



The Fall Vine OCTOBER 2024

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A Thanksgiving message from Archdeacon Rhonda

For many years, my family and I have subscribed to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which we purchase a share of the harvest of a local farm in advance and then receive weekly installments of fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season. The spring boxes are lighter, filled with tender greens, asparagus, and rhubarb. Then the strawberries arrive, and cucumbers, radishes, beans, broccoli, the raspberries and blueberries, tomatoes, zucchini and corn and cauliflower and melons. Finally, the fall settles in, and the boxes get heavier and heavier – squash, carrots, potatoes, beets, and apples. Some years, there is an abundance of strawberries but a disappointing melon crop. Some years the tomatoes are in short supply, but the corn just keeps coming. Every year is a little different, as the farmers dance with the weather and the soil and the insects and the workload, but every year our fridge overflows and I am astounded by the bounty of God's good earth.

Thanksgiving offers us an occasion to stop and really notice all that God has given us – food to eat, skills to share, people to love, faith to rely on – and acknowledge our deep dependence on those gifts for the nourishing of our bodies and our souls. Then, in response to God's generosity, we are called to sing God's praise and place our gifts of back into God's service.

During this season of thanksgiving, I also want to offer thanks to all of you, who support the ministry of St. Helen's with your money, time, talent, and prayers, and encourage you to consider how you might increase that support in the future. This parish is a blessing to many, both within and beyond the church walls, and I am deeply excited by the work to which we have been called.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Blessing of the Animals Garden Party Sept. 28th



Our 3rd Annual Blessing of the Animals Garden Party was a resounding success! Although a firm count of participants is impossible to determine, our lawn was busy the whole afternoon and we got to meet lots of our neighbours. Children made animal masks and ears, played lawn games, and had their faces painted by the very talented Lynn Ethier of LynneArt. People of all ages delighted in the creatures brought by the Zoo Crew, including but not limited to rabbits, guinea pigs, a snake, a bearded dragon, a tortoise, hedgehogs and a very

affectionate chinchilla. Everyone also enjoyed the Merry Dairy Ice Cream Truck, appreciating the cold treats on a very sunny September afternoon, as well as the delicious homemade cookies provided by parishioners. Dogs of all sizes tried out the obstacle course organized by Queenwood Villa and Rhonda and Jonathan got to bless lots of dogs, a couple of cats, and a hedgehog.



Not only was the event successful on the practical level, it was also a success as a sign to our community that St. Helen's is a place of joy and generosity, where our faith leads us out into the world with no agenda other than love. We may never know the impact of our witness, but I am confident that God used us to touch the hearts of more than one person that day. Thank you to all the volunteers who joined in this ministry and to the whole parish for supporting it

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Norman Johnston Alternative Program

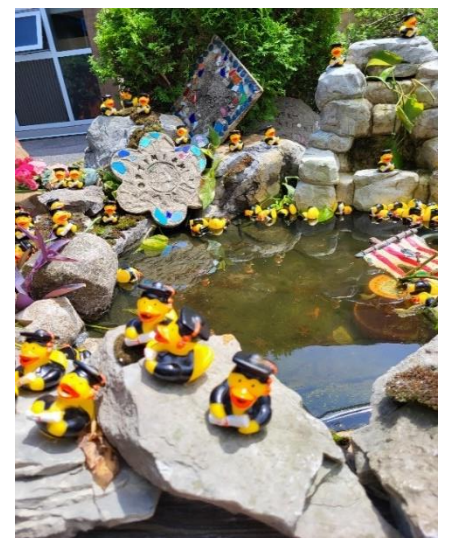
Norman Johnston is an alternative program of the Ottawa Carleton School Board, located on Cleroux Crescent in Blackburn Hamlet. The program is different from other secondary schools providing small class sizes, one course at a time learning, more on site social supports for students, flexible timelines and a relationship centered learning environment. St Mary the Virgin has supported the program in the past and St Helen's is continuing that support.



St Helen's was invited to the school's Commencement Ceremony on June 25th and Jean Lockett and Lisee Kiar were pleased to attend. Norman



Johnston had a record number of graduates this year. Many awards were presented, including seven Ontario Scholar Awards (over 80% average) and three Silver Medal Awards (over 90% average). It was inspiring to hear the stories of the students who had been unsuccessful in



previous schools but were able to thrive and even win awards in this Alternative Program. We plan to continue to support the program with donations to the school, and/or to support the students with supplies or gift cards.

Orleans Cumberland Community Resource Centre (OCCRC)

We have expanded our partnership with the Community Resource Centre this year. We continue to collect food for their food bank on a regular basis. Working with Carole Ouelette,

the Community Development Co-ordinator, we are providing a location for two new food sustainability projects.

We provide a pick-up location for the Ottawa Good Food Box program. The mission of the



Ottawa Good Food Box is to make fruits and vegetables more accessible and affordable for Ottawa community members. Produce ordered online can be picked up the following week at various locations. We provide a volunteer from St Helen's each Wednesday from 4:00pm to 7:00pm to ensure the church is open and help the OCCRC volunteers with pick up.

We provide a location for a new community garden, organized by OCCRC as part of a network of community gardens supported by Just Food. The model will be asking gardeners to donate half of the harvest to the Community Resource Centre food bank. Two garden beds have been installed and partially filled. OCCRC have applied for a grant for the 2025 budget with Just Food and is currently in the process of creating policies for the community garden.

We hope to have a chance to have a site visit this fall to the Community Resource Centre to see firsthand the various services they provide to the community.

St. Helen's Virtual Walk Across Canada 2024

For thirteen weeks, this summer, more than fifty people participated directly in the St Helen's Virtual Walk Across Canada. We were walking for body, mind and spirit, and your organisers hope that participants feel that at least one of those aspects of their own lives was enhanced, each week.

On Mondays, we were encouraged by a prayer prompt from Rhonda. Each "prayer postcard" was about a famous saint. Included in our meditations was Saint Helen and an explanation of

how she is said to have found the cross and why she was looking for it. If you do not remember that one, her son sent her!

On Fridays, our knowledge of our own home was enriched as a "virtual postcard" highlighted a different area of Ottawa and Canada. Over the thirteen weeks, we travelled from east to west and across the territories as well as discovering local gems that you might have been inspired to visit. In fact, you might have nourished your body visiting a couple of nice coffee spots in Ottawa, in the name of doing some more walking, of course.

Your St Helen's Virtual Walk Across Canada 2024 team was ably guided by Catherine Cromeey and included Helen Giroux, Emily Adams, Val Guest, Thomas Cormie and Peter Humphries, with special thanks to Ian Kelly for helping with the slide show of all the postcards. Speaking of a slide show of all the postcards, you can see them (and share them), here:

<https://tinyurl.com/sthvw24>

It was, as always, a delight to prepare this programme, to speak with participants and to make new contacts in the community as we chased down details and pictures for each virtual postcard.



And, with fall we turn to all that the coming months may hold. Be sure to pick up a copy of the events handout and keep an eye on your email newsletter.

The Vine is issued four times per year

Do you have anything you'd like to share in the next issue of The Vine?
Articles and photos can be submitted to officethelens.ca