



154 Somerset Street West  
Ottawa, ON, Canada, K2P 0H8  
(613) 232-4500 x 12  
beth@stjohnsottawa.ca

Epiphany 2017

Dear Friends,

After the celebrations of once again welcoming the Christ child into our lives, long winter days seem to endlessly stretch out before us. And yet in the midst of this time, the days grow brighter and the light gradually increases to gladden our hearts and stir our minds to new resolutions and opportunities. This is much the same in our church life, as we change liturgical seasons and move towards our annual Vestry meeting.

Much work has been done in our parish this past year as we have learned about change, explored new ways of connecting, discovered ourselves and dreamed using appreciative inquiry, developed new partnerships in the community, and heard voices from the edge, nearby and within. Thank you for your hard work, steadfast commitment, passionate enthusiasm, generous giving, open and prayerful hearts!

Vestry is often a time to focus on the past, reviewing and reflecting on what we have done, as well as a time to determine what we shall spend our resources on in the upcoming year. This year we shall do a bit of the former and some of the latter. However the bulk of our time will be spent turning our attention to Making Connections: Towards an Abundant Future.

The future, like the Christ child, holds both promise and risk. The Reverend Canon Herbert O'Driscoll, former rector of this parish and probably the most well-known author and preacher in the Canadian Anglican Church, says this: "We all have a choice of attitude about the evolving future. We can either be mourners or midwives. The former weep for what has been, the latter enable the future to be born." In truth, each one of us holds some of both attitudes, though the balance will be different for each of us. As we move into our future as a faith community, it is important to hold one another gently and with care as we both mourn what has been and give birth to what is to come.

As I mentioned in last Sunday's sermon, January 8<sup>th</sup> (<http://tinyurl.com/8January2017Sermon>), we have the opportunity to bring to life a new partnership. Our neighbours, The Ministry of Coffee, have come to us with a proposal to move their business to our property, more specifically to our hall. Corporation, the Making Connections Working Group and Parish Council are working hard to ensure this falls within our values and mandate, in conjunction with the Diocesan Property and Finance Team explore all the risks and benefits, implications and legalities, reimagine how our space may be used more creatively and wisely, and meet all the checks and balances which are part of our church system. Please come and explore, ask questions, and be involved over the next few weeks:

- **Sundays, January 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at Noon – Making Connections: Towards an Abundant Future**  
An interactive experience where folks will be on hand to answer questions and explore with you how we have come to this place, what our new vision statement and guiding principles contain, the details and potential related to the Ministry of Coffee proposal, and possible creative ways of using our space.
- **Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 8.45 to 10.15 am – Potluck Brunch and Newcomers Welcome**  
Connect with friends, meet new people, discuss our future and enjoy the exciting vibe of an all-parish time of food and fellowship.
- **Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup> at Noon – Pre-Vestry Budget Info Meeting**  
Hear how we have done financially and look ahead for 2017 (please note that The Ministry of Coffee proposal does NOT affect the 2017 budget).
- **Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at Noon – Annual Vestry**  
Be a part of the decision making for our parish.

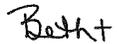
I believe that we at St John's have the commitment to minister in this place well into the future and to work well with partners from all sectors of the community. I believe that we have the creativity to

accommodate all our space needs as well as those of The Ministry of Coffee, The Well, The Community Thrift Shop, and all the groups we host. I believe that we have the compassion to allocate a substantial part of our diversified income to outreach ministry so that we can enhance the ways in which we help those who need it most. And I believe that we have the courage to hear the voice of the Spirit in an unexpected opportunity, to have the attitude of a midwife who helps the future to be born, and to choose abundant life in Jesus Christ.

May we honour both the risk and the promise and may we be blessed by the words of Bishop Dennis Drainville: "This great challenge to us is not just to change. The great challenge is abundant life. The Lord came that we might have abundant life and if we are going to have abundant life, it means that we must embrace it. And that means embracing things we don't know, we don't understand, we've never done before, but we do it in the sure knowledge that the Spirit is with us, and we are guided by our Lord Jesus Christ."

I look forward to continuing this journey of faith with you!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

The Reverend Beth Bretzlaff  
Incumbent