

In 1674 my direct ancestor, Vincent Boissonneault St-Onge, bought this piece of land to settle outside Quebec City.

Work Up North

A milestone was marked a few days ago on Sunday morning: ten Sundays of worship online in a row, without any gathering in person. At the beginning of our time in viral lockdown I remarked that "feeding Christ's people remotely" was one of those things not *explicitly* taught in seminary. But it was *implicitly* taught. Missionaries and pastors are called to bring the light of the Gospel of Christ into the darkness of the world. As our world seems to grow darker, so does the light of Jesus' forgiveness, love, hope, and eternal life become brighter.

Remarkably our attendance has gone up over the last few weeks, from the mid-forties for our Sunday services to the high-fifties and low-sixties. We also upload our services to YouTube (search for "Ascension Montreal"). Deb and the girls have been a big help in recording music to assist us all with singing. Wednesday evening and Sunday morning bible studies also continue, as do my twice-weekly written and podcast devotions. Our Ladies' Aid group meetings have expanded and are now held every three weeks. The congregation has been incredible at helping keep our seniors fed physically and spiritually, and reaching out to one another and inviting more people to hear of Jesus and his love.

Our sign project continues and we hope to sign a contract in the next few days if not hours. I am working with our deaconess intern, Emilie Stoller, to get a work visa as she has decided to marry in Canada this summer. The two dates she had set for her marriage in the US have now passed – so she and Avery are moving to Plan "C." Our online evangelistic outreach continues. We have adapted – or rather the Lord has adapted us – to the new "not normal."

Work Down South

Puerto Rico, battered by two hurricanes and six months of earthquakes, is also weathering this COVID-19 disaster. In preparation for a more active than normal hurricane season, we are ramping up the purchase of emergency supplies for our two disaster response centers. Plans are underway for a second virtual FORO for Jamaica on June 20, with this next one focused on the Ministry Centre at Halfway Tree and our continuing renovations of the property. At last, finally, a ray of hope for the Caymans. We are looking to call a missionary to serve there full-time in the coming weeks. Locked down does not mean locked out of work and opportunities.

Mission Moment

This virus has tested the church's ability to balance all of our Lord's teachings: to keep the Sabbath holy by gladly hearing God's Word together; to honor our father and mother by respecting the government's authority; and to love and serve our neighbor by keeping them safe, especially those most vulnerable.

On Thursday of this week I was on a video call with over a thousand churches in Canada and the Chief Medical Officer of Nova Scotia, Dr. Robert Strang. As we prepare for some form of small, in person communion celebrations in Montreal, Dr. Strang's two fold advice was well taken. First, health agencies can give guidance and best practices, but churches will need to figure out implementation. This is a partnership with no simple solutions and mistakes will be made. Second, churches are essential maybe more so now than ever - but also great opportunities for virus spread. Squaring that circle will be difficult but necessary work.



A Picture's Worth of Words

Right: Dr. Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Nova Scotia, walked us through the need for churches, especially to fill the spiritual void and loss of community at a time when gathering physically is challenging.

Below: This last week I participated in a virtual VBS with children in Hong Kong and missionaries from around the world. One day I taught everyone how to say "Jesus loves you" in French.

*We thank Thee that Thy church, unsleeping,
While earth rolls onward into light,
Through all the world her watch is keeping,
And never rests by day or night.*

7:45 PM →

7:45 AM →

1:45 PM →

*The sun that bids us rest is waking
Thy saints beneath the western skies,
And hour by hour as day is breaking
Fresh hymns of thankful praise arise.*

LSB 886, "The Day Thou Gavest"

Prayer Concerns

For Safe Harbour Lutheran Church in the Caymans, that they might not grow weary in their isolation and vacancy,

For the Christians, new and veteran, in Montreal that they might continue being bright lights in a dark world,

For all of us, that we might display patience and kindness in a world that seems to be falling into despair, anxiety, and anger,

Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Support this Work

You can donate online at lcms.org/givenow/stonge. Or you may send a cheque, payable to **The LCMS**, to the addresses below. Include **St-Onge – LAC** in the memo line.

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