

Rector's Annual Report for 2023  
Fr. David Curry  
February 18th, 2024

“We go up to Jerusalem”

The word parish (*παροικία* from *παροικέω*) refers to where we dwell as sojourners in the land, and thus to the idea of the place of our abiding with God. The parish is where the concrete and corporate realities of our lives in faith are lived, *via ad patriam*. “For here we have no continuing city,” as Hebrews reminds us (Heb. 13.14), “for our citizenship is in heaven” (Phil. 3. 20). The parish is the place of our abiding in that hope and desire for the “Jerusalem which is above” (Gal. 4.26). The distinction between the eternal and the temporal is essential against the tendency to collapse the one into the other.

We go up to Jerusalem. It is one of the great images of pilgrimage, of our journey in and through the wilderness to the paradise of God in his beauty and truth. It signals the true fulfillment of our longings and desires. We journey in the abiding love of God which shapes and moves our hearts and minds. It is embodied in our liturgy and in our prayers and praises, our service and sacrifice; they are the motions of God's love in us.

We have persevered and endured faithfully and in good cheer through all of the ups and downs of the past year amidst the confusions and chaos of our time spiritually and experientially. It has been a year of faithfulness and commitment and for that I am most grateful to all of you. We are continuing to learn and find strength and comfort from God's Word and Sacraments that help us to bear witness and to face the uncertainties of a divided and divisive world. It seems to me that as a parish we are gaining a deeper sense of penitential adoration and contemplation as what defines and guides our lives.

There have been of course the constant challenges of maintaining roofs and other building and operational concerns. This includes the re-shingling of the north side of the Hall roof and so too emergency repairs on the clerestory roof on the King Street side of the Church. Most significantly, the solar panels installed in the Fall of 2022 became operational in late January of 2023 and we have been pleased with how this has contributed to the reduction of our electrical costs. In the fall-out from the Covid years, it has been challenging to find workman and carpenters who are able to undertake some of the work which needs to be done. I want to thank Alex Jurgens and David Appleby for their diligence and perseverance in finding ways to get things done. We have been fortunate, it seems, to have found an excellent carpenter as a result of the pre-Christmas wind and rain storm which wreaked such havoc everywhere. We are hoping to be able to get a number of projects done in a responsible fashion. Bear in mind, that as a parish, we have long recognised that the buildings are part of the mission and life of the parish for which we have stewardship obligation.

It has been a year of devastating natural events such as fire and flood, storm and tempest, some of which led to the tragic loss of life here in the West Hants area. As a Parish, we contributed \$ 1,000 to relief efforts from the wildfires in the Shelburne area. It has been a

year, too, in which we have been able to return to the forms of community outreach both by way of helping those in need and in social gatherings. We hosted under the auspices of Musique Royale an outstanding guitar trio concert. Through the initiative of Bronwen and Blythe Appleby, a Mother's Day Tea was undertaken. The Ham Supper in late November was one of the most successful and the busiest ever. All testament to the spirit of determination and dedication "as workers together with God" through the grace of God that has not been "received in vain." These efforts have provided important times of fellowship and fun in working together. Thanks to Jen and David Appleby and all of you we were able to contribute a considerable number of shoeboxes for the Missions to Seafarers.

We have continued with Lenten and Advent teaching programmes and with the Christ Church Book Club that witness to the intellectual and spiritual life of the Parish. I am grateful for the Parish's continued support of my work at King's-Edgehill School as Teacher and Chaplain, especially in these trying and difficult times. I have endeavoured to meet certain requests for articles and scholarly contributions to publications, completing a paper in late January for publication sometime in 2024, a contribution to the 50th anniversary of the Foundation Year Programme at the University of King's College, and participated in the Atlantic Theological Conference. We hosted the meeting of the St. John Vianney Chapter of the Society of the Holy Cross in August and I went off to St. Anthony of Padua in Hackensack, New Jersey where I gave a paper *Unum Necessarium* to the Provincial Society. I have continued to produce a weekly chapel reflection at King's-Edgehill which is posted on the parish's website.

Post-covid, so to speak, we have been able to carry on faithfully and the Christ Church Connections email continues to be rolled out after the 8am service of Holy Communion each Sunday. I am most grateful for the work of Marilyn Curry and Judy Gilbreath in readying the altar for the Sunday services and for the work of Nikki Cameron in cleaning the Hall and the Church and for the many services rendered by Scotty and Kathy Cameron in relation to services.

We have been wonderfully blessed by our organist, Owen Stephens, who provides splendid organ and piano reflections in the preludes and postludes for each Sunday which complement nicely the theological and liturgical themes of the ecclesiastical year. I thank him and the choir for their extraordinary commitment to the services musically which adds so much to the holy ambience of prayer and devotion. My thanks to Bronwen and Blythe for their devotion to the choir and to ringing the bell as well as for leading the Intercessory Prayers. My thanks go to Fr. Todd Meaker for his assistance at the altar at 8am and for reading the Gospel. Thanks go as well to Scott Gilbreath and Darren Atherton for reading the Epistle at the 10:30am service.

The Parish Council has been outstanding and faithful in their due diligence with respect to the temporalities of the parish and I am grateful for their support and advice. We have endeavoured to be fiscally responsible in all regards. We have endeavoured to contribute to the Diocese without compromise to the existence and well-being of the parish.

It goes without saying that the parish and its operations would not be possible without the Christ Church Foundation. It exists at arms length from the parish but for its well-being. It appears that the installation of the solar panels through funds borrowed from the Foundation have resulted in greater savings on our electrical bills and will mean being able to pay off this loan in fewer years than initially expected. Once again, we are committed to fiscal prudence with respect to the funds of the Foundation. I want to thank the Foundation and in particular, Alex Jurgens and Kathy Cameron along with Trevor Hughes whose advice has been so helpful. We currently face a dilemma about insurance and are still in the process of seeing whether and what kind of insurance we may be able to secure in the face of the turbulence in the insurance world which resulted in our becoming uninsured.

It is important that parishioners know this and that you know that we are still looking into what options there may be. We may have to obtain directors and officers' insurance via the Foundation. Once again, we are acting with due diligence and with a sense of financial probity to reduce risk as much as possible.

All these things belong to the primary mission of the parish in our commitment to the essential principles of the Christian faith and to their expression in the worshipping life of the parish. It has been wonderful to welcome newcomers to the parish and to sense the spirit of prayerfulness and faithfulness in the services. It is all about the pilgrimage of faith. "We go up to Jerusalem," not just in Lent but in the whole course of our lives in faith. It is all about our life together to God and with God in penitential adoration and in constant contemplation of the Passion of Christ, the divine love which perfects and embraces our loves and our lives.

In Christ,

Fr. David Curry