

Incumbent's report St. James church Bedford 2014

It seems just like yesterday when we moved into this parish on August 2nd 2010. Now we are into our 5th year. This parish has grown into home for us and in many way family. Like in any family, we had to say goodbye to people dear to our hearts and they are missed. Still we have new people within this parish as welcomed additions. We had been in discussions with our neighbouring parish about how we could work more closely together. Janet Marshall and The Ven. Bill Gray have guided us in this dialog. I think that no matter what the outcome, we will be faced with change, but also opportunity. I ask you to continue in prayer about how God calls us to be church in our communities.

Our Parish of Bedford, Philipsburg and Farnham has been active in 2014. We have had a total of 89 Holy Communions on Sunday, 36 Morning prayers, 2 Baptisms, 10 Funerals, 1 Wedding, 5 other forms of worship, 10 week day services and a blessing and planting of bulbs. In total, 2280 attended Sunday worship, with 11764 receiving communion. At St. James Church in Bedford 2014 we had 40 Sunday Communion services, 7 Morning Prayers, 2 Baptisms, 1 weddings service, 3 funerals, hosted the World Day of Prayer, Way of the Cross and our annual service of Carols and Lessons. Total Sunday attendance for 2014 was 1359 with an average Sunday attendance of 29.9.

Without the hard work of many individuals, St. James would not be able to share the Gospel and worship in Bedford. I would like to express my appreciation for those who have invested their time, talents and money for the benefit of this church. I would like to thank: Eric Dryden for his work as Incumbent's warden, plus his on going work with the Anglican Church on the National, Diocesan and Deanery level, Barry Bockus as People's Warden along with his project to improve our buildings , Rick Bordo as deputy Incumbent's wardens; Hardy Craft for his work as treasurer and Karen Craft for being our envelop secretary; June Harris as both our lay- reader and lay pastoral visitor; Lynn Caldwell our ACW president along with the ladies of the ACW for their work; Francine Alder for her music ministry; Lynn Osborne for being the PWRDF Representative, co-ordinator of vacation bible school and VP of the ACW; and Dawn Bordo as our parish secretary; Lana Bordo as president of the Altar Guild; and Ralph Kutschale for his help at the Lambert residence. Finally I would like to recognize Elizabeth Boulet for her excellent work as our Sexton. If you like to book an event in the hall, please contract Elizabeth at 450 296 4632. Once again, these ministries are valued and appreciated.

I would like to express our appreciation for the ongoing work of our ACW. In 2014, I was able to fulfil a promise I made to Holly Bockus. The Lord Bishop of Montréal has awarded the ACW 2014 Bishop's Award for our Arch-deanery. Our Bishop will be at St. James to present this award on April 26th. I believed that this is the first time a group has been recognized with this award.

Our Vacation Bible School titled "*Weird Animals: Where Jesus' Love is one-of-a-Kind*" was held from August 11th to 15th. 29 children attended this event that was led by the volunteers. We held a VBS Christmas reunion on December 16th with 14 attending. Plans are in the works for another VBS in August 2015.

My involvement on the deanery level is with the deanery chapter and biweekly Clericus meetings. On the diocesan level, I chair the Stewardship of the Environment Committee; am involved with The Partnership Committee; EFM mentor training and a member of the Diocesan Council for our Deanery.

I continue to do visits at the BMP hospital, the hospital in St. Jean sur Richelieu, as well as a number of local residences. These include Knowlton House, Lambert Residence, Manoir Lac Brome, Cowansville Maison, CLSC-CHLSD La Pommeraire, Palliative Care home at St. Luc, Dutchman Residence and Manoir Philipsburg. If you know of someone who was either in hospital or lives in a residence that I should visit, please speak to me or leave a message with the parish office.

This parish has 6 volunteers, along with 3 members of St. Andrews and St. Mark's that visit Cowansville Institute. If you're curious about what worship is like in prison, I would encourage you to come see for yourself.

I remain the chaplain of the Royal Canadian Legion branch 82 in Philipsburg. I continue to work ecumenically with the Roman Catholic Church, and the local pastoral charge of the United Church of Canada.

During 2014 the wardens and treasurers from Bedford, Farnham, Philipsburg, Stanbridge East, Frelighsburgh, and Pigeon Hill have had a series of meetings first with the Diocesan Congregational Development Officer, Janet Marshall, and with the Ven. Bill Gray. At the January 18th meeting of two unanimous motions were adopted that will lead a discussion to explore options for sustainable ministry in our area. These will be discussed and hopefully accepted at the 7 vestry meetings of the involved churches.

Lynn and I continue to lead a successful multi-parish Bible study on Friday mornings at 9:30. Eleven- twelve people are attending these Bible

studies on a regular basis. This multi- parish Bible study is the classic Alpha course. All are welcome to join.

On the first Sunday of each month we still hold the Fellowship breakfast. We gather at 8:30 AM at Bedford Pizza. We normally have between 8 and 16 people around the table, Bedford, Philipsburg, Stanbridge East, Dunham, Frelighsburgh, and Pigeon Hill. I really enjoy this event.

Once again, I would like to expressed just how blessed my family and I are to be here in this parish and how much I appreciate all the members of this church who invest their time, talents and money. I look forward to what God has in store for St. James in 2015.

God Bless,

The Rev. Andy O'Donnell