

The People's Pulpit

Lent 2026



St Thomas sets its heart toward being a Christian Home which welcomes, encourages, and seeks to inspire people.

St. Thomas Anglican Church
1619 Stittsville Main Street
Tel. (613) 836-5741
StThomasStittsville.ca
StThomasStittsville@gmail.com
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR: Mary Anne Reinhard

Thank you once again to all who have contributed to this edition of the newsletter. I worry sometimes that there will only be a slim edition but then towards the deadline date I am happy to see the notices for emails increase.

Please consider submitting an article for the next edition. The theme for that one will be Spring oriented. Do you have any gardening hints, a spring or summer project that you will be working on, or an event coming up between May 10 to early Fall? Even though we will have recently celebrated Easter do you have memories of Easter's past or traditions that you would like to share?

Please note that this edition is being published before the annual Vestry Meeting so the list of contact persons contained here may have some changes to it after February 22nd. If you are looking for current contacts, please refer to the Church's website at <https://www.stthomasstittsville.ca/>

Today you will find a book review, announcements of upcoming occasions, meetings and updates on previous events. A little humour and the odd recipe are also included.



A blossom from a **Pōhutukawa** Tree (New Zealand Christmas tree)

Words from the Wardens

We look forward to the arrival of our new Incumbent, The Ven. Eric Morin, who will be coming to us on March 23rd. Eric was ordained in 2006 and has been the Incumbent in the Parish of West Quebec since 2019. His wife, Rev. Susan Lewis, is the Incumbent of St. Columba's Parish in Manor Park. Eric's official induction will be held on Sunday, April 26th at 4:00 pm followed by a reception. We continue to be so blessed by our interim priest, the Venerable Rob Davis, and are thankful for his guiding and teaching throughout these last 8 months.

Our organ was in dire need of repair and Bonnie MacDiarmid investigated options. A company was found in Peterborough who would be able to do a complete overhaul. A motion was passed at Parish Council in December that we accept the quotation from Phoenix Organ Builders to refit the organ and the speakers at a very substantial cost. It is acknowledged with great thanksgiving that the cost will be underwritten by a generous donation from a parishioner.

A big thank you to Bob Lomas for his ministry as Envelope Secretary for the past many years. We are pleased to announce that Brenda Miller has taken over this responsibility and will work with Bob during the transition.

On February 28th the election for the 11th Bishop of Ottawa will take place. Please keep the candidates and the Ottawa Diocese in your prayers during this important time. There are 3 candidates - The Ven. Brian Kauk, The Ven. Kathryn Otley, The Ven. Monique Stone

Parishioners are invited to attend a meeting to hear from the candidates and have an opportunity to ask questions. This meeting will be held on Sunday, February 15th at St. Paul's Church, 20 Young Road, Kanata from 7:00-9:30pm. No registration is required. This evening will also be broadcast on YouTube.

The two representatives from St. Thomas who will be voting at the Electoral Synod for the new Bishop are Pat McNally (pbumcnally@bell.net) and Mary Attwell (maryattwell@yahoo.ca). Please speak with them or email them your thoughts about the candidates.

All information regarding the election can be found on the Diocesan website: ottawa.anglican.ca



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Tuesday, February 17 th	Pancake Supper	4:30 pm - 6:00 pm
Wednesday, February 18 th	Ash Wednesday Services	10:00 am and 7:00 pm
Friday, February 20 th	Trivia Night	7:45 pm - 9:00 pm
Sunday, February 22 nd	St. Thomas' Vestry Meeting	11:00 am
Saturday, February 28 th	Electoral Synod for a new Bishop	
Sunday March 22 nd	Ven. Rob's last Sunday Service and luncheon	9:30 am
Sunday, March 29 th	Ven. Eric's first Sunday with us and Palm/Passion Sunday	9:30 am
Thursday, April 2 nd	Maundy Thursday	7:00 pm
Friday, April 3 rd	Good Friday	11:00 am
Sunday, April 5 th	Easter Sunday	9:30 am
Sunday, April 26 th	Ven. Eric's Induction Service	4:00 pm

We wish you and your families a peaceful and holy Lent and a Joyful Easter as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour.

Your brothers in Christ,

Pat McNally
Rector's Warden

Rick Anderson
People 's Warden

Good morning and welcome to Flight 2026.
We are prepared to take off into the New Year.

Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destruct devices: pity, anger, Selfishness, pride, and resentment should be turned Off at this time. All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your Positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith.

There will be NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight.
God, our Captain, has cleared us for takeoff.
Destination-GREATNESS!

Wishing you a New Year filled with new HOPE, new Joy and new BEGINNINGS!
Stay Blessed. And welcome 2026.

Submitted by Mary Passmore.

**This poem has circulated through Facebook and the internet since 2022. Can not find original author.*

Weekly Contemplative Prayer and Meditation Sessions During Lent

Experience Stillness and Communion with God

Contemplative Prayer and Meditation is an ancient Christian discipline designed to help us step away from the busyness of daily life, making space for a deeper communion with God. As Lent is a traditional season for such spiritual practices, we invite you to join our weekly Contemplative Prayer and Meditation sessions at the church.

- When: Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. throughout Lent beginning February 19th
- Where: In front of the Chancel step
- Format: Each session will begin with a short talk on meditative practices, followed by a guided meditation. Every week stands alone, so you are welcome to attend as your schedule allows.
- Who: All are welcome—whether you are curious about Christian meditation or already have an established practice.

Come discover ways to deepen your spiritual journey this Lent. No prior experience with meditation is required; simply bring an open heart and a willingness to explore quietness in community.



MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT FROM THE CHOIR

This year has seen our numbers decrease with the retirement of Tanya Drew. Tanya has been with the Choir for many years, and she has been our Librarian for most of those years. Beth Barden also retired a few years ago, so the Choir treated both of those ladies to lunch at Lafayette on Hazeldean Road. It was wonderful to say thank you to these two stalwart ladies who have supported the Choir for many, many years.

When one door closes, yet another one opens. Jaclyn Morrison and Grace (sorry I don't know her last name) – joined us and have added so much to our Soprano section. Then Carol came forward to join us for Advent, along with Sylvi and Liz. Darci Watson-Laird and Christine Ritchie joined us in the Soprano section – provided some lovely high notes and descants; then my friend, James MacIntosh, who sings with the Goulbourn Male Chorus, offered to sing the tenor line so the choir provided some new music for Advent. Thank you to everyone who came out to join us; you really made a difference.

We sang at a few funerals this year and some members of Cornerstone were quite happy to join us for those services.

New members are most welcome to join us. We rehearse every Thursday night from 7 to 8 pm. You do not have to be able to read music. The music is picked out months ahead and I can make MP3 files for anyone who needs one – those are practise tracks so that you can practise your part at home.

It is a very pleasant outing and of course we would love to have men join us. It adds so much to our anthems. We sing an anthem every Sunday, according to our numbers that present on the Sunday.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie MacDiarmid



God's Garden

This year began as a sad time for us at God's Garden. One family moved to the Philippines with their 4 children. Then we heard that their father was very ill and needed to return to Canada. He is still here receiving medical care. The family is now planning to return to Stittsville sometime in March.

The father of another one of our wonderful children was transferred to Tennessee. Also, one of our teachers retired and moved to Gatineau to be closer to her children there.

Michael Agen-Frimpong is now my main assistant. He is working his way through to the ministry and loves to work with children.

I welcome Karen Davie who has returned to help as well. (and Chico)

Our program has also changed. I felt that it was important that all our children feel welcome in the Sanctuary. Now we all meet in the church where the Venerable Rob talks to the children about our theme of the day. This Christmas he invited the children to light all the advent candles. Another change is musical. When Cornerstone is playing, Mary will invite the children to help with the last hymn/song with maracas and tambourines!!! These simple additions to our Children's ministry let the children know that they are children of God as well and welcome in the church!.

Downstairs we have a story, a song or two and a craft that teaches the same theme as is upstairs. Hopefully, over lunch, our parents and children will enjoy comparing notes!!

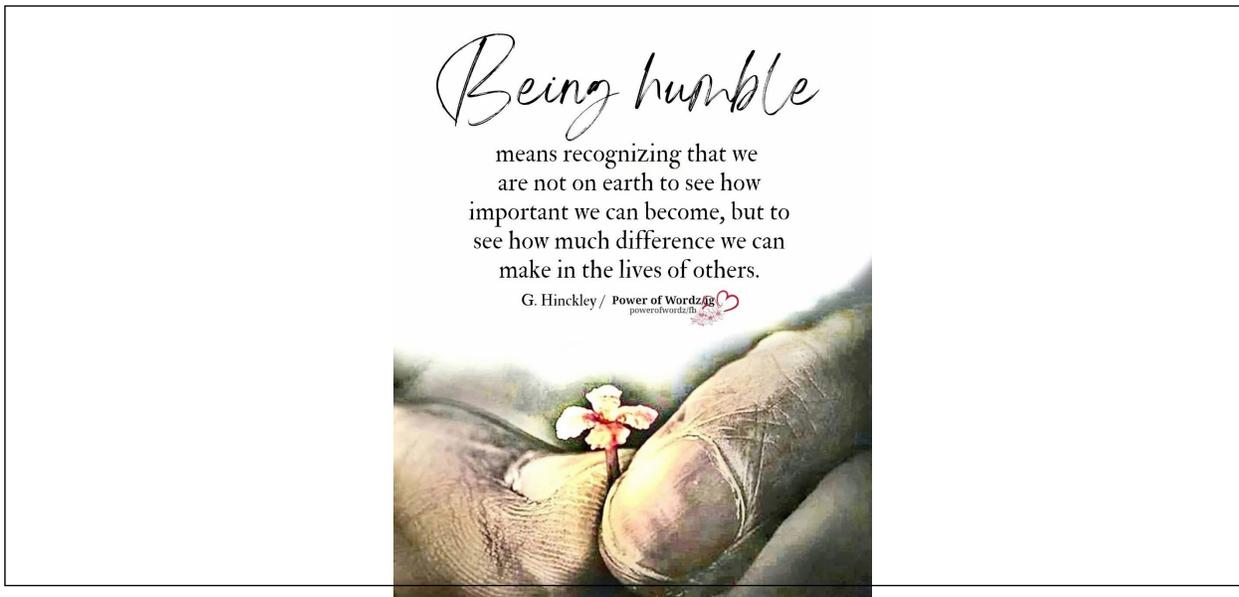
The Christmas pageant was chosen to allow as many children as possible to participate even if there was only one. Because of our "shortage" of youngsters we needed to adjust the number of children participating. The previous four weeks the children made a craft to depict each of the four main parts of the story. A stable made of sticks, angels made of coffee filters, shepherds and sheep, and crowns for the wise men. During the pageant they had to find a craft that matched each part of the story I was telling and attached it to our special tree. Many of the parishioners commented afterward that it was very well done. (Gifts of angel halos, shepherd candy canes, golden stars decorations and a cross necklace were given to each child to remember the reason for the season.) Oh Yes! We thank God for sending us new and visiting children to help make our pageant a success !!!)

I am looking forward to seeing what God will do for God's Garden in 2026.

Sincerely Merilee Clarke
God's Garden Co-Ordinator



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY: THE ACW “NEXT TO NEW CLOTHING SALE”



Two years ago, the Stittsville Food Bank identified a growing need for clothing support among its clients. In response, St. Thomas ACW launched the “Next to New Clothing Sale,” reaching out to the community for donations of clothing, footwear, and accessories. The response was overwhelming—residents of Stittsville and beyond generously contributed, expressing their appreciation for the opportunity to help such a meaningful cause.

As donations and support continued to grow, and with the Food Bank’s approval, the sale was opened to the general public. Food Bank clients still receive priority access through a special closed session, but we have also welcomed increasing numbers of young families and seniors—groups particularly affected by today’s economic challenges. The ongoing demand highlights just how vital this initiative remains for our community.

Our dedicated team of up to 20 volunteers, including both members and friends of the St. Thomas congregation, gathers weekly to sort donations, share a cup of tea, and enjoy each other’s company. Their commitment and teamwork are the heart of this project’s continued success. Special thanks go to the men who help set up, haul boxes, and take down after each sale—we truly couldn’t do it without you.

The January sale was a tremendous success, and we’re excited to announce that the next sale will take place on March 27 and 28. Thank you to everyone who continues to support this important community effort.

Pam Hazen



Pictures from the previous sale in January.

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH MINISTRIES IN OTTAWA

On January 20th I had the opportunity to attend the “City on our knees” prayer and worship service at Chapel Ridge Free Methodist Church on Flewellyn Road. Several churches in Stittsville and Kanata attended. As part of the event there were two presentations from Christian organisations who reach out to the city. They were “First Place Options” and “Safe Families”

First Place Options

First Place Options (FPO) reaches out to women who have had an unexpected pregnancy or who have recently had an abortion and are struggling with the outcome. They also lend support to the expectant father or the father who regrets the abortion. Support for the 3 possible outcomes of an unexpected pregnancy; abortion, adoption and parenting is provided. This is given in person or virtually and is free of charge.

For those struggling with the outcome of an abortion whether a man or a woman, FPO provides a safe and non-judgemental space for the complex thoughts and emotions that arise.

For more information, please go to their website <https://www.firstplaceoptions.ca>

Safe Families Ottawa

Safe Families Ottawa is an organisation with several chapters across Canada that seeks to reach out to families with limited access to Social Services. The program aims to support families in crisis by providing a network of volunteers who offer temporary care for children and help families get back on their feet. This initiative is fuelled by compassionate faith and focuses on keeping children safe and families intact. The Ottawa chapter has been growing, with partnerships with local churches being essential for its expansion.

With the changing economy and limited access to many social services, many families are experiencing financial crises, unemployment, and homelessness. Others are dealing with substance abuse, mental health issues, medical illness or incarceration. Many parents cannot provide their children with a safe and caring environment during such emergencies.

Historically, extended families or neighbours would step in to help parents by caring for their children temporarily. However, many urban families today are socially isolated, with no extended family nearby, especially for newcomers to Canada. In times of crisis, this leaves children vulnerable to neglect or abuse, as parents struggle to cope with overwhelming emotions and circumstances.

Safe Families provides a model in which parents can voluntarily place their child(ren) with a Host Family while retaining custody during the temporary placement. The families that *Safe Families* support come from a wide variety of backgrounds and are referred by a school, hospital, church, pregnancy centre, homeless shelter, child welfare agency, or neighbour. A parent may also contact Safe Families themselves when in a time of crisis. Safe Families Canada’s volunteers serve without compensation and are motivated by the compassion and grace they first received from Jesus Christ.

For more information, please go to their website: <https://safefamiliescanada.com/>

In conclusion this was a great opportunity to meet other Christians in our area and to be “One in Christ”. I encourage readers to come next year.

William Passmore

THANK YOU

The end of November was hard for the Dallaway Family. The shock of my son's death and the suddenness of it combined to make it a difficult time.

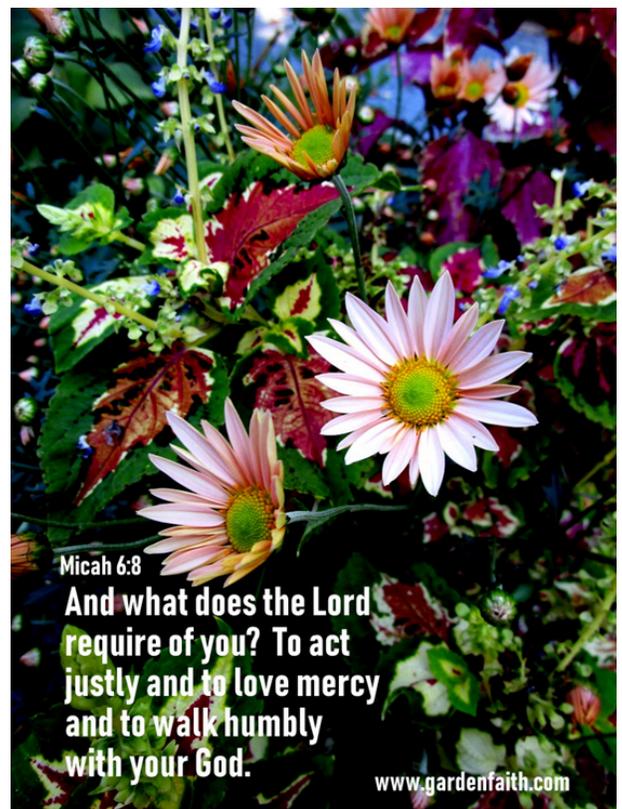
The support of the St' Thomas Family was amazing. You were all there with your love, hugs, words of comfort and just there everywhere I looked.

The funeral with Rev. Lee and all of you helped us to find the strength to go forward- albeit slowly. Those of you who helped Diane with the luncheon, were as always amazing. Those that were there from Ryan's workplace and the friends from Brantford were impressed with the whole morning.

God certainly sent His St. Thomas angels to help at that very difficult time

Thank you seems so inadequate for all that you did. It will long be remembered by us all.

The Dallaway Family



The image was inspired by the Venerable Rob's sermon on February 1st and submitted by Maureen Anderson.

THOUGHTS FOR THE COMING YEAR

“I wish it need not have happened in my time,” said Frodo. “So do I,” said Gandalf, “and so do all who live to see such times. But it is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time given to us.” JRR Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*

These are worrying times. In spite of biblical warnings not to be overly concerned about “wars and rumours of wars” (Mt 24:6), the reality is that they are concerning. After so many years of relative peace and calm, it seems that every day there is some new panic or outrage, amplified by social media. Further, those same channels tell us that we cannot trust our leaders – they are only in it for themselves and their cronies. I sympathize with the hobbits who, generally, wanted to be left alone to their quiet life in the Shire.

I am not going to pursue the question of who is right and who is wrong in this forum. (Happy to have a private discussion on that topic.) Rather, I want to talk about the impact that it is having, the feeling of helplessness and what we might be able to do about it.

There is no doubt that the language chosen for social media postings is designed to trigger emotions – whether for financial gain through “clicks” or to simply stir up a political base. This is nothing new. 100 years ago, when newspapers were much more blatantly partisan, similar effects were seen in the choice of headlines and the editorial leanings of articles. Even when we know that we are being played, we are still triggered: old wounds reopened and stereotypes reinforced. That emotional hurt is real and many of us are wearing the results –lack of sleep, anxiety or outrage.

Sadly, while we can attempt to turn off those feeds they are seductive. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) lures us back again, and again. Oh, for the good old days of 60 yrs. ago when life was simpler! Sadly, there is no going back to a (largely imagined) past when life was simple. We are where we are.

So, what do we do about it – especially when some part of us is screaming, “Just make it go away!” Absolutely, we should pay attention to what is happening on the world’s stage. There are important shifts underway and ignoring them will not make them go away. However, this can also lead to increased angst, thanks in part to that feeling that things are going to happen to us and there is nothing we can do about it.

Here is a second quote from Middle Earth, this time from Gandalf via the script for *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*: “Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check. But it is not what I have found. I have found that it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.”

As I was finishing this article, I was reminded that the Old Testament lesson for Feb 1 is Micah 6. As Diana Butler Bass notes in her weekly meditation, Micah was a prophet at a time when the power of elites in Jerusalem was growing – a time that perhaps has some resonance. Common folk increasingly felt that the nation was charging down a dangerous path and there was nothing they could do about it. “What can we do?” they cried. The answer is in Micah 6:8:

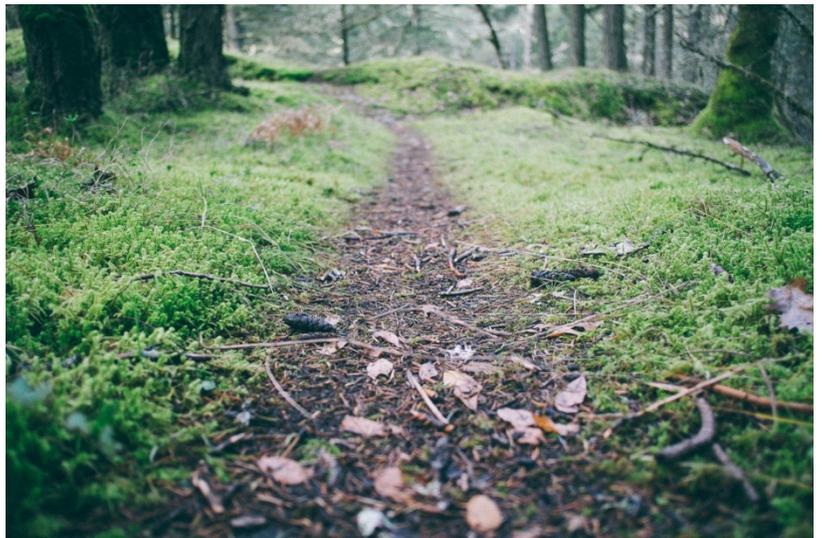
*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*

So, here are some thoughts:

1. Read wisely. Social media curation algorithms are designed to hook you and keep you coming back for more. To this end, they will feed you more of what you have “liked” or even paused long enough to read creating personalized echo chambers that simply reflect your own biases. In particular, beware of postings that begin with “The mainstream media doesn’t want you to hear about this...”
2. Speak up for the powerless and marginalized.
3. Be gentle. Recognize the fear, worry and hurt in the lives of those around us and avoid, by our words and deeds, adding to it.
4. Know that we are not alone. We are not traveling solo. Rather we are traveling together along a good path that was blazed by the Lord himself - a path that has been beaten down by the footsteps of those who have gone before us. We will get through this.

Standing on the precipice of a new and uncertain age, especially one that lacks the usual promises of greatness and prosperity but rather warns of difficulty and hardship is not a place I would have chosen. However, we are where we are. We do have a promise that, even though the path forward is frightening and the immediate future uncertain, we have One who has promised that he we will be with us to strengthen, reassure and guide us.

Dave Hazen



Senior's Finish the Phrase!

1. A penny saved is a _____
2. The grass is always _____
3. A stitch in time _____
4. Don't count your _____
5. Curiosity killed the cat but _____
6. The squeaky wheel gets _____
7. Don't put all your _____ in one _____
8. You can't have your _____ and _____
9. If at first you don't _____ again.
10. The early bird gets the _____

Make new friends and keep the old.

One is silver, the other gold.

Hope Faith and Love and the Greatest of these is LOVE

Brought to you with love from God's Garden Children's Sunday School

“Even to your old age, and gray hair, I am He.

I am He who will sustain you.

I have made you, and I will carry you.

I will be with you and I will rescue you. ”

Isaiah 46:4

BOOK REVIEW: *Let Me Be the Kind Who Weeps: Poems for a Wounded World.* By Jon Swales, MBE.
UK: Cruciform Justice (www.cruciformjustice.com), 2025.

Poetry is not generally one of the things I go after. A career as an engineer has left me inclined more to

the black and white of non-fiction or historical prose. However, when the poems of Jon Swales started appearing in my social media feed, there was a strong (and unexpected) resonance.

The Rev Jon Swales is a Church of England pastor in the Diocese of Leeds, West Yorkshire. Early in his ministry, he recounts an encounter with “wild Messiah – a transformational figure who embodies a Kingdom that radically overturns conventional expectations. This Jesus is not content with the status quo. He flips tables in the temple, dines with outcasts, confronts the rich, and champions the poor...” This encounter led to his studying for ordained ministry and eventually a curacy at St. George’s Church, a reasonably well-to-do downtown parish. In the course of his work there, particularly with the marginalized folk he met on the streets, he and others realized that inviting the people he met into the main Sunday services was not necessarily the most effective approach. The people he was working with felt out of place amongst the “posh” at the principal services. This led Rev. Swales and others to found, in 2014, Lighthouse – a church within a church – which was specifically designed for “adults battered and bruised by the storms of life,” for whom the expectation of immediate integration with those worshipping in their “Sunday best” just wasn’t working.

The book contains a several collections of poems. In Swales’ words:

I seek to use my words as a paintbrush,
dipping into mystic wells of
metaphor and meaning –
red as the ache of longing,
gold as eternity trembling on the horizon,
colours of joy and sorrow,
lament and hope.

The first collection, “Margins,” provides a series of word pictures of people he encountered through 10 years of ministry at Lighthouse. The images reminded me of some of the people we encountered through downtown ministry when we lived in Halifax. Not all the pictures are nice. There is a gritty reality about them. This is echoed in the second collection, “East of Eden,” reflecting on the challenges of ministry to the marginalized in other parts of the world, including “El Salvador,” a poignant tribute to Bp. Oscar Romero. (Biblical reference: East of Eden refers to the region where Adam and Eve were sent, after being evicted from the Garden.) Other collections include “The Sacred Story,” reflecting on the events leading up to and through Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, on “Hope,” on being a 21st century “Pilgrim,” “Crisis,” on living through the crises of the 2020’s and “Mission,” reflecting on the calling and challenges of responding to a call to reach out and develop a ministry like Lighthouse.

I don’t want to be a Christian
who forgets how to feel –
who hides behind answers,
quotes verses like shields,

and silences sorrow with a song.

I don't want a faith of
romanticised abstraction,
where resurrection is polished
and the cross is theory.
give me something real –
flesh and blood,
grief and grace.
I want to weep with eyes wide open.

The book itself was published in 2025 as part of the 10th anniversary of the Lighthouse ministry and is available through Lighthouse (hello@lighthousewy.org.uk or www.lighthousewestyorkshire.org.uk).

You can access individual poems by searching for “Jon Swales” on Facebook or hear them read aloud in the podcast series “Lament and Hope: Prayers & Teaching for Justice and Peace.” I recommend them for any who need a reminder of the realities of the 2020's lost sheep of and the call to minister to them.

David Hazen

Jon Swales. *Let Me Be the Kind Who Weeps:
Poems for a Wounded World.*



Rose Blanche Lighthouse, NL & Labrador

Open Table January 2026

Our Cornerstone Music Group enjoys getting together to practise our songs most Tuesday evenings and

to provide the Music Ministry once a month from September to June.

Many of us enjoy cooking and baking as well. With the help of other members of the Congregation and the community we were able to put on a meal for the January Open Table.

Our menu included Easy Bolognese Pasta Bake and the recipe may be found at this website: <https://www.theslowroasteditalian.com/easy-bolognese-pasta-bake/#recipe> The Slow Roasted Italian. I cannot include the actual recipe as it has a copyright on it but the link will take you to the site. We also served St. Thomas salad, rolls and a dessert of Hot Milk Cake with a Berry Sauce.

It is always a bit of a concern wondering if there is enough food to feed everyone and if it will be ready on time. I am happy to say that there were leftovers and we received quite a few compliments so I think that most people were happy.

Thanks again to all those who volunteered to create food, purchase supplies or helped with the meal.



The morning preparation crew.



Pasta Bakes ready for the oven.

THE LAST WORD

Hmm, I am not sure where January has disappeared to. I think that I need to take a little pause as it seems to have been a busy month or two. Not only for myself but for many of you and the Church as a whole.

The busyness has made the darker days of January pass faster and I am appreciating the sun on the snow the last few days. I have filled up the birdfeeder and watch Cardinals, Chickadees, Juncos, the occasional Nuthatch and those pesky Starlings come to it. We also have short glimpses of the two rabbits in the yard (not together too often).

Preparations are well underway at Church for Lent and then Easter. The Church of England describes Lent: *“The season of Lent lasts for forty days (not including Sundays). It is a time when Christians reflect and prepare for the celebrations of Easter. Some people fast, eat frugally or give up treats following the example of Jesus, who fasted for forty days in the wilderness.*

People also give to charity, set aside time to study the Bible and meet with other Christians to reflect on Jesus' life and prepare for the events of Holy Week and Easter.”

We are being offered an opportunity to join in sessions on Contemplative Prayer and Meditation or to come to Services offered Wednesday morning, or of course on Sunday. There are also Holy Week Services that will take place.

However you choose to partake in the Lenten season may you find peace.

Secondly I include this prayer that can be found on the Church of England Website:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/lent-holy-week-and-easter>

A Prayer for Lent

Holy God,
our lives are laid open before you:
rescue us from the chaos of sin
and through the death of your Son
bring us healing and make us whole
in Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.

I will leave you with this note: The deadline for the next edition of the People's Pulpit will be April 20th for a Spring Edition in time for Mother's Day.

Mary Anne

THE PEOPLE'S DIRECTORY

	Role	Phone	Email
Rick Anderson	People's Warden	613-825-6816	p.warden.stthomasstittsville@gmail.com
Attwell, Mary	Synod Delegate	613-836-3133	maryattwell@yahoo.ca
Cheer, Carolyn	Parish Administrator Mon-Thurs. 1:30-4:30 PM	613-836-5741	StThomasStittsville@gmail.com
Clarke, Merilee	Church School/God's Garden	613-591-9351	godsgardenstt@gmail.com
Clement, Diane	ACW President	613-825-6223	bill.di@sympatico.ca
Dallaway, Judith	Open Table Chair & Fundraising Committee Rep.	613-323-1971	mapilgrim1946@gmail.com
Dallaway, Nicole	Bookkeeper		
Dallaway, Ryan	Treasurer	613-298-6670	rjdallawa@live.com
Dawes, Sylvi	Prayer Team	613-492-0218	sylvidawes@gmail.com
Deevy, Bill	Member at Large		
Hall, Andrew	Member at Large		andrew128@rogers.com
Hazen, Pam	ACW Rep on Council	613-831-3093	
McNally, Bonnie	Outreach Committee Rep. Counter, Sunday Prayer & Healing Co-ordinator, Council Secretary	613-831-0968	pbmcnally@bell.net
McNally, Pat	Rector's Warden & Synod Rep.	613-831-0968	rec.warden.stthomasstittsville@gmail.com
MacDiarmid, Bonnie	Organist & Choir Director	613-271-8474	rorbon@hotmail.com
Miller, Brenda	Member at Large		bmiller1939@rogers.com
Passmore, Mary	Cornerstone	613-836-2876	cpassmore@sympatico.ca
Passmore, William	Prayer & a Pint	613-836-2876	cpassmore@sympatico.ca
Reade, Moira	Webmaster & Member at Large	613-266-6472	webmaster.stthomasstittsville@gmail.com
Reinhard, Mary Anne	Editor, People's Pulpit	613- 838-5781	mareinhard1@outlook.com
Roy, Ewan	Member at Large	613-770-7003	
Simonovich, Arlene	Altar Guild	613-836-2753	asimonovich@rogers.com
Walsh, Jane	Cemetery Committee	613 866-1360	jpwalsh@rogers.com