

2001 Annual Report Parish of Brigus-South River

For the Anglican Parish of Brigus-South River, the year 2001 has been one of stability and vision. The liturgical and administrative re-structuring that was initiated in the fall of 1999, and continued throughout 2000, settled in 2001 and has become a stable aspect of our parish identity. That is to say, the changes that we have implemented are no longer on a trial basis, but here to stay. For all intents and purposes, our parish is operating liturgically and administratively as a one point parish using four buildings. Having solidified a new identity and direction for the parish, 2001 was a year in which we also began to look forward, to develop a sense of vision of how the coming years may unfold for us.

Administratively, the main event of 2001 was the strategy workshop attended by parish council, held at the Holiday Inn in St. John's. Not only was this a positive experience, it was an opportunity to start looking at our future and to continue to build and strengthen our community of faith. A number of significant ideas were identified at this time and will be discussed over the coming year and into the future.

Another administrative issue that I would like to highlight in this year's report is that of our free-will offering. This is an area that concerns me, and it is a concern of the diocese. The parish's normal operating budget requirements should be met by the free-will offering of our people. We should only have to fundraise for special projects (ie. Roof repair, donations to other charities, etc). Our parish is in a position in which we have to burn ourselves out fundraising just to meet our very basic budget requirements. Approximately 70% of this requirement is given through free-will offering, the other 30% has to be generated by fundraising. This is not a good situation. If we are to become a financially healthy parish, and if we wish to develop a vision for our future, then our supporters have to respond with a responsible increase in their weekly free-will offering for the work of our parish. If we do not take seriously our need to increase our weekly offering, then we greatly reduce our ability to chart our own future.

The last administrative issue I wish to highlight in this report is consequent to last fall's diocesan synod. The main presentation of the synod was a government study on the changing demographics in Newfoundland and the impact on institutions – including the Church – in rural Newfoundland. Recognizing the declining and changing population of rural Newfoundland, the synod has put in place a task force that will report back in 2003 with recommendations – including recommendations on what to do with too many buildings in multiple point parishes with declining congregations. I raise this to make us aware that the “too many buildings” issue is not just particular to our parish. The entire diocese is finally recognizing that there is a problem and we need to begin to deal with it.

Liturgically, our 11am Eucharistic gathering continues to bring the parish together with joyful worship led by our parish band. With reference to our evening worship, in 2001 we tried on a trial basis offering a BCP Holy Eucharist at 7:00pm. This had no impact on evening numbers. Presently the Sunday evening slot is simply titled “Evening Prayer,”

and will take different forms that will be announced at the appropriate time (ie. Healing services).

JAM continues to be active not only in our parish, but also in the Parish of Port de Grave. In addition to the various contributions JAM makes to the liturgy throughout the year, including this past years Christmas concert, the big event is the annual JAM packed day in St. John's, which was again a success this past year.

And still with reference to youth and liturgy, after this past years confirmation, we have added a number of new servers to our team of assistants at the liturgy.

We have had a good year with Christian Education. In the area of stewardship, there are two points to highlight. First of all, in 2001, we implemented a new stewardship initiative to encourage our people to increase their freewill offering on a percentage basis each year. We have asked for an initial 10% (or more) increase in the weekly offering, followed by an annual 5% increase. Although some people have responded to this initiative, most people have not. But we will persevere in educating and challenging our people in responsible financial support of the parish. The other stewardship point worth highlighting was a meeting between our stewardship chair and the diocesan stewardship resource person earlier in the year. One of the issues discussed at this meeting was the area of planned giving. We hope to hear more in this area in the coming year.

Our Children's Church has continued to provide good programming for our children over 2001, and for this we are thankful. Also in line with children's education is the Life in the Eucharist program. Two programs were run in the last year with a number of families participating.

Alpha, being our main adult christian education tool, was run on two separate occasions this past year. The "After Alpha" program titled "A Life Worth Living" was run in the winter of last year with good participation. And the Alpha itself was run, as it is each year, in the fall of 2001 with a group of 10 or 12 participating. We look forward in the coming year to a new Alpha resource on marriage.

In addition to the Alpha program, a number of our people have participated both at leadership and participant levels in the Diocesan Cursillio weekends over the past year. Again, like the Alpha, the Cursillio offers a wonderful opportunity in Adult Christian education and experience.

The pastorate ministry continues to grow in the parish with a new pastorate group being formed following our last Alpha, and a new Cursillio weekly reunion group consequent to the last Cursillio weekend. Also in the context of pastoral care and outreach, a number of parishioners organized a fundraiser for the Janeway Telethon. This is good outreach ministry that has become something of a tradition and we pray will continue.

Reflecting on life in our parish over the last year, I am aware that this is not an exhaustive list of every activity that has taken place, and in this context, I am also aware of the very

rich nature of our parish. That is to say, we have a beautiful parish with a lot of very wonderful people who are offering their lives for the building up of the Kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit is indeed moving amongst us and making us into a genuine school of love. We have much to be thankful for.

My friends, Jesus is Lord, and His Kingdom is within us. Let us continue to seek Him in the silence of our souls and in the faces of one another, and as we seek to do His will, let us glorify His Name.

Yours in Christ,
Father Gerald+

Parish Statistics:Baptisms 11; Confirmations 0; Marriages 9; Funerals 8