

## **St. Helen's, Orleans (November 8, 2021)**

### **1. What is the single most important thing you would like our diocese to know about your parish/congregation?**

St. Helen's is a relevant, vibrant, devoted, active, welcoming, friendly and growing faith community. We are a parish that loves one another and our community; a congregation that embraces inclusivity; St. Helen's is open and caring; with strong fellowship, love and support (especially during life's difficulties); there is an incredible representation of skills and talents at St. Helen's; focused on living God's word, and on health and wholeness, in body, mind and spirit.

### **2. What are your ministry priorities, and how are these priorities lived out in your decisions, activities and use of your resources?**

St. Helen's celebrates creative, contemporary Anglican worship and life-long learning. Lay ministry is encouraged in all areas of parish life, including an active pastoral care team and prayer chain, worship and music ministries, healing ministry, faith witness and discipleship programming and governance.

St. Helen's has a clear strategic plan that focuses thinking and action on five strategic "pillars": *worship, discipleship, stewardship, outreach, and community*. Parishioners are active leaders of the strategic pillars by which we organize the ministries of the church.

Parish Council evaluates church activities based upon the strategic goals defined by our strategic pillars, and allocates resources to support programs and goals set out at Vestry. We seek out organizations in our wider community and offer support financially, materially and with the participation of those who align with our mandate (within available resources).

### **3. In what way does your parish/congregation serve the wider community; how are you engaged with the local community beyond your walls - outreach, events, partnerships?**

St. Helen's engages in many forms of outreach, event hosting, and partnerships, demonstrating faith in action:

- Our Diocesan Community ministries, especially Cornerstone, The Well, Centre 105; Continuing long-time partnership with The Well's breakfast programme (Muffins Made with Love)
- Food bank support
- Support of individuals involved in community events and organizations ie Rotary, Habitat for Humanity, Shepherds of Good Hope, Special Olympics, PWRDF, Hope for the Future ministries as well as special appeals.
- Ending Homelessness, through Blue Door to End Homelessness, supporting Princeton Ave. Cornerstone, substantial donations to T4T and Centre 105.
- St. Helen's Bazaar is very popular with the wider community, as we welcome hundreds of people to the event; emphasis on 'being Christ' to them.
- Our site is used for elections, Blood Donor Clinics, and some Diocesan events

- Long time involvement with the Ottawa Anglican Cursillo movement; participants, team members, executive, spiritual directors, musicians, in Ottawa and at the national level (CACS).
- Events for the community include The Sanctuary Course on Mental Health in 2019; St. Helen's Virtual Art Fair in 2021(also planned for 2022)
- Our Quiet Garden offers the community at large a sacred outdoor space for peaceful contemplation (used extensively during Covid)
- Past partnerships include providing maintenance and other services for Christian Horizons; Services and visiting at senior's homes; Ecumenical Involvement, such as shared services and events with Resurrection Lutheran, Queenswood United, Orleans United, and a Christmas Concert in Orleans called Choirfest

**4. What are the challenges to accomplishing the work you've described, in terms of finances, building status and human resources?**

St. Helen's building is beautiful, with a new, extensive expansion of the facility. The congregation is working on developing human resources to clean and maintain its new facility, and develop cost-effective hall rental income, while balancing its own use of the space.

Some of St. Helen's aging parishioners can't be as active as they once were; many struggle to let go and to engage younger participants with different ideas; we need to allow and equip others to share the load and discover their own gifts and calling.

- Our immediate challenge is to move beyond the pandemic and a sense of the unknown, to post-pandemic realities, and reconnect as we re-evaluate ministries and programmes and rebuild a sense of parish identity, healthy community and engagement
- Finances: Our givers are generous, but the cost of 2 ECOPS, PFS and Mortgage payments is substantial and has reduced other allocations, for example to the outreach budget.

**5. Are there ministry opportunities you are aware of and what would you need to engage in them?**

- Continued development of Discipleship opportunities and leadership education for all age groups.
- Increase our online presence and explore ways to advertise our presence, outreach, events
- The expansion of Orleans (second fastest-growing city in Canada, a multi-cultural environment, lots of new housing development): What do we do to make ourselves known? How do we market ourselves? How do we evangelize? We need to look at ways to effectively engage these rapidly growing communities.