

# PARISH NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2023

Greetings from the team at  
St. Peter's on-the-Rock!



## A message from your Senior Warden, Aaron Thompson:

On behalf of the Wardens, Executive, and Vestry, we hope everyone is having a wonderful start to 2023 and we look forward to welcoming you back to St. Peter's this summer!

Last year we saw a return to full operations after two difficult years of pandemic restrictions. The Vestry has been working hard to build on this momentum and hopes to see our attendance continue to increase to pre-pandemic levels in 2023. Let us look forward to the coming summer and to help us do so this newsletter will provide important updates on current initiatives. We also wish to recognize members of our community who are making important contributions to ensure St. Peter's continues to flourish and serve as an important place for prayer, quiet reflection, and connection for the Stony Lakers.

### Clergy for 2023

The first order of business to extend a very warm welcome to our incoming July Clergy, **Rev. Canon Kevin Bothwell**, and to welcome back **Rev. Dr. Mary Cate-Garden** for August. We are blessed to have such wonderful Clergy at St. Peter's. Both Kevin and Mary-Cate have kindly provided some words of welcome of their own (see sidebar inserts in the following pages).

### Recognizing our Volunteers

Let us also take a moment to recognize our many important volunteers without whom we would not be able to run our beautiful parish. Special thanks go to **Ward Strickland** for his dedicated and productive work over the past years, **Rachel Corbett** (Secretary) for her invaluable work keeping us organized, **Carol Corner** (Past Warden) and **Pat Bunting** (our skilled Treasurer). We would also like to acknowledge **Sue MacIntyre** (Vestry Member-at-Large) for the essential organizational knowledge she brings to our Executive meetings. We extend thanks to our wonderful Sextons, **Taylor Dalton** and **Avery Partridge**, who will continue in their roles supporting our operations in 2023. Their work is instrumental in taking care of the daily needs of the church, running our coffee hour following services, and assisting in various other program areas. Of equal importance is to extend thanks to **many other volunteers of the Vestry**; a simply amazing team (they are identified in the Contact Information sheet included in this package).

### Music and the Music Scholars Program

Our Music Scholars Program continues to thrive, thanks to the ongoing generous support of **Don (and the late Margaret) Walter and family**, and the work of **Bern Kelly** who administers the program on St. Peter's behalf. This program provides bursaries to promising young musicians and has become a fixture of our services. Congratulations go to the 2022 winner, **Emily Levere**, who provided a lively performance last summer that got some of our congregation up clapping and dancing. Please let any young musicians in your family or among your friends know about the program. On the topic of music, which is so central to our community, we are very pleased to have **Helen Batten** continuing in her role as organist this summer and we wish to thank her for her long-time service to the Church in this essential role.

## Property Management

The role of Property Manager is essential and involves a tremendous amount of work keeping our beautiful island and its buildings in tip-top shape for the enjoyment of our community. We are thankful for the continued volunteer work of **Duncan MacIntyre** and **Richard Wotherspoon**, who will be the team looking after the property this year. Last year saw the completion of the Restoration Project for the church and Clergy cottage (thank you to everyone for your very generous donations!). Our buildings, with their new siding, door and window trim, soffits and fascia, and hardwood door sills look spectacular and have preserved the property for many years to come. This year will see long overdue work to restore some of the docks. In the spring there will be resurfacing of the swim dock with a new swim ladder (there is an urgent need for these repairs) and immediate replacement of some boards on the small boat dock. In the fall, the small boat dock will be completely resurfaced.

Another important initiative that will take place in 2023 is the rejuvenation of the St. Peter's garden that borders the pathway from the small boat dock as you pass the Clergy cottage. As discussed at the last AVM, the garden will now be known as the Memorial Garden. Funded by some of the proceeds of memorial donations over recent years, this project will see a complete rejuvenation of the garden with planting of native species to ensure long-term health and vitality. We are thankful for **Rachel Corbett** who has agreed to take on oversight of this important project. Rachel will be working closely with **Helen Batten** (who is a landscape architect by day), **Tony Whittingham** and **June Cooper**. Stay tuned!

## Sunday School

We are very pleased to have **Jaclita Hubbs** continuing this year in her role as Sunday School Lead. The Executive, with input of some members of the Vestry, have reflected on our Sunday School delivery. To our knowledge, St. Peter's has never articulated the Sunday School's mission. Given the uniqueness of our two month, island-based, on-the-rock location, the following might be considered: *"To give children and youth spiritual roots in an environment that emphasizes the connection of God with nature so that they are better equipped to make sense out of life and respond to its circumstances."* With this mission in mind, we can emulate what some other parishes have done by preferentially having Sunday School outdoors when weather permits, and setting up a suitable space with logs and large stones for seating similar to what has been done behind the store at Juniper Island. In this space the children can learn lessons connecting God with nature and continue to do crafts and music in an outdoor setting.

## Attendance

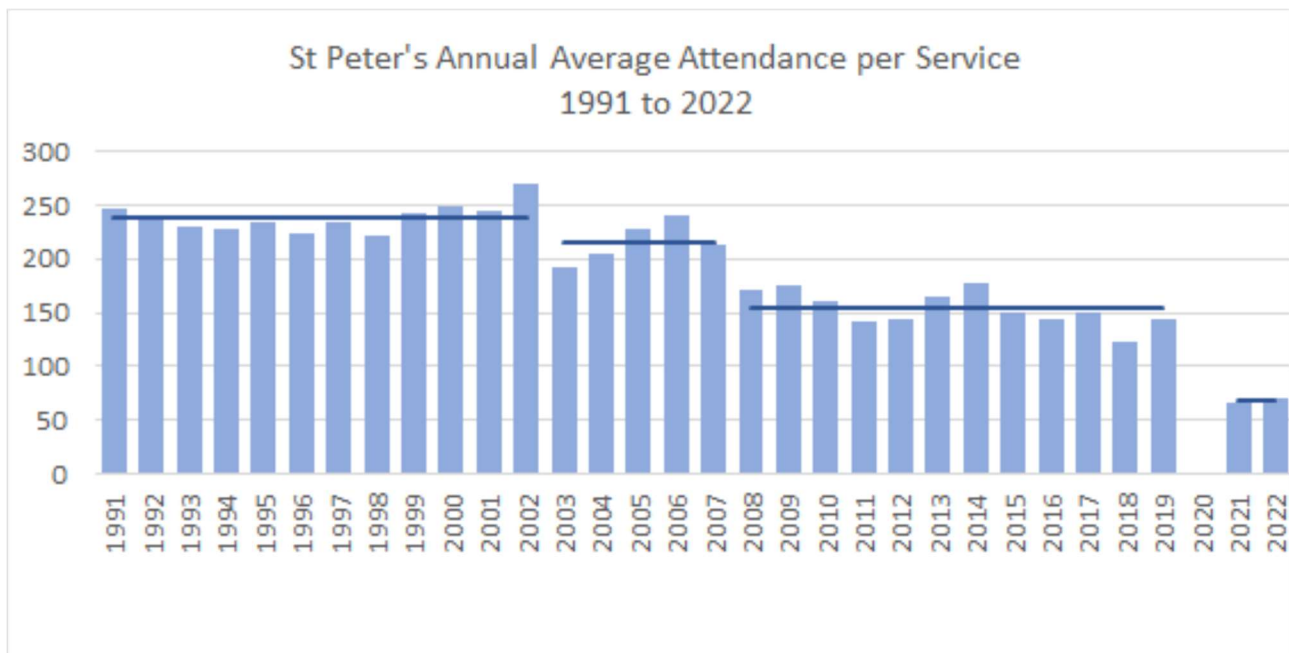
St. Peter's is facing the same challenges as other parishes, which are all seeing a steady decline in attendance first starting in the late 2000s. This trend was significantly accelerated by the pandemic (see the graph on the following page).

---

### **From Rev. Bothwell –**

*I think of summertime as sabbath time. True, there are many things to accomplish opening up a cottage property, but the work and the love put into opening and getting established for another season is somehow very satisfying. Sometimes people look back on the years gone by and long for a simpler, less complicated world. And yet, that is exactly what Stoney does for us. Yes, there is work to be done, but there is also sabbath to be experienced. There is laughter mixed with loon calls, morning coffee watching the sun come up, and the sound of sails being set and paddles dipping into the water. Welcome to another warm summer of life at the lake, and with the wonders of creation that God has given us to enjoy. Peace and all good things. Kevin+*

---



There are certainly multiple factors causing this steady decline, although I believe St. Peter's has a great advantage over other parishes because of its unique location and history. An organizational assessment of St. Peter's conducted in 2020 provides some insight. One of the central themes was that the "tradition" of St. Peter's needs to be better balanced with a younger and more diverse congregation. Some newcomers in our lake community have not felt welcome at our church, as they were not overtly religious. In that 2020 discussion was raised the topic of 'Anglicanism' versus 'spirituality' noting, again, that historically most of our participants are not Anglican and perhaps don't even see themselves as religious. As noted in a [Toronto Star Article in 2007](#), although we are an Anglican church, St. Peter's actually serves worshippers from many different denominations, and we know that for the vast majority of our participants, St. Peter's is the only church they attend all year.

Taking the above into consideration and thinking about the make-up of our participants in the past few years, I believe the major drop in attendance is explained by the loss of participants who are not overtly religious and not devoutly Anglican. At some point their interest in attending stopped, which may have been due to competing interests and activities on our lake, combined with them no longer feeling welcome. This is a slippery slope, because as attendance of the less religious or people of other denominations decreases, the proportion of those who are devoutly Anglican increases, thereby making those who are simply seeking a spiritual experience feel even less welcome as they become the minority.

If we are going to be successful in reversing the trend in attendance, we must make a concerted effort to welcome back all Stony Lakers. This means opening our doors to everyone seeking a quiet moment for reflection, reconnecting with their spirituality (whatever form that takes), and joining with us in song so we can all once again connect as a community. This is the spirit of St. Peter's that was articulated in a [2015 Peterborough News article](#) which actually referred to St. Peter's as a "non-denominational church", concluding the story with the following statement; *"Guests and tourists come from all over on the Trent Severn Waterway to check out this special Church where everyone is welcome"*.

### Important Dates

Now looking forward to some important dates to put in your calendars:

- Clean-up day followed by BBQ and short Vestry meeting is **Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>** (if rain, then Sunday June 11<sup>th</sup>): 10 AM – Noon clean-up, 12 noon to 1 pm BBQ, 1 – 2 pm Vestry Meeting. Please come and help and all friends are welcome!
- Every summer Sunday starting **July 2<sup>nd</sup>**, ten in total, we will be running our regular services - 8:00 AM is Holy Eucharist (a spoken service) and 10:30 AM is our Family Service (Morning Prayer), with music and Sunday School.
- Holy Communion is offered once per month at the 10:30 AM service. The dates this year are **July 9<sup>th</sup>** and **August 13<sup>th</sup>**.
- Baptism is offered once per month at the 10:30 AM service. The dates this year are **July 16<sup>th</sup>** and **August 20<sup>th</sup>**. If interested in a baptism in your family, please reach out to our Baptism Coordinator, Katharine Dalton (katharine\_dalton@hotmail.com)
- The Annual Vestry Meeting will take place after the 10:30 AM service on Sunday, **August 20<sup>th</sup>**.
- Say farewell to summer at our Thanksgiving Service, Sunday **October 8<sup>th</sup>**.

---

**From Rev. Garden –**

*This Lent I, along with folks at my parish, spent some time thinking about the idea of Sabbath. What is a Sabbath? How do we make time for this daily or weekly break? Perhaps most important of all, we asked ourselves, was it worth taking a break when it often means that you have to work that much harder to catch up afterwards? One thing that none of us disputed was the need for a time of quiet. In this Eastertide, as my thoughts are turning to summer and to spending August at St Peter's, I become increasingly convinced that summer at Ston(e)y might be a definition of a perfect sabbath: a 'just right' restorative mix of rest and work. Whilst there is much to be said for lazing in a chair with something cool in hand, there also is something restorative about the annual tasks and sometimes-small work of summer. The warm days, the slower pace, breathing in that good air and the sounds of life on the lake: there is nothing more restorative to our bodies and souls than spending time in God's good creation. I will look forward to sharing my summer Sabbath break with each of you. In the meantime, I will pray that each of you finds your way to your own Sabbath times—even if it's just a moment a day—where you can find rest and restoration.*  
 Mary-Cate +

---

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we say farewell to these members of our parish who passed away over the winter:

**Sheila Mackenzie  
 Christopher Bunting  
 Fred Ross  
 Marvin McDermott**

Also, our lake community said farewell to **Wayne Furlong, Phyllis Scott, Gerran Ferrey and Alan Ferrey**. Please keep the families and friends of these individuals in your prayers.

In closing, thank you again to all our wonderful volunteers, and to you, the people in our St. Peter's community who continue to support St. Peter's with your participation and generous donations. As we enter our 109<sup>th</sup> year, let us honour the past while embracing the future to ensure St. Peter's remains one of the centerpieces of the Stony Lake community.

Yours in Service,



Aaron Thompson  
 Senior Warden, St. Peter's on-the-Rock

hellstpeters@gmail.com  
 www.stpetersontherock.org

***St. Peter's on-the-Rock sits on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinabeg.  
 We strive to worship on this land with grace, respect and peace.***