

Michaelmas-tide 2009

Can anyone at Saint John's not be excited at the prospect of the resurrection of our Church School? From 1991 through 1994 we struggled to keep our small band of children together and growing. Demographics and our changing neighbourhood were decidedly against us. The average age of the congregation in 1991 was higher than the average age of death in the United States and the neighbourhood was swiftly destabilising. Our Church School became untenable as our few parents failed to regularly bring their children and the majority of our pupils, who were from one family, moved to New York state. Determined on-foot personal invitations to dozens of households in the community produced one completely worn-out pair of shoes and not one new registrant for the Church School. Most of our new neighbours had their own church Sunday Schools to support. Cultural differences kept others who might have been interested away. The volunteers trying to make a go of our program were frustrated and exhausted. Reluctantly, we closed the program in 1994.

Now, fifteen years later, with about the same number of members, the average age of our congregation is much, much lower, and our neighbourhood has improved somewhat and stabilised. Some of our surrounding neighbourhoods have flourished even more. Importantly, children are again part of our parish life. Even more importantly, it is the parents themselves who are re-organising our renewed Church School. In its last incarnation, volunteers tried to keep the program going without much parental support. The reverse is true now. Our parents need volunteers like you to help. The principal way to help just now is to invite your friends with children to join us! Beyond that, we need people to "spell" the parents so that they are not solely responsible for the Church School. Please call either Colleen Rhine (443.801.4750) or Marijke Sutter (443.610.2698) to ask how you can help make our Church School a success.

Other good news is that Bishop Rabb will be with us to celebrate Michaelmas Day, 29 September, at 6.30 PM. Our annual "homecoming" will be all the more special as the Bishop Suffragan joins us to celebrate and preach. Following the service, there will be full course dinner in the Parish House for all provided by Charles Spinks and his faithful helpers.

At the reception/dinner we will greet Bishop Rabb, and also honour one of our own, as well. Matthew D'Amario, who was ordained a Deacon in the Roman Communion before becoming an Anglican, was licensed some time ago by Bishop Rabb to catechise, preach, teach, lead worship, take the Blessed Sacrament to the sick, and to minister at the Altar. We will honour (the Rev'd Mr) Matthew D'Amario for his excellent pastoral work among us these past several years, and celebrate what we hope will be a long association with our parish in continuing pastoral and social ministry.

Please plan to be here on Michaelmas to welcome Bishop Rabb, to thank him for licensing Matthew to minister with and to us, and to thank Matthew himself for his generous self-offering for the ministry entrusted to Saint John's in the Village. With every prayer and blessing for each of you in our new season, I remain,

Yours faithfully in Christ Jesus,

The Rev'd Jesse L. A. Parker
Rector of Saint John's in the Village