

In 1674 my direct ancestor, Vincent Boissonneault St-Onge, settled this piece of land outside Quebec City.

## Work Up North

We are now into summer, and preparations are well underway for our first full in-person service July 12. The number of daily new cases in Quebec is now counted in dozens rather than thousands, and the daily fatality rate is now in single digits. This Friday representatives of the four communities that use the worship space at 855 Jarry will meet to discuss a usage protocol document prepared by me and a small team over the last three weeks. Social distancing, masks, hand sanitizing and no singing will be some of the obvious changes to "life as normal," but a celebration of the Lord's Supper and the hearing of God's Word will be happening again in our sanctuary space. Services will also be live streamed for those not yet able to attend.

Some have suggested that these measures go too far and betray a lack of faith in God. I can understand this sentiment: after all, does not the Lord hold our lives in his hands and value us more than sparrows (Matthew 6:26-27)? This is indeed a moment to renew our faith. God does indeed do all things well, and He who did not hold back His only Son but sent Him for our redemption will continue to care for us as a dear father cares for his children.

Yet at the same time we, as those redeemed and loved by God in Christ, are also called upon to care for our neighbors (remember who your neighbor is: Luke 10:25-37). If there is anything we can do to help and support our neighbor in his or her physical needs, the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment calls upon us to do it (see also James 2:16, 1 John 3:16-17, Romans 15:1). The health measures we take during worship to stop the spread of SARS-COV-2 are not done out of fear, but out of love for those around us – especially those who do not yet know the forgiveness of Christ by faith.

(con't on the next page)...

## Work Down South

On June 20 we held our second virtual FORO for Jamaica, focusing on Lutheran Hour Ministries, the work at St. Andrew Lutheran Church, and our Ministry Centre. Many generous donors have stepped forward through the work of the folks at Mission Central to support Pastor Ite, for which I give much thanks. I'm hoping to have a virtual FORO on August 15 for Montreal. We are still on track to call a missionary for the Caymans in mid-July. Despite COVID-19, we continue to move forward with work in Puerto Rico, bringing Ashley Lehr on board and hopefully moving her to the island soon from the Dominican Republic.

## Mission Moment

It is often said in church planting circles that the most difficult step for a non-Christian or dechurched person to take is the step through a church building door. What awaits on the other side? Will I be welcomed? Will things be so strange that I'll want to turn around and leave?

Since mid-March our worship services have been online. That has made it easier for people to "test out the waters." The first step into the church has been a virtual one, much easier to take. We have had a number of those gone from Ascension for various reasons return and rediscover the joy of the Gospel. We have also had people invite friends and neighbors to attend to hear the Word of God, both to worship and Bible study.

Because of this, we have invested what we could in equipment to live stream our worship services from the sanctuary. This is no substitute for in-person encounters. But if it lets Jesus take the first step towards someone, then we give thanks for that to God.



## A Picture's Worth of Words

**Right Top:** On June 14 we installed Deaconess Intern "virtually" as our intern. She will be flying in to Montreal tomorrow, on Canada Day. Lord willing she will be granted a Port of Entry "work visa" and will enter two weeks of quarantine at the church parsonage.

**Below:** Virtual worship. A gift to share God's Word this way, but it will be good to worship in person again.

## Work Up North (con't)

As you can see from the picture on the right, our Deaconess Intern Emilie has been installed and is already hard at work on her first project: a virtual Vacation Bible School. In mid-July we will have kids from Montreal and some other smaller churches join together to hear how the heroes of the Bible relied on the Lord in difficult situations. Emilie will also be working on English classes, especially how to do them virtually in the fall.

Special thanks to Olivia who helped me set up a new mesh router wifi system at the church. She also helped me install our live streaming camera (a very basic camcorder) and a microphone to capture the congregation. Everything should be ready to start live streaming of services for those still at home due to medical conditions or concerns. We plan to use Zoom so our elderly members can continue calling in by phone, but we will also live stream to Facebook.

The contract on our new sign is... signed. First, we need to acquire a permit from the city. If that is approved, we will move ahead with installation. We hope it will be in place by the end of the summer.

As I mentioned on page 1, I'm hoping to have a virtual FORO for Montreal Saturday morning, August 15. If you'd like to participate, let me know by email.



## Prayer Concerns

For Deaconess Intern Emilie Stoller, moving to Montreal and anticipating a wedding in a month's time, that the Lord would watch over her travels and work,

For those who feel forgotten or neglected or oppressed, that the Lord would send those who would care for them and lift them up,

For missionaries working behind temporarily closed borders, that they might know the presence of Jesus.

## Support this Work

You can donate online at [lcms.org/givenow/stonge](https://lcms.org/givenow/stonge). Or you may send a cheque, payable to **The LCMS**, to the addresses below. Include **St-Onge – LAC** in the memo line.

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