



## MESSY CHURCH AT ST. GEORGE'S - OUR STORY

### The History of Messy Church

Messy Church is part of a worldwide movement which was begun in England in 2004 by Lucy Moore and now exists in twenty different countries.

You may ask, "Why the word "Messy?" In a book, "Messy Hospitality", written by Lucy Moore, she states: "The word "mess" itself came into English directly from an old French word meaning "a portion of food"; and we still talk of an 'officers' mess' where officers eat. Lucy Moore states that the old French comes originally from the Latin *missus* meaning 'something put on a table', *mittere* is the word for 'to put' or 'to send'." She elaborates much, much more in her book.

What is Messy Church? Messy Church believes and practices being Christ-centered, in an atmosphere of warm Hospitality for All Ages, offering creative activities and encouraging Creativity (at St. George's, Grafton, expressed through theme-related crafts), and Celebrating Christian faith through Bible story and song. People come as families or individuals; children must be accompanied by a parent(s) or guardian who is responsible for them during Messy Church. Messy Church must incorporate and evidence these five values. Sharing a meal together each meeting is a natural part of Hospitality. Welcoming and being open to people on arriving and throughout the session is part of Hospitality.

### Our Story

Our first Messy Church session actually began in September, 2016 but Whispers of Messy Church could be heard in January 2016 when a group of people met to plan for an Open House scheduled for June of that year. The purpose of the Open House was to gather together all the ways St. George's could be a blessing to the community and especially how the Canon Nind Hall, which was being beautifully renovated, could serve the community. I was given the awesome responsibility for implementing Messy Church. Knowing very little about Messy Church, I started looking for books about it and began searching the internet. My husband and I went to experience an operating Messy Church at St. John's Church in Ida that February. Later I went to experience a Messy Church at St. George's Church, in Trenton. The prospect of offering a Messy Church gathering once a month at St. George's was introduced at the Open House in June. A fuller presentation followed in August, assisted by the Regional Coordinator for Ontario. St. George's, Grafton, developed its own Messy Church team of volunteers and in September, the doors to our first Messy Church were opened.



## **Come to Messy Church!**

You will be warmly welcomed at the door by Clare. If this is your first visit with us, we will ask you to fill out a registration form for your child(ren) and we will make everyone a name tag. If you have no children with you, you are still welcome (after all, aren't we all children at heart)? We ask that you wear your name tag so other members of your Messy Church family can get to know you and, as well, you can get to know them. Come in to our beautiful hall and have a snack, moms and dads usually head for the tea and coffee, prepared by Sally, while children help themselves to fruit and vegetables or other light snacks prepared by Sharon. You might notice a fabulous cake on a table right there under a wall hanging of the Last Supper. By the way, this wall hanging was donated to our church by Dick's father Bill Raymond. If you look, you will see a plaque telling a bit about the making of it. Gary is amazing at baking cakes and we are very lucky that he takes the time to make a special cake for each Messy Church gathering. He has made a cake in the shape of a big fish (to go along with the story of Jonah) and another one for the parting of the Red Sea (when God led his people out of bondage), January's cake was a camp site in the desert with tents and animals and people on a journey...you get the idea. You will notice that tonight's cake directly corresponds to the lessons being taught this evening. You will be invited to join the activity centres, there are usually five or six of them. They will keep minds, young and old, engaged while they are learning about Christ's teachings and God's love. After, everyone will grab a chair and sit in a circle with Pastor Jim, sing songs, hear a bible story and say a blessing before supper. Sometimes Father Ed is there too with his wife Janina.

Ahh, supper, I forgot to mention that! Everyone will sit together at the long table and enjoy good food and friendly conversations. We pass food from one to the next as you would at home with your other family. It might be chicken strips and french fries, pancakes and sausages, pizza, hot dogs and macaroni and cheese, hamburgers...why, the list is endless. Nothing is too difficult for Joan and the kitchen staff. And dessert! Gary always serves one of his amazing cakes for dessert. And get this...the kid's serve the dessert. Isn't that great???

We know you have had a busy day but we are so very happy that you were able to spend this time with us. We hope you felt the love here. We pray God's blessings on you and your family and we look forward to seeing you back with us next month. We'll keep the Light on for you!

Clare Phillips