



ANGLICAN DIOCESE MONTREAL

The Right Reverend Mary Irwin-Gibson
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'St. Jax' Church,
St. James the Apostle
Montreal, QC

February 2, 2020

The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple

Dear Graham and members of St. Jax gathered for this Annual Meeting

In June 2015, shortly after being elected to succeed Bishop Barry Clarke as Bishop of Montreal, I learned of his dream to plant a church here. It was a bold dream and I sensed that it was an idea that the Holy Spirit had given to us in the Diocese of Montreal. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to many of us that we should embark on this exciting new mission. The Diocese of Montreal invested generously in this work through its budgeted subsidies for three years and through the Bishop's Action Appeal and through its prayers.

I want to thank and praise God the Holy Spirit for putting this project into the hearts of so many, including some of the leadership of the Church of St. James the Apostle which had run out of money to continue as they were. I want to acknowledge Mr. Mark Dunwoody who was the Diocesan Missioner who fed the idea to Bishop Barry and who met the Rev. Graham Singh.

Thank you to the leadership of the diocese who have served for three years as legal trustees along with me, Wardens: Me David Eramian, our Diocesan Chancellor and legal advisor, The Ven Robert Camara and the Ven Bill Gray before him. Thank you to Diocesan Treasurer, Ron O'Connell for his support and supervision.

Planting a new church –and in an old building at that – is not as simple as it seems! Many people hours have been spent in prayer and in meetings as we have tried to find the way forward. It has had many unexpected complexities and consequences and it has cost much more money than anyone really expected it to.

We would not be where we are today without so many of you having come on board for God's vision for ministry in this place and in this wonderful city of Montreal. I delight to see how you have grown and matured and it is really fun to be here for Baptisms and Confirmations -and yes, to answer the list of questions the children prepared for me!!

I want to thank Graham for his leadership - his passion and crazy ideas and his continuous schmoozing and networking. He has alternately made me admire him and make my head hurt!!

Today I am granting Parish Status to St. Jax based on where you have got to so far. As such, you will be entitled to elect your wardens (clergy typically appoint one of them), and elect a synod delegate and alternate.

It was established at the beginning that this congregation was a mission under the supervision of the Diocese and that it would remain so until it was self-supporting. As a new church plant, you have not had to focus on all these things while in the start up phase but I would like to be sure that you and your wardens are made aware of the Safe Church material, the Policy on Sustainable and Strategic Ministry as well as all the material in the Clergy and Warden's Handbooks and the Canons and Constitutions of the Diocese of Montreal.

While you may not be able to digest it all at once, they are reminders that the wardens and the incumbent are a legal corporation with responsibilities for this ministry that extend beyond a mere title, and that the ministry belongs to the Diocese of Montreal in the Anglican Church of Canada. Every parish reports to and is accountable to the Bishop who is the chief pastor of the parish - and with whom she shares this ministry.

It is not time to sit back and rest. We need to keep growing this congregation in giving and in mission and seek to strengthen our whole Diocese in a humble and helpful way. Please know that we are very pleased with where you have got to so far and that we all want to see St. Jax succeed. These are exciting and uncertain times for the church as a whole. The diocese is proud of what you have accomplished and is there to support you

Sincerely,

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mary Irwin-Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend Mary Irwin-Gibson