



IN THIS ISSUE



Trip to the Holy Land
| Inspires One-of-a-Kind Vestment

PAGES 4 & 5



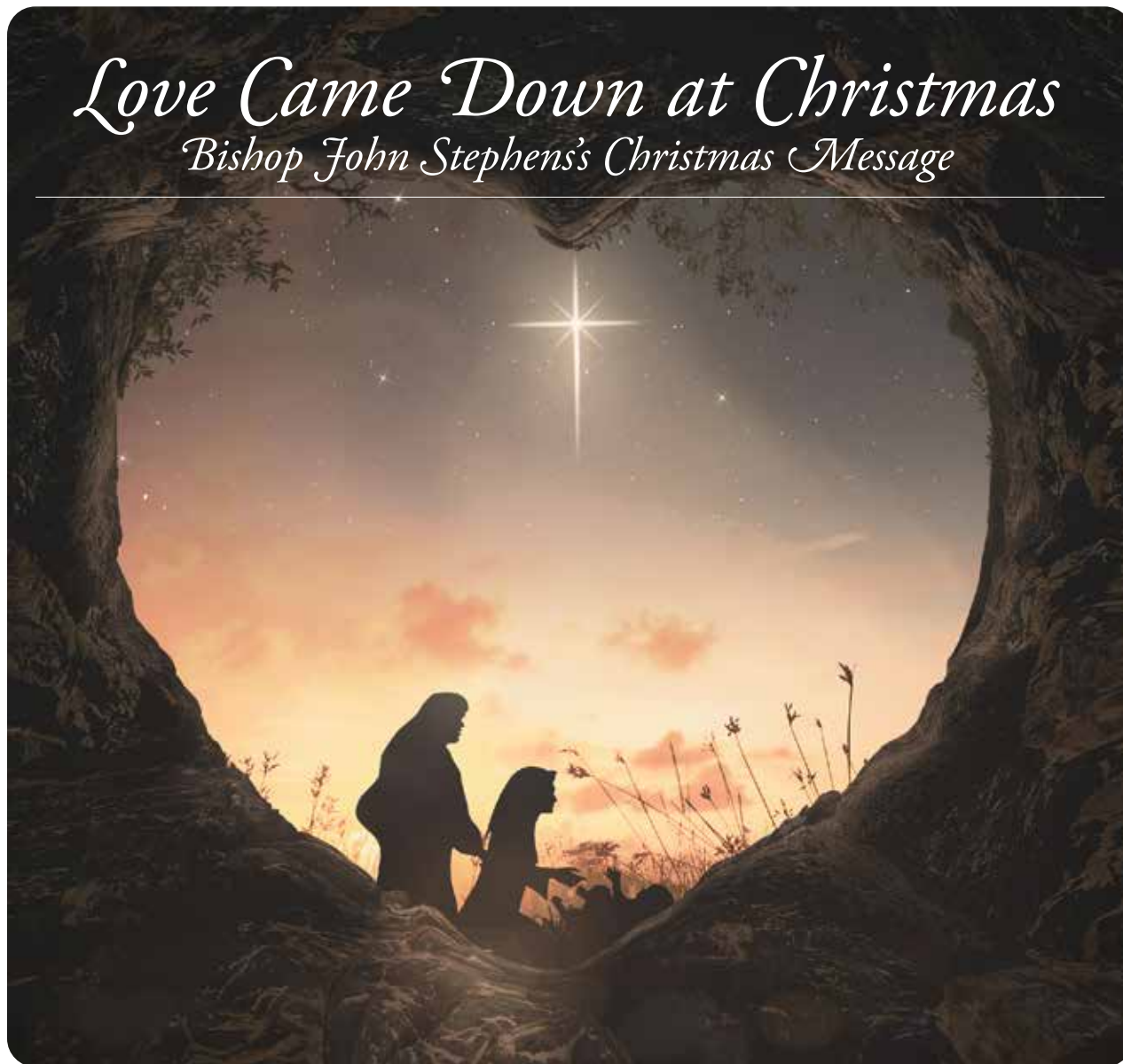
The Call to Prayer, the Call to Remember

PAGE 11



The Elephants in the Room
| Induction of the Rev. David Taylor in Ocean Park

PAGES 14 – 16



Love Came Down at Christmas
Bishop John Stephens's Christmas Message

Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!

There is a beautiful hymn written by Christina Georgina Rossetti entitled *Love Came Down at Christmas*. Perhaps you have sung it a number of times as well. Let me remind you of the lyrics of the first verse:

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas;
star and angels gave the sign.*

The birth of Jesus Christ is filled with many interpretations and theological understandings as the timeless God entered into time in the form of Jesus Christ. But it is celebrated in an enormous number of ways that seem far removed from God with us. Christmas is often filled with chocolate, coloured lights and glistening trees, and while all this is beautiful, it can be hard to focus on that love coming down at Christmas.

For at the heart of Christmas is the process of coming to understand more about God and God's relationship with humanity. A relationship centred on grace and love, seen in forgiveness and blessing, grounded in justice and hope. We discover that God is desperate to have a closer relationship with us, inviting us to uncover more about the meaning of abundant life in this world and the world to come. All of this is wrapped up in our celebrations of the birth of Jesus but often that gets missed in the commercials on television. But our hymns often get to the heart of it and Christina Rossetti's is no exception.

Love Came Down at Christmas, she wrote long ago. And ever since we have been trying to fully interpret and understand what that means in our living and our praying and our calling. That God so loved the world that God came to us to reveal our true purposes and awaits our responses. For at the heart of life, at the centre of living, at the core of what it means to be human, we discover that it is love, love of God and love of neighbour that shapes and informs us. And Christmas is about naming this discovery.

The third verse of Christina Rossetti's hymn draws us deeper into this discovery:

*Love shall be our token;
love be yours and love be mine;?
love to God and others,
love for plea and gift and sign.*

Archbishop Michael Curry wrote this:

"When love is the way, the earth will be a sanctuary. When love is the way, we will lay down our swords and shields down by the riverside to study war no more. When love is the way, there's plenty of room for all of God's children. When love is the way, we actually treat each other, well, like we are actually family."

May your Christmas be filled with love. Love that came down at Christmas to change and transform to help us see anew that indeed God is in our midst. God is in our midst, inviting us to live in imitation of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. To live like Jesus in ways that transform our lives and our world. May your Christmas celebrations honour this love of God that came to us in a manger long ago and continues to come to us each day.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! ✦

Blessings & Peace
+ J



**Randy Murray,
Communications Officer
for the diocese
of New Westminster**

**A message to the diocese
from Bishop John Stephens**

one—2009—of the 22 regular, electoral, and special diocesan Synods, from 2004–2023), or a whole host of other communications tools, Randy has kept in touch with us and all of us in touch with one another. Many will know Randy to be on the end of a camera lens when covering an Episcopal Visit to a parish (or other place of worship). Many will know of his sharp wit and ability to get the best photograph at an ordination or confirmation liturgy. Many will know of his guidance and good advice when connecting with local media around a local issue or when sourcing quality components for a parish's A/V software and hardware needs. Randy has many gifts and talents, and we will greatly miss him. ✦

Randy Murray has been the Communications Officer and *Topic* editor for our diocese for the past 14 ½ years. He has brought a vast array of talent and competence to this role and has done so with good humour and a deep love for the Church. Randy will retire from his role on December 15, and we will miss him very much.

Every parish and worshipping community will know Randy Murray. Whether through the weekly email, *Topic*, the website, social media, Synod (he produced all but

For more information about staff changes and in particular the Communications role, please visit the diocesan website and stay tuned for additional coverage in an upcoming issue of *Topic*.



Carol

By Herbert O'Driscoll

*Jesus, babe of Bethlehem's manger,
Helpless in your newborn hour,
Born in days of death and danger,
Herod's hatred, Roman power;
We who watch as countless children
Daily die in cruel ways,
Trapped in endless human conflicts,
Help us not to turn our gaze.*

*Orphaned child, her city ruined,
Dangers in its shattered streets,
Lead her to some sheltering haven
Where with care and love she meets;
Freezing child in storm tossed waters
Watching as his parents drown,
Children of an ethnic cleansing
Crying in a burning town.*

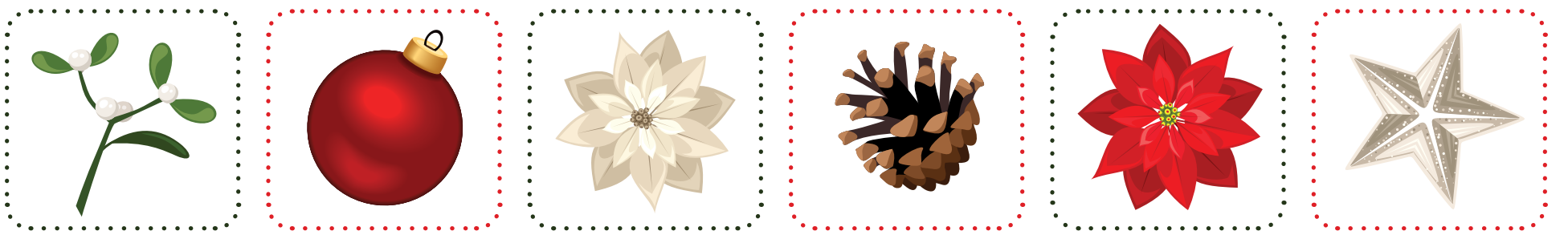
*Children too in every city
Known to us in this our land,
Living without love or pity
Lives we barely understand;
Children lonely, unprotected,
Children mentally confused,
Children, some by drugs affected,
Children cruelly abused.*

*Jesus whom we know as loving,
Lord of all things good and true,
Show us that when children suffer
Serving them is serving you.
Jesus, Prince of Peace in glory,
Guide us that our wars may cease.
Help us change our human story.
Grant us wisdom, grant us peace. ✠*

.....
Suggested tune: Westminster Abbey • Editor



PHOTO J. Chizhe (iStock ID#1291892758)



Growing communities of faith in Jesus Christ to serve God's mission in the world.



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The diocese of New Westminster

The Anglican Church in the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley and on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, located on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish First Nations, consisting of 62 parishes and 4 worshipping communities.



The Bishop of New Westminster

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Thank you!

Dear Topic Readers

You can help communicate the Good News of the arrival of the Light of the World by passing on to friends, family, and neighbours the web location of the diocese of New Westminster's Find-a-Church pages at

www.vancouver.anglican.ca/find-a-church

There are easy to access parish pages grouped in 11 deanery sections with regional location information on the entry graphics and detailed location information for each parish. Many of the parish pages may also include specific listings for Advent and Christmas worship and events including information about livestreaming and Zoom gatherings; inviting everyone to participate. All are welcome!



It is our privilege to produce Topic and we are extremely grateful for our readers and the wonderful support we receive from Around the Diocese



TO YOU AND YOURS THE MERRIEST OF CHRISTMAS'S & MANY BLESSINGS FOR 2024!

Randy Murray, Topic Editor and Jennifer Ewing, Topic Designer

International Students Seeking Rental Rooms

A request from the Vancouver School of Theology

Who are we?

The Vancouver School of Theology (VST) is located on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus. We are called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders in collaboration with the Indigenous Church and people of other faith traditions. We welcome students from across Canada and around the world to share in our inclusive and affirming community of learning.

What do we need?

As we embarked on the fall academic term of 2023, we recognized that some new international students needed help to find affordable rental rooms. This concern has prompted us to reach out to our church partners with a special request. If you have property to rent, either a room (\$500-\$850 a month) or a house (2-3 bedrooms, \$2,000-\$3,000 a month), we would love to hear from you. Your openness to offer a room in your home or to share this information within your congregation would be immensely appreciated.

Why offer international students a place to live? Why specifically VST international students?

- To provide incoming students with more than just a place to stay.
- You offer newcomers a soft landing and supportive community during their academic journey, making a significant impact on their transition.
- To earn additional income.
- To join in supporting VST's mission and vision by cultivating an inclusive environment that values diversity.



PHOTO Kikujarm (iStock ID#1405531469)

How to get in touch.

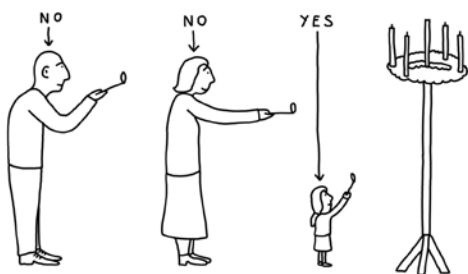
If you have a room available or know someone who might, please contact:

Astrid Melatunan at 604.771.9207 or vststudentbuddy@vst.edu or Laura Chen at 604.822.0824 or lchen@vst.edu

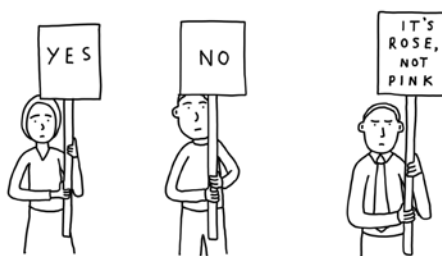
Your generosity in opening up your homes can truly make a positive difference in the lives of these students and contribute to the vibrancy of our international community. Although the fall term is well underway, housing shortages will likely continue in the future so please contact us anytime.

We would like to partner with you to support international and domestic students from elsewhere in Canada to ensure a smooth transition to Vancouver and enrich the community for all. Thank you for considering this wonderful opportunity to extend your hospitality. ✦

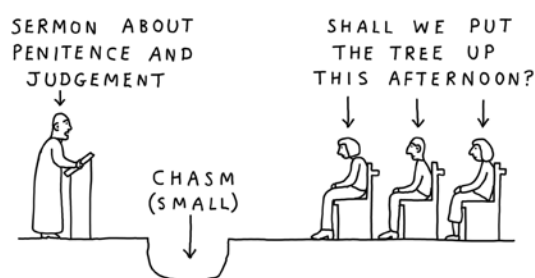
ADVENT CONTROVERSIES



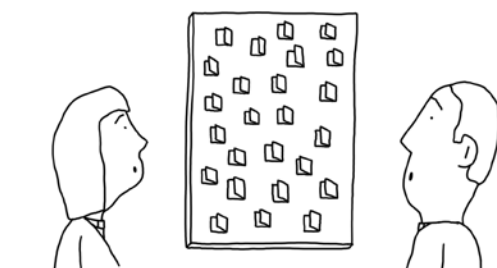
WHO WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES ON THE ADVENT WREATH?



SHOULD THE WREATH HAVE ONE PINK CANDLE?



WHETHER TO PREACH ON CHALLENGING ADVENT THEMES



WHO COULD HAVE EATEN THE VESTRY ADVENT CALENDAR CHOCOLATES?



A Heart Full of the Art & the Shape of the Holy Lands

ALECIA GREENFIELD

Regional Dean of Kingsway; Vicar of the Parish of Holy Cross; Special Projects Missioner, Program Department, diocese of New Westminster

I went to Jerusalem in April. At the time, the region had a palpable tension, but the violence was limited. I received the Hiltz scholarship¹ to attend St. George's College² in Jerusalem. It was amazing. The team at St. George shepherded us throughout the land. In addition to Christian sites, we visited a Palestinian refugee camp, the Dome of the Rock, and the Western Wall. You can find all the traditional pictures on the internet so I won't go on and on (but I could—the trip was wonderful, if you can, sometime in the future, you should go. The links are listed at the end).

I came home with my head full of an awareness of the simmering tensions between people and my heart full of the art and the shape of the Holy Lands. I have been integrating this experience into my faith through art. So, instead of the big pictures, let me show you the little details that caught my imagination and share how this trip has inspired me.

In Israel, I saw grapes and images of grape vines everywhere. Carved in wood and stone and pieced in mosaic, grape vines appeared in Christian and Islamic sites. Jesus said, "I am the true vine" (*John 15:1*), and I whispered these words as I sewed.

I also saw (rather obviously) a lot of crosses. I was captivated by the pilgrims' crosses cut into the walls of the



Alecia in Jerusalem. PHOTOS Courtesy of Alecia Greenfield

church of the Holy Sepulchre by people like me (but before, there were rules against this practice). Crosses punctuate the Jerusalem roofline, and decorative crosses are everywhere, for example, this iron grill in Nazareth.

And birds. I was surprised by all the birds and the diversity of birds in the holy art of Israel. I might have been paying particular attention to the spirituality of birdwatching after the Rev. Jessica Schaap took the Parish of Holy Cross on a birdwatching trip earlier this year. But I came home with many images of birds. There were mosaics of peacocks, ducks, sparrows, cranes, chickens, and doves. We saw a mural by Banksy (the infamous pseudonymous England-based Street artist, political activist, and film director) near the Palestinian wall and doves in Razzouk tattoos.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

¹ For more information about the Hiltz scholarship go to <https://cep.anglican.ca/institutions/the-most-reverend-frederick-james-hiltz-scholarship-fund/>

² To learn more about St. George's College in Jerusalem go to <https://www.saintgeorgescollegejerusalem.com/>



Grape detail on the ceiling of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



Cross in the gate of the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth.



Crosses cut by pilgrims at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



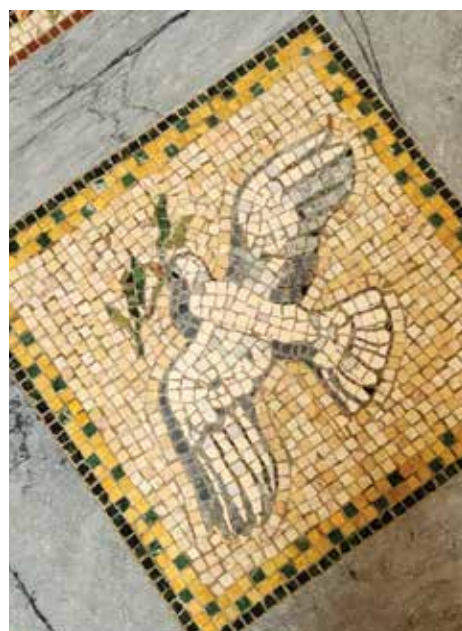
Grape detail on the wall of the Mosque, the Dome of the Rock.



Crosses roofline in Jerusalem.



Grape carving in St. George Anglican Cathedral Jerusalem.



Bird, Floor mosaic.



Bird, Banksy in Palestine.



Bird, St. George Porter Fellow, Amy Taylor's tattoo.



A Journey of Growth & Understanding

On Wednesday, October 11, 2023, the Chair of the Diocesan Refugee Unit (DRU), Shannon Muir, ODNW, forwarded the following letter to diocesan communications written by the parents of a family sponsored through the diocese of New Westminster, Abdul Hussein and Gulsoom (their surnames have been kept private at the request of

the DRU). It is compelling and beautifully written. The new arrivals from Afghanistan began their lives in Canada, reunited with their elder daughter, August 27, 2022. They gave permission to Shannon for it to be shared with the diocese and beyond. • Editor



PHOTO Oleksii Lisknoih (iStock ID#1089929808)

As we sit here and pour our hearts onto this page, a flood of memories washes over us, leaving us both overwhelmed and grateful. These memories are the fragments of our journey, some shimmering with the brilliance of cherished moments, while others are shadowed by the weight of things we'd rather forget. It's been a year since we embarked on this life-altering journey, a year of tumultuous emotions, yet one filled with unwavering hope.

Exactly one year ago this month (August of 2022), we set foot on Canadian soil, brimming with excitement and anxiety. We knew this was a path that would lead us to something extraordinary—the chance to provide our children with a life, one we never had ourselves. Every step we took was a promise to make a better life, a promise that would shape the very essence of our existence.

Our journey to Canada was not just about reuniting with our beloved daughter, who had been separated from us for six long years. It was also about reconnecting with a piece of her life that had unfolded in this distant land. The anticipation was electric, like a current running through our veins, as we imagined the place where our daughter had navigated the challenges of her teenage years, all alone.

But as we arrived in Canada, reality hit us like an icy wave. Everything was unfamiliar—no friends who spoke our language, no familiar faces, and an unquenchable yearning for the home we left behind in Afghanistan. The warmth of our home country, its traditions, and the embrace of family and friends were suddenly replaced by a cold, lonely void. The initial days were a maze of confusion, a sea of faces and languages we couldn't comprehend.

We ventured into this unknown world, armed with simple phrases like "Hi" and "How are you?" in English. Our children found companions, but it wasn't without its hardships. The first day of school etched a painful memory in our hearts as our kids were taunted as "Taliban's kids." It was a stark reminder that we were outsiders in a foreign land, a reality that pierced our souls.

Despite the struggles, we persevered. Slowly, we started to feel a sense of belonging. We adapted, not just to the language and culture, but to the resilience that had been dormant within us. In our quest for acceptance, we unearthed the beauty of Canada, its diverse culture, its delectable cuisine, and the kindness of its people.

The journey was never easy, but it was a journey of growth and understanding. It taught us to value the simple joys of communication, to piece together sentences even when we stumbled over words. Our children found not just friends but

a sense of belonging, and though the path was fraught with challenges, they emerged stronger.

Yet, amid all the triumphs and tribulations, the shadows of our past lingered. The label "Taliban's kids" was a wound that ran deep, a reminder of the prejudice that lingers in even the most welcoming places. We were asked about our first year in Canada, and how could we put into words the rollercoaster of emotions? We had found freedom, a home, and each other, but there was a part of us that still longed for the life we had left behind.

Back in Afghanistan, we had built a life, a sanctuary of security, and a sense of purpose. But that life was shattered when we saw history repeating itself, regressing to a time when ethnicity and education were reasons to hide from the world. Our escape from Afghanistan 26 years ago had been an arduous journey, and when we returned after the Taliban left in 2002, we never imagined we would be compelled to leave again, to seek safety, education, and freedom from persecution based on our Hazara ethnicity.

The past year served as a stark reminder to the world that war is a scourge that knows no bounds. It can destroy countless lives, leaving emotional scars that may never heal. At the beginning, we clung to the hope of hearing the words, "The war is over; you can come home." But those words never came. Instead, we learned to make Canada our home, a place where our children could thrive without the shadows of discrimination.

In recent months, we've been blessed to encounter incredible souls who have touched our lives in profound ways. They stood by us in our darkest hours, celebrating our joys and sharing our sorrows. Our sponsors, who opened their hearts and homes to us, not only provided support but also imparted valuable lessons about compassion and generosity.

To those who have supported us from afar, your contributions have shifted our perspectives and made us feel truly welcome. We'll never forget the kindness we've received, and we pledge to pay it forward, ensuring that newcomers who follow in our footsteps receive the same warmth and support we've been fortunate to experience.

Our journey has been marked by resilience, love, and the unwavering belief that in the face of adversity, the human spirit can shine. As we reflect on this past year, our hearts are filled with gratitude for the opportunity to start anew, to create a life filled with promise and hope. Our story is a testament to the enduring strength of the human spirit, and we are determined to share that strength with others, to make this world a better place for all who seek refuge and a chance at a better life.

Sincerely,
Abdul Hussain & Gulsoom ✝

A Heart Full of the Art & the Shape of the Holy Lands

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

When I got home, I noticed how many circles there were. A circle is a symbol of unity and promises. We use circular halos to mark saints and rings to mark the promises of bishops. Rings are symbols of union. I feel uncomfortable when I reflect on the conflict in Israel/Palestine and name the many broken promises in this region. The disconnect between the art of promises of peace and the lived reality is obvious.

When I returned home, I processed and prayed my experiences through my own art. I put together grapes, crosses, birds, and circles and made a cope (because a cope is a big beautiful shape). As I added circles, I prayed for unity and peace and kept promises in Israel, Palestine, and here, where I live and worship. ✝



Cope, front.

Cope, back.



Cope, detail.



Cope, detail.

After this issue of Topic had gone to final layout it was announced that the Rev. Greenfield has been appointed Rector of St. Anselm's, Point Grey (UBC Endowment Lands) effective January 1, 2024. In the next issue with contributions from the Rev. Greenfield she will have a new byline. • Editor



So, You Want to Do an Instructed Eucharist

JESSICA SCHAAP

Regional Dean of Kingsway; Vicar of the Parish of Holy Cross; Special Projects Missioner, Program Department, diocese of New Westminster

Juan Oliver, an Anglican liturgy scholar is keen to recover people's experience of worship as meaningful and formative. One way to bring intentional awareness to what we do in worship and why we do it is an *Instructed Eucharist*. These can happen annually, at a newcomer's class, during preparation for baptism or confirmation, or another good time in your parish's calendar. An *Instructed Eucharist* offers a time to slow down and learn again, or for the first time, the core elements of our Sunday liturgy and why they matter.

A number of colleagues have developed resources to help with putting an *Instructed Eucharist* together. Others farther afield in the Anglican church have done so too. Feel free to use and adapt as may work best for your community.

An Instructed Eucharist Bulletin¹

Rev. Liz Hamel annotated the Eucharist on page 185 of the *Book of Alternative Services*. It's in an easy to read and accessible format, providing people with lots of details that free up the presider from talking too much during the Instructed Eucharist itself.

Dean Christopher Pappas offered an annotated bulletin during a recent guided Eucharist. The sidebars could be used any week of the year to offer quick and easy formation on the Eucharist for newcomers and longtimers.

St. Clement's in North Vancouver produced a welcome book. It's available to newcomers and describes each part of the Eucharist with pictures.

An Instructed Eucharist Script¹

During the *Instructed Eucharist* there are natural pauses where a few minutes of core teaching can take place. For example:

1. After the opening/gathering hymn
2. During the homily time
3. After the offertory
4. After the prayer after communion

In the link, you can find an *Instructed Eucharist* with script for two speakers in dialogue following the four pauses. With thanks to the Rev. Rhonda Waters who developed this while serving at Christ Church Cathedral in Montreal.

There is another script in the form of a seven-part commentary on the actions and meanings of the Eucharist. It was written and produced by the Ven. Kevin Hunt at St. James', Vancouver. It could also be published and shared as one document.

And more! You can find another two-hander script

"Whenever my niece complains that what we do in church is meaningless to her, I sit up and take notice. Her expectation that this event we call liturgy should be meaningful is right on target..."

Juan Oliver, *Shaped by Worship: Liturgy & Formation*



PHOTO (iStock ID#140081906)

from the Rev. Laurel Dahill at St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge. The presider is accompanied by a second speaker who provides the teaching on each part of the liturgy.

An Instructed Eucharist for Kids

And for elementary-aged kids during the *Instructed Eucharist*, or any Sunday really, these two books are helpful:

What We Do in Church: An Anglican Child's Activity Book | A fun teaching and activity book for ages 7–11. Once you buy it you have a license to make copies of the activity sheets for your church. (Available on Amazon.ca)

We Gather at This Table | A lovely introduction to the Eucharist written by Episcopal priest, Anna Ostense Moore. This book is for younger kids ages 5–7 and can be read out loud to pre-readers. (Available at Indigo/Chapters)

Godly Play also has a few stories that allow children to explore and wonder and learn about the Eucharist including *The Good Shepherd and World Communion*, *The Circle of the Eucharist*, and *The Symbols of the Eucharist*. The first two are available for borrowing from the Synod office.

An Instructed Eucharist for at Home or in Small Group Study

If an *Instructed Eucharist* isn't something you can do or if you want to share something for folks who won't be able to make it, there's other ways to intentionally form people in the deep spirituality and meaning of the Eucharist. Here are some suggestions:

*How2Charist: A Digital Instructed Eucharist*² | This beautifully produced video by a priest in the Episcopal church takes you step-by-step through the celebration of the Eucharist. Watch and reflect as an individual or in a small group. All materials are free to download.

Pilgrim: The Eucharist | This is a slim volume for small groups to do a six-week study of the Eucharist together and grow in understanding of how this rite forms us as followers of Jesus and gives us vision and strength to live in the realm of God. Each session follows a simple laid-out pattern of prayer, discussion, reflection, and brief readings for the week. St. Catherine's, Capilano has used it several times to positive response. (Available on Amazon.ca)

*Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us*³ (two-part video) | Ron Rolheiser, OMI, a Canadian Roman Catholic priest, offers a two-part talk on the many meanings and spiritual depths of the Eucharist. He explores what it means to gather and celebrate this mystery of love. The videos are free to watch and download. ✦

¹ The *Instructed Eucharist Bulletin and Script* files mentioned are available to download at <https://tinyurl.com/teachingeucharist>

² *How2Charist: A Digital Instructed Eucharist* is available at <https://how2charist.com>

³ *Part 1 of Eucharist: God's Way of Embracing Us* is available at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/848952727>

Family by Choice

The ACW's Fall Gathering for 2023

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

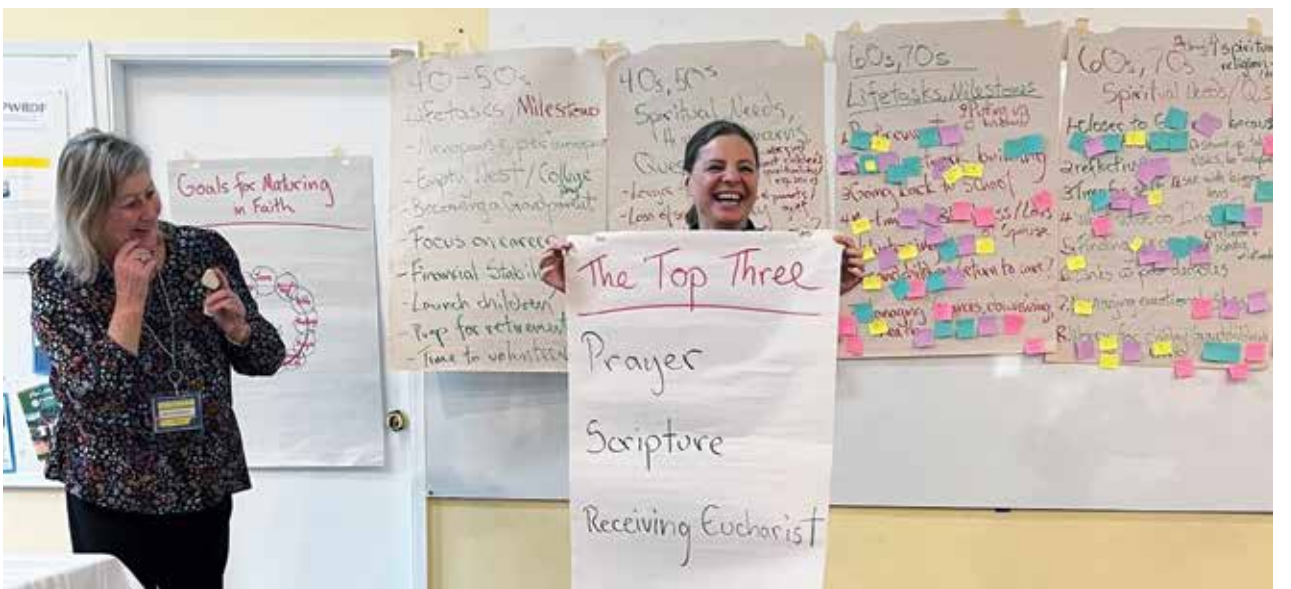
On Saturday, October 14, 2023, from 10am–2:30pm the Anglican Church Women (ACW) of the diocese of New Westminster met for their 3rd Annual Fall Gathering. The Gathering took place at the Parish of St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge which as many of us know boasts the oldest church building in the diocese. It was constructed in 1859 on a piece of land by the Fraser in the village of Derby just west of the present Fort Langley. Twenty-three years later it was dismantled and floated across the Fraser River to a location near its present site and reassembled at River Road and Laity Street in Maple Ridge. The venerable building and the ACW both have a rich history. St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge is not a museum, it is open and active, a place of compassion, hope and healing and the 2023 version of the ACW in our diocese is also open and active. The diocesan ACW is growing, rejuvenated, relevant and ready to move forward.

The theme for the meeting can be summed up in these two pieces of Scripture:

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:20)

"Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from her earnest counsel." (Proverbs 27:9)

The vicar of St. John's, the Rev. Laurel Dahill presided and preached at the Eucharist that was celebrated following registration, and the keynote speaker/facilitator was the Rev. Jessica Schaap, diocesan Missioner for Christian Formation on Synod staff. Her topic: *The lifelong journey of maturing into the mind, heart, and practice of Christ.*



President of the Diocesan ACW, Kelly Bowman, the Rev. Jessica Schaap, and some newsprint sheets. PHOTO Amelia Foster

In her report to diocesan communications about the Gathering, ACW President Kelly Bowman had this to say:

"The sermon by the Rev. Laurel Dahill was wonderful. So inspiring and uplifting. The Rev. Jessica Schaap's address was excellent. I've never seen the women so involved, full of ideas and laughter. The Rev. Dahill's homily had us chuckling and touched our hearts with the message that we are 'family by choice.' She reminded us of the good works we do and encouraged us to continue. The Rev. Jessica Schaap thoroughly engaged the women with her afternoon presentation inspiring all of us

to think and participate. In her focus on the lifelong journey the Rev. Schaap broke up the years as 40–50, 60–70 and 80–90+. We discussed life tasks/milestones and spiritual needs for each age group. Our focus became the 60–70 age group. Not only was it informative but also enlightening. I believe it brought out some of our emotions and concerns from which some might have been trying to ignore or hide. It was great to find we all shared so much and could find strength, comfort, and peace through each other. Coming to understand our Life

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

The Missing Ones

KERRY BAISLEY, ODNW

Missioner for Indigenous Justice, diocese of New Westminster

In May 2021, 28 months ago, our country and the world were shocked by a report from the Tk'emlups te Secwepemc people that a possible 215 unmarked graves were identified in the orchard of the former Indian Residential School. The number "215" became a shorthand for residential schools and undocumented graves.

Numbers become dangerous when they consciously or unconsciously package or contain the broader issues and concerns present in conversations about residential schools in Canada. The Tk'emlups te Secwepemc people realized this and stopped using the number and began talking about *Le Estwicwicye* (*The Missing Ones*).

The Missing Ones who never returned home, *The Missing Ones* who never got to see loved ones again, *The Missing Ones* who were not cared for by the Residential School System when they were alive and not respected by the institutions and the Church after they died. Some may find this hard to accept, here are some numbers from Volume 4 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Final Report, *Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Executive Summary*:

- 32% of the recorded 3,200 deaths on the TRC Register did not record the name of the child who died.
- 23% of those records did not record the gender of the child who died.
- 49% of those records did not record the child's cause of death.

Read those statistics out loud. Now think of them as your children and grandchildren.

This may help us appreciate some of the thoughts and feelings present when the Stó:lō Nation's team *Xyolhmet ye Syewiqwelh* (*Taking Care of Our Children*) presented their findings on September 21, 2023.

Bishop John has spoken about the presentation in his Pastoral Letter distributed to the clergy and lay leaders in every parish of the diocese. It is as follows:

"To the Parishes and Worshipping Communities of the diocese of New Westminster

On Thursday, September 21, Chief David Jimmie, President of the Stó:lō Nation Chiefs' Council, invited me to attend a meeting where the Xyolhmet ye Syewiqwelh (Taking Care of Our Children) team reported their findings. The event was titled qwólqwel swáyel (telling news, talking-together-day). I was able to attend through Zoom.

At the gathering it was announced that 158 children were known to have died at four institutions in Stó:lō territory, all of them part of the Indian Residential School System. One of those schools, All Hallows, Yale was operated by the Anglican Church in our diocese. The other facilities were St. Mary's Residential School, the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, and the Coqualeetza Hospital.

All these institutions were part of the national program to separate Indigenous children from their families and their communities and take "the Indian out of the child" in a process many now categorize as cultural genocide.

The Truth and Reconciliation Committee and its 94 Calls to Action were part of the Class Action Settlement process seeking acknowledgement, responsibility and compensation for the actions that took place in these institutions.

The research discovered that many of the 158 deaths were related to illness, a few due to accidents and some of the causes of death are unknown. The All Hallows School closed in the late 1920s and five children are known to have died there due to illness.

I cannot describe how deeply saddened and ashamed I am that the Anglican Church along with our Federal Government and the society in general were part of all of this. To hear the descriptions in the truth telling on September 21 was disturbing, to say the very least.

Please know that we continue to offer any help that we can to try to paint the fullest picture possible of all that took place. Please know that we do not in any way deny that the Anglican Church was part of this, and we have much work to do in relation to Reconciliation. Please know that on behalf of this diocese of New Westminster I apologize as sincerely and completely as I can that this happened as part of the Anglican Church's history on these lands.

I continue to pray for more truth-telling and greater movement toward Reconciliation in our Church and in Canada. We have much work to do."

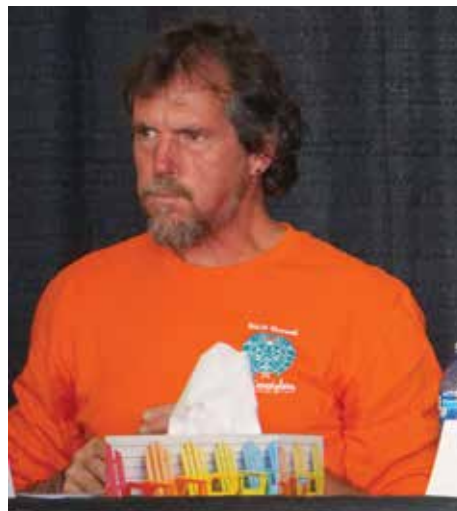
We often "come away" from these experiences wondering what to do. The Stó:lō people shared five issues that need follow up and we can explore ways to support four of those five issues.

- The Canadian government is not providing access to the Federal Historical Document Data Base. All the information gathered by the federal government is not being shared and this means the First Nations must duplicate work already done because the Federal government will not share. You can ask MP's and other government representatives why that is so.
- There are legal barriers for the materials housed at the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as they are controlled by Manitoba's Freedom and Privacy regulations. Asking questions about this situation is also something you can do.
- Long term financial commitments are required to continue the healing work of identifying *The Missing Ones* and informing their families.
- And finally, telling the Prime Minister that if he is truly serious about Reconciliation, he will consider the needs and relationships of First Nations People before changing the Minister of Crown — Indigenous Relations. It is all about re-establishing respectful relationships.

There is always something you can do to support and advance the work of Reconciliation. ✦



Blanketing Ceremony. PHOTOS Kerry Baisley



Dr. David Schaepe (left), Project Lead and Chief David Jimmie (right) at the September 21 Gathering



Family by Choice The ACW's Fall Gathering for 2023

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tasks and Spiritual needs was rewarding. Most importantly, we had fun doing it."

By the number of newsprint sheets filled with ideas and taped to the walls it is obvious that the participants were engaged.

There were 49 ACW members present, four visitors, and three members of St. John the Divine who prepared and served the lunch of homemade soup and sandwiches. The ACW folks in attendance really enjoyed their time at the diocese's oldest church building and it looks promising that the Parish of St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge will be forming an ACW group in the future.

Kelly's promotional parish visits to invite women in our diocese into Circles of Friendship and Community are going well. She has visited several parishes and is booked to visit more into 2024.

- October 1, 2023
- St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge (currently without an ACW group)

- October 15, 2023
- St. Cuthbert, North Delta

- November 26, 2023
- Christ Church, Hope

- January 7, 2024
- St. Francis in the Woods, West Vancouver (currently without an ACW group)

- February 4, 2024
- St. John's, Port Moody (ACW group celebrating 125 years)

- February 11, 2024
- St. Paul's, Vancouver (currently without an ACW group)

- March 10, 2024
- St. John the Divine, Squamish (currently without an ACW group)

- April 14, 2024
- St. Alban the Martyr, Burnaby (currently without an ACW group)

Kelly requested that we include the Blessing as part of the coverage of the day.

*The world now is too dangerous,
too beautiful for anything but love;
so I bless your eyes,
so that you see God in everyone.
I bless your ears,
so that you hear the cries of the poor.
I bless your lips,
so that you speak nothing but the truth in love.
I bless your hands,
so that everything you give
and everything you receive is a sacrament.
I bless your feet,
so that you may run to those who need you.
And may your hearts be so opened, so set on fire,
that your love changes everything. ✦*

Kelly would be delighted to visit your parish (particularly on a Sunday). If interested, please email her at acw.kelly@gmail.com



The pilgrims in front of Holy Cross. PHOTOS Alecia Greenfield, except where noted

Walking Our Prayers

ALECIA GREENFIELD

Vicar of the Parish of Holy Cross, Vancouver; Special Projects Facilitator at the diocese of New Westminster

More than 25 people joined a local pilgrimage September 30 in the Kingsway Deanery which includes the parishes of: Christ Church Cathedral; Holy Cross Japanese Canadian; St. James; St. Margaret's, Cedar Cottage; St. Mary the Virgin, South Hill; St. Michael's, Vancouver (aka Multicultural); St. Paul's, West End and St. Thomas' in the Collingwood neighbourhood. We walked over 20 kilometres visiting seven parishes. Starting at Holy Cross we stepped over a line drawn on the sidewalk to enter into holy time. Then we walked and we talked and we prayed. As we left each parish, we were invited to consider a question, like, "How do we walk on unceded territory?" or "How might the church be transformed by taking our bodies out of the church into the world?"

We walked through leafy parks, residential neighbourhoods, and busy downtown roads. We took a moment in Mountain View Cemetery to remember all the children's graves at residential schools that went unmarked. We took one section of our walk in silence. And many times throughout the day, I heard the refrain, "Wow, I have never been through this area of this city before." We talked about what *beautiful* meant to us and looked for beauty in traditionally pleasing vistas, and in the squirm of rats' tails or the sprawl of a life lived on the street.

I know I love pilgrimage walking. Walking with Salal + Cedar and talking with the Social EcoJustice working group of the Ecclesial Province of British Columbia I have been practicing local pilgrimage for the last few years. Last year I walked with the St. Dunstan's community in Aldergrove. I walked with Roy Cline and the St. George, Fort Langley community and with a provincial group at Sorrento Centre.



Walking through the park with the author in the lead. PHOTO Jonathan Green



The pilgrims walk through Mountainview with Fr. Wilmer in the lead.



Arriving at St. James'.



Fr. Expedito addresses the pilgrims at St. Mary's, South Hill.

Together, we have developed a booklet to support local pilgrimage intended to make this practice accessible (and easy to organize) for any community.¹ I know I pay attention to the places I live and work and worship more intently after I have walked the ways and prayed beside those roads or that stream. I know I love pilgrimage walking.

This year, I was awed stopping at local churches. We experienced incredible hospitality. St. Margaret, Cedar Cottage and the St. Paul's community waiting over an hour to greet the pilgrims (as our large group of walkers fell behind our optimistic timeline) and still they greeted us with great smiles and welcome cookies. The Rev. Heidi Brear set up prayer stations around the church, gave all the pilgrims a touching cross before praying us forward. The Rev. Phillip Cochrane waited even longer, then greeted us with hot coffee and an Irish prayer. At every church it felt like we met different gifts and graces. At St. Mary the Virgin, South Hill, the Rev. Expedito Farinas shared a candle lighting prayer. At St. Thomas', the Rev. Michael Batton celebrated Mass and shared a homily that connected the Michaelmas and Orange Shirt Day. At St. Michael's, the Rev. Wilmer Toyoken invited us to connect with Scripture and we had more excellent treats. Finally, at the end of a long but lovely day, at St. James', the Rev. Amanda Ruston gathered all the thoughts and prayers of the day into a final blessing, and we stepped out of holy time and back into our regular lives. ✠

¹ Please contact the Rev. Alecia Greenfield at the Synod Office if you would like the one-day event booklet in Microsoft Word for easy editing at Agreenfield@vancouver.anglican.ca



Diocesan Council Highlights | October 4, 2023

PREPARED WITH FILES FROM THE PRÉCIS DOCUMENTS & THE VEN. ANDREW HALLADAY'S SUMMARY REPORT TO DIOCESAN LEADERS (BISHOP, ARCHDEACONS, REGIONAL DEANS & SYNOD OFFICE LEADERSHIP)

The October 4, 2023 meeting of Diocesan Council (the Synod between Synods) was the third for the new Council that was elected and appointed at or just following the last Synod held in May of 2023.

After a delicious homemade meal featuring South Asian style dishes prepared by Bette Geddes, ODNW, Bishop John Stephens called the meeting to order. Next on the agenda was Evening Prayer led by the Ven. Stephen Muir, Archdeacon of Capilano and Rector of the Parish of St. Agnes, North Vancouver

Property and Finance as it relates to parish buildings and ministry as usual was a substantial part of the New Business portion of the meeting.

St. Laurence, Coquitlam plans to renovate its sanctuary and two narthexes. In 2020, the Parish Depreciation Report identified several repairs and replacements in the sanctuary. A *Renovision* Team was formed to create a vision and plan to develop a well-considered space offering flexible usage for worship and community groups.

Members of St. Laurence voted 81.5% in favour of the *Renovision* Design and Funding Plan, including a \$347,000 capital campaign that includes \$50,000 allowance for cost overruns and full repayment of loans. Of the \$347,000 goal, a few members have committed \$161,000 during the pre-Capital Campaign visits, leaving \$186,000 to raise once the official campaign starts.

The parish completed pre-construction requirements, launched its groundbreaking and Stage 1 capital campaign in September 2023, on its 60th anniversary. Stage 2 of the capital campaign, to pay off the *Renovision* Loans and to restore the reserve funds, will take place in 2024. The parish hopes to celebrate its first service in the new sanctuary on January 7, 2024.

Diocesan Council approved the capital grant of \$40,000 and the loan application of \$50,000 and the bishop and Council also endorsed the \$15,000 grant application and \$100,000 loan application to the Anglican Foundation.

A loan of \$541,429 was granted to St. George's, Maple Ridge in 2006, for a variety of building renovations. The loan should have been considered as a forgivable loan whereby a portion of the loan could be forgiven by the diocese as the loan was repaid. At the time of granting, interest was charged per established diocesan loan agreements. The interest charged on this loan from 2006 to 2013, when it was suspended, was \$217,848. The parish felt that when they took the loan, the diocese would help them out in the future with a matching grant.

The Parish has been paying \$20,000 a year since 2017, which the diocese matched as a reduction in the interest outstanding. As of August 31, 2023, payments of \$405,933 from the parish towards the loan's principal had been received. Grants have amounted to \$124,000.

The parish proposed that the grants paid by the diocese of \$124,000 be put towards the principal of the loan, leaving an outstanding balance of \$11,496 (\$541,429 - \$405,933 - \$124,000), which the parish has agreed to pay by December 31, 2023 if the request is approved.

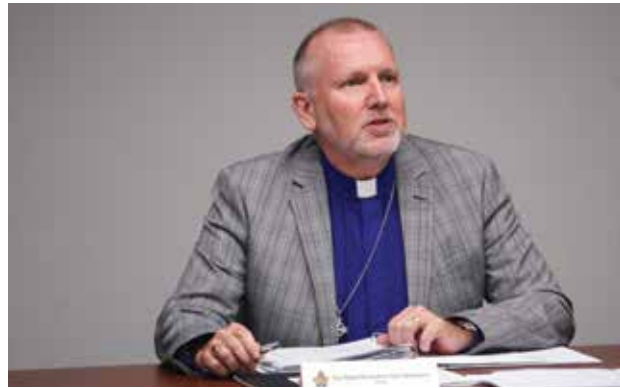
Effectively, the interest charged (recorded as income from 2006-2013) amounting to \$217,848 becomes the forgivable part of the loan. This will reduce the Parish Loan Fund account by the same amount.

A request for forgiveness of the interest of the loan was approved by Council provided that the parish pays back the outstanding loan principal by the end of 2023.

A presentation by the Rev. Paul Bowie, Regional Dean of Golden Ears and Rector of All Saints, Mission and parish warden, Judy Beale, ODNW requested approval from the bishop and Council to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between *Mamelé'awt Qweesomel To'o Housing Society* (MQHS) and the diocese of New Westminster regarding a proposed development project. The church building has many issues and members of the parish have spent decades trying to find ways to make substantial repairs, renovations, and improvements with very little funding. Despite the state of the buildings, the parish, the structures and the All Saints' community continue to be a cornerstone of services to "downtown" Mission offering compassionate service of many kinds. A new building constructed in partnership with MQHS will solidify Anglican ministry for the future. Diocesan Council agreed to support a MOU with MQHS with the proviso that All Saints, Mission develop a ministry plan contemporaneously with the development of a feasibility study and report back to Council, November 29, 2023.

The Clergy Compensation schedule and diocesan staff salaries was approved to 3.8% effective January 1, 2024. The

temporary clergy supply rate will remain at the actual 2023 amounts with transportation per kilometre will continue to be based on the rates as per CRA (2023: \$0.68/km for first 5,000 and \$0.62/km thereafter). Transportation allowance for clergy be increased to \$9,167 with mileage rates as per CRA.



At 6:30pm the bishop calls the meeting to order. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Members of DC on the west side of the room applaud Bette Geddes, ODNW in gratitude for dinner.



The Ven. Stephen Muir leads worship. The Ven. Stephanie Shepard on the left.



Judy Beale, ODNW and the Rev. Paul Bowie from All Saints, Mission.

Throughout the history of the diocese of New Westminster, fundraising for projects that are diocesan in their planning and implementation have been part of diocesan mission and ministry. In recent decades there was *Stewards in Action* (SiA), *Going the Extra Mile* (GEM) and care + share, most recent version. care + share was established following a resolution at Synod 2011. Ministries included in care + share do not receive "funding," instead, they receive financial contributions made by parishes and individuals, sent to the Synod Office finance department which forwards funds several times a year to the current recipients. Recipients are selected every two years at Diocesan Synod. One hundred percent of the donations go to groups that are supported. These donations come in and go out under the diocese of New Westminster's charitable tax status but the overhead for fundraising and administration is included in the diocesan budget, and not taken from donations. Donations may be directed to all ministries or to individual ministries in any combination or amount. Parish and individual gifts are encouraged.

In May 2021, Synod approved nine food ministries to receive funding during the care + share 2022/2023 cycle. This was a demonstration of diocesan solidarity in addressing the challenge of food security throughout the Lower Mainland. At the next Synod in May of 2023 Synod approved the following motion that was put forward by the Mission and Ministry Development Committee:

THAT *the Ministry of Food Security throughout diocese be funded through care + share from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025 with the following proviso:*

That the Standing Committee for Mission and Ministry Development in collaboration with the Bishop, the Dean, Archdeacons, Regional Deans and Leadership create a model to determine the distribution of donations by December 31, 2023.

At the May 25, 2023 BARRD-LT (Bishop, Archdeacons, Regional Deans, Dean, Leadership Team) meeting, clergy recommended that the Standing Committee on Mission and Ministry Development select one parish as the recipient for the care + share 2024/2025 cycle. The Rev. Tellison Clover, the Director for Mission and Ministry Development identified St. Augustine's, Marpole Food Hub for consideration as the care + share 2024/2025 cycle recipient on the basis that the ministry:

1. Provides groceries to more than 500 individuals weekly
2. Is in partnership with three local organizations
3. Has a dedicated volunteer base
4. Has a well-organized system
5. Has a clear vision to increase its capacity to serve more families
6. Is in need of more funding to build capacity

Diocesan Council unanimously approved that St. Augustine's, Marpole Food Hub be the one care + share 2024/2025 Cycle recipient.

Council members expressed concerns that care + share is underpublicized, and that recently arrived clergy and parish lay leaders are unaware of care + share and the process for applying to be considered care + share recipients. ✠

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The Ven. Andrew Halladay is the Archdeacon of Lougheed, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Langley, and the Chair of the diocesan Mission & Ministry Development Committee.

Diocese of New Westminster
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Shailene Caparas, CPA, CGA
Call 604.684.6306
or email info@vancouver.anglican.ca

ULTIMATE STEWARDSHIP to Sustain the Church

The Director of Finance of the diocese of New Westminster and her team will be delighted to speak with you and answer your questions about Ultimate Stewardship and Planned Giving

Lord, my influence in this life is on many people in many ways. Help me to leave a lasting, positive legacy in all areas of my life.



Thanksgiving Associates' Weekend at Sorrento Centre | October 6–9, 2023

JANE DITTRICH, ODNW

Christ Church Cathedral; Diocesan Communications Contributor

Author Alice Walker wrote, “In nature nothing is perfect, and everything is still perfect.” Sorrento Centre, the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon’s retreat and conference centre was evacuated in mid-August due to the Bush Creek East wildfire which swept very near the Centre. Sorrento staff were able to re-open in mid-September. Ravaging wildfires in British Columbia have greatly increased in recent years. This is *not perfect*. From October 6–9, approximately 45 Sorrento Centre associates, board members, valued friends and leaders gathered to celebrate Thanksgiving, to work outside on the verdant property, which was bursting with rich autumn colours, and to give thanks for the work and many blessings of Sorrento Centre. This was *perfect!*

The Thanksgiving Associates’ work and fellowship weekend is an annual event. This year, the Board of Directors met daily for strategic planning sessions and were guided in strategic listening and planning by Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver’s deacon, the Rev. Alisdair Smith. Board of Director’s member, Archbishop Lynne McNaughton, diocesan bishop of Kootenay and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province joined in on some of the meetings remotely. Jason Cruickshank of Victoria, BC serves as the current President of the Board of Directors. Jason’s father, the late Bishop Jim Cruickshank, was the founding director of Sorrento Centre, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

All were blessed by the presence of the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, the Most Rev. Chris Harper and his wife Tracy. Archbishop Harper is the diocesan bishop of Saskatoon. He was installed as National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop in May of 2023. Archbishop Harper led various worship services and presented several talks over the long weekend.

Throughout the four days, associates worked on the property: painting, mowing lawns, chopping wood, storing things away for the winter season, working on the gardens, raking leaves and cleaning exterior windows of buildings. The weather was glorious which made for excellent working conditions. On the Sunday afternoon, October 8, former Executive Director, the Rev. Dan Meakes (who worked on the property over the weekend) was moved by the beautiful colours of the leaves on the trees, the glory of the property, and the extra blessing of the Centre having been spared by the fires. This prompted those in the conversation to reflect on their many decades of memories and the Centre’s deep meaning in their lives. The Rev. Meakes warmly named this moment “the nostalgia of the privileged.”

Many from the diocese of New Westminster were on site over the course of the weekend including the Dean of the diocese and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, the Very Rev. Chris Pappas; the Rev. Alisdair Smith; Erin and Rick Barr of St. Laurence, Coquitlam; and the diocese of New Westminster’s Missioner for Indigenous Justice, Kerry Baisley, ODNW.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



LEFT The welcome sign outside of the Centre’s office building, *Spes Bona* (Latin: Good Hope). RIGHT Beautiful colours outside of Caritas Lodge. PHOTOS Jane Dittrich, ODNW



Associates, staff and board members gather to share their memories of Sorrento Centre. In this photo, James Barr (great grandson of Canon Herbert O’Driscoll) shares some stories of his own.



Christ Church Cathedral deacon, the Rev. Alisdair Smith receives the Body of Christ from the Most Rev. Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop.



A “V” of geese flying over the Centre. The large tree which they are seen flying over was famously struck by lightning several years ago.



Evening talk presented by Archbishop Chris Harper in the Caritas Lodge meeting room.



The Centre’s Executive Director, the Rev. Michael Shapcott, his dog Phoebe and Jane Dittrich briefly catching up at the Centre’s waterfront.



LEFT The beach at Sorrento Centre. The low water levels in Shuswap Lake are easy to see. Low rainfall, and the water from the lake used by helicopters to fight the nearby wildfires in August depleted the lake. RIGHT The beach’s fire pit, complete with freshly chopped wood.





Lighting candles at the Memorial Altar. PHOTOS Submitted



Fr. Expedito leads the prayers for those who have died.

The Call to Prayer, the Call to Remember

FELLY FARINAS
St. Mary the Virgin, South Hill

On Sunday, September 24, 2023, the Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, South Hill marked the 51st anniversary of martial rule in the Philippines in a combined Sunday service with Migrante BC to remember and pray for the many faithful who've died during these dark years. The parish took up the *Call to Prayer* for the Philippines requested by the Anglican Church, the United Church of Canada, and Kairos Canada supported by their partners in the Philippines because of the "grave and deteriorating human rights situation in the Philippines."

Rector of the parish, the Rev. Fr. Expedito Farinas gathered the congregation at the end of the service around the memorial cross to light candles and offer prayers for "those who have died, for all whom we remember this day, particularly those who were killed abducted, and missing during the dark years of martial law in the Philippines, including all workers and peasants, youth and women, Indigenous people, professionals and many people of faith."

Amnesty International estimates that approximately 70,000 people were imprisoned, 34,000 tortured, 3,240 killed, and 398 forcibly disappeared. These are the numbers for the documented victims, there are likely many more. The Human Rights Victims' Claims Board received documents from 11,103 claimants, which is just a portion of the 75,000 victims whose records are in their safekeeping. The victims will always be remembered as long as their names

are spoken, candles lit, prayers offered, and their service to the oppressed, marginalized, and the society's poorest kept close to our hearts.

A small table of flowers was exhibited inside the community hall where a short program was held. On display were photos of victims of martial law from 1972 to the present, including current political detainees. Luthfi Mawarid, the Secretary General of the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (ICHRP) Canada, spoke to the congregation:

"Though I am not from the Philippines, but your neighbouring country Indonesia, our country lived through similarly dark times under President Suharto. I am truly inspired by the commitment of the Filipino people to never forget and to continue the fight for human rights, as well as the decades-long partnership and solidarity work of the Canadian people, especially church communities here in BC, for the Filipino people, going back to the days of Martial Law."

Amado Mercado, Jr. of the Angat Buhay Coalition and the founder-president of the Filipino Canadian Construction Company asked for a commitment to remember the dark years, to remain vigilant and to take action to ensure that this does not happen again.

In the *Call to Prayer* for the Philippines, the Rev. Expedito read:

"We pray for those who peacefully challenge state laws and practices, give them strength and courage to stand their ground for truth and justice. Protect their lives from those who seek to harm them when they voice their dissent."

Assistant Warden of the parish, Eric Maestro, shared the recent message from the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Carlos, Gerardo Alminaza, which began with the words from the prophet Amos:

"Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream."

Bishop Alminaza wrote that when the dream of justice and peace remains elusive and "government leaders choose silence and enable injustice... we must wholeheartedly embrace our integral role in caring for both people... remain vigilant and actively engage in efforts to end repressive acts by the military and hold the state accountable."

The service and fellowship are commitments to our common dream of a better world:

"As peace-loving Canadians, we thank you God for the opportunity to be in harmony and solidarity to people working for a just peace... to work for things that are true, noble, just... to make this world a better place." ✠

Thanksgiving Associates' Weekend at Sorrento Centre | October 6-9, 2023

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

On the Saturday, following board meetings and the workday on site, Executive Director, the Rev. Michael Shapcott led a gathering to reflect on the 60 years of the Centre. Many offered memories, what working there (many on the board of directors had served as summer youth staff in their teens) and what attending/holidaying there has meant to their lives, their families, their faith journeys, and their personal and professional growth. On Sunday, Archbishop Chris Harper presided and preached at the Thanksgiving Eucharist service at St. Mary's Anglican-United Church

in the community of Sorrento. All were treated to a delicious Thanksgiving dinner, prepared by the Centre's chef and food services manager, Simon, and his staff. Much of the produce prepared for the harvest dinner was grown on the Centre's farm. From *John 1:16*, "From his abundance, we have all received one gracious blessing after another." ✠

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Please visit <https://sorrentocentre.ca> to learn about upcoming events and programs, how you can become an Associate and for other ways to support the work and ministry of Sorrento Centre.



James Barr (great grandson of Canon Herbert O'Driscoll) and Erin Barr (daughter of Canon Herbert O'Driscoll).



Dean Pappas's son worked hard on the property all weekend. He's readying the ride-on mower in preparation to cut the grass of the Centre's fields and lawns.



Dean Pappas's granddaughter was the youngest Sorrento Centre Associate working over the weekend. She assisted Jane Dittrich with cleaning the exterior windows of Richardson Lodge.



A view of the SJS nave and chancel during the concert. POV from the organ pipe gallery. PHOTOS Wayne Chose, ODNW



LEFT Event Organizer Joan Stewart, ODNW welcomes the concertgoers. RIGHT Event co-organizer, co-founder of *Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry* and founder of the NGB, Deacon, the Rev. Pitman Potter, CM offers a few words to the audience.



View of the chancel from the organ pipe gallery.

Joan Ste...



A view of the NGB in action.

St. John's, Shaughnessy Welcomes the Neighbourhood Gospel

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Homelessness Action Week took place in the Province of BC, October 9–15, 2023. Founder of the *Neighbourhood Gospel Band* (NGB) and co-founder of the *Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry*, the Rev. Pitman Potter, CM with the aid of St. John's, Shaughnessy's warden, Joan Stewart, ODNW and others organized a benefit concert at St. John's, Shaughnessy (SJS), Sunday October 15. Proceeds to be directed to the *Neighbourhood Ministry* and their ongoing support to the marginalized, unhoused of Vancouver's Westside. The organizers were delighted to report that the concert raised \$2,200.

The 100+ folks in attendance were treated to two sets by NGB. Following the first set, special guest, Jim Byrnes, OBC took the stage and delighted the crowd with a 20-minute set. Jim Byrnes, originally from St. Louis, Missouri is a highly accomplished actor and blues musician. The three-time *Juno Award* winner has made Vancouver his home for 50 years and during his career he has appeared in dozens of films and television series.

The *Neighbourhood Gospel Band* is a company of musi-

cal friends who have joined together to play songs with spiritual and sacred meaning, ranging from classical instrumental hymnody, to bluegrass, folk, blues, and pop stylings, combining original compositions with classic covers.

Members of the band include:

- The Rev. Alisdair Smith, *Guitar & vocals*
- Bob Beazer, *Bass*
- The Rev. Clare Morgan, *Harp, Mandolin, Dulcimer, & vocals*
- Daniel Sinclair, *Guitar & vocals*
- Frances Beazer, *Vocals*
- Owen Marmorek, *Keyboards*
- The Rev. Pitman Potter, *Guitars & vocals*
- Stan Wardle, *Harmonica*

The NGB is currently looking forward to more opportunities to lead the music in worship during liturgies (Evensong



Deacon, the Rev. Alisdair Smith of Christ Church Cathedral.



Bassist Bob Beazer, blissful.



Keyboard player, Owen Marmorek.



Pitman and Bob, singing and grooving.



The Rev. Clare Morgan of the St. Brigid's community at Christ Church Cathedral, singing and playing the mandolin.



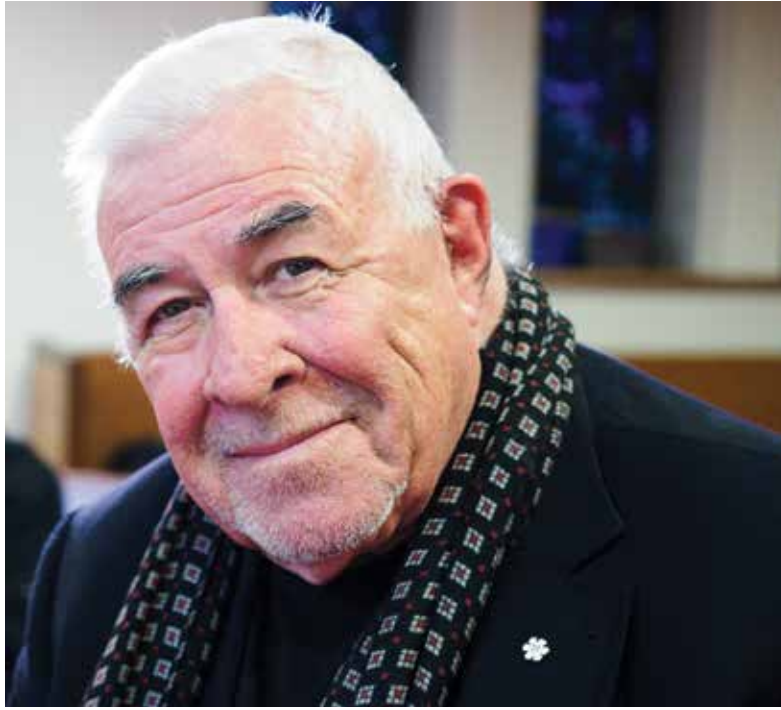
Francis Beazer, vocals.



Stan Wardle, harmonica.



Maggie Sanders and Lydia MacGillvray staff the welcome table.



Special Guest artist, Jim Byrnes, OBC.



Rector of the Parish of SJS, the Rev. Terry Dirbas speaks to the audience.

Band & Special Guest Jim Byrnes

perhaps?) and to perform their repertoire in other venues as well.

The *Neighbourhood Ministry* is a collaborative ministry offered by the Anglican parishes of: St. Anselm's, UBC Endowment Lands/Point Grey; St. Philip's, Dunbar; St. Helen's, West Point Grey; and St. John's, Shaughnessy (SJS) on Vancouver's Westside. Under the guidance of their board of Directors, the *Neighbourhood Ministry* offers care, companionship and practical help to their most vulnerable neighbours living on the Westside streets and in marginalized conditions.

Street Ministry

At the core of the *Neighbourhood Ministry* is its street outreach program. Teams of three to five people (one from each parish) take part in the preparation and distribution of packages to homeless folk on the west side. Volunteers deliver nutritious packets of food, clothing, and other necessities every Saturday morning, year-round. The greatest gift is that of conversation and companionship,

and those living on the street have developed a trust in *Neighbourhood Ministry* volunteers. The parishes donate items in-kind and cash, as well as provide volunteer help. This ministry initiative transforms the lives of those who prepare, give, and receive the packets by fostering friendship and understanding.

Funding and Support Funding for the *Neighbourhood Ministry* activities is shared by the four sponsor parishes (St. Anselm's, St. Helen's, St. John's, and St. Philip's). Parishes donate items-in-kind and cash and provide the bulk of volunteers. Over the years, neighbours and friends not associated with the churches have joined as volunteers, to be part of this special and life-changing ministry.

There are many ways to support the *Neighbourhood Ministry*. You are warmly welcome to make contact and join the team. ✦

For more information about the Neighbourhood Ministry please visit the website at www.neighbourhoodministry.com



A view of the labyrinth, nave, and chancel before the show.



TOP & BOTTOM, LEFT & RIGHT Four shots of Jim Byrnes playing.



A south facing view during Jim Byrnes's set.



The new rector and bishop. PHOTOS Randy Murray, except where noted

The Elephants in the Room

The Induction of the Reverend David Taylor as Rector of St. Mark, Ocean Park

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

There are many beautiful neighbourhoods in the region that makes up the Anglican diocese of New Westminster, and Ocean Park would certainly be near the top of that list.

Established on the territory of the Semiahmoo First Nation at the conclusion of the 19th century, Ocean Park is the western part of the Semiahmoo Peninsula, boasting the shorelines of both Semiahmoo Bay and Boundary Bay, and bordering Crescent Beach to the north and the city of White Rock to the east. Ocean Park began its life in truly colonial fashion with 136 acres of the approximately 400 acres that made and make up Ocean Park acquired to provide the members of the Methodist church a vacation place and subsequently a summer camp, Camp Kwomais.

The Parish of St. Mark, Ocean Park is a more recent parish of our diocese. The parish buildings are attractively designed and constructed, the grounds are well looked after bordered with forested green space, and there is a very large parking area. Following the retirement of long serving rector, the Rev. Craig Tanksley in January 2020, the parish began the search for a new rector and were delighted to find the Rev. Br. Billy Isenor of the diocese of Edmonton who with his spouse and children packed up and arrived in Ocean Park from Spruce Grove, Alberta on July 2, 2021. Br. Billy was inducted by Bishop John Stephens, August 25 of that year but stayed for less than a year as the young family, like many others in the Greater Vancouver Area did not have the financial resources to afford a home and a life for

a family of seven. They returned to Alberta in the summer of 2022. Honorary Assistant, the Rev. Sue Foley-Currie supported the parish as did other priests of our diocese. After assembling a parish profile and going through the search process, the parish got close a couple of times but were unable to find a rector so they agreed with Bishop John that a direct appointment may be the best solution. The bishop approached the Rev. David Taylor, Rector of St. Dunstan, Aldergrove who is also the founder of the Centre for Spiritual Development headquartered in that parish. The Rev. Taylor was amenable and so were St. Mark's leadership. It was announced that he would be appointed rector with a start date of September 16, 2023. The Rev. David Taylor concluded his ministry as Rector of the Parish of St. Dunstan, Aldergrove on Sunday, September 9 and following a month of Sunday worship led by Sunday Supply priests, the recently retired, the Ven. Al Carson began an interim ministry at the Aldergrove parish on October 15.

The Celebration of a New Ministry Eucharist took place at St. Mark's during the evening of Monday, September 25. There was a large and enthusiastic congregation and a good turnout of diocesan clergy. The Rev. Taylor's time as Assistant Priest at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale early in the last decade followed by his nine-year incumbency at St. Dunstan's have served to establish his multi-faceted ministry in our diocese. The Rev. Taylor is a bridge-builder, a change

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



The Procession in.



The Ven. Andrew Halladay preaching.



The new rector signs the Oaths and Subscriptions.



Bishop John prays the Collect for the Feast of St. Sergius.



The First Reading, Eccles 39:1-9 is shared.



Filling the font during the Presentations of the Symbols Ministry.



Receiving the keys to the buildings from warden, Barbara Carington Smith, ODNW during the Presentations of the Symbols of Ministry.



The new rector acknowledges the applause of welcome.



Bishop John leads the applause of welcome for the new rector.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

agent, an excellent preacher, a fine teacher, an enthusiastic collaborator, a very good musician and composer, and amongst his charisms is his ability to unite peoples of faith. Particularly during his time in Aldergrove he was effective in collaborating with members and pastors of reformed congregations from evangelical traditions. Since 2021, he has chaired the diocesan Ecumenical/Multifaith Unit. He has many friends and supporters in the diocese of New Westminster. And one of his supporters is his husband and co-parent of their two children, the Ven. Andrew Halladay, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Langley and Archdeacon of Lougheed.

Archdeacon Halladay was the preacher for the Eucharist. Bishop John Stephens presided and the regional archdeacon, the Ven. Luisito Engnan, Vicar of St. Michael's and Christ the Redeemer, Surrey facilitated the Covenant in Ministry.

Preaching at a Celebration of a New Ministry Eucharist can be challenging, but Archdeacon Halladay handled the responsibility superbly. He deftly examined the readings for the Feast of St. Sergius being celebrated on September 25, in particular, the Gospel, *Luke 12:33-37*. The Archdeacon began his sermon with these words:



The regional archdeacon and regional dean welcome their colleague to Fraser and Peace Arch.

"I don't know about you, but I have a lot of things on my mind right now, not the least of which is what the heck I'm going to say in this sermon. As we pray for a swift end to the war in Ukraine, we are faced tonight with St. Sergius, one of Russia's greatest saints. Then, there's this part in the Gospel reading about a wedding banquet which might put some of us in mind of particular conversations about who's marrying who. To say that it was a surprise to hear that St. Mark's, Ocean Park wanted to call the Rev. David Taylor, who's positions on marriage are well-known, as their rector might be understating it just slightly. And finally, in the midst of economic times when housing and food costs are skyrocketing and churches particularly are feeling the pinch, we are faced with Jesus' words advising us to sell all our possessions and give alms. All three of these things feel like elephants in the room that must be addressed."

While examining the "elephants" he said this about his husband David's attitude toward the concepts raised in the Gospel:



A welcoming hug from the archdeacon.

"His job is not to dominate or force a particular point of view on anyone. His job is to serve you and assist you as you explore questions of faith and theology amongst you. His job is to help you clarify your own positions, on this issue and on other important issues, not to promote his own point of view. He is not the Mongolian or the Russian empire. Like St. Sergius, David will advocate for peaceful solutions in times of conflict, though he will also stand up to dominant or oppressive approaches when the need arises."

The Ven. Andrew Halladay's homily from this liturgy is highly recommended and may be found on the diocesan website.¹

As well as taking care of the legal formalities, Archdeacon of Fraser, the Ven. Luisito (Fr. Louie) Engnan, Vicar of St. Michael's and Christ the Redeemer, Surrey was on hand to welcome the new priest to the archdeaconry. Regional Dean of Peace Arch and Rector of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey, the Rev. Stephen Rowe welcomed the Rev. Taylor to the deanery with his well-known mixture of wit and wisdom. Reprising his role as Deacon of the Word and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Leading the Prayers of the People.



Members of the Choir.

¹ To view the Ven. Andrew Halladay's homily go to the diocesan website at <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/podcasts/media/2023-09-25-induction-of-a-new-rector-on-the-feast-of-st-sergius>



LEFT Deacon of the Word and Table for the Eucharist, the Rev. Steve Bailey prepares the altar during the Offertory. RIGHT The Eucharistic Prayer.



Administering the Body of Christ.

The Elephants in the Room The Induction of the Reverend David Taylor as Rector of St. Mark, Ocean Park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Table that he took at the parish's last induction, August 25, 2021, was the Rev. Steve Bailey now deacon at St. Aidan and St. Bartholomew (St. Bart's), Gibsons. The Rev. Bailey was deacon at St. Mark, Ocean Park for several years.

Music in worship was led by Music Director, Elizabeth Gilchrist and the Choir of St. Mark, Ocean Park.

The refreshments for the reception following worship featured homemade apple pie a la mode served by members of the St. Mark's youth group.

The Rev. Taylor and Archdeacon Halladay are great supporters of Sorrento Centre as are the Rev. Taylor's family and it was wonderful to see his mother, father, sister, and niece at the liturgy. They had travelled from Calgary to be present for this special day in the life of the family.

Please keep the Rev. Taylor, Archdeacon Halladay, their children, their families and the Parish of St. Mark, Ocean Park in your prayers as they begin this next chapter of ministry. ✠



The clergy: The Ven. Andrew Halladay, the Rev. David Taylor, the Rev. Steve Bailey, Bishop John Stephens and the Ven. Luisito Engnan.



Youth serving apple pie and ice cream. PHOTO Sarah Autio



The new rector with his parents, Connie and Brett Taylor, sister, Katherine Patik, and niece, Bianca Patik. PHOTO Jane Dittrich, ODNW



And another of youth serving apple pie and ice cream. PHOTO Sarah Autio



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the A.E.J. (Ted) Fulford Trust for Sacred Music



Legacy Gifts “Lift All Boats” Name your passion, grow your legacy

In 1973, A.E.J. “Ted” Fulford partnered with the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) to develop a trust to promote, develop, and enrich sacred music in the Anglican Church of Canada. Since then, the *A.E.J. Fulford Trust for Sacred Music* has awarded more than \$580,000 in grants, which have supported choir schools, bursaries for choir camps, choral scholarships, organ study, and more.

“The generosity which arose from Ted Fulford’s desire to foster musical education and training in Canada allows churches and other music programs to reduce or eliminate financial barriers for young people who are seeking musical training,” says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director, AFC. On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Fulford Trust, AFC is celebrating Ted’s generosity by encouraging Anglicans across Canada to do as he did: *name your passion and grow your legacy.*

“Ted Fulford’s philanthropic spirit, and that of hundreds of other Canadian Anglicans, have formed the bedrock of AFC’s \$15 million endowment,” says Brubacher. “These legacies have varied in size and do not come exclusively from wealthy philanthropists. The thread that unites them all, however, is a passion to make a difference.” Brubacher explains that AFC’s capacity to weather the pandemic, while also pushing its grants program to new heights is directly attributable to the “growing impact of enduring gifts.”

Whether motivated by their love of sacred music, belief in the value of leadership and education, a vision to reduce poverty, or a desire to support the Indigenous church, an increasing number of Canadian Anglicans are choosing to remember the church in their wills.

Brubacher says that among the many bequests it has received in recent decades, AFC is rarely the sole faith-related

beneficiary. “Our experience has been that legacy gifts typically lift all boats by supporting the church at various levels—locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is especially heartening to see the benefit to the local church as well as to a donor’s family and other much-loved charities. From hospitals to universities to animal shelters, Canadian Anglicans are putting a great deal of care, compassion, and consideration into how they put their wills to work.” ✠

This year, AFC is joining the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) as well as dioceses across Canada to partner with Will Power, a national campaign of the Canadian Association of Gift Planners (CAGP) that educates Canadians about the power of leaving a charitable gift in their will. Visit willpower.ca to see all participating charities across the Anglican Church of Canada.

Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas.
Thank you for your generous support!

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

All are encouraged to submit letters, articles, reports on parish activities, opinion pieces, photos, and more for consideration as content for Topic

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DEADLINES FOR TOPIC SUBMISSIONS
January 19, 2024 for the March 2024 issue
.....
February 23, 2024 for the April 2024 issue
.....

Please email info@vancouver.anglican.ca
All contributions are appreciated



AROUND THE DIOCESE

Volunteer Drivers Need at Mission to Seafarers

The Mission to Seafarers is looking for volunteers with a valid Class 5 Driver's License who have a few hours to give, a good driving record, a friendly disposition, and a heart for the wellbeing of others. Volunteers are needed to transport seafarers in the Mission minivan evenings from 4:30pm–6:30pm to the local mall, the ship, and the Seafarers Centre either Waterfront or Delta Port.

Police Check Required.

Training and orientation are provided.

It is an opportunity to make a real difference by helping seafarers relax and connect with loved ones, to meet people from around the world, to be an ambassador, welcoming seafarers to Canada, and to be truly appreciated for what you do.

We would love to hear from you. ✦

Please contact Senior Port Chaplain, the Rev. Peter Smyth by email at vanchaplain.missiontoseafarers@gmail.com or call 604.992.9867



PHOTO Submitted

Observing Orange Shirt Day

Jane Dittrich, ODNW with her godson Ellis and his big brother Eamon (all members

of the Christ Church Cathedral) posing for a photo on September 30. ✦



PHOTO Jane Dittrich, ODNW

Season of Creation at St. Stephen's, West Vancouver

SUBMISSION Hilary Clark

As a reasonably new addition to the Anglican liturgical calendar, the Season of Creation was welcomed by St. Stephen's congregation with new hymns curated by Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch. The first was *Soplo di Dios viviente (Breath of the Living God)*, with Spanish text celebrating creation, appropriately accompanied by castanets. She taught this hymn to the group over three Sundays. Later in the month, parishioner and community choir member Machiko Akakura donned her traditional Japanese kimono and sang *Sakura, Sakura*, a song about creation in spring. This was immediately followed by the congregation singing *Praise to God (#89, Sing a New Creation)*, a hymn of praise set to the same tune, accompanied by Dr. Paetsch on piano and Hilary Clark on finger cymbals. A new version of the *Lord's Prayer* written by Martha Blacklock of Mother Thunder Mission was included as part of the service. The Rev. Kenneth Vinal mused in his sermons on the glory of creation, and the need for

all to respect and care for the environment.

Two discussion groups continue to attract members of the congregation: the

Online Bible Study conducted via Zoom on Tuesday evenings, and the Wednesday morning discussion group held in the

Church lounge. As well, St. Stephen's Community Singers, a group of 30 choristers from the community and congregation directed by Dr. Paetsch, have resumed rehearsals on Thursday afternoons.

On October 15 the third annual Lavender Tea followed the morning service. This event uses the lavender growing in the church's gardens and other lavender donated by parishioners which is crafted into sachets and "tea" bags for sale. The proceeds, this year \$2,000, were donated to the North Shore Harvest Project joining the plentiful food donations from the previous week's Harvest Thanksgiving. During the service the worship was enhanced by two guest soloists, joining Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch: Nancy Rieken, flute, and Catherine Crouch, soprano. Using the new harpsichord, generously donated to St. Stephen's by Mrs. Sharon West, the group performed *Domine Deus (Gloria)* by Vivaldi, and *Mein Glaubiges Herze (Cantata 68)* by J.S. Bach. ✦



LEFT Machiko Akakura performed *Sakura, Sakura* at St. Stephen's morning service. RIGHT Hilary and Machiko. PHOTOS Janice Harvey & John Ruddick



Flautist, Nancy Rieken.



The Lavender Tea sheet cake.



A table is prepped for the Tea.



Ruth and Caroline offer some cookies.



AROUND THE DIOCESE

Blessings of the Pets

The first Pet Blessings photos of St. Franciside 2023 began arriving digitally at the diocesan comms office, October 2. Communciations Officer and Editor of *Topic*, Randy Murray expected many more, however, that didn't happen even though Pet Blessings in the diocese continued up until October 15. But there were two more submissions. Many thanks to Larry Scherben, ODNW of St. Alban's, Richmond for taking these great photos of the Rev. Liz Ruder-Celiz blessing pets at their Sunday worship, October 1. Many thanks to Sandy Scherben for sending in the photos. ✠



According to frequent *Topic* contributor, Hilary Clark, the folks at St. Stephen's, West Vancouver dovetailed their final Season of Creation liturgical observance on October 1 to include a Pet Blessing. As a finale to the Season of Creation, with organ music from *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saens as well as three hymns with texts by St. Francis. Parishioners brought their well-behaved pets (dogs on leash, cats in carrying cases) plus photos of fond well-remembered deceased pets, all of whom were mentioned by name, then blessed by the Rev. Kenneth Vinal. Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch opened the service with *The Swan* from *Carnival of the Animals* and ended it with *Royal March of the Lions* from the same work.

It was a few weeks before we received more Pet Blessing photos, but they were worthwhile. The Rev. Art Turnbull writes, "At St. Matthew, Abbotsford, on Sunday, October 15, the dogs gathered with their caregivers to receive grace from God."

The Rev. Art Turnbull officiated, blessing the seven dogs attending, one at a time. Candles were lit for pets loved but now deceased.

The homily spoke of Jesus being the good shepherd. The good work of the Wounded Warriors Canada providing over \$1 million worth of training of dogs for Canada's veterans of recent missions and service, was shared. The importance of these dogs to sufferers of PTSD is immeasurable

as lives are saved.

The annual service at St. Matthew is a meaningful outreach to the community, reminding people to give thanks for the

sharing of life with all creatures. The care given by pet owners is rewarded with the loving care that pets give back. Perhaps that is why the animals were created before the

humans in the *Book of Genesis*.

Of the dogs blessed that day there was a very special participant, Cutty, a rescue dog from Mexico. ✠



LEFT Robert Clark presents Cutty, a rescue dog from Mexico, to be blessed by the Rev. Art Turnbull. RIGHT A closer look at Cutty. PHOTOS Paulette Farquhar



LEFT The dogs listen to the Rev. Art Turnbull. MIDDLE The Rev. Turnbull blesses a friendly pooch. RIGHT Waiting to be blessed, a dog with different coloured eyes, AKA David Bow-wow.

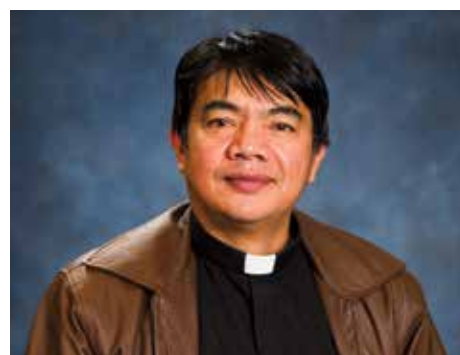
Clergy News Around the Diocese

With some recent departures, Bishop John has appointed two new Regional Deans. On October 16, the bishop appointed the Vicar of the Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton, the Rev. Arvin Amayag, Regional Dean of Royal City/South Burnaby effective immediately. Padi Arvin succeeds the Rev. Greg Jenkins who this past summer resigned as Regional Dean and Rector of St. Alban the Martyr, Burnaby to return to ministry in the diocese of Huron.

It was announced on October 25 that Bishop John had appointed the Rev. James

Duckett, currently Rector of St. Timothy, Burnaby, Regional Dean of Tri-Cities/North Burnaby succeeding the Rev. Eric Mason who left our diocese following his incumbency at St. Laurence, Coquitlam to return to ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. This new ministry began November 1.

Congratulations to Padi Arvin and the Rev. James, the entire diocese is grateful and welcomes you both to this next chapter of your ministry. ✠



The Rev. Arvin Amayag. PHOTOS Wayne Chose



The Rev. James Duckett.

A 21st Century Parable

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Retired Priest of the diocese of Calgary; Former Dean of the diocese of New Westminster & Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver

A couple of months ago in the Sunday Supplement of the *Victoria Times-Colonist* there was a shot of a large bowl of Gary Oak acorns gathered by a staff member of the city's nursery. They will be used for planting around the city. Incidentally there was also a fascinating article about this year being a very prolific year for acorns.

It was the word acorns and the large bowl that brought to my mind something I've had in my study for a long time. An author named Jacob Needham wrote it in his book *Lost Christianity*. I think of it as a modern parable. It's time to share it! Here goes...

Once upon a time in a not so far away land, there was a Kingdom of Acorns. It was nestled at the root of a grand old oak tree. Since the inhabitants of this kingdom were modern, fully westernized acorns they went about their business with purposeful energy, and since they were mid-life baby-boomer acorns they engaged in a lot of self-help courses. There were seminars with titles such as *Getting all you can out of your shell*. There were woundedness and recovery groups for acorns who had become bruised



PHOTO Liudmilla Chernetska (iStock ID#1387045224)

in their original fall from the great tree. There were spas for oiling and polishing their shells, and various *acornopathic* therapies for enhancing longevity and wellbeing.

One day, in the midst of this kingdom there suddenly appeared a knotty little stranger, apparently dropped out of the blue by a passing bird. He was capless and dirty, creating an immediate negative impression upon his fellow acorns. And huddled beneath the oak tree he stammered out a wild tale. Pointing upward into the branches of the great tree he said, "We... are... that!"

"Delusional thinking obviously," the other acorns sneered, and moved away. But one of them, a philosophically minded acorn, decided to continue chatting with the strange visitor, if only to humour the poor fellow, "So, tell us," he said. "How would we become that tree?"

"Well," said the visitor, "it has something to do with going into the ground... and cracking open the shell."

When the other acorns standing around listening to this conversation heard this they said, "Insane! Totally morbid! Why then we wouldn't be acorns anymore!" ♣

The Olden Days

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Not very long ago one of our great-grandchildren asked her great-grandmother a question that intrigued me. She said, "Nanny" (after all if you are very young the word great-grandmother is quite formidable). "Nanny, did you live in the olden days?"

I think there is something rather romantic having someone ask you that, don't you? The expression, *the olden days*—has a ring to it. Like "once upon a time." Don't you think that? I do. After all, I am a doughty old great-grandfather and even I have difficulty getting around the word great-grandfather sometimes.

Anyway, be that as it may... now, come to think of it, there's another nice old phrase—"be that as it may." I must stop bringing up old phrases because I want to tell you a couple of things from the olden days of our very first parish. They are not hard to discover, you simply go and have a cup of tea with some of your oldest parishioners. You discover things about the past that will never appear in the official record of the parish, believe me.

I was in my first country parish for only a few weeks when a very elderly parishioner took me back to when he himself was a small boy. That long-ago winter his dad had been rector's warden. He told me of one occasion when as a small boy he accompanied his dad when the latter had some business at the rectory. It was January, the snow, as with dear old King Wenceslas, was indeed "deep, crisp and even."

Readying the horse and sleigh they set off. When they got to the rectory the rector's wife told them that he was on his way home from a funeral so they should come in and wait.

As soon as they heard the sound of the horse and sleigh, they all headed to the back kitchen where they knew the rector would come in after stabling the horse. In he came, a tall, bearded figure, made enormous in the room by his travelling furs, snow cascading from everything as he took things off. To drag off his boots his wife gave him a hand. She had something warm in a glass for him. Taking it from her, he led them all back into the warmth of the kitchen, put his



Early 20th century village with a church in the snow. PHOTO George Robinson (iStock ID#1463474083)

glass down, went over to the fire, stretched his hands out and rubbing them together briskly said with considerable heartiness, "well, a couple more funerals like that and this will be a great parish." Reaching out for his glass he lifted it, took a swig, and sat down.

The rector was not halfway through

his toast when his wife had shot from her chair grasped the hand of her child visitor to whisk him out of earshot, hastily opened a drawer where the cookies were kept, gave him two, and told the lad in no uncertain terms to stay there until the adults had finished their business conversation. He of course obeyed implicitly.

As has been memorably said, "The past is another country. They do things differently there." Eventually, their hostess and his father came, and they prepared to leave for home. The visit to the rectory was never spoken of again. It lay in an aging memory, waiting to be recalled. ♣

OPINION

Holding the Contradictions Lightly | Part 3
Last part of a three-part series on Seniors' Downsizing

HANNAH MAIN-VAN DER KAMP
St. David & St. Paul, Powell River



Several months after moving from our much-loved spacious home in a semi-rural location, we thought it might be emotionally safe to return there to visit with neighbours. We had lived there for so many years. It had been painful but necessary to leave. We thought we had detached ourselves sufficiently.

But we were astonished by our sadness. To see the place again, to walk the paths and view the state of the creeks and slough. Our dog knew where she was, took off for "home" and waited to be let into that front door. Do we regret going? We should have waited longer. Were we inconsolable? No, our neighbour friends were consoling. Did we have regrets? No, we were just sad.

This is not the bone sorrow of residential school survivors and their families. It is not the grief of losing a beloved younger sibling to cancer. It is not the despair of refugees stuck in camps. It's just garden variety sadness.

How to hold these contradictory emotions, sad but without regrets. The decision to move to a small rental right in town was the right one. Dispensing with truckloads of *stuff* was timely and good. So, what was the sadness all about? Oh, just being human. Change is inevitable. Aging is inevitable.

The Lord is always bringing us into a "Good Land." Even with less stuff and less space, we're discovering a new land. The "honey" is easy access to the wonderful local Public Library. The "milk" is a senior's bus pass to get to appointments.

Through the last months, the Lectionary readings have been about abundance, generosity, richness, plentiful re-



ILLUSTRATIONS Guzaliia Filimonova (iStock ID#1257182722)

sources, satisfaction. We are challenged to follow the gospel of Abundance and not the creed of Scarcity. Like the people of Israel on their exodus, we have been humbled and tested. That's part of the process of downsizing. Seen in the global perspective, we are fabulously prosperous.

It's just real and true to be sad, admit it and not persevere on the sense of loss.

There was another feeling state that surprised us. So, for those seniors who are considering taking the downsizing step, here is a word of preparation: we were affected by *acedia*.

Acedia, not a word we hear often in our parishes, but a state well known and discussed in earlier centuries. It's quite common for folks who move from one place to another. Part disorientation, part low-energy, part detachment from routines and an overall listless kind of ambivalence.

All summed up by feeling flat (Of course, that could also be a virus, malnutrition, depression, or dementia onset). *Acedia* used to be thought of as a "deadly sin." But maybe it's no more than a need to rest from the concentrated effort of moving. It's also the confusion of not knowing where you have put things such as, "Did we sell that rug, dump those winter boots, do we still have a bread knife and if yes, where is it?"

Don't assume moving will be exciting. A smaller abode is easier to keep up. No more long distances to drive to town. Now it's possible to partake of *town delights*. Join a choir, go back to the gym, go out with friends on an evening. But instead, we mostly just hung around and napped.

So, what to do? Fight it? Pretend it's not happening? Seek relief with a pharmaceutical? Blame something or someone? As people in our late 70s, perhaps this state was already occurring, but we were so busy moving we did not notice. When you are downsizing you just have to stay focused on the goals and ignore a lot of other events and feelings going on. You assume you will catch up emotionally later.

We decided not to push it and practice the virtue of patience. Invest in trust. It's not like we have been wandering for 70 years. Consider that post-move flatness is a kind of grief. And though we have no regrets about the *Great Cleanup* (Why and how did we acquire all that stuff in 51 years of marriage?), we only really miss a few things and do not intend to replace them.

As oldsters, we are tasked to be models of satisfaction and contentment in a culture of excess and emotional dishonesty. My generation has mostly had parents who were models of careful stewardship. They practiced trust in the economy of grace which is not the same as the economy of consumerism and social media posing.

During Christmas's happy liturgical and social events, many, especially mothers of young children, long for some quiet alone time. Families under financial pressure hope to spend less while desiring to be generous gifters. The shopping centres in December glitter with cravings (but no savings). Tension (spend/not spend) is an exercise in trust.

The *acedia* may dissipate and energy flow again in our lives even if minutes of napping increase. Listlessness is not a symptom to be cured but a healthy rest. Remember that post-Christmas, most seniors feel a little flat. As for gifts, keep them tiny in size. Having disposed of stuff, now there's no place to store even a new mug. Hoping there will be a restoration of energy in our household, we plan to distribute it around. "They who sow sparingly, reap sparingly."

Sadness/no regrets. Listlessness/energy. Pared down/rich. Anxiety/Christmas joy. It's not how you resolve them; it's how you carry them. You hold the opposites in creative tension. You sense your hurt and simultaneously practice resilience. Both, say the mystics, are gifts from the merciful One.

After Christmas, we will return to our old neighbourhood. Our dog will wade in the creek. We will walk past our old home which will be easier because the new owners are making hugely visible renovations, so it feels less like "ours." We will carry any loss we still feel with grace.

To those seniors who are, or about to make a downsizing move, be gentle, you will settle. A New year is around the corner. There will be milk and honey. ✠



CartoonChurch.com

Hannah Main-van der Kamp lives in Powell River. She did join a choir, found new local trails and creeks. Even the dog is settling down and might accept her new front door.

The Old Bird

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

For many decades in the last century, Canadian life was linked by countless private telephone companies. Since the great modern phone behemoths have arrived on the scene these small companies have disappeared. One of them — *The Monk Telephone Company* — was part of our family for two wonderful years. Three long lines stretched through the village and the surrounding countryside. Whenever a call was received in a home, the conversation could be heard in all the other phones if their owners wished to lift them and listen in. As you shared your conversation with someone you could hear the clicks all along the line as each listener linked in. Only two exceptions were allowed in the village — the home of the doctor and of the two church ministers. If memory serves, this intimate and cozy world would all end in 1957 when Mother *Bell* gathered all her little ones, snuffed them out and took over.

For decades before we went to our first parish in the Ottawa Valley, there was an ancient custom. Come Christmas, the family in the rectory would be presented with a turkey. One of my elderly parishioners regaled me with the story of a certain Christmas.

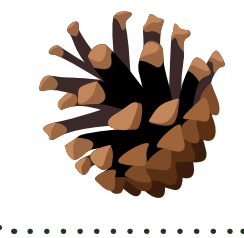
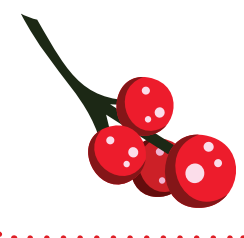
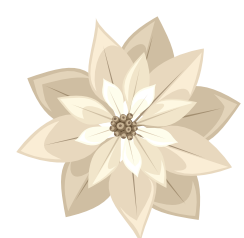
The rector had arrived at the designated farm, been given due hospitality as well as the wrapped-up turkey. Farewells were being said. Perhaps a trifle merry from a flowing if small glass, the rector, perhaps on a whim, picked up the kitchen phone, held it in his hand for a few moments to allow the clicks to begin signaling company on the line, then called his own number at the rectory. When his wife answered he gave a cryptic message. Into the phone he intoned, "My dear, I'm coming home. The old bird is dead, throat cut from ear to ear." Without more ado he replaced the phone on the hook, said his thanks again, and left.

Arriving in the rectory driveway, he saw three ladies of the parish, all dressed formally as they would for a wake or some such serious occasion; all sitting in chairs borrowed from the parlour. After all, who in their right mind could ignore such a delicious piece of news. Throat cut from ear to ear, no less. Who could ignore getting in early on that gem!

MERRY CHRISTMAS! ✦



PHOTO Jeannine Raymond (iStock ID#1467966171)



Of Rugby & the Greek New Testament

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Which sounds an extraordinary linkage but trust me, dear reader. In 1951, the men of the Divinity Class in Trinity College, Dublin were hoping to be ordained. Towards the end of the Trinity Term the only hurdle that remained was what was called *the Viva*. It not only sounds medieval, it was indeed medieval. Having done all our written exams, we faced an oral in New Testament Greek, a test officially known as a *Viva* — *Viva Voce* or *by voice*. This you had to pass in order to be ordained.

One sat before a professor who had in front of him a copy of the New Testament in Greek. After welcoming you to his table — formally rather than without any great warmth of friendship — he would open his Testament, point to a passage, and say with chilling solemnity Mr. (whatever your name was) would you please translate from verse 10 to verse 25 of such and such chapter of the Gospel or Epistle he had chosen. This was your last chance to redeem yourself if you had done a poor written exam. This *Viva Voce* test was worth ten all-important marks in your final exam. To pass it you had to get at least four out of ten.

Now to the occasion I recall. There were three of us in the small room, the King's Professor in Divinity and two of us final year students, myself and one of the most well-known sports figures in European Rugby whom we shall call GM, incidentally one of the most liked students in our year. However, it was not a secret that GM was not an outstanding scholar in New Testament Greek. When the prof suggested GM go first, I knew that what I was about to overhear would not be pretty, and it wasn't. Valiantly, with many self-corrections, apologies, wrinkling of the brow, and gazing at the ceiling, GM at last stumbled to a halt.

There was silence while the prof closed his New Testament and prepared his verdict. Then he said something I thought I was imagining. With quite a pleasant expression on his face he looked at GM and said, "You know, for an international rigger player, you're not a bad classicist." Then, pausing, he added the all-important mark: Four!

I had little time for wonder. I was duly called and presented with a long passage in Greek awaiting translation. As with GM, Greek had not been my favourite subject. Des-

perately I searched for the odd Greek word that I might know in English. Mercifully I recognized the word Samaritan, and I was saved to stumble through our Lord's well-known story. Humbled and feeling rather miserable, I was relieved beyond measure to hear the professor say rather dryly the single word: Five!

Many years later GM and I would meet in St. Patrick's National Cathedral one Sunday at the Church parade of one of the elite Guard regiments — the Irish Guards — where I had heard that GM would be the preacher. By then he had for some years been rector in the parish in Sandringham where he had had a most royal parishioner when she visited and where she attended service most faithfully. Always, GM told me, on Saturday evening the Queen would come bearing flowers for the altar for Sunday.

You will wish to know what we talked about as aging clergy. Many things of course but one thing we recalled was that long ago "Viva" morning when like desperate swimmers we struggled as drowning men reaching for the bank. I learned something that solved a mystery for me. That magical pass mark of four out of ten. It happened for a very simple reason. The Archbishop Kings Professor of Divinity that day of our Viva exams also happened to be, *mirabile dictu*, the President of the University Rugby Club.

As far as my getting a grudging five mark? I assume our reverend examiner was feeling so good about rescuing GM for the future of International Rugby that he decided to allow me to survive, thus bringing it to pass that decades later the Parish of Royal Sandringham would have a rector and Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver a dean. ✦



Trinity Rugby



Gloria

by Antonio Vivaldi
with classical
Christmas favourites



*with a **Christmas Market**
in the upper hall
2:00 - 9:00pm Saturday
1:30 - 6:30pm Sunday

Parish of St Mark – Ocean Park

12953 20 Avenue, Surrey

7:00pm Friday December 15

***Trinity Lutheran Church**

11040 River Road, Delta

7:00pm Saturday December 16



Cambridge SSJE. PHOTOS Stephen Rowe

Visiting the Other Cambridge

STEPHEN ROWE

Rector of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey; Regional Dean of Peace Arch

For many years I've wanted to visit the brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), an Anglican (Episcopal) religious community in Boston, Massachusetts. Finally, this happened in early October of 2023.

The society was founded in 1866, in Cowley, Oxford, England but established a house in Boston in 1870; their present building dates from the 1920s and was completed in 1936, at the height of the Great Depression. The brothers also have a rural retreat in West Newbury, New Hampshire where several of the brothers reside.

We arrived during a heat wave, so I was glad to have packed some shorts! Like other religious communities, SSJE's life is based around prayer, the Eucharist, hospitality,

and silence. And for five days we kept this rhythm. Morning Prayer was at 6am, so it did not feature on my "to do" list. Rather, my day started with the Eucharist with the brothers, other guests, and local residents at 8am. Each service was accompanied by a full, well-crafted sermon by one of the brothers. At midday there were noon prayers followed by lunch eaten without talking, however there was music to break the silence. There was 6pm Evensong and 8:30pm Compline. Each of the liturgies included hymns, plainsong, and the reciting of psalms. There was a great sense of listening and responding to one another in all the worship. The rooms were very comfortable, mine with a view of the Charles River with each day seeing rowers going up and



Chapel SSJE.

"The brothers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist are most assuredly 'in the world' but 'not of the world' and it is a great joy to have shared their generous hospitality for the time we were there."



Harry Elkins Widener Library in Boston.



Residence of George Washington and Henry Longfellow.



Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston.



JFK Presidential Library, Boston.

down as well as joggers on the sidewalk.

SSJE, is in Cambridge (across the river from Boston) where Harvard has its home. One is struck by the architecture, particularly the bricks that face the sidewalks as well as the community's buildings. During my time there, I had ample opportunity to visit the Art Gallery and explore a house once used by George Washington (during the siege of Boston) and where Henry Longfellow (American poet) lived for many years.

For me this provided a much-needed spiritual retreat, but also provided access to plenty of information about the history and culture of this place. In Boston we visited the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, walked the Freedom Trail, and enjoyed the waterfront of Boston Harbour. My own knowledge of the history of America's independence from Britain, as well as the origins of the ending of slavery in the States, were greatly increased by the visit.

We were blessed with extraordinary weather and enjoyed many of the sights, churches, and historical centres of Boston's past juxtaposed with a modern business city centre.

Without doubt, the spiritual and religious aspects of the trip were key. A chance to rest and reset from the challenges of ministry in this post-pandemic time. The brothers of SSJE are most assuredly "in the world" but "not of the world" and it is a great joy to have shared their generous hospitality for the time we were there. The beauty and energy of their corporate life will long remain with me, and I hope it will not be too long before I get to go again.

If you are looking for a retreat, I can highly recommend SSJE, both houses are easily accessible by public transport and based on our experience will provide a restful and spiritual experience in the context of excellent, thoughtful hospitality. ✦