



Saturday, June 20, 2020

To all members and friends of the congregation of St. George's Place du Canada,

I very thankful that summer is here today, and I hope and pray that everyone who reads this letter will be able to do something or travel somewhere so that they can get away and find some rest and refreshment. Of course I am thankful that we are so well connected by our zoom meetings and by instant communication in all its forms through the internet, but there comes a time when we have to lay aside the tech communication, and get outside to re-acquaint ourselves with the woods, the open spaces, and the fresh air. As for myself, I will spend some time camping in Quebec this year in early August, and I look forward to it. I hope you are able to get away as well, this year has been especially draining, and we all need a rest.

On Thursday morning the diocese released their plan for the re-opening of the churches. This is in light of the Quebec plan to slowly re-open our province for business and recreation. Many of you will know that the province has said that beginning Monday, churches can reopen, provided that they respect a number of guidelines, mainly restricting the number of people who can meet, and the necessary distancing. They also advise against singing in groups. Our diocese has decided that this is too soon for us, and that the earliest they will permit us to gather is September 6th, and even then, it will depend on whether or not the infection rates continue to go down. Currently there is good news on that front, and rates, even in Montreal, are on the decline, so we can hope for the best, knowing that September 6 is still almost three months away.

Briefly, the plan outlines several phases, which roughly have us first returning, with precautions, then introducing the Eucharist, and finally going completely back to normal, with music, and all the elements we are used to. Because the first priority is definitely everyone's safety, it will feel slow, and our corporation and worship committee will think very carefully about the steps we will take to respond to the diocesan plan. Our church is large, and for this, we are blessed to be able to spread out, but a service without music will be difficult, and we may prefer to stay online to enjoy our hymns. As we discussed it together, we agreed that we will probably have an intermediate period where we do a small service in person, and a separate Zoom service later in the morning, at 10:30. Nothing is cast in stone yet, and nothing will change before September, so we have time to decide, and time to let you know. Therefore, the summer will see us continue our online services that most have grown to appreciate, and we will introduce an in-person service when we know we can keep everyone safe. If you are interested in reading the Diocese's plan, I believe that the document will be posted on the Diocese of Montreal website early next week. Just a heads up: it is 35 pages long!

**St. George's
Anglican Church
1101 Stanley St.
Montreal, QC
H3B 2S6**

**Tel: (514) 866-7113
office@st-georges.org
www.st-georges.org**

On June 10, our parish hosted its first Community Conversation about Racism, in our church and within our greater community. We spoke together for an hour and a half, and it was heartening to see how many people were courageous enough to speak about their own experiences and encouraging to see how well we listened to each other together. About 25 people were able to join into the conversation, and it never lagged, and we even seemed to make some progress. We had hoped to leave with an idea of some next steps, but perhaps that was too ambitious. In fact, when we signed off, there were still several people who had put their hand up to speak. For these reasons we have decided to continue the conversation, this time on Thursday June 25, again at 7:30. We hope for time to allow those who have not spoken to share with us, and then to gradually move onto a discussion of next steps. None of us have any pre-conceived notions as to direction necessarily, but I would love to gather ideas, and to go from there. I look forward to meeting again on Thursday this week. Here is the invitation, share it with others who you may know would like to come.

Topic: Community Conversation

Time: Jun 25, 2020 07:30 PM Montreal

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85314213948>

Meeting ID: 853 1421 3948

One tap mobile

+12042727920,,85314213948# Canada

+14388097799,,85314213948# Canada

Dial by your location

+1 204 272 7920 Canada

+1 438 809 7799 Canada

+1 587 328 1099 Canada

+1 647 374 4685 Canada

+1 647 558 0588 Canada

+1 778 907 2071 Canada

Meeting ID: 853 1421 3948

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85314213948>

Finally, we have completed the worship planning survey, and have looked carefully at the results. We received 50 surveys back, so we are very pleased by the response! In general, people are satisfied with the service, approved of the service length, and the number of hymns. When asked about other possibilities, perhaps to be held during the week, several people hoped to see interesting speakers, another bible study, or a book club. People mentioned our wonderful Ascension Day hymn, and the response to it has inspired our team, (mostly JS and Debbie) to begin to prepare a similar Jubilate, to be used over several services during the summer. I look forward to its “release” in late July. In addition, we were asked again about why we are unwilling to let everyone respond together during the service, especially during the opening responses and the prayers. As much as everyone would prefer that, the way Zoom is designed, that remains impossible, since each time someone speaks, the microphone of the last speaker cuts out, and if there are several people talking at once, Zoom has a virtual tantrum, and we are left with a stream of broken voices and nothing comprehensible. It is definitely a shame, but the solution that we have come up with, of muting everyone, and having one voice respond does allow everyone to still do the responses from home, and even sing. It is a compromise, for sure, but sing your heart out, and we will all sing with you!

Two last things before I sign off. First, as the summer is upon us, I have decided that this Tuesday will be our last afternoon “Virtual Coffee hour” (Fridays will be retained.). In addition, I have decided to go to a bi-weekly letter, especially as things will inevitably slow down during the next couple of months.

So take care, and stay well, and keep everyone in your prayers, as I keep you all in mine.

In Christ,

Karen+

Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock! Isaiah 26:4