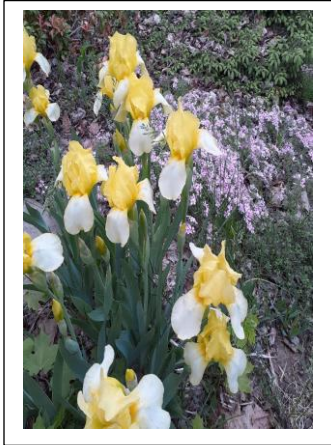


Coop's Scoops # 210 Wednesday, June 8, 2021:



It's been great to have some rain over the last few days, along with lots of warmth...everything is growing so beautifully. Ontario farmers will be smiling after a May that was the driest in many, many years. And we'll be smiling because we'll get those awesome Niagara peaches again soon. On the home front, where there were "none", I woke up to "many"! Sunny yellow iris are beautiful, and my front roadside is now also filled with orange tiger lilies, so I have no excuse to be anything but happy coming in to work these days. And near the



outdoor track I often walk, lupines are filling the fields. Seem to be mostly blue/purple here, but in Thunder Bay we had acres of pinks and whites as well. They grow each year, just as they should, without extra care from anyone, just living out what their botanical lives were created to be. God didn't NEED to give us colour and fragrance and beauty....but He wanted to as He knew how much we would come to love them! Just like God! Always up to something good!

Hope to do some of that myself this week, and I know that you do too!

News from the Diocese:

The Wardens and I have done much musing and thought and prayer over the possibilities available to us in Step One of Re-opening our Churches. The Province moved **Step One** up to this Saturday, June 12th.....I hope we can all get out and support our newly re-opening retail and patio dining in some way. The Church building, our lovely St. Thomas, however remains CLOSED during step one. Three weeks later, July 3rd, all going well, it is anticipated that Step Two will be announced and implemented. In **Step Two** we CAN re-open for public worship.

And we will. There will be Sunday morning worship (still checking on whether I am allowed to do one service or two), and it will be Eucharist, in one Kind only,

and it will be wonderful to be back in our beloved sanctuary. We will be at 15% capacity and that, for us, means 30 people. So we will be needing people to call ahead to “reserve” a spot so that they do not arrive only to be disappointed. We will still have to be masked and sit socially distanced, except for family bubbles. It is a START!!! And I am very excited and grateful.

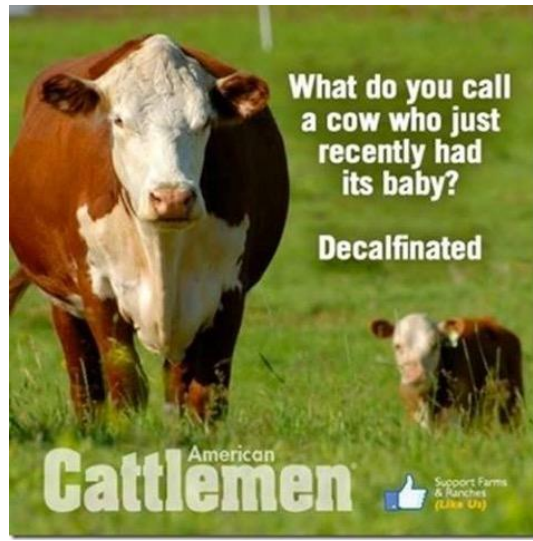
There will be some folk not ready to mingle with 30 people until more of us have received our second dose vaccinations, and so I will also offer one small group of 10 Eucharist during the week, in Browning Hall where ventilation is superior.

If you have read, or plan to read, the Reopening Roadmap prepared by our Executive Archdeacon Jay Koyle, you will note that other options have been made available, including provision of drive-by Reserve Sacrament, limited outdoor services and other variations on on-line or print worship on Sundays, but each of them is a very complex undertaking with additional expenses, and essential logistics which might stymie a military general, let alone humble Peter, Paul and me. We have agreed that we will continue as we have been doing for the next three weeks until Step Two begins. You will still receive Scoops and the Sunday readings, prayers and sermon for worship at home. If you wish more information about any of these things, please just call me and ask.

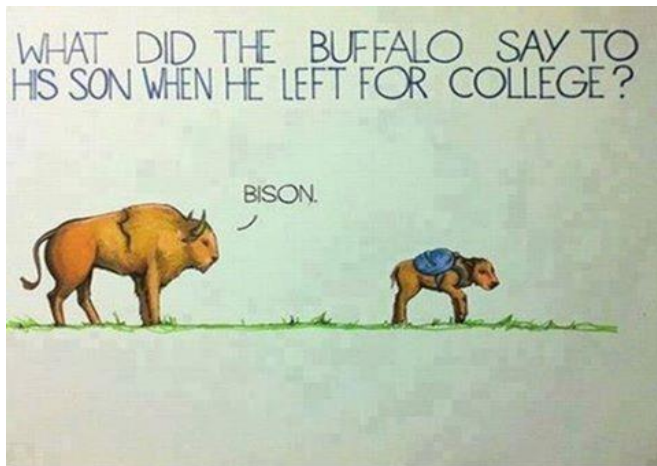
Please pray for everyone working to get the building ready again, to set up volunteers for various tasks, and prepare for in person worship. You will be sad to hear that singing is not yet allowed.....Maybe in Step Three? And please remember that all of our plans depend upon decreasing numbers of infections and increasing numbers of vaccinations, both first and second doses. We’ve made it so far; let’s keep pressing on, doing what’s right, taking care, and living with hope.

Some Chuckles! (Alva says that farmers tell the best jokes!)

Mr. and Mrs. Brown were farmers with two very mischievous sons. They named one Mind Your Own Business & the other was named Trouble. One day the two boys decided to play hide and seek. Trouble hid while Mind Your Own Business counted to one hundred. Mind Your Own Business began looking for his brother behind garbage cans and bushes. Then he started looking in and under cars until a police man approached him and asked, "What are you doing?" "Playing a game," the boy replied. "What is your name?" the officer questioned. "Mind Your Own Business." Furious the policeman inquired, "Are you looking for trouble?!" The boy replied, "Why, yes."



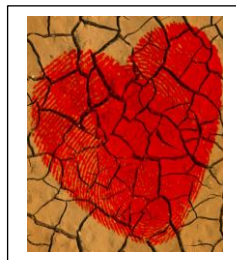
Many graduates will be moving up soon from kindergarten to primary, grade 8 to highschool, and highschool to college or university.



Congratulations to all graduates of every age! Some of you will be having outdoor ceremonies, or indoor family celebrations.....may you know that we at St. Thomas, along with your parents, and families and friends are very proud of your accomplishments and wish you much happiness.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 34:18

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”



So many people need to hear and re-hear and digest and cling to this Scripture this week. Indigenous people continue to grieve and work to somehow cope with yet another horrific revelation of children who perished while attending Residential Schools, without records or names or bodies returned to families. So many survivors and families are crushed in spirit and brokenhearted. All people of good will and love must grieve with them. Who can help? Ultimately, only the Lord. We can listen, and really hear, and take whatever steps are asked of us, for we who are not indigenous do not have the answers or even know all the questions. And so, to prayer.

And then there is the horrific murder of three generations in London yesterday, where a young man deliberately drove his truck high speed into a family out for a walk on a lovely evening. Grandma, Mom, Dad, teenaged daughter all dead, and nine year old Fayez Afzaal clinging to life in hospital. Why? Because they were people of faith, who practiced being Muslim with all their hearts. Open, kind, peaceable, generous community members loved by neighbours and friends. That young boy, who's name we don't even know as yet, is about to be crushed in spirit and brokenhearted beyond anything most of us will ever experience. Who can help? Again, ultimately, only the Lord God whom he calls Allah. What is the only answer to hate? Love. Love alone. But not apathetic love - active love, love which pursues justice, respect, dignity, education, health, income and everything else necessary for hate to be overcome. And so, to prayer.

Let's challenge ourselves today to actually think of something to DO which will add a new layer of love to someone else. Write a letter for justice, examine a Koran, study the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action once more and improve what we are doing in response, don't look the other way when someone we know says something racist, if we see violence toward any person or living creature take action to report it, step up a bit in how we try to make the world a better place.

Between us all, we might just make a difference. Let us also thank our God - our Creator, Allah, God of many names, One who is close to the broken hearted and the crushed in spirit - for His power and His will to heal, and to bless. Unity does not mean "uniformity". To me, unity means being one in "need", and one in "service". The most common denominator in all the peoples, all the faiths, all the situations in this world is that we all need mercy, and we all can give it. We can

all.....”love the Lord our God with all our strength and might and mind and soul, and love our neighbours as ourselves”. Christians do that in the name of Jesus, Saviour and Redeemer. Muslims do that in honour and obedience to Allah with thanksgiving for their prophet Mohammed. Jews do that in obedience and love to the God of Abraham.

To the extent that we all do that, justice and love can mend our hearts and **stop**



the hatred. To the extent that we all don't, we will continue to see the fruits of evil. And overcoming hatred will not be fully realized until His Kingdom comes, and His will is done, on earth as in Heaven. We aim for a little more of heaven on earth each day!

Prayers:

We pray today for Fayez Afzaal, asking that he may recover from his serious injuries and may survive the shock of hearing of the violent deaths of his entire family. We pray for all who are treating him, helping him, for extended family who have been allowed to be with him, that all

may be done with great love and skill to help this young one heal. We pray that racism, Islamophobia, all types of bigotry and hatred may be quelled by active and open love and justice. Help us, O Lord, to contribute to the good of all. Amen.

We continue to pray for our Archbishop +Anne and all who are leading our Church as we begin the process or gathering once more for public worship. May all be done with care and love for our neighbours and for the health of our family of faith. Thank you for the decrease in infections and the opportunity to move second doses forward more quickly.....We are grateful and hopeful of being together in your Presence in our sanctuaries over the coming weeks! We are grateful also for your Presence among us, in us, and working through us as we have worshipped in our homes and other holy spaces. Keep us always mindful of your goodness and love. Through Christ our Lord, amen.

Blessing: May the peace that surpasses all our human understanding, keep your hearts and minds fixed on the love of God and on His Son Jesus Christ, and the

blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be upon and
remain with you always. Amen.

–Judie+