

## **Discernment Committee Progress Report: October/November 2017**

**for**

### **ALL PARISHIONERS OF ST. JOHN'S, ST LUKE'S, AND ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.**

In January, 2017, the Together in Hope Committee issued a report which assessed all the Thunder Bay Anglican Parishes in terms of their condition, finances, and congregational status. The goal of the committee was to recommend sustainable organizational models to enable us to experience the love of Jesus and share the faith through caring and service with others. A key recommendation was that our three congregations (plus St. George's) merge and form a new parish.

In July, 2017, a Discernment Committee was established to determine how a new parish might emerge. The Committee is composed of wardens and lay representatives (5 total) from each of the three congregations plus clergy, the Archdeacon and Diocesan support staff. St. George's has decided to remain as a part-time parish and not get involved, at this time, with the Discernment Committee. We are thankful for their ongoing prayers.

We have been meeting every two or three weeks, discussing, planning and working towards the creation of a new parish. Indeed, there has been much wrestling with essential things such as what the values and visions should be, and how this parish might reflect the Kingdom of God. The phrase "death and resurrection" has been used more than once. We are making good progress, but it will take some additional time to achieve our ultimate goal of preparing a merger proposal. We appreciate Bishop Anne's request to develop the proposal as soon as possible.

Once a merger proposal is completed, it will be presented to each of the three congregations for a vote at their Special Vestry meetings for each to recommend the future of that congregation. No dates have been determined as yet. With the advice of the affected congregations, the Deanery officials and the Archdeacon, a resolution requesting the dissolution of the congregations and establishment of a new parish will be sent to the Diocesan Executive Committee for approval, in accordance with the Bishop, and Canon H-5.

We want to be clear that an approved merger will result in the closure of the three congregations *as they currently exist*, BUT in their place will arise a newly named parish. Either St. John's or St. Michael's buildings will be "home" for the new parish, but a new location/building may be considered in the future.

If a merger proceeds, special closing services/celebrations will be planned for each of the three congregations so that legally each congregation will no longer exist and enable a new parish to be born. The future use of surplus assets, buildings and memorials is governed by Diocesan canons and policies.

While there is additional work to be done, we see the future as a new beginning for the new parish with opportunities to be relevant in meeting the needs of today's world while holding fast to the essentials of our faith – love being central. There is great potential for the new parish as we purpose to be Christ centered, His disciples, dynamic, vital, multi-generational, multi-cultural, missional, and risk-taking among other things. This is all very exciting – but scary too!

We look forward to becoming one family of faith, hope and love, building caring relationships in community, and serving together as a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's Kingdom here in Thunder Bay. We ask for your continued prayers.

#### **Your Discernment Committee Parish Representatives:**

St. John's – Margaret Boone, Jim Green, Brenda O'Neill, David Reid, Dale Sparkes

St. Luke's – Kim Bienvenue, Carol Lee Kostyniuk, Sylvia Kostecki, Jim Sutton, Marjorie Tutkaluk

St. Michael's – Barbara Brayshaw-Fontaine, Stacey Livitski, Scott Martin, Katherine Stewart, Angela Woods