

# The Watch Keeper

## MISSION TO SEAFARERS

### PORT OF THUNDER BAY

# Seafarers and COVID-19



People have expressed to me a concern that seafarers are bringing COVID-19 to Canada. In reality, they are more concerned about getting COVID-19 from us.

Seafarers on a ship become like a household; they are for the most part isolated from the world and serve quarantine most of the time.

As an example, a ship that loads in the Port of Antwerp in Belgium and goes to Montreal takes about 11 days to get there at 13 knots (1 nautical mile per hour). Then it might go to Hamilton, another day, and

discharge cargo. Then come to Thunder Bay, another 4 days and wait at anchor for a week.

Regulations provide that 96 hours (4 days) before the ship enters Canadian waters it has to give notice and that notice includes the health status of the crew. If there was any concern about whether someone was sick, the ship would have to stay at anchor once it arrived in Canadian waters. So the possibility of seafarers bringing the virus to Canada is low.

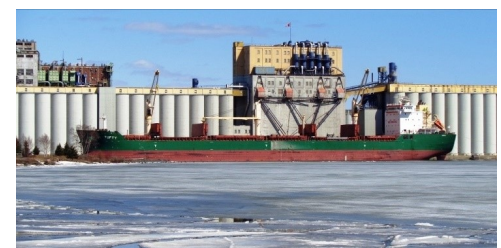
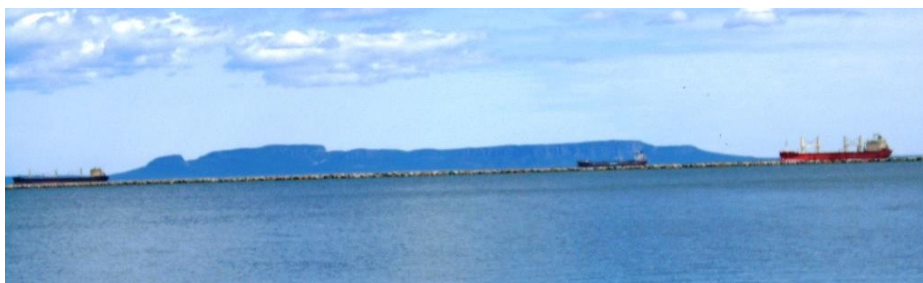
The main threat to the crew is from shore based personnel: ship's agents, stevedores,

government officials. Generally they are not allowed in the accommodation part of the ship, and interactions between them and the ship's crew take place on the deck with everyone wearing masks. Where possible, as much business is done electronically so the shore based personnel do not have to board the ship.

Since March 15 ship's crew have not been allowed ashore. That means for some they have been aboard more than 4 months. During this time crew have only been allowed ashore for crew change and medical appointments. The isolation and exhaustion affect the crew.

On June 30, Transport Canada issued Ship's Safety Bulletin (SSB) that granted permission for crew to go ashore to a seafarer's welfare facility for four hours.

One company increased provision of free Wi-Fi from 500 megabytes to 1 gigabyte per week, which enables the crew to contact home.



**M/V Trudy, the first ocean going ship in the Port in 2020**

# Happenings At The Mission

## Responding to COVID-19

March started as March does.; the year has kind of a rhythm. At the Mission in Thunder Bay the opening and closing of the St. Lawrence Seaway shapes what we do. Another thing that shapes us is that I am part-time as Chaplain and part-time as a parish priest for St. Stephen the Martyr Anglican Church. Where possible we have shifted the work of running the Mission to the winter. Also we are shaped by the fact that the community who supports us goes to camp in the summer months. This means that our Fund-raising Dinner, Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Meat Sale happen in the spring and they are organized in the winter. March is also the time when we get ready to recommission the Seafarers' Centre in readiness for the opening of the Seaway.

We were well into March's work when COVID-19 shut things down. Yet some work continued. We wanted to be ready in case any seafarers called on us for assistance. We advised the ship's agents: Jon Henderson of Lake Superior Shipping and Bill Hryb of Thunder Bay Shipping of our availability. We are fortunate to have good working relationships with both agencies.

The Board of Directors started to meet by teleconference; we were not ready for Zoom. Meeting by teleconference was important to keep the business going and the Board functions in an advisory capacity, being a forum to discuss ideas such as how we were dealing with COVID-19. We decided to hold the AGM by telecon. The AGM was necessary to renew the terms of 5 directors, a term being 2 years.

I formed a group that I called the Leadership Team that consisted of the Seafarers' Centre Manager, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Ship Visitors and Persons-in-Charge: Margaret Capon, Brad Yeo, David Stephens and Irene Wyrozub. A Person-in-Charge is the individual who runs things when I am unavailable due to vacation, being on unpaid leave or out of town. We began to meet every couple of weeks by telecon then Zoom to discuss adapting to various things.



**Chaplain-Rev. Canon Ed Swayze**

We had several requests to attend ships to sell SIM cards and credit vouchers and for shopping. We sell iVittamobile SIM cards, which is a pay as you go SIM card for mobile phones, and seafarers use them largely for the internet. A credit voucher is used to put more time on the SIM card. Shopping, sounds easy, but accounting for it is in some cases challenging. When we buy for several seafarers, the bill has to be split up and figuring out what is charged HST and what is not is not easy. Also seafarers use \$US or Euros. In some cases it takes about an hour to figure out. We also had to figure out how to reimburse our volunteer shoppers. Much work for all concerned.



In June we began to transport for crew for medical appointments and crew change. The agents reimburse us for our costs as this transportation is a responsibility of the ship to pay. We appreciate having contact with seafarers as we can sell them SIM cards and help them out in other ways.

In mid-June we could see that some shore leave would be granted to seafarers and we began to develop our COVID-19 policy and protocols and implement them. There were a

number of Zoom meetings with other MTS Canada chaplains to learn what was going on around the world and to share what each of us were doing in our own location. The van had cloth seats and we decided to get vinyl seat covers made for it so that they could be sanitized, and a plastic screen put in to separate the driver from the passengers. This cost \$3,000 and took about 6 weeks to accomplish. Thank you to David Robertson who headed this project up. A sneeze screen had to be installed in the Seafarers' Centre. Once the Public Health Inspector, Board of Directors and the Harbourmaster approved our COVID-19 policy and protocols, we set up a Zoom meeting to train our volunteers.



In July, the Board of Directors started to meet by Zoom. In order to do this, we had to provide an option at the Seafarers' Centre for those who could not use Zoom. We set a web cam up with external speakers and projected the video on a projection screen.

I am glad that we have developed the capability to use Zoom as it will continue to be useful. It allows some business and training to take place without people having to go to the Seafarers' Centre and it allows people who are travelling to take part in a meeting. All of this work leaves us in a good position to respond to seafarers needs until we return to 'normal'.

	2018	2019		2018	2019
Ocean Going Serviced	98	105	# Seafarers Transported	940	1043
Lakers/CCG Visited	1	1	# Visitors to Centre	382	359
Ship Visits: Chaplain	32	21	Tours	5	4
Ship Visits: Ship Visitor	49	30	# Ships Christmas Gift Bags given to	13	15
Days Staffed	132	134	# Christmas Gift Bags distributed	254	295



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## PORT OF THUNDER BAY

### Comments from the Chair of the Board

As 2020 began we prepared to move forward with our annual fund-raising projects: the Fund-raising Dinner in April and our Meat Sale. Events unfolded quickly around the world that changed, cancelled, and postponed plans and sent us into our homes. The response from our leadership at all levels has been well-thought out to serve the best interests, health and safety of all of those involved in caring for seafarers.

Technology has become a vital part of our communication with each other so that we are able to move from teleconferences to Zoom meetings where we can see each other. Our new reality may be with us for a long time and we are grateful for the advances that allow us to keep in touch.

We held our AGM by telecom and welcomed Margaret Capon and Rev. Matthew Diegel to the Board and Anne Zuliani who returned. Since then Cecily Hewitt resigned as she moved to North Bay. We have two vacant Director positions.

We had hoped that we would be able to postpone our Fund-raising Dinner until October; however, we have now had to cancel it as regulations on the size of gatherings and those governing the community centers will not allow for it to happen. This means a shortfall in our income.

Our Open House in September is cancelled as well. Unfortunately we do not have sufficient space to comply with distancing at the Seafarers' Centre to have an event such as this.

It has been our practice to have a Volunteer Appreciation Social in January. We were unable to do it this year at that time and had planned to make presentations at the Fund-raising Dinner; however, again that did not happen. The Board is looking to recognize our 2019 volunteers this fall.

Our support from our volunteers, Congregational Representatives and donors has been encouraging. Thankfully, we are able to access some grant money from Missions to Seafarers: Canada to supplement the cost of outfitting our van, Seafarers' Centre, and volunteers to comply with Health Unit regulations regarding COVID-19.

We are in a financially trying time. Many of the churches and church groups who donate to us are not able to do their own fund-raising.

### Board of Directors 2020/2021

Chair	Vice-Chair	Secretary	Treasurer (non-voting)
Janet Pike	Suzy Thornes	Anne Zuliani	Brad Yeo
Directors			
Margaret Capon	Rev. Matthew Diegel	Dorothy Playle	
Ingrid Price	David Stephens	Barbara Williams	
Non-voting		Ex-officio	
The Reverend Canon Ed Swayze		The Venerable Deborah Kraft	

Some of the maritime groups that fund us likewise are unable to maintain their donation. We have appreciated those groups and individuals who have been able to continue to donate.

Through the Diocese of Algoma, we have been able to apply for the Federal Government wage subsidization program, but at this point we are uncertain as to what funds we will be receiving.

There has been a tremendous amount of work for our Chaplain, Canon Ed. We are so grateful for his strong leadership and regular communication to all of us as new information is made available from various sources on what is happening due to this pandemic.

I would like to thank the members of our Board of Directors, our Watch Keepers, Drivers, Congregational Reps, donors, and supporters throughout the Diocese. These are extraordinary times and we need to respond to the needs of the seafarers as best as we can. Many are in intolerable circumstances and we pray for them and their families as they are separated from each other.

Janet Pike  
Chair

Mission to Seafarers: Port of Thunder Bay

### Meat Sale Fund-raiser

We were very fortunate to be able to hold our Annual Meat Sale even though we had to postpone it from the usual May date. Once the province moved to Stage 2 we were able to engage our Congregational Reps in collecting orders for June 29 with packing and delivery on July 8. We are grateful to European Meats for assisting us in carrying out our project. It went very smoothly for those of us packing. We were in a cleared out area and wearing masks and gloves with minimal contact from anyone else. Thank you to our Congregational Reps for your efforts and to our loyal customers for your orders. We raised \$1,084.96.



The proceeds go directly towards supporting seafarers visiting Thunder Bay from all over the world. We use these funds to help keep our Seafarers' Centre open and welcoming for seafarers. These funds also help us maintain and operate our van so that we can drive seafarers to our Centre so that they can have a break from being on board ship for extended amounts of time. Thank you.

We are looking at the possibility of another sale in the fall. We do want to ensure that there is support for this endeavour before making a final decision at our September Board of Directors meeting.

Janet Pike  
Meat Sale Coordinator

### Christmas Gift Bags

We are looking for donations for **Christmas Gift Bags** to be given to seafarers in December. Our objective is to prepare for 14 ships with 19 bags/ship or 266 bags. Donations need to be at the Seafarers' Centre by November 23, and suggested donations include mittens, gloves, writing paper, and wrapped candy.

For COVID-19, all donations will have to sit idle for a week and the people putting the bags together will have to wear masks and wash their hands frequently.

For further information visit [www.missiontoseafarers.ca/thunderbay](http://www.missiontoseafarers.ca/thunderbay) or call (807) 344-8241.

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## PORT OF THUNDER BAY

### Thank you to Those who Financially Supported the Mission

November 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020

#### CORPORATE DONORS

##### **Master \$3,000 +**

Diocese of Algoma, SAULT STE. MARIE  
Thunder Bay Port Authority, THUNDER BAY

##### **Chief Engineer \$2,999 - \$1,000**

Shirley H. & Meredith O Nelson Fund, THUNDER BAY

##### **Duty Officer \$999 - \$250**

Christ Church, NORTH BAY  
Corp of Professional Great Lakes Pilots, OWEN SOUND  
Diocese of Thunder Bay, THUNDER BAY  
Exaltation of the Holy Cross Ukrainian Catholic Church,  
THUNDER BAY

Hensen Foundation, BRANTFORD

International Ship Masters Association, OWEN SOUND  
St. John's Anglican Church, Schreiber  
St. Michael and All Angels Church, THUNDER BAY  
St. Paul's Anglican Church, THUNDER BAY  
St. Paul's Church Grassmere, HUNTSVILLE  
St. Thomas' Anglican Church, THUNDER BAY

##### **Duty Officer \$249 - \$100**

Christ Church, NORTH BAY  
Harmony United Church, THUNDER BAY  
Lakeview Presbyterian Church, THUNDER BAY  
Scalabrini Fathers Missionaries of St. Charles,  
THUNDER BAY  
St. James Anglican Church Guild, MURILLO  
St. Luke's Cathedral ACW, SAULT STE. MARIE  
St. Mark's Anglican Church, ROSSLYN  
St. Mary's Anglican Church, NIPIGON  
St. Peter's Anglican Church, SAULT STE. MARIE  
St. Saviour's ACW, BLIND RIVER  
St. Stephen the Martyr Anglican Church, THUNDER BAY  
Trinity - St. Alban's ACW, BALA  
USWA/TCU, Unit Lodge 650, THUNDER BAY

##### **Friend < \$100**

Gathering Table, THUNDER BAY  
Parish of St. Joseph & St. George ACW, Richards Landing  
St. George's Anglican Church, THUNDER BAY  
St. Thomas' Anglican Church, THUNDER BAY

#### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Robert Aldrich  
Jean Hall-Armstrong & Ted Armstrong  
Chris Bailey  
Jyl & Frank Barclay  
Margaret Boone  
Margaret Capon

The Rev'd Canon Paul Carr  
Paul & Deborah de Bakker  
Marshall & Lynda Farquharson  
Barbara Fontaine  
Scott & Rhonda Gibson  
The Most Rev'd Anne Germond  
Inda & Doug Goodale  
Glenys Huskie  
Philip Jarvis  
Camille Landry  
Don Liggins  
David Linn  
Patricia & Lorne Mark  
Dorothy Martell  
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Melissa Sdao  
Elizabeth Sim  
Carolyn Skinner  
Sarah Smart  
Margaret Stefak  
David Stephens  
Paul & Liz Straiton  
The Rev'd Canon Ed Swayze  
Margaret Tollefsen  
Elizabeth Whalley  
Brad Yeo  
Anne Zuliani



**Mission To Seafarers Port of Thunder Bay  
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(807) 344-8241**

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www.missiontoseafarers.ca/thunderbay  
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To donate:

- **Interac E-transfer** send an e-transfer request through your financial institution to mtstreasurer@tbaytel.net;
- **www.CanadaHelps.org**; or
- the **Electronic Offering Program**; see www.dioceseofalgoma.com or an Anglican parish.

## Volunteers

**John Proctor** retired this year. John has been a volunteer since 1995. He has been a very reliable Watch Keeper, Driver and Ship Visitor. As a young man John went to sea, which gave him a heart for seafarers. Thank you John for your commitment to looking after the welfare of seafarers.

**Wendy Ratz** joined us this year as the congregational representative for St. Mark's Anglican Church and decided to help out as a Watch Keeper and Driver.

**Sister Cecily Hewitt** was called back to her community in North Bay. While she was with us she was Watch Keeper, Driver, Seafarers' Centre Manager, Person-in-charge, Director and Secretary. Most of all Cecily enjoyed talking with the seafarers. Thank you Cecily for all that you did with us.

## In Memory of

**Denis Allen** - Dennis died this spring. He worked for the Thunder Bay Port Authority as the maintenance person for Keefer Terminal.

**Bernice Richmond** - Bernice died this spring. She had been living in Mississauga. Bernice was a Life Member of the Mission and she had worked as a Watch Keeper 1999 to 2004 with her husband George as was St. John's Anglican Church MtS Congregational Rep.