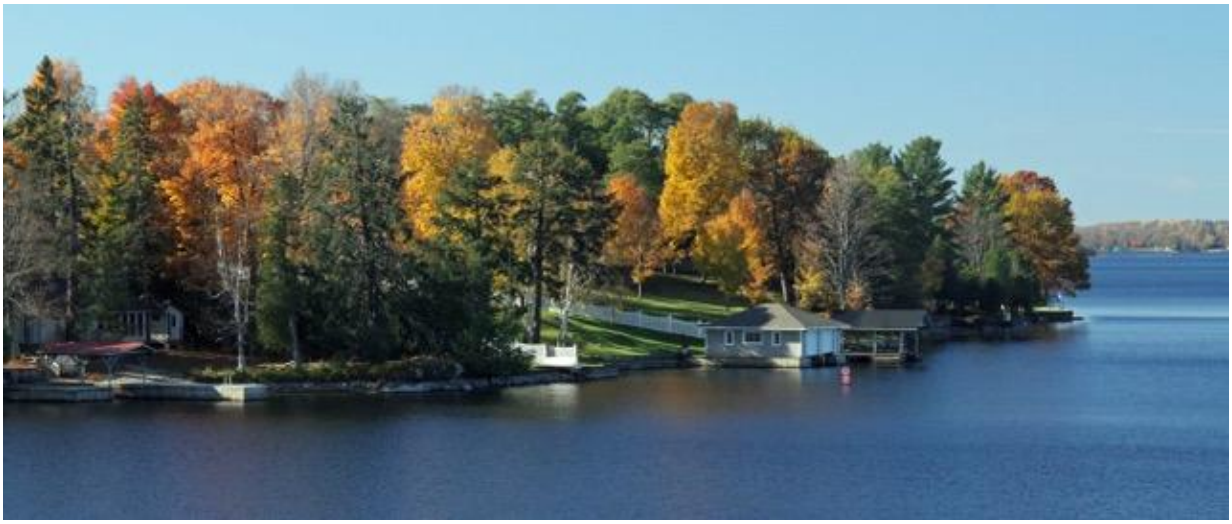
PROFILE OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, SMITHS FALLS

WHERE ARE WE?



The church is located in the picturesque Town of Smiths Falls, one block north of the Rideau Canal. The town is centrally located in Eastern Ontario and is touted as 'The Heart of the Rideau'. The church serves a population of approximately 18,000 with parishioners residing within the town as well as the Townships of Rideau Lakes, North Elmsley and Montague. Ottawa, Kingston and Brockville are easily accessible within an hour's drive. Smiths Falls is also home to a Via Rail station.

St John's website can be found here: https://www.stjohn-smithsfalls.com/ where reflections, resources, news and upcoming events are posted.

The church is of stone construction (1849) with an attached parish hall dating to the 1910s. The purchase of a new digital organ sparked a plan to remodel the chancel, improving accessibility and increasing the ability to adapt to an open and flexible space. Completion of this project is expected before the end of 2026.

In 2024 the hall was found to have mould in the basement. A process of discernment, aided by consultation and assessments by experts, resulted in a multiphase renovation plan. The abatement in the basement has been completed. Further assessment will be followed by construction to make the basement moisture and thermal proof and it will be left as an unfinished area. After choices on function and design are made, work will proceed with the renovation of the upper hall. Large holdings in the diocesan consolidated trust fund are enabling the parish to make these renovations, as well as upgrades to the parish rectory, currently rented to a retired priest. A generous housing allowance will be provided to the new incumbent.



OUR WORSHIP



Parish leaders believe that exploring alternative and progressive forms of worship will be key to attracting new members, younger families and the unchurched. Meanwhile, the parish currently has three weekly worship services, two on Sunday and one on Wednesday morning.

The main Sunday 10 a.m. service uses the BAS while the other two services use the BCP. There is an organist and choir at the 10 a.m. service. ‘Beginnings’ is a band of five singers with a

keyboardist and guitarist that provides additional worship support. There is also a baby grand piano.

Sunday School is provided September to June during the 10 a.m. Sunday service. An active Altar Guild support the worship life of the parish. The Sunday 10 a.m. worship service and special events are streamed live and are available for replay through our Facebook page https://facebook.com/stjohnanglicanchurchsmithsfalls Based on analytics, our audience spans the country and has had more than 4000 playbacks in the first 6 months of this year. An edited version of the 10 a.m. service is broadcast through our local cable station.

Two monthly worship services are also offered, one at a local long-term care home and one at a retirement residence.

BEYOND WORSHIP



Parish leaders are aware that, after a relatively short-lived resurgence in the economy of Smiths Falls, decline is happening again. The parish is conscious of the resultant social needs in the community and has chosen youth and food insecurity as the focus of their outreach efforts. St John's received a financial grant from the Diocese of Ottawa in support of an innovative new ministry, Games Night. This ministry continues to express the care of the parish for its surrounding community as well as members of the parish.

St John's also participates in ecumenical events including a monthly prayer group, Good Friday walk and World Day of Prayer. There is new energy around ecumenical relationships,

both with mainline and evangelical churches. Musical events that bring churches together are valued.

The parish has recently played a vital role in funding and launching a 34-unit affordable housing project in Smiths Falls, which officially opened in May 2024. The church engaged in local consultations with social services, Carebridge Community Support, and town council to demonstrate strong grassroots support to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). In addition, the parish contributed a $500,000 financial pledge to the project.

St John's has several active groups including music ministry, outreach, the previously mentioned Games Night ministry, Bible study on Zoom, a new mid-week Coffee Hour, a pastoral care team and cemetery board. It is blessed to receive support from retired clergy and honorary assistants.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Parish leaders believe the parish is healthy, happy and, while content, not complacent. There is a strong feeling of being a church family alongside a commitment to outreach projects in the community. St John's is outward looking and feels the town is appreciative of its contributions and role in the social fabric of Smiths Falls.

St John's feels blessed to be in a strong position financially and takes care to be a good steward of its finances and buildings. That said, a significant annual operating deficit is funded by large holdings in the diocesan consolidated trust fund. Leaders are aware of the heavy financial outlay for the recent renovations of the church and hall, and are concerned about the impact on future financial sustainability.

A three-year mission strategy, 'Thriving in the Future' was developed in 2024 the congregation. This vision statement resulted: 'God's love is the foundation of community. As members of God's community, we are called to work together to lovingly share the good news

of God's Kingdom: building relationships and discerning and meeting needs.' St John's is just over half-way through this vision plan, providing the new incumbent with the opportunity to help shape the next statement of mission.

WHO WE ARE SEEKING

St John's is seeking an incumbent who is committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those outside the parish, developing ways to offer Christian faith formation, and valuing corporate worship – both traditional and innovative.

Strengths in both administration and pastoral care are required. The incumbent needs to appreciate the value of pastoral visits to people's homes, as well as collaborating with the parish pastoral care team. Reimagining outreach and mission will be essential, as well as knowing how to take the practical steps to help bring St John's vision to fruition.

HOW TO APPLY

Please send to the Venerable Linda Hill, Executive Archdeacon:

-a letter expressing your reasons for being interested in this parish
-(for those outside the Diocese of Ottawa): a signed letter from your bishop indicating you have permission to seek an appointment in the Diocese of Ottawa
-linda-hill@ottawa.anglican.ca