

**The Parish of Stafford-Whitewater
Anglican Diocese of Ottawa**

St. Augustine's, St. Patrick's, St. Paul's, St. Stephen's, St. Thomas

August 31, 2013

Commemoration of Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Today is the day of commemoration for Aidan, an Irish monk who restored Christianity in a war-ravaged kingdom in northeastern England early in the seventh century. Aidan is a wonderful example to us all of the importance of a Christian life that combines the proclamation of Christ's message of Good News in all aspects of our lives with the soul-refreshing practice of prayer and contemplation within community. Like Aidan, we too are called to be living examples of the scripture passage: "I do all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (*1 Corinthians 9:23*)

Sadness. In the spring, the St. Patrick's community mourned the passing of Martha Graham and Alex Siebarth. The Loxton family, formerly of St. Mary's Westmeath mourned the death of a beloved son, David. On November 3 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Patrick's, Snake River Line, there will be a special service of Healing and Remembrance at which there will be an opportunity to celebrate and to remember loved ones who have gone before us.

Rejoicing. There were also times of rejoicing. In April, I was inducted into this parish by Bishop John. At this music-filled service at St. Stephen's, Micksburg, representatives of all five congregations participated in the presentation of the symbols of ministry. The Venerable Rob Davis, our archdeacon preached. Jennie Mick of St. Stephen's was the event's photographer – you can see some of her event photos on the parish web page if you missed the photo that appeared in a recent issue of the diocesan newspaper, *CrossTalk*. In May, Bishop John returned for his triennial visit, hosted this time at St. Augustine's, Beachburg. Five EFM (Education for Ministry) graduates: Pat Leach, Jean Lopushanski, Bev York, Lorna McLaren and Marie Zettler received their certificates. Three young people: Brooklyn McIntyre, Nathan Vandekemp and his sister Alyssa were confirmed. These young people participated with other members of our parish in "Conversations", a diocesan-led session of idea sharing held at Holy Trinity Pembroke.

The sunny summer days have passed by much too quickly and we are now in the thick of harvest and fall preparations. At the 9 a.m. service on Sunday, September 8, there will be a "Back-to-School" service with blessing of the backpacks and an instructed Eucharist. All are invited. On Sunday, October 6, we will get together as a parish in a special Harvest Thanksgiving-themed service at Micksburg Community Hall, located beside St. Stephen's. Fellowship with coffee/tea/juice and "goodies" starts at 9:30 a.m. Bring your own mug. If you have extra mugs to donate, you are encouraged to bring them as a donation to the

diocesan ministry, Centre 454. Following the service, there will be a showing of the fascinating and beautiful (and short: 15 minutes) film, “The Awakening Universe.” In celebration of the Christmas season, there will be a music-filled evening at St. Augustine’s, Beachburg with a Lessons and Carols service. These are just a few of the things “in the works” this fall.

Last March, four from this parish journeyed to Cornwall to attend the day-long presentation by the Reverend Dr. Jay Koyle of the Diocese of Algoma: *Shaped by a Living Hope: Fostering Renewal in Rural and Small Congregations*. Now is your chance to attend this inspirational day of ideas and sharing. On Saturday, September 28th, Dr. Koyle is coming to Holy Trinity Pembroke. It would be wonderful to have as many parishioners as possible attend this event so that together, you and me, can bring renewed vibrancy to our ministry in this place.

Our region has been truly blessed this summer with much sun and good rainfall. The harvest has been plentiful with fields overflowing with round bales, fruit trees fully laden, corn fields ripening. We are so blessed to live in this country in peace, with the freedom to worship God without fear.

O God, in your Son Jesus Christ you richly bless us with all that we need, bread from the earth and the bread of heaven, which gives life to the world. Grant us one thing more: grateful hearts to sing your praise, in this world and the world to come. Amen.

Praise God from whom all blessings come! In this season of gratitude, I ask you to prayerfully consider how you will intentionally support your local congregation: St. Augustine’s, St. Patrick’s, St. Paul’s, St. Stephen’s or St. Thomas – through prayer, through regular financial donation, through regular worship and involvement in community life now and through the coming year. Your regular presence and strong support is very important to our faith communities. It is vital to the living proclamation of Christ’s Good News by and through each of our small churches.

May we each remember that God calls us to be God’s hands and heart in this world, to share those blessings, the gifts and the treasures that God has given to each and every one of us.

I wish you every blessing in this fall season. Looking forward to seeing you at Sunday service!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda" followed by a small cross symbol.

The Rev. Linda Wheeler
Incumbent, Parish of Stafford-
Whitewater

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