

February 10, 2021

Dear St. Luke's Family,

*"Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love..." (Joel 2:13).*

This verse from the prophet Joel is read as a part of the Old Testament scripture for Ash Wednesday which begins the season of Lent – Ash Wednesday is February 17 this year. Though we will be sorry not to hold a Pancake Supper at St. Luke's on Shrove Tuesday, we will be having Ash Wednesday services and will be observing Lent (see below for details). I pray this is a time of renewal for us all as we return to our gracious Lord for mercy and grace, and as we seek to be closer to Him and more like Him.

As you may have heard, Premier Ford announced on February 9 the gradual reopening of Ontario from the lockdown. We in Renfrew County are one of the first counties to open – this week we return to the 'green status' we held up until Christmas. After checking the Ontario and Renfrew County health guidelines and consulting with other clergy, Parish Council, and other worship leaders, and recognizing that some of us will be able to join us in person and others will need to stay home, I am proposing the following for St. Luke's during Lent (remembering that this schedule could change if we receive new directives from the government or our bishop – also noting that we will continue to be vigilant in maintaining proper health protocols e.g. wearing masks, keeping 6 feet distance, sanitizing, those with symptoms staying home, etc.):

### **1/ WORSHIP SERVICES**

**a) Online services** continue each Sunday.

**b) Indoor Sunday services** resume at **8, 9:30 family service, & 11am**. Note that maximum capacity is 30% so we will maintain attendance lists for each service – if you have attended one of these services in the past you do not have to re-register, but if you will be attending for the first time please call the church office to register. **You still have the option to stay in your car** in the parking lot and listen to the service on FM 88.1, **or to join the 11am service on zoom** (ask for a link). **Communion will be offered the second and fourth Sundays in February and March.**

**c) Ash Wednesday** indoor services will take place at **11am and 6:30pm** – there will also be an online service available that day. If you have palms for burning (though we were not able to distribute palms as normal last year) please bring them to the church by Tuesday morning February 16.

**d) Lenten mid-week services** will take place in-person and on zoom **Wednesdays at 11am** from February 24 until March 24.

I will plan to send out another letter closer to Easter with information on Holy Week and Easter services.

**2/ CHURCH OFFICE** hours return to normal – we ask everyone to maintain health protocols if you come by.

**3/ CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY** In addition to the brief **9:30 Family Service** we will resume (rezoom? LOL!) Zoom Kids' Church on Sundays at **10:15am**. Check out our **brief fun family devotions** which can be found on St. Luke's website.

#### **4/ DISCIPLESHIP**

- a) **Tim's Trending Topics (or Tim's Bit)** – encouraging biblical reflections on current topics – continue on line each week – check our website or YouTube.
- b) **Bible Studies** are happening at different times in different formats e.g. a zoom bible study on anxiety will continue until March 3, a new **Saturday 11am zoom & in-person bible study called Proverbs Healer will begin March 6**, and an in-person study on the book of **Hebrews begins Wednesday, February 24 at 2pm**, and more! Contact the church to register or for more information.
- c) After Easter we are looking towards an **online Alpha** course – watch for details.

**5/ PASTORAL CARE & PRAYER** While keeping all health guidelines, we need to pray for and support one another in these times!

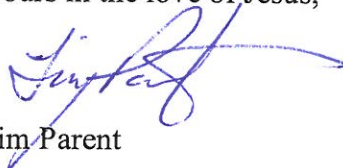
- a) Call the church if you have a **prayer request** for the prayer chain or prayer list.
- b) Call the church if you have a **pastoral need** of any kind.
- c) **Clergy are still allowed to do hospital visits** so please let me know if you or anyone you know is in hospital and needs a visit.
- d) **Saturday morning prayer** group meets at the church at 9:30am for an hour of prayer – call to register.

**6/ ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING** will take place **Lord willing Sunday, February 28 at 3pm**. You either have already received the Vestry Report by email or you may find it included if you are getting this newsletter by mail. If you missed getting a copy for any reason you can pick one up at the church office (one per household please). If you have a question, please email it to the church or drop a copy off in the question box in the church hall by Tuesday, February 23. **Remember you have to be registered as a voting member to vote** – contact the church office if you are not sure if you are voting member and want more information.

If you can attend vestry by zoom you are encouraged to do so – we will send out the link a few days before the meeting. If zoom is difficult or impossible for you, we will likely be able to have a limited number of people in the building – call ahead to register – or you may participate in your car in the parking lot (you don't need to call ahead if you are staying in your vehicle). We intend this vestry to be very simple and short to only deal with essential business. We will be able to count votes regardless of how you attend.

**Thank you to everyone who prays for and supports St. Luke's by your help, offerings and in so many ways, especially during the recent lockdown!** May we all have a blessed Lent – He who loves us is faithful!

Yours in the love of Jesus,



Tim Parent