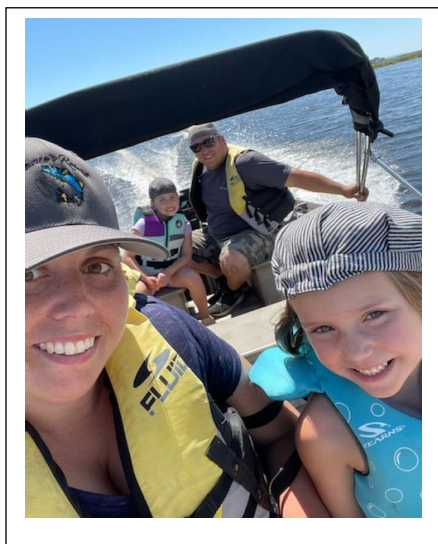


## COOP'S SCOOPS # 221 Wednesday, July 14, 2021

This is the Hello and Goodbye edition of Coop's Scoops! Let's start with some "hello's!" We had lots of them last Sunday, as some of our parishioners returned to worship in the sanctuary of St. Thomas for the first time in 16 months and 3 days! We all looked a little different.... Some of us are still in line for hair cuts....and wearing masks meant we couldn't see each other's smiles, but it was still just so great to be physically together in one space. We prayed for those of us who weren't ready to return just yet, and were worshipping with us through the Sunday Scoops format. And there was also one great big brand new hello! On the day of our re-opening, there was a wonderful person attending our church for the very first time, as the result of a street conversation in which one of "us" shared the love of Jesus with her friend. The friend had committed to come out on July 11<sup>th</sup>, and was unable to do so, so she asked this woman to stand in for her, and voila, our newcomer. God works in wonderful ways!

There are some additional "hello's" already planned in a few weeks. First will be "**Hello, Hudson**" as the 8 month old son of Nikki Noakes and her husband is baptized here at St. Thomas. Hudson is the great grandson of Bev and Bob Bullen. In September we will say "**hello**" to **Stella Mary Ann**, daughter of Laura Miller and Blaine Lovelock, a little "grand" of Frank and Mary Lovelock. ( note to grandparents...don't have all the info in yet and sorry not to have Nikki's husbands name at the time of printing!)



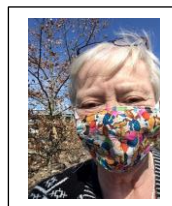
On to the "goodbye's" now...We are wishing Jessica and JD, Isla and Aubree safe travels and a wonderful new life on the East Coast. They will be sorely missed by grandpa and grandma Peter and Tracy and cousins Everitt and Eli and all their local family members. They will also be missed by all the Messy Church kids and our entire St. Thomas family. It's a whole new life for those two little girls who started here as babies....new home, new farm, new school, new friends, new adventures, so much light and life and dreams to enjoy! There'll always have the same old wonderful huge pile of love

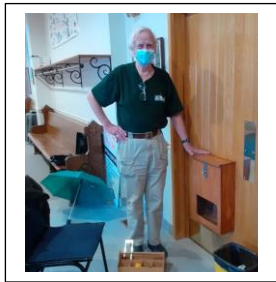
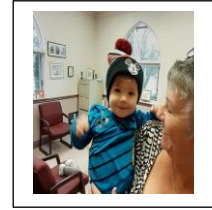
however that goes with them everywhere. Jess has been our videomaster for months and months of Messy Church and assisted in so many other ways in our parish. And she is also my “Scentsy” salesperson, and wow, I’ll miss that too! God’s blessings go with you, dear friends, and we are sure glad that Tracy and Peter will keep us up to date on all your milestones and great activities!

And on to yet another goodbye. This time it’s to SCOOPS! Today will be the last weekday edition of our pandemic outreach ministry.... The Sunday worship, readings and sermon edition will be available July 18<sup>th</sup> and possibly for a few more weeks until more of us are comfortable with returning to in person worship.

Scoops has been a wonderful thing for me! I pray it has filled a good spot in your hearts and lives as well! Thanks to all who contributed stories and jokes and updates. I could never have imagined pulling off 222 comprehensive Scoops when I first started....it is sheerly the grace of God and the warmth of your comments that have kept me going at it. And you....well you’ve had 222 sermons in the last 16 months, whereas you would usually get 52 in a year. So you’re ahead by about three years worth! Please don’t decide you don’t need to come back to church until 2024, but, hey, it’s an interesting thought! We will always continue to love and support each other, and now we have the added blessing of being able to gather together and share our stories, our hopes, our sorrows and our joys. It is my hope to do one monthly Scoops now...a sort of news update ...not as comprehensive as Sandi’s “Tidings” - but a way of keeping in touch as we move forward here at St. Thomas.

Here’s a little mini review of some of the pictures that we’ve shared in Scoops since March of 2020.





There have been over 600 pictures, 900 cartoons, about 700 jokes, 222 Scriptures and Homilies, and, at best guess, 1110 hours of writing and editing, and, if everybody read every issue, which of course is ridiculous, there could have been 111,00 readings. And that is all to the glory of God.

### **Just a few announcements:**

- For those who love **Our Daily Bread**, there are copies available which begin August 1<sup>st</sup>. You can drop by the office to get yours, or call if you need one mailed or delivered. A \$1 donation is appreciated! These daily devotions are an excellent framework for personal prayer and Bible study. Don't forget the daily devotions posted by Paul on St. Thomas Facebook page as well!
- Call to claim your pew for services on Sundays, 9 and 11. So far, we have not had our maximum occupancy so if you forget to call and want to take a chance on "getting in", you could just come and would likely find seating available. It is however a great help for our record keeping if you can call ahead.
- The Thursday morning small group Eucharist ( max 12) begins tomorrow in Browning Hall at 10am. This is a well-ventilated room, and with all wearing

masks and being socially distanced, I believe it is safe environment for all of us....perhaps a good way to determine your comfort level for Sundays!

- The province will be entering Step 3 of restrictions this Friday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. The Diocese however requires that we do not do that until July 25<sup>th</sup> for service capacity and other restrictions. Watch for news on the Diocese of Algoma web site!

Now for the most popular joke/story ever in Scoops....it got the most comments, and presumably the most belly laughs!

### **Squirrels Find Religion**

As a band of squirrels had become quite a problem, the Presbyterian church called a meeting to decide what to do about their squirrel infestation. After much prayer and consideration, they concluded that the squirrels were predestined to be there, and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

At the Baptist church the squirrels had taken an interest in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a water-slide on the baptistery and let the squirrels drown themselves. The squirrels liked the slide and unfortunately, knew instinctively how to swim, so twice as many squirrels showed up the following week.

The Lutheran church decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creatures. So, they humanely trapped their squirrels and set them free near the Baptist church. Two weeks later the squirrels were back when the Baptists took down the water-slide.

The Anglicans tried a unique path by setting out pans of whiskey around their church in an effort to kill the squirrels with alcohol. They sadly learned how much damage a band of drunk squirrels can do.

But the Catholic church came up with a very creative strategy! They baptized all the squirrels and made them members of the church. Now they only see them at Christmas and Easter.

And not much was heard from the Jewish synagogue. They took the first squirrel and circumcised him. They haven't seen a squirrel since.

### **Scripture for Today: Nehemiah 8:10**

*Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to*



*the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for **the joy of the Lord is your strength.**"*

**Shortest Homily Ever: (well, by me!)**

**Just as the children of Israel returned from exile, we too are returning from a type of exile during this pandemic. There has been grief, and sorrow and questioning and change; throughout it all it is the joy given to us by our Lord that has kept us going. YOU HAVE BEEN THE JOY OF THE LORD TO ME! I'm a bit teary doing this last Scoops "goodbye", so, um, as a famous bunny once said ...."That's alllllllll folks!!!"**

**The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace! Amen.**

**- Judie+**