

In The Way

March 2022 - Part 2

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A Hint of Spring

"Spring has sprung, the grass has ris'; I wonder where the flowers is?" I think of this nonsense verse every year around this time. It was part of one of the first computer programs I learned to write years ago when the memory of a machine was counted in kilobytes, not terabytes.

How life has changed since then! A major land war in Europe, societies fractured by the pressures of the last two years, even churches struggling to keep love alive. Yet Christ remains faithful, and his Word remains life-changing. Thanks to the diligent work of the congregation and mission team at Ascension, this month we celebrated two confirmations, a baptism, the dedication of a new pouring chalice as well as two new Lenten banners.

On March 24 we held an impromptu prayer vigil for Ukraine on the front lawn of the church building. This marked the one month anniversary since Putin's invasion. Members of the community and from Ascension joined us in asking our Lord to bring peace. They told us more people would have come if they'd had more advance notice – which we promised to give next time!

Deaconess Emilie Prozenko and Ruth Stone continue to lead English classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Attendance is growing as they make connections in the Parc-Extension community. Both are also enrolled in French classes now. Plans are in place for a personal finance and "introduction to Canadian and Quebec taxes" open house in April.

As for me, I'm back to leading Sunday worship and Bible classes. I've also been leading mid-week Lenten services by Zoom. Our theme has been "The Five Temptations of Christ." I'll be preparing for Holy Week and Easter services in April, restarting our Wednesday Bible study, and beginning a junior confirmation class later in the month.

You may notice the "Montreal map" at the bottom of our newsletter instead of the usual map of the Caribbean. As I'm back only 75% time, I've been given leave to focus 100% on Montreal for a little bit. That's exactly what I've been doing, to the great appreciation of a congregation that has had a challenging and yet fruitful two years.

Mission Moment

Our two confirmands this month come from the same area of the world but from very different backgrounds. One is a student from Thailand who came from a Presbyterian tradition. She had a lot of questions about the formalities of the liturgy: "Do I need to cross myself? Do I need to bow at the altar?" We spoke a lot about the essentials of the faith: God's saving grace shown in Christ's crucifixion and given to her through the promises of His Word.

Our other confirmand was only baptized last year. She comes from India and is looking to make a new life for herself and her daughter in Canada. All of Christianity is new to her, so her questions are refreshing and remind us of the importance of "the main things."

She has mentioned to me the importance of being heard, especially for new people to our country. We hear the Lord speak his Word in our gatherings. But the work of the people – our liturgy – is also to listen to one another (Gal 6:2).

I'm challenged by the need to provide opportunities for intentional listening in our congregational life. As we exit from most of our pandemic restrictions, we'll be introducing new ways to do this.



A Picture's Worth of Words



Top left: Our new Lenten banners, thanks to Ann Smith of Franklin, OH and in memorial of Deb's and Charles' fathers. **Bottom left:** Another successful medical clinic open house at Ascension. **To and Bottom Right:** Two confirmations at Ascension this month.

Prayer Concerns

For all members of the flock in Montreal, that as warmer weather comes and we leave the worst of the pandemic behind we might not give up meeting together,

For Deb, in thanksgiving for a mild case of shingles, and for her work with our Ladies Aid, council and in playing for our services,

For full recovery from stroke for the member for whom we prayed last month, thanks be to God!

Support this Work

You can donate online at 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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