passed. Will we let the flame go out?

The future holds many challenges for all churches, but our future is made today . What we accomplish in the next few years will determine the future of our parish.

Change is never easy. It wasn't for our ancestors and parents and isn't easy today. But the seeds we plant today will bear fruit for generations to come.

Through hard work and the establishment of new ministries and outreach through the dedication and hard work of our volunteers and leaders, we ensure our church will exist for our children and grandchildren.

To accomplish our goals we need to be well resourced, providing a place for learning and spiritual growth not just for our members but for the community at large.

To better equip myself for the work ahead, the Bishop has granted me a Sabbath leave beginning May 1st. My time off will include educational opportunities within the area of Congregational Growth and Development. I will return to the parish September 1st.

As we look to this coming year, remember that we are called by God to be the guiding light which draws people to the Hope of Christ. That is our mission!

With that in mind, I plan to focus on our Mission and Core Values in upcoming sermon series at different times through the year.

By the grace of God, we have been doing the work of Christ for 176 years in our community. By the grace of God we will continue to fulfil our mission and to honour God through our ministries.

Working together, we will move forward into the next five years as a place of learning and spirituality, participation and fellowship, and a place of Promise and Hope for all people.

May God continue to bless us and guide us through the work of the Holy Spirit as we bear witness to Christ and move into the future.

Blessings and Peace,

Rev. Warren

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Warren" followed by a small cross symbol.