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Continuing the Journey as Partners in Christ

The Sesquicentennial Celebrations at St. Thomas, Chilliwack

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

One hundred and sixty-four years ago, during the Gold Rush, the Sappers (Royal Engineers of Her Majesty's Armed Forces) built a church at Port Douglas, BC. At that time the Sappers were quite busy as they'd built a church near Fort Langley and in Hope at about the same time. The church was named St. Mark's and 14 years later the structure was moved via First Nations war canoes down 72.4 kilometres (45 miles) of Harrison Lake to Fraser River Landing at the foot of Wellington Street and rebuilt on the site of Five Corners, Chilliwack. The year was 1873, and the Parish of St. Thomas was born. A resident priest arrived in 1877, a new church to serve the growing community was built on the site in 1897, and then moved in 1909, to its current site on Gore at First Avenue. According to the information card distributed at the November 18 Celebration Dinner, "the move took nearly two weeks and was made with rollers drawn by horsepower."

In 1957, a Parish Hall was built about 50 metres east of the church building and on the evening of November 18, 2023, approximately 120 people gathered for dinner to mark the occasion of the parish's founding 150 years ago. It was a joyful celebration and hats off to those who made it happen, particularly the 150th Anniversary Committee: Deb Alford, Deb Edwards, Jan Guretzki, Marlene Rodgers, Shauna Fortin, Sharon Tiessen, Gail Hampson, and Johanna Mdoe. All these volunteers were inspired by the leadership of their Interim Vicar, the Rev. Lorie Martin whose energy, enthusiasm and faith were the metaphorical knitting needles that brought it all together creating a beautiful two-day event.

The Rt. Rev. John Stephens was delighted to head south and east to his Parish of St. Thomas to participate in the festivities. He spoke briefly at the dinner about the incredible accomplishments contained in 150 years of ministry but reminded everyone that the most important thing is to move forward in sharing the message of the Gospels, and to continue to strive to build-up God's kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ. Also at the dinner was Chilliwack's acting mayor, City Council member, Chris Kloot who spoke on behalf of the city to offer congratulations to the parish. Councilor Kloot had to leave a bit early to attend the Civic Fireworks display held two kilometres west of the church as the City of Chilliwack was also celebrating its Sesquicentennial the same day.

The Celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, November 19 began at 10am and was well attended. Bishop John's



Synod Office Building Administrator, Regan Gorman is a man of many talents. An interview exploring his recent work as a labyrinth designer, creator and installer may be found on pages 10 – 11.



According to warden, Jan Guretzki, ODNW, this model was created by a man from Abbotsford (name unknown) who dropped it off one day a couple of years back, saying that he thought the church was so beautiful that he wanted to make a model of it and subsequently donated it to the parish. PHOTO Lorie Martin

message from the previous evening that time doesn't stand still, and that the life of the church continues was made manifest as he was to confirm five members of the congregation, reaffirm one member and receive another into the Anglican Communion. In his sermon the bishop examined at some length the Gospel for the day, the *Parable of the Talents*, however toward the end of the sermon he continued the theme of his address at the dinner:

"Today we are remembering the 150th Anniversary of St. Thomas, Chilliwack. For 150 years people have turned to this place as a grounding for their lives, for their living and for the best ways to invest in the abundant life. For 150 years

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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Due to staff transitions at the Synod office of the diocese of New Westminster, regular publication, and distribution of the next scheduled issue of *Topic*, March 2024 may be disrupted.

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Monthly distribution of the *Anglican Journal* will not be affected.

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The Narthex Open House Display. PHOTO Lorie Martin



A bulletin board in the parish hall with letters, emails, posts from area leaders and well-wishers on the anniversary. PHOTOS Randy Murray, except where noted



During the Open House, Bishop John speaks to parishioner Jim Stevenson, who was curating the photo albums table. Jim attended both days and continued to help out. Not bad for 96!

Continuing the Journey as Partners in Christ The Sesquicentennial Celebrations at St. Thomas, Chilliwack

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

people here have discovered that all of life is about a relationship. A relationship that Jesus described as loving God with the whole of ourselves and our neighbours as ourselves. And we discover this because of the font that we gathered around at the beginning of this service. For it really is at the centre of this and all churches. The font is the starting place that marks us as Christ's own forever... and with that, with the water of baptism splashed upon us, we are making a commitment to become more aware of God's investment in us and how we are called to live into that in this world. With the water of Baptism splashed upon us we are naming our relationship with Jesus. The same Jesus who told many stories, many parables, about the kingdom of heaven. This church has been grounded in this for 150 years and counting. Grounded in the kingdom of heaven and learning that God is investing in us.

*This morning, Joanna, Dennis, Tyler, Liberty, Myrtle, BettyAnn and Andrea will either be confirmed, reaffirmed, or received. This is an enormous undertaking. They are revealing to us that they are aware that indeed the kingdom of heaven that Jesus spoke about is known to them. They have discovered it. Not in the pursuit of riches (as in the parable) but in the pursuit of recognizing God's gifts in their lives and our lives. They have discovered that Jesus came into the world, the Son of God came into the world, to show us and reveal to us that we live in the kingdom of heaven, and it is beckoning us to pay more attention to God's hope for us.*¹

On a personal note, this was the penultimate parish visit I would undertake during my incumbency as Communications Officer and *Topic* Editor and the last one that I would cover as a photo feature in *Topic*.

I hope you enjoy the photos and cutlines that tell the rest of the story of November 18 and 19, 2023 at the Parish of St. Thomas, Chilliwack. ✠

¹ Bishop John's sermon is available on the diocesan website at <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/podcasts/medial/2023-11-19-the-font-is-the-starting-place-that-marks-us-as-christ-s-own-forever>



LEFT The balloons and cupcakes set the tone. MIDDLE View of the Parish Hall at the dinner, Saturday, November 18. RIGHT The cranberry and orange centrepiece candles made by Associate Warden, Irene Tisdale.



The Rev. Lorie Martin addresses the diners and introduces the programme and the speakers.



LEFT Acting Mayor of Chilliwack, Council Member Chris Kloot. As Saturday, November 18 was also the civic celebration of Chilliwack's Sesquicentennial, Councilor Kloot had to leave early to host the fireworks. RIGHT Preparing to bless the font and water before asperges and the procession in for the Eucharist.



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



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Thank you!



Rehearsing the Confirmations prior to worship with the soon-to-be-confirmed, BettyAnn Martin.



Processing in to *Great is thy Faithfulness*.



Bishop John leads prayers.



Lesley McMillan leads special anniversary prayers.



Joanna Bravo shares the First reading *Judges 4:1-7*.



The Rev. Martin and the confirmands in waiting.



Bishop John confirms Myrtle McDonald, aged 102!



Liberty is confirmed.



Bishop John preaching.



Deacon of the Word and Table for the Eucharist, the Rev. Linda Varin prepares the altar during the Offertory, *Day After Day, Jesus Reigns*.



LEFT *Sursum Corda*. RIGHT Commissioning of Lay Ministries: Altar Guild, Liturgical Assistants, Lay Administrators, Music Team, and Tech Team.



The Deacon's Dismissal.



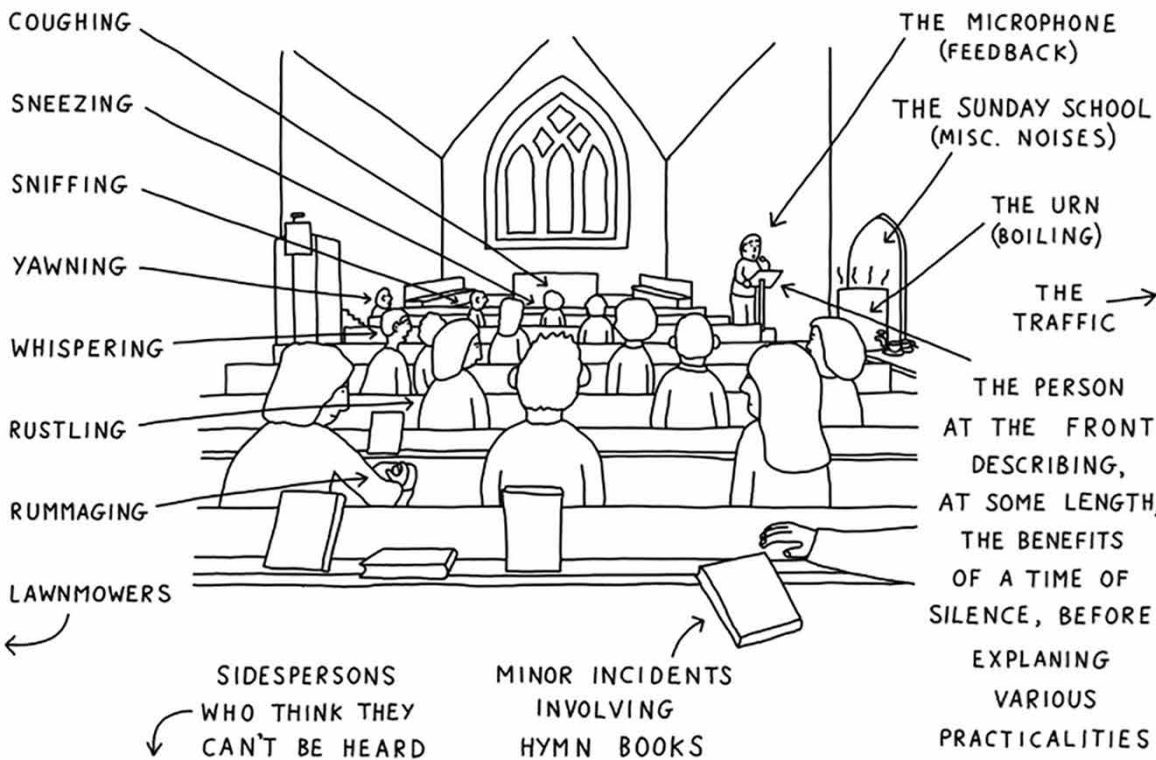
Greeting folks after worship.



The Sanctuary Party: Deacon of the Word and Table, the Rev. Linda Varin; Bishop John; Interim Priest-in-Charge/Vicar, the Rev. Lorie Martin; and Crucifer/Liturgical Assistant, Nancy den Boesterd who is also the parish's Office Administrator.

A TIME OF SILENCE

PLEASE IGNORE ALL DISTRACTIONS





The Rev. Stephen Rowe, October 2023. PHOTO Randy Murray
PHOTOS Courtesy of Christine & Stephen Rowe, except where noted



LEFT The not yet ordained the Rev. Christine Rowe to the left of Stephen who has just been priested, June 28, 1987 at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.



RIGHT The 10th Anniversary of Stephen's priesting, June 1997.



An unknown celebration at St. John the Baptist, Caversham in 1993.
Hannah Rowe is on the left by her dad's elbow.



November 19, 2023, Baptism of Chinedu Emmanuel Ezema.



Stephen with a newly baptized member of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey (circa 2008).

Clergy, First & Foremost, Must Love & Care for their Congregation

An interview with the Reverend Stephen Rowe as he prepares to retire as rector of a parish

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The Rev. Stephen Rowe is well-known to many in the diocese of New Westminster even though he has spent more than 90% of his time here as rector of one church community, the Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey (aka Epiphany).

Stephen served as Regional Dean of South Fraser from 2004–2007, as the Archdeacon of Fraser from 2007–2017, and in 2021, Bishop John Stephens appointed Stephen, Regional Dean of Peace Arch, one of the two regional deaneries in that same Archdeaconry of Fraser.

Immigrating to Canada from England with his spouse, the Rev. Christine Rowe and their three children at the turn of the last century, Stephen was appointed Senior Port Chaplain at the Mission to Seafarers. After a short stint of chaplaincy and some discussions about his career path with then-bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham, he was appointed as part time Priest-in-Charge of Epiphany in 2021. He became rector in November 2002, where he has remained and will retire from that position at the end of February 2024.

I am grateful for Stephen's ministry and his support and encouragement of diocesan communications and pretty much all diocesan initiatives.

Stephen, thank-you so much for taking the time to speak with me and to share your thoughts with *Topic* readers.

Q. As the child of an Anglican priest, husband of an Anglican priest (who herself is the child of an Anglican priest) your future was pretty much pre-ordained (and I'm proud of that pun). Please share a little bit of your background; where you grew up; your Christian Formation; the circumstances around your vocational call; and your move to Canada?

A. My growing up years were spent in Coventry, where my father was rector of an Anglo-Catholic parish, where he spent 24 years. My mum was an elementary school teacher; both born in the city of Coventry.

I guess I was about 14 when I started to wonder about becoming a priest. In those days there was no discernment process via the parish and the careers advisor at school, not sure what to say to me when I told him what I was thinking, suggested history might be a better major than geography.

After modest success at high school I attended a Church of England College of Higher Education, majoring in Religion and Philosophy. Then after a year working on a Master's degree (which remains uncompleted) it was time for life experience, as the church seemed to think was important. I'm not entirely sure what they thought I had been doing for the previous 23 years!

However, this led me to a year spent with the Mission to Seamen (as it was then) in Mombasa, Kenya. Working alongside a Scottish Episcopal priest, I drove a minibus to transport seafarers to and from the Mission, and organized soccer games for ships teams to play against a local and expatriate team. For Soviet ships the KGB officer might allow his crew to play soccer at the Mission to Seamen as the crew's only opportunity to leave the port area. I played left back with little distinction. An armed robbery during the night certainly added to my life experience!

In 1983, I went to Ripon College, Cuddesdon where Christine and I met and married three months before we left in 1986. The college was liberal catholic and was one of the first to admit women for training in the Church of England.

We served as joint curates in Denham, Buckinghamshire where Sir John Mills was a parishioner; attendance at Mattins was always swelled when he was scheduled to read. The parish was middle of the road and varied socio-economically. I cut my teeth on youth work arriving one evening to find the kids had entered the building and let off all the fire extinguishers.

We then moved to Aylesbury where we worked in different parishes as part of the same team. I became Team Vicar of St. Peter's, Quarrendon, a blue-collar parish on the edge of the town, and Christine as deacon of the parish church of St. Mary's where she had been ordained. In those days the rector was expected to do almost everything. One Sunday it became clear that the candles were not alight, so one person near the front brought this to my attention. I shook my head, and someone came forward to complete the task.

In 1993, we moved to St. John's, Caversham where I was vicar (rector in Canadian speak) and Christine worked

with me but also was a part-time prison chaplain and later a full-time hospital and hospice chaplain. These were seven formative years for us as a family, especially with three young children. It was here that Christine was ordained priest (after a seven year wait), one of 600 women ordained in the Church of England at that time.

In the fall of 1999, I saw the advert for the Senior Chaplain's role at the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) in Vancouver. As Christine's sister and brother lived on the North Shore, we had visited several times since we had married. At the time I thought a change from parish ministry would be a good development. It seemed like a one-off opportunity when my career path seemed stalled in England. The post at MtS had been vacant for two years, and the institution was not entirely functional when I arrived. Like the BC fast ferries, I never really got into service there, which brought me to a temporary gig at Epiphany. That said, meeting seafarers and seeing the sacrifices they made to care for their families was striking. Many spent months away from home, and often to go away again as soon as they'd arrived home, when a new contract was offered.

Q. What are some of the biggest differences between the Anglican Church in the UK and your experience in the diocese of New Westminster, Anglican Church of Canada?

A. When we left the Church of England, parishes were still somewhat subsidized by the historic resources of the church. Parishes were much more plentiful, our diocese (Oxford) had over 600 parishes and our deanery in Reading had 36 parishes! As Canadian parishes are self-supporting, the parishioners tend to be more committed in their giving and their ministries. Of course, most of my ordained ministry has been in the diocese of New Westminster, so my ideas about the Church of England are somewhat dated.

Q. Did you always feel that parish ministry was your vocational calling?

A. Aside from the brief time at MtS, the parish was always my first love. Over the years the role as rector has varied, responding to the development of the community and the congregation. During Epiphany visioning processes hospitality often came up as a priority. Nearly ten years ago a group of Chaldean Christians (from the catholic tradition) arrived. At first a few and then a few more. Then a Chaldean priest arrived from Iraq as a refugee. With Bishop Melissa Skelton's full support, we shared space, which taught us what hospitality really means. Later Father Ayoob Shawkat Adwar became an Anglican and so Chaldean worship came to an end. However, by then a regular group of Chaldeans were committed to staying. Epiphany had always been a multi-racial parish and now was one with two languages. With generous support from the diocese, we employ two translators to provide written and spoken translation week by week. Any announcement is always made in both languages.

Q. Many readers may not fully understand the roles of a Regional Dean and Regional Archdeacon, in brief what are those roles?

A. A regional Dean really has the care and support of the clergy in their area. To pastor the clergy and ensure they meet regularly for prayer and mutual support.

Archdeacons work with the bishop to provide support to leaders especially in times of challenge and transition. They meet with parish leaders and often act as a go-between for the bishop, clergy, and local leaders. This was a role I really relished. However, attending Diocesan Council every month for ten years is time I will never get back. I have no doubt I got to be part of many projects and initiatives that would not have been open to me in the Church of England.

Q. In retrospect, did your many years of involvement in diocesan leadership inform your vocation as a parish priest?

A. This for me was always a two-way process. Knowing what was happening in diocesan terms could then be applied in the parish setting and vice versa. It has always been interesting to learn what other parishes were doing and gaining from their experiences and their mistakes!

Four things are key for a parish to flourish: able and active lay people, a good building and financial self-sufficiency. The last is a sense of mission, which for Epiphany has been, for 18 years, seeking to build a new church.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Q. Describe the evolution of your liturgical style to where you are now. What's changed? What hasn't changed?

A. As with technology, I am quite behind the times. As Anglicans we are a people of the book, and it seems that we should allow the liturgy to speak for itself rather than try to improvise too much. The Eucharist is the centre of the week, from where we start and end our ministry as clergy and lay people. We always work together. I love it when parishioners come up with ideas and I ask 'how are you going to help us get that started?' At Epiphany perhaps 30–40% of the congregation are Arabic speaking from the Chaldean tradition. Although many do not understand English, they know the shape of the liturgy and so have no problem ignoring the sermon but happily sharing Eucharist on Sunday and midweek. In the pandemic, when the church was closed, two of the women came to Epiphany and knelt on the stone steps to say rosary.

Q. As you approach retirement how would you describe your overall approach to liturgy and to ministry?

A. Clergy first and foremost must love and care for the congregation. Unless we do that, we are wasting our time and more importantly the time of parishioners. The liturgy has to be well done; the music has to be good (here speaks someone dedicated to *Common Praise*). There must be variety and innovation. Strong and effective leaders are crucial and must work as a collegial team. In our parish nothing ever goes to Council unless the wardens and I have discussed the matter and come to a common mind. If the majority say no, we don't go ahead. Our parish has really been assisted by the three-warden system. Each year we are looking for a new leader and the group dynamic changes, which leads to new ideas and fresh perspective.

Q. Is there a particular component of ministry that you really enjoy, that feels most comfortable for you? And is there a component or components that are more challenging?

A. Preaching and presiding on Sunday is the highlight of the week and is what I will miss the most. From where I sit, I can see the entire congregation and think about their needs and perhaps where they might serve the church in the future. A parish requires a sense of vision for its future and to begin with, the building wasn't the focus, rather building up the spiritual lives of the congregation and making a difference in the community. Epiphany was always a strong supporter of Surrey Food Bank and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) as well as other diocesan initiatives. I have appreciated working together with St. Helen's, St. Michael's and Christ the Redeemer on parish picnics and other shared projects and retreats. Also, for most of my time I have had colleagues, deacons, the Reverends Len Dyer and Connie Wilks, and more recently retired priests the Rev. Paul Guiton and now the Rev. Christine Rowe.

Prayer has always been vital to me, saying the Daily Office and praying with people whenever I visited them

at home or in hospital. One of the great gifts from the pandemic years has been weekly Compline, Mattins and Bible Study via Zoom. This means we can join in prayer wherever we are and regardless of our ability to leave home.

The weekly Bible Study group has met for 20 years in various forms. It is now a hybrid at one of the assisted living communities. Every Wednesday afternoon we grapple with the texts and seek to apply them to our lives in contemporary times.

Vocational discernment is very important. We should always be seeking the gifts of our congregation so they can use them in the service of God and the church.

Q. What's the best day and time for parish meetings?

A. Midweek early evening works best when you have people on Council who work in the daytime. We still have Council via Zoom, and it works well. That said, the wardens and I meet in the middle of the day once a month face to face. In heaven there are no meetings.

Q. Early on in your incumbency, the Epiphany community decided that the parish's principal ministry goal would be the building of a new church and new buildings to serve the Guildford neighbourhood and create a welcoming place for Anglican ministry to flourish. How did that come to pass and why did it not continue on to completion?

A. I always blame one of the congregation for this. She said in 2005, she would like to see us do something with the building. I went on holiday and came back and wrote an open letter to the congregation. Two weeks later a fire destroyed part of the building.

We have a great and growing congregation, and we have a terrible, falling down building in which to do ministry. In the earlier days of planning to build a new church someone literally kicked a hole in the rotted woodwork and got inside before the alarm went off. As a diocese we should be saddened that we allow a vibrant, growing congregation to continue to meet in such a building, a place that regularly welcomes seekers who become new members of the parish.

In the last 30 years we have built no new churches in the diocese and so why not be serious about doing that in a growing and developing area which is strategic and has a more than active congregation. The last few years we have turned a profit, as well as continuing to accumulate funds for a new building. We have separately raised \$14,000 to employ a worker for childrens and youth in the last year.

As we have learned, building new churches, and redeveloping existing structures is complex work and needs diocesan leadership to partner with parishes to get this done. No parish should be trying to figure out how to do this without invested diocesan partnership. Any project will cost millions of dollars and we need to invest wisely and well. We have much to learn from the United Church in this field. Any parish should sit down with a dedicated group from the diocese to work with the parish to develop a plan. We had three or four people with development

experience, project management experience and as well financial expertise, and yet we have lacked real partnership and this has left the task unfinished.

My old statement was I wanted to see the new church built *before I retire*, now that has been revised to *before I die*. If the diocese steps up this will happen. I remain hopeful.

Q. In your opinion what is the biggest challenge facing the Anglican Church in this part of the world?

A. It isn't easy being the church in 2023, especially after the pandemic. We need to be lean, efficient, and strategic. We should invest in churches that are growing and repair and replace some of our buildings. We need to keep the main thing the main thing: worship, pastoral care, outreach, spirituality, discernment. The world and our communities have many issues, but unless we focus on the essentials, we will have no people or churches left from which to do ministry or speak for our communities and the wider world.

Q. What do you think you will miss the most when you are no longer rector of a parish?

A. The biggest loss will be the people I have worked with for two decades. We always seem to be attracting seekers and people of faith searching for a new church home (in spite of the dreadful state of the building) and meeting new people and getting to know the existing congregation has been endlessly life-giving. Also, the loving support and encouragement from the people of Epiphany for me and all my family.

Q. An incoming US president leaves a sealed letter in the desk of the Oval Office for the next resident of that office. If you were to leave a letter in the desk for the next Rector of Epiphany, what would you write?

A. Love the people, get to know the people, learn from them, and listen and be guided by them. Your time at Epiphany will change your life and you will always be glad you made the decision to become the rector.

Q. Anything else you'd like to add?

A. It has been an immense privilege to be rector of Epiphany which in many ways became my life's work. I stayed so long in hopes of seeing the new church built, but also because the congregation has been and continues to be a total joy with which to share ministry. Throughout my time I was always well supported by the congregation as a whole and by a series of excellent and dedicated wardens. Often it has been a blast, but there have been times (especially with the building project) that were very difficult to navigate. We have probably seen the passing of 50 or more members of the congregation, each one faithful and dedicated to this particular house of prayer. Together we have achieved so much and been an influence on the lives of many people, inside and outside the congregation. My prayer is that this community will go from strength to strength and attract the new leadership it richly deserves. ✠



Presentation of flowering tree at St. John the Baptist, Caversham to Christine in honour of her recent priesting, May 1994. The tree was a gift from members of the Mother's Union and all three Rowe children are in the photo. Hannah with the older girl on the left, Lucy being held by her mother and Tom, on the right, standing in front of an older boy.



Stephen with Carol Williams and some younger members of the parish beside the creche, January 18, 2018.

St. Hilda's Cemetery Centenary

JANET MCINTOSH & CHRISTINE PAWLEY

St. Hilda's, Sechelt

The St. Hilda's Pioneer Cemetery and Memorial Garden is located on the unceded ancestral *swiya* of the *shishálh* Nation.

One hundred years ago, in January 1923, settler Thomas John Cook made some land available as a Sechelt community burial ground. He did this as a matter of urgency, since four-month-old Regnheld Evelyn Davidson had just died in the tiny Sechelt Inlet community of Doriston. Regnheld's parents rowed their baby's body, wrapped in a blanket, the nearly 30 kilometres to Sechelt, but no dedicated burial site was accessible to them nearer than Vancouver. Now Cook stepped in to help. In addition to donating the land, he himself built Regnheld's coffin, dug her grave, and read the burial service. He then surrounded the grave with a cedar fence in protection against the ever-encroaching forest.¹

Soon afterwards, a second little girl was interred nearby. Toshiko Konishi, whose parents farmed along the western shore of Sechelt inlet, had died in a tragic accident in August 1922. Her father, Jimi Konishi, and Thomas Cook were good friends, which perhaps helped the Konishi family decide to entrust her remains to the burial ground. A Buddhist priest came from Vancouver to conduct the funeral service for Toshiko, and eventually the graves of several members of the Konishi family were grouped together inside an iron fence, with two ornamental cherry trees to mark the area.

The two children's graves instituted a new cemetery for the Sechelt community. In its early years, settler Helen Dawe remembered, children placed wild flowers there in remembrance. Other burials followed, and as time went on, Cook grew concerned, wanting to ensure that the ground would be kept up as he himself aged. In 1928, he registered a 1.6 acre (0.7 hectare) block of land known as



PHOTOS Submitted

the Shorncliffe subdivision, that included the burial ground, with the Land Registry in New Westminster. He felt that he could trust the Anglican Church to take care of the cemetery, and in 1930, he donated the block to the Synod of the Anglican Church. In 1936, Archbishop Adam Urias DePencier dedicated the first St. Hilda's Church building.

Eventually, as the community grew, the space available for burials proved insufficient, and St. Hilda's opened a memorial garden for cremated remains. The first burial of ashes took place in 1989, and by the year 2000 the garden was full. The church then created a second garden, which is also now nearing capacity (plans for a third memorial garden are taking shape).

The two memorial gardens are marked by large wooden Celtic crosses that bear brass plaques naming those whose ashes are interred there. These gardens continue the tradition of the community cemetery and many members of the wider community have found their resting place there. The names of those interred in the cemetery and the memorial garden can be found by searching the website *Find a Grave*.²

On Sunday, November 5, St Hilda's Rector, Rev. Stephen Black, conducted a service to commemorate All Souls Day which included a prayer in and for the Pioneer Cemetery and Memorial Garden. ✠

¹ Thomas Cook's granddaughter, Helen Dawe, recounts these and following details in her book *Helen Dawe's Sechelt (Madeira Park: Harbour Publishing, 1990)*

² The names of those interred in St. Hilda's cemetery and the memorial garden can be found on the Find a Grave website at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2287671/saint-hilda-s-pioneer-cemetery>.

Your Identity is Bigger Than Just You

KERRY BAISLEY, ODNW

Missioner for Indigenous Justice; Christ Church Cathedral



The manual typewriter Seahorse. PHOTOS Curated by Kerry Baisley; edited & formatted by Randy Murray



Detail of the lower portion of the Seahorse.

"...your identity is bigger than just you."
Ray Aldred's opening line from his recent book, *Our Home and Treaty Land*

Cynthia Llewellyn, OM, ODNW would have smiled hearing those words. She was one of the early leaders in the diocese of New Westminster working for social equality and Indigenous justice issues. Cynthia was engaged all through her life on projects bigger than she was, including the *I27 Society for Housing*. Her support of these issues and her volunteer work resulted in being awarded the Anglican Award of Merit (AAM/OM) in 2001.

And yet there was another part of her life yet to be discovered. Cynthia asked me to be her executor and after she died in 2016, we discovered a treasure trove of letters Cynthia wrote to her parents while she was stationed in London in World War II. We knew Cynthia had enlisted in the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) and served from 1943-1945 stationed in Jericho Beach, Esquimalt and London, England but didn't know any details about those years.

Who knew she wrote 236 letters to her parents about every two to three days from March 10, 1943 to March 24, 1946! The only gap in correspondence is from April 1943 to February 1944, when she was stationed aboard the HMCS Burrard. Was it because there was nothing to write about, or was it because they were not allowed to write home or say anything about their work during this period? We will never know.

We also discovered a photo album and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Cynthia and a friend digging up some worms.

Establishment	Subsidiary Rating	Non-Subsidiary Rating	From	To
THEY BEYOND THE SEA	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945
H.M.C.S. BURKARD	1st Class		1943	1945

LEFT Cynthia's service record (top half). RIGHT Cynthia (right) with two other Wrens (the common term for members of the WRCNS).



Photo taken by Cynthia from her office of the Royal Family going to St. Paul's on VE Day.

Confirmation Service at Holy Spirit, Whonnock

A combined Celebration of the Eucharist with St. Matthew, Abbotsford

GAIL LEFÈVRE

Communications Consultant, Holy Spirit, Whonnock

In the fall of 2023, both St. Matthew and Holy Spirit parishes saw a surge of interest from all age groups in Confirmation Preparation and commitment to Christ through the Anglican Church. The Sacraments of Holy Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist were celebrated at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Whonnock, on Sunday afternoon, October 22.

Six confirmands were each blessed by the Rt. Rev. John Stephens. The Rev. Miranda Sutherland, Vicar of Holy Spirit and St. Matthew, Abbotsford presented the candidates: Maria Davidian and Victor Kalashyan of Holy Spirit; Devon Jules Jensen, Rebekah Palmer, Emmanuel Oludaisi Coker, and Robert Clark from St. Matthew. Devon received double blessings (and a cake), having been baptized that morning at St. Matthew and confirmed in the afternoon at Holy Spirit.

Holy Eucharist with Confirmations do not just happen. Willing hands swept the church, cleaned the windows, arranged flowers, and polished the brass. Fingers had to type up a comprehensive order of service. Music was selected and rehearsed, with Tearyn Heaven leading the music in worship. The bishop's office had been notified weeks before, refreshments for after the service being made on the day. Deacon for the liturgy, the Rev. Karen Saunders had to prepare. Trish Martin of St. Matthew and Tom Kerr of Holy Spirit, wardens, rehearsed the readings. Hartley Seldon was the crucifer for the service. Rector's Warden at Holy Spirit, Deborah Sproule oversaw the many details.

Confirmation preparation is the priority. The confirmands spent hours over many weeks learning under the guidance of the Rev. Sutherland. At St. Matthew this was aided by Richard Martin. Each student needed their own time to understand what the sacrament means to them personally. To decide to belong to God through Jesus Christ, to be an active member of the Church, to live as a disciple daily, to seek peace and justice with respect for all people, and to safeguard the integrity of God's creation requires commitment. This is what we witnessed in the service from each of those confirmed.

In his sermon, Bishop John emphasized the message from the Gospel (*Matthew 22:15-22*):

"Give to the emperor the things that are the emperors, and to God the things that are God's."



The Confirmands, bookended by the Rev. Miranda Sutherland and Bishop John Stephens. PHOTO Gail Lefèvre

The members of the congregation and the confirmands were confronted with the question: *What really belongs to God?*

The outreach of the Church to the wider world was also realized as Bishop John dedicated the 215 *Indigenous Resource Room*, located in Holy Spirit Church. In the room are small, knitted orange shirts depicting the fate of too many residential school children, each shirt a memorial made by the artists of Whonnock. We were reminded that we are all responsible for Reconciliation, no matter when or where we were during those dark years. The space invites all who would like to learn and understand more about the stories and the impact of the Residential Schools in Canada. A space for quiet contemplation, study, and healing prayer.

After the service, everyone enjoyed a lovely meal—a *two-cake affair*—and got to know each other better.

Many thanks to Deborah Sproule and Thomas Kerr of Holy Spirit and the hard-working group of people—Judy Rowbotham, Femke, Richard, and Tearyn Heaven, Jean Davidson, Janet Kerr, Jamie and Ken Mulligan—who

lovingly prepared food, cleaned and decorated the church and hall, etc., in preparation for the bishop's visit. To Mimi Hunfeld and her Sunday School group, thank you for your lovely handmade gifts for Bishop John.

Thanks also to Trish Martin, Linda Burton, the Rev. Art Turnbull, Margaret Strocel, and the friends and families of the confirmation candidates for their support, presence, and participation. Special thanks and appreciation to Dick Martin for all his time, hard work, and expertise in developing, with the Rev. Sutherland, the Confirmation Preparation program at St. Matthew. Dick spent several weeks instructing and preparing the candidates for this day.

When the liturgy ended, when refreshments had been shared and appreciations said, we all went to our homes, our neighbourhoods, and communities. It is here that the commitment of Confirmation will be carried out by those now confirmed in the faith. This is where all of us will live out the promises made. The Holy Spirit will make this happen. ✠

Your Identity is Bigger Than Just You

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

a collection of programs from theatre and musical performances Cynthia attended while in London. She saw John Gielgud as *Hamlet* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket and Laurence Olivier's film of *Henry V* for a penny in the Marble Arch Pavilion Theatre. They calculated things differently than; the length of the film was (literally) 12,296 feet! The Apollo Theatre's *Private Lives* programme provided guidance regarding Air-Raid warnings.

As an executor you are responsible for "distributing the assets" according to the deceased's wishes. But what does one do with such personal memorabilia as these letters. If you knew Cynthia, you would know she wasn't sentimental nor prone to collecting things. And yet she continued to keep the letters that her parents had saved all those years ago. What should happen to them?

Luckily, I had the support and wisdom of Joan Siedl, one time Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the Museum of Vancouver. After some discussion, Joan and I made a "pitch" to the Canadian War Museum and offered them the collection. By Museum standards, the response was swift and positive. The letters, the entertainment programmes, and the photographs, ending with Cynthia's photos of the Royal Family attending a Service of Celebration for VE Day at Westminster Abbey will soon be sent to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

One of my last decisions was what to do with Cynthia's manual typewriter. It had created so many letters, recorded the minutes of so many meetings. Eventually I



Cynthia with an unnamed cousin (surname Llewellyn).

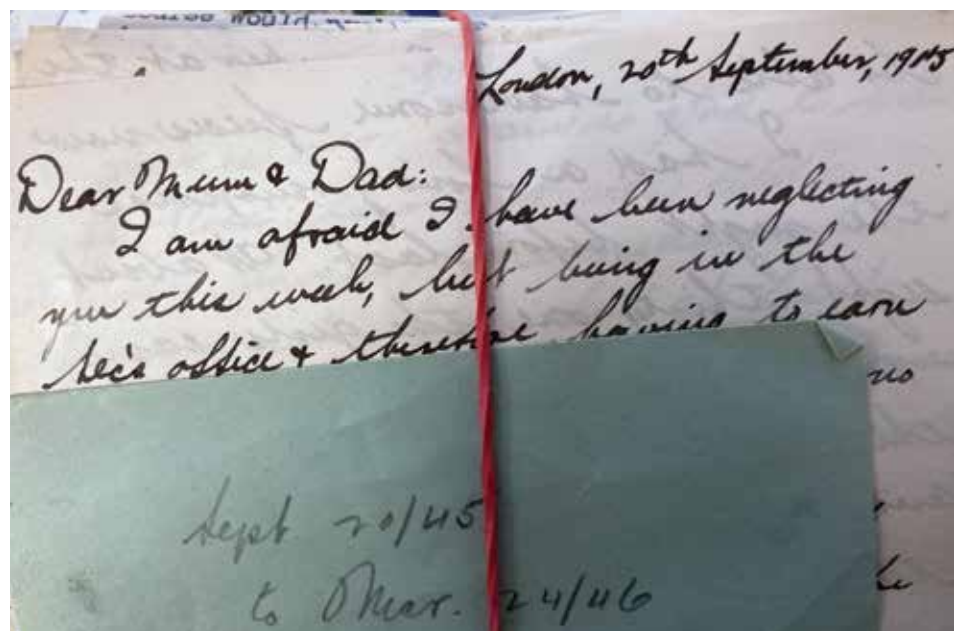
decided to have its components made into a sculpture and once the artist heard about Cynthia's work and her love of nature, he recommended a seahorse. It lives in the hallway and reminds me of Cynthia's faith-full life and work, and how it quietly leads to "more than we could ask or imagine." Cynthia's identity will live on in the Canadian War Museum as a record of her thoughts and experiences. ✠



Playbills and programs.



Big stack of letters.



Letters with a 1945 letter to her parents on top.

The Reverend Peter Armour Niblock, Priest

August 8, 1928 – November 3, 2023

We give thanks for the life and ministry of Peter Armour Niblock, Priest, and are grateful for his ministry in the diocese of New Westminster and in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Peter died on Friday, November 3 in Vancouver.

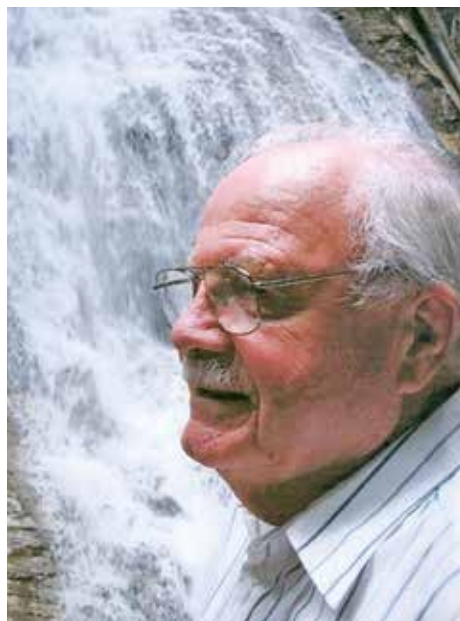
Peter is survived by his wife Pamela, children; Douglas, Ruth and Bradwin, eight grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his daughter Dorothy and grandson Ian.

Born in Toronto, Peter grew up in the Parish of St. Timothy, North Toronto.

Peter graduated with an Honours BA in Maths and Physics from University of Toronto. He then obtained a Bachelor of Divinity from Wycliffe College, and his elementary and secondary teaching certificates from the Ontario College of Education.

While at university, Peter worked summers for Frontier College as a labourer-teacher on CN railroad gangs where he taught English to fellow workers recently arrived in Canada as displaced persons from post-war Europe. He also worked on construction at the Chalk River atomic energy facility.

Peter's work for the railway was inspired by his family's involvement in the construction of the original CPR line across Canada. Peter's great-grandfather was Western Superintendent of the CPR at that time and is recognized by a mountain named



The Rev. Peter Niblock. PHOTO Margaret Marquardt

for him next to Lake Louise. Peter climbed that mountain twice, the second time with his sons at age 75.

Peter taught mathematics at Espanola High School in Espanola, Ontario, and subsequently became Resident Master at Crescent School, Toronto.

Prior to ordination, Peter was commissioned a Lay Reader in the diocese of Algoma by Archbishop Wright. Later, he was in charge of the Pincher Creek parish in the diocese of Calgary in the communities of Cowley, Lundbreck, Beaver Mines, and

Livingstone Valley and part of an evangelism team of seminarians in that diocese.

Ordained to the diaconate on January 25, 1958, by the Bishop of Toronto (for the Archbishop of Rupert's Land), Peter was then ordained to the priesthood on December 17, 1958, by the Archbishop of Rupert's Land. He and Pamela were married December 27, 1958.

Peter served many parishes in his over 65 years of ordained ministry. He served his curacy at St. George, Crescentwood, Winnipeg and was then Rector at St. George, Transcona, Winnipeg and later Rector, at St. Mark, Calgary. This was followed by a time as Teacher-Priest at St. John's School of Alberta, Edmonton. While there, he served the Company of the Cross, the Anglican lay religious order that operated the school. During this time, Peter accompanied young people on canoe trips, snowshoeing treks, and other wilderness adventures. While in Alberta, Peter was the President of the Sunday School Teachers' Association and Chair of the New Curriculum Committee in Rupert's Land. In Calgary he was a member of the board of the Calgary Pastoral Institute and the Calgary Interfaith Committee for Community Action.

In 1970, Peter travelled to England. While there, he visited several churches searching for records of his ancestors. Thus began Peter's interest in genealogy that was to culminate in later years in the research and creation of a complete family tree going

back more than five centuries.

Peter transferred from the diocese of Calgary to the diocese of New Westminster on September 1, 1973.

In this diocese, Peter served at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale; St. Mark/Ascension, Ocean Park; St. Helen's, West Point Grey; St. Columba, Pitt Meadows; and St. Edward's, Richmond. He was also Regional Dean of Granville and Regional Dean of South Fraser.

An avid runner, Peter ran three times in the Vancouver Marathon. In August 1954, in order to witness the British Empire Games record-breaking event when Roger Bannister and John Landy both ran the mile in under four minutes, he slept overnight in a cranny under the old Empire Stadium in order to be present.

In 2015, Peter calculated that he had preached in 121 places of worship: 54 in BC, 30 in Alberta, 18 in Manitoba, 13 in Ontario, 3 in Ireland, 2 in Australia, and 1 in England.

Peter also wrote hymns and poems which he regularly revised. Here is the final verse of his 2004 hymn, *Called by Name*:

*Eyes beholding, faces gleaming,
Christ, our Saviour, leads us on.
Love, her glory ever streaming,
Threads our dark with blaze of dawn.
Called by name, our Lord sustains us
Day by day his course to run.*

Peter's memorial service was celebrated at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale on November 13. ✠

The Reverend Helen Dennee Hill, Priest

August 10, 1935 – November 14, 2023

We give thanks for the life of Helen Dennee Hill, Priest, and are grateful for her ministry in the diocese of New Westminster and in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Helen died at a time of her choosing on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at her home in Vancouver.

Helen attended elementary and high school in New Orleans, Louisiana. She was president of her high school class. She attended both the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church growing up but was confirmed in the Episcopal Church in 1957. Her university undergraduate degree was done at four universities—Tulane University, New Orleans; Northwestern University, Chicago; Université Sorbonne, Paris; and Boston University, where she graduated with a BA in history in 1958.

Helen moved to Vancouver in 1959 and became a member at Christ Church



The Rev. Helen Hill.

Cathedral. Her community involvement included parent organizations, the Junior League, and she was President of the Sunny Hill Hospital Auxiliary. In addition to being a Lay Administrator at the Cathedral, Helen was on the diocesan Task Force on Hospice and Palliative Care and the diocesan Programme Committee. She enjoyed sailing and skiing.

Having discerned a vocation to ordained ministry, Helen attended the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) and graduated with a Master of Divinity (MDiv) in 1986. She was ordained to the diaconate June 2, 1985, and appointed Deacon Assistant at St. Philip, Dunbar, in June 1985. She was ordained to the Priesthood on June 29, 1986. She completed her appointment at St. Philip's in 1987.

Helen also served as Honorary Assistant and then Assistant Priest at St. Mark's,

Kitsilano, followed by a period as Chaplain at the Willingdon Youth Custody Centre, Burnaby, before being appointed Priest-in-Charge at Christ the Redeemer, Surrey. She would later serve as Honorary Assistant at Christ Church Cathedral. She retired in June 2000.

Helen was predeceased by her husband Dr. Robert Hunter Hill in 2021. She met Robert in Paris, France, when she was a student there, and they married in 1957. Her daughter Diana Hill Stringer also predeceased her in 2018. She is survived by her daughter Lianne Hill (Rob Dowler), her son Robert Hill, her son-in-law Brad Stringer, her grandchildren Sarah and Robert Dowler, her step-grandchildren Jade and Tyler Stringer.

The Rev. Hill's funeral was held at Christ Church Cathedral on November 25. ✠

The Reverend Bruce Campbell Gifford, Priest

October 28, 1932 – November 6, 2023

We give thanks for the life of Bruce Campbell Gifford, Priest, and are grateful for his ministry in our diocese and in the Anglican Church of Canada.

Bruce died on Monday, November 6, 2023, at Mount St. Joseph's Hospital, Vancouver.

Bruce was born in New Westminster, BC where he attended elementary and secondary school and attended Holy Trinity Cathedral with his family.

Bruce was educated at the University of British Columbia (UBC) where he graduated with a BA (Psychology and Literature). He was awarded a Konrad Adenauer Exchange Scholarship for study in Theology and Literature at Heidelberg University

which cemented his already developing relationship with German language and culture. Continuing his academic work at the University of California-Berkeley, he was employed as a teaching assistant in the Department of Germanic Studies and graduated with an MA in German Literature in 1956. Having had his vocation to the priesthood affirmed, he enrolled at the University of Trinity College, Toronto where he earned a Licentiate in Theology (LTh) in 1959.

Ordained to the diaconate in 1958, and to the priesthood in 1959, by Bishop Walter Bagnall of the diocese of Niagara, Bruce served as deacon assistant at St. John, Ancaster, Ontario from 1958–1959 and rector

at St. Michael, Hamilton from 1960–1961. He was also a lecturer at Hamilton Teachers' College from 1959–1961. He transferred to the diocese of New Westminster in April 1961, to join the staff at St. James, Vancouver as assistant priest where he served until 1966. During this time, he was known for his religious-themed broadcasts for the CBC morning show.

Bruce returned to academia to do doctoral studies at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and was an Instructor in the Department of Modern Languages. He was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1970 and served on many committees at the University in the early 1970s.

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Interfaith Afternoon Tea with Attorney Neri Colmenares

ARTICLE CREATED WITH FILES SUBMITTED BY BETH DOLLAGA
 Vice-Chair of ICHRP-Canada

Participants at an Interfaith Tea held in the Trendell Lounge at the Synod offices of the diocese of New Westminster on the afternoon of October 16, 2023, heard from Attorney Neri Colmenares, a Filipino human rights defender. His visit was sponsored by the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, Canada (ICHRP-Canada). ICHRP has a strong relationship with the Anglican church and sponsored his visit across Canada. The Interfaith Tea was presented in partnership with the diocesan Justice and Peace Unit, the Parish of St. Mary's, South Hill and ICHRP-Canada.

ICHRP-Canada is a global network of organizations concerned about the human rights situation in the Philippines. It is committed to campaign for just and lasting peace in the country. It aims to inform the international community about the grave human rights situation in the Philippines today.

The Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) is a strong supporter and partner to the campaigns and advocacy work of ICHRP. Through its global affairs ministry, along with other ecumenical partner-institutions and grassroots organizations, the ACoC has helped develop effective responses through writing petitions and letters to the government, organizing face to face meetings, sending a representative or representatives to international solidarity missions, and devising a proactive strategy to address concerns pertaining to human, political, social, and economic rights in the Philippines.

A primary purpose of the October 16 event was to expose the impacts of *red-tagging* (when a person or community is labeled by the government as a dissenter or dissenters, lives in danger and their reputations smeared) and the abuse of the law by government decrees against those who raise human rights concerns, putting those lives in danger, many whom are in the faith communities.

Attorney Neri Colmenares is the Presidential Advisor on Human Rights of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines

(IBP), the official organization of Filipino lawyers and Vice President of the Confederation of Lawyers in the Asia Pacific (COLAP). He presently serves as a legal counsel for the families of victims of extrajudicial killings arising from former President Duterte's drug war in a complaint filed with the International Criminal Court (ICC) against Duterte and his police subordinates. He has received numerous international awards for his work including the 2020 International Bar Association (IBA) Human Rights Awards for *Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights*. Attorney Neri's lifelong commitment to human rights began when he became a student leader during Martial Law in the 1970s under former President Ferdinand Marcos. Neri was arrested in 1978 at the age of 18, imprisoned for four years and tortured.

During his talk, Attorney Neri spoke of the seriousness of human rights violations taking place under the new President Marcos. The extrajudicial killings are continuing. The *red-tagging* is continuing. The *red-tagging* is against individuals standing up for human rights, against organizations and against the churches. He remembers years ago speaking with a church leader who said to him that, "Every time the people are oppressed, the church is oppressed." Now it is ever more so, and with the *red-tagging* he noted: "Every time the church is oppressed, the people are oppressed." All these abuses are to stifle dissent, to silence critics of the government and its policies.

Attorney Neri reflected on what gives him hope and hope for all who are working for human rights. This hope is about faith in the capacity of the people to change society. It is about trusting in the people's capacity to effect change. "It is the conviction of hope, and because you hope, you trust... our fight is a reasonable fight. We recognize our victories on the side of justice."

In attendance were approximately 25 from various Filipino Organizations, including Migrante BC and Sulung UBC, a Filipino Canadian student and youth organization.



Attorney, Neri Colmenares.



Beth Dollaga.



The Reverends Expedito Farinas and Margaret Marquardt.



View of the Trendell Lounge during the introductions.



The group shot. PHOTOS Randy Murray

IN MEMORIAM

The Reverend Bruce Campbell Gifford, Priest October 28, 1932 – November 6, 2023



PHOTO Longfin Media (iStock ID#1578058520)

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In 1976, Bruce was appointed Rector of the Parish of St. Mark's, Kitsilano by Archbishop Somerville. He was appointed Chaplain at the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) in 1984 and was the Regional Dean of Arbutus-Point Grey. While at St. Mark's he supervised many theological students. Bruce resigned from St. Mark's in 1988, to take up the position of Director of Religious Programmes for the Government of British Columbia Corrections Branch—a position which he held until his retirement in 1993.

In 2022, Bruce was predeceased by his partner of 61 years, the Rev. Edward Hulford. He was also predeceased by his brother Ross, nephew John, and his parents John (Jack) and Agnes. He is survived by his nephew Dave, niece Kathy Glassie, Chad Jupe and Greg Kirkham, Maria Villones, and countless friends. ✠

The Rev. Expedito Farinas, Rector of St. Mary's, South Hill and the Rev. Margaret Marquardt, Chair of the diocesan Justice and Peace Unit of the diocese welcomed the visitors to the Synod office. Offering the Land Acknowledgment was Retired Bishop Alex Wandag an Honorary Assistant at St. Michael's, Multicultural in Vancouver. Bishop John Stephens offered the Opening Prayer.

In his role as Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster, a diocese in a Companion relationship with Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines (EDNP), he visited the Philippines in 2022. In our diocese he has engaged with the Justice and Peace Unit, Beth Dollaga, Filipino leaders in our churches, and with the leadership in EDNP regarding human rights. In the question period, Bishop John asked Attorney Neri about support for human rights in a partnership model and in protecting churches and individuals. Attorney Neri responded that the work of partnership is one of continuing to hear the direction of those working in human rights in the Philippines and to work in solidarity.

Beth Dollaga, Vice Chair of ICHRP, a principal organizer of the Tea introduced Attorney Neri.

The participants were called to action by the Chair of ICHRP-Canada, the Rev. Patricia Lisson, United Church Minister in Toronto whose ministry focuses on ecumenism and Dr. Andrea Mann, the ACoC's Global Affairs Director.

A National ICHRP-Canada Conference 3rd General Assembly *Resist State Terror: Stand for People's Rights in the Philippines* will be held in Montreal May 3–5, 2024.¹

At the conclusion of the time together, the Rev. Stuart Lyster, of the United Church of Canada (UCC), a proponent of Legal Defence Fund of the UCC led the Closing Prayers that offered the courage and hope for all to live into justice and peace together in God's beloved community. ✠

¹ Information about the National ICHRP-Canada Conference 3rd General Assembly *Resist State Terror: Stand for People's Rights in the Philippines* is available on the organization's website at <https://www.ichrpcanada.org/2024-conference-and-ga/>



St. John's, Shaughnessy labyrinth, phase 1.



St. John's, Shaughnessy labyrinth, phase 2.



St. John's, Shaughnessy labyrinth, phase 3.



St. John's, Shaughnessy labyrinth, final.



Regan on the St. John's, Shaughnessy labyrinth's cross.

You Always Find Your Way

Interview with Regan Gorman, Building Administrator, Synod Office

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

It was May of 2019, when Regan Gorman began his association with the diocese of New Westminster. He was appointed Building Administrator of the Synod offices at 1410 Nanton Avenue by senior Synod staff and he was hired to be Verger of St. John's, Shaughnessy (SJS) at 1490 Nanton Avenue by that parish's lay and clergy leadership in a combined hiring where each entity would be partially responsible for Regan's remuneration (which included lodging in the upstairs apartment located at 1410). Suffice it to say, the administration, maintenance, care, and organization of 1410 Nanton had since its establishment in July of 2015, never really developed into an orderly operation, with processes, protocols, and policies. Regan quickly took care of that and the many quirks of 1410 Nanton were addressed, with the principal benefit being that the building is now a well-maintained and welcoming place to work, gather and rent.

After the first three years, which included the time of COVID-19, Regan decided that he would leave his position as Verger at SJS, move out of 1410 Nanton and take the same position at the nearby Parish of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale. He remained in his role as Synod office building administrator. Regan has many skills both objective and subjective and wears many hats, two of those are as a sign maker and as

a production tech. All through his tenure on Synod staff, Regan has continued to work in both fields as a contractor. The specific skill set that we talked about for this interview brings together those skills and his recent vocation as a verger in the Anglican church and that is... the design, planning, and creation of interior labyrinths.

Q. Thank-you Regan for taking the time to speak with me and share your experiences with *Topic* readers. Please share a brief history of your background and the circumstances that brought you to 1410 Nanton in May of 2019?

A. Originally from Ontario, I spent most of my career in marketing and communications. After a stint as a consultant, I was asked by a longtime colleague to come to Vancouver. He and a group of investors were opening an FM radio station. I agreed to come to Vancouver for a year. After my contract was up, I realized how much I loved being out west. Searching for a way to live here, have a flexible schedule and be open to different opportunities, I took a job as a "live-in" caretaker for a condo in Kerrisdale. After a few years I saw the job at St. John's and (now) Bishop John Stephens who was rector of SJS hired me. A few months later, the Synod office (on the same property) needed a building manager and then-Director of Property and Finance, Rob Dickson agreed to bring me aboard.



St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church labyrinth, phase 1.



McKillop United Church in Lethbridge pre-labyrinth.



McKillop United Church labyrinth, phase 2.



McKillop United Church labyrinth, phase 1.



McKillop United Church labyrinth, phase 3.



McKillop United Church labyrinth, final.

Way to the Centre

Offices, diocese of New Westminster; Verger, Parish of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale

Q. As someone with a history in marketing and advertising as both a planner and a creator what drew you to labyrinths?

A. To me they are a “triad” of elements I enjoy. Art, meditation, and energy. Since their inception, labyrinths have been thought to attract positive energy and while simplistic in design, the various designs and circuits (to me) offer a simplistic beauty. As for the meditative quality, I have always had an active brain and struggle with ADHD. Walking the labyrinth is one of the few things that allows me to narrow my focus and stay in the present.

Q. Please supply a little bit of history of the labyrinths that you have created, their locations and circumstances?

A. I have *happened* into a variety of projects throughout my life and my foray into creating labyrinths is no exception. While working at SJS, the trustees had approved the removal of some pews to create a more open space that would be anchored with a labyrinth. The labyrinth had been designed by a local artist and the project was about to happen when the designer said they were not going to be able to handle the installation. The project was basically stopped in its tracks. Having a creative mind, a love for labyrinths and some technical knowledge I imagined a way where an adhesive

stencil could be produced, applied then used to stain the labyrinth pattern on the freshly polished concrete. The result was beautiful and when St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church was looking to incorporate a 12-metre (40-foot) diameter labyrinth into their seismic renovation, they asked to come see the labyrinth at SJS and meet with “the person who did it.” Shortly after, I was hired to put the labyrinth on their new stone floor. That led to me doing the labyrinth at McKillop United Church in Lethbridge following a flood that destroyed the one they'd had in their parish hall.

Q. Describe the process, from negotiating the initial contract to the planning, creation, and installation of a labyrinth?

A. It is really a three-step process. Once approached, whomever wants the labyrinth can choose either the seven circuit or eleven circuit design we have already created, or we are able to design something unique. The final design (once approved) is digitized, and the digital file is sent to a plotter which cuts the outline of the stencil into 1.5-metres wide x 3-metres long (5-foot wide x 10-foot long) panels. When I arrive at the location, I find the absolute centre of the area they wish to have the labyrinth installed and place the panels according to registration marks. Once we know that the panels all line up (there are 50 panels needed to create

a 12-metre labyrinth), they are applied to the floor. Once the entire stencil is down, we “weed” (remove) the area to be painted or stained, apply the paint; once dry we remove the stencil. What used to take two people three weeks or more to create is now done in less than a week.

Q. What has been the greatest challenge for you in your labyrinth work to date?

A. Age. To apply the stencil takes about three days and it is all on my hands and knees. It takes its toll which is why I am working on a device that will allow me to apply the stencil from a standing position — a sort of giant paint roller. I'll let you know how that works out.

Q. What surprised you the most doing this work?

A. Probably the way it came about and how the subsequent jobs came to fruition via “word-of-mouth.” That and the satisfaction I get from placing an indelible piece of work in a wonderful place that will be seen by so many.

Q. What do you feel has been your most satisfying accomplishment and why?

A. Figuring it out and making it work. As far as I know, this method of application has never been done before and while it seems simple and obvious, there is a lot to consider. The type of paint/stain... and

will that impact the stencil? Can I get the stencil to adhere well enough to create crisp lines? What is the best or most energetic colour to paint the labyrinth. I love that McKillop's used a deep purple. It looked (and felt) amazing.

Q. Has planning, creating, and installing labyrinths informed other parts of your work life?

A. I think we are all skeptical when moving into new, uncharted territory. Having succeeded at using this *new* method has reminded me that we need to push through our doubts and hesitation as the satisfaction that lies on the other side of those feelings is spectacular.

Q. Are you still entertaining requests for your labyrinth services?

A. I would *love* to do more labyrinths. Anyone interested can email me.¹ If there's a will, there's a way.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

A. A special thanks to the Parish of St. John's, Shaughnessy for trusting me with this project and their willingness to be my *Beta Test*. Not only did it work out for them, but it gave me the confidence to proceed with others. ✠

¹ If you are interested Regan's labyrinth services, please email regan@regangorman.com



St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church labyrinth, phase 2.



St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church labyrinth, final.

Spiritual Care | Healing for Patient & Practitioner

JUANITA CLARK

Deacon of the diocese of New Westminster, Licensed Member of the Spiritual Care on-call team at Lion's Gate Hospital, North Vancouver, BC

Whether we are clergy or lay, whether we choose to recognize it or not, we all have a calling.

It may take a host of people to discern it and half your life before you have the courage to act upon it. However, based on my own experience, it's never too late to move forward.

I believe people come into our lives for a reason, whether we recognize it or not.

In gratitude of those who work in Spiritual Care and those who shepherded me along the way, I would like to share my story of healing and personal transformation.

Although I have been a life-long Anglican, it wasn't until I discovered the community of St. John's, North Vancouver (roughly 15 years ago) that I experienced a spiritual awakening. I was in my early 50s and overcome with a deep yearning to become centred in Christ; to be of service to others. Guided by this loving and supportive faith community, I gradually became immersed in its contemplative prayer practices, worship services and outreach programs. The parish's priest, (the Rev. Patrick Blaney) encouraged me to participate in the Caring Ministry program for seniors. Several years later Patrick affirmed my calling to Pastoral Care. This led to my discernment of the diaconate, and in 2018, ordination as a vocational deacon within the diocese of New Westminster.

While I was the deacon at the parish of St. John's, the Rev. Bryan Rivers occasionally filled in when the priest was away. Bryan's primary ministry in the diocese is Anglican Chaplain at Vancouver General Hospital (VGH). I immediately felt inspired to learn more about his ministry. Subsequently, I was permitted to "shadow" Bryan on a hospital shift. Little did I know, I was now on a journey of healing, not just for my patients, but also for myself.

VGH was well known territory to me. I had enrolled in its Registered Nurse (RN) training program 35 years earlier. However, halfway through the RN Program I dropped out. A painful decision that I agonized over for decades to come.

However, Spirit made sure there was no fear or doubt, this time round. I served, part-time on Bryan's chaplaincy team, initially as an Anglican denominational volunteer, later as deacon. As my path unfolded, Bryan and I marveled at a growing number of *God-instances*; they affirmed my pastoral care ministry and led to my own healing. *This* was the time and place where Spirit was calling me.



The Rev. Juanita Clark is a vowed member of the dispersed Benedictine Canon Community of St. Aidan's. PHOTO Submitted

While at VGH I also became acquainted with the staff and practitioners of Vancouver Coastal Health's *Clinical Psycho-Spiritual Education* (CPE) Teaching Unit, within which the Chaplain's office was located. I marveled at the stamina and resilience of their hard-working Spiritual Care interns.

It's important to understand that CPE is an intense form of education.

Prospective CPE students are interviewed and assessed for personal maturity and readiness. Although an introductory unit of CPE is typically required for students completing a Master of Divinity or a Public and Pastoral Leadership Program, CPE is equally beneficial for parish clergy (like me) or lay people who are seeking to deepen their ministry or vocation. It can also lead to—usually after completion of between three to five Units of CPE plus a year's Residency—an accreditation with the Canadian Association of Spiritual Care (CASC).

CPE is a blend of the pastoral/spiritual-tradition and modern sociological and psychological approaches to patient care, often referred to as an action/reflection model. Clearly, CPE isn't for everyone, nor was it in my *wildest* dreams. However, God had other plans for me.

In 2021, armed with a lot of encouragement from my

chaplain and the Spiritual Care practitioners, I enrolled into CPE Unit 1. I recall being filled with equal amounts of excitement and fear (and I had *several* meltdowns along the way!). But in the end, I found my CPE experience very powerful. One does work hard, and the interpersonal work can be challenging. However, you also reap a heightened sense of personal awareness—incredibly important for your patient care—which can't help but transform the practitioner.

CPE supports a holistic approach to health care. Its practitioners are part of an interdisciplinary team and a resource, not only to patients, but to their families and hospital staff. The holistic program affirms a patient's spirituality and culture as part of the healing process.

Learning occurs not only through the student's clinical experience (roughly 200 hours per Unit, either in a hospital or long-term care facility) but through didactic sessions, peer group and supervisor reflection. This combined learning experience heightens the student's personal awareness to better understand their emotions, reactions, triggers and how they might be impacting others. This is essential in enabling students to effectively support and offer appropriate interventions to address the patient's emotional and spiritual care needs.

CPE practitioners also receive training that enables them to support clients of all faiths, beliefs, and customs for prayer, meditation, supportive spiritual services, and ceremonies.

Vancouver Coastal Health Spiritual Care Practitioners are available 24 hours/7 days a week to support the patient in their holistic journey. This often involves coming alongside patients as a compassionate and non-judgmental presence, being an empathetic listener, helping patients find hope—despite pain, suffering, illness—facing death or dying, and helping patients find meaning in their life experiences (or a sense of transcendence).

I really can't say enough about the benefits of Vancouver Coastal Health's Spiritual Care Program—led by the Rev. Dr. Doug Longstaffe, Regional Director, Spiritual Care and Multifaith Services—and the work of his VGH team of Spiritual Care Practitioners. I sincerely hope, if you or your loved one find yourself in hospital, that you will reach out to staff and request a visit from Spiritual Care. You will be in good hands. ✦

AROUND THE DIOCESE

PWRDF Wild Ride 2023

SUBMISSION Jane Dittrich, ODNW

The second annual fundraiser for the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), *Wild Ride*, launched June 20 (World Refugee Day) and continued through to October 31. The *Wild Ride* supported PWRDF partners who serve refugees and displaced people. Their partners work to support refugees in Tanzania, South Sudan, Jordan, Ukraine and more. Participants in *Wild Ride*, both teams and individuals, were invited and encouraged to raise money by biking, walking, swimming, knitting, canoeing and other activities.

This year, participants from the diocese of New Westminster raised an outstanding total of \$7,005. Jane Dittrich, ODNW of Christ Church Cathedral raised \$4,100; Liz MacDonald, ODNW of All Saints, Ladner raised \$850; Peter Goodwin, ODNW of

St. James', Vancouver raised \$530; Janet Coghlan, ODNW of St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge, and *The Divine Dashers* (participants from St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge and St. Laurence, Coquitlam) raised a combined total of \$1,525. During the PWRDF AGM held September 22, Liz MacDonald was made an Honorary Associate of PWRDF. This honour is given for prolonged and exceptional volunteer service to PWRDF. Congratulations to Liz on this well-deserved honour!

Most participants in *Wild Ride* did their rides, walks, and committed fundraising endeavours on their own over the course of the four months, but several group outings took place as well. On September 23, the Vancouver walking team consisting of Jane Dittrich, Mark Halyk (Christ Church Ca-

thedral's current PWRDF representative), the Rev. Margaret Marquardt, Peter Goodwin, and Liz MacDonald were privileged to meet briefly with Bishop John Stephens and the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, at the Synod office for some photos and conversation prior to their walk. On October 1, Jane and Liz cycled together at Boundary Bay in Tsawwassen. In September, *The Divine Dashers* team did a walk together which included a break for some photos at the picturesque Osprey Village in Pitt Meadows, and in October members of their team did a 20 km bike ride together.

Thank you to all participants and to their supporters for raising money for PWRDF through *Wild Ride* efforts this year! ✦



Cyclists from St. John the Divine Maple Ridge: (left to right) George Coghlan, Steve Zivin, Korri Zivin, and Elizabeth Zivin. PHOTO Janet Coghlan



Jane Dittrich, Mark Halyk, Peter Goodwin, Liz MacDonald, and the Rev. Margaret Marquardt during their Vancouver walk. PHOTO Jane Dittrich



Walkers from St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge and St. Laurence, Coquitlam (*The Divine Dashers*). PHOTO Janet Coghlan



Liz MacDonald and Jane Dittrich at Boundary Bay. PHOTO Jane Dittrich

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Raising Funds for Our Neighbours in Yellowknife Primate's World Relief & Development Fund Canadian Disaster Fund

SUBMISSION Patricia Martin

In the wake of the heartbreaking wildfire that swept through Yellowknife, the compassionate congregation of St. Matthew, Abbotsford extended their heartfelt support and prayers to the affected community. However, our response didn't stop at prayer alone. In a spirit of kindness, our priest encouraged all of us to put whatever spare change we could find in our pockets and pocketbooks on the collection plate throughout the month of September. Our collective goal was to raise funds to assist the evacuees of Yellowknife, and all proceeds would be channeled through the *PWRDF Canadian Disaster Fund* to aid the victims of this devastating fire.

Being a small congregation, we set the goal of \$500, about \$125 each week. What followed was nothing short of inspiring; the overflow of generosity of our parishioners allowed us to exceed our goal, and together, we raised a remarkable \$826.20.

In this moment, we are reminded that the true abundance of any congregation lies not in its size but the depth of compassion and willingness to make a difference. We thank each and every one of you for your open hearts and unwavering support as we continue to live out our mission of:

"Helping each other explore God's Beauty, Truth, and Goodness." ✠



PHOTO Submitted

St. Stephen's in the Fall of 2023

SUBMISSION Hilary Clark

There is something about the fall that has people reassessing the present and projecting into the future. Perhaps it is the "back to school" feeling that we have all experienced that we bring to our lives and to our relationship to our church. Motivated by this stimulation, the members of the Parish of St. Stephen's, West Vancouver under the leadership of rector, the Rev. Kenneth Vinal have embarked on the creation of a Ministry Plan. This process involved the entire congregation in discussions leading to the setting up of themed meetings under the headings of:

- Worship
| *Georgie Reddington & Kathleen Lashbrook*
- Spiritual Formation & Development
| *Ken Vinal & Heather Gilley*
- Stewarding our Resources
| *George Richards*
- Building & Sustaining the Congregation
| *Ken Vinal & Heather Gilley*
- Community Partnerships & Service
| *David Petitpierre & Val Grimes*

Parish Council held several open parish meetings, initiated many smaller in-person meetings, and via Zoom to reach those housebound. A Parish Vision was developed:

"We are a thriving, multicultural community of fellowship, spirituality and support in the Christian tradition for all ages."

The Parish Mission statement is as follows:



Paul Dubnick, trumpet. PHOTOS John Ruddick



Mike Chisolm, piper.

"Led by the Holy Spirit, we welcome everyone to join in our journey to follow Jesus. We serve people in Christ's name. We respond to the needs of the community through social engagement and serve with joy from the abundance which God provides us."

Our Values:

"Loving God, Serving others, Supporting lives, Open and affirming."

A draft Ministry Plan following these guidelines was presented by chair, Dr. Heather Gilley to the congregation on Sunday, November 19. Members were encouraged to ask questions and make comments. Email addresses of members of the committee were listed. There was a general feeling at the end of the meeting of satisfaction in a job well done.

On November 12, at the principal Celebration of the Eucharist, the parish honoured Remembrance Day with a moving service led by the Rev. Vinal and guest from Squamish, Canon Donald Lawton. The service was enhanced by trumpeter Paul Dubnik and piper Mike Chisolm augmenting the music leadership of organist and Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch. At the conclusion of worship, the Rev. Vinal directed the attention of the congregation to the War Memorial Plaque on the wall of the sanctuary. There he read the names of all the members of St. Stephen's who had died in the two world wars. He quoted the well-known:

"At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them."

Trumpeter, Paul Dubnik played the *Last Post*, paused for two minutes of silence, then played *Reveille*. The rector recited the Prayer of Commemoration for the Fallen and ended the service with all verses of *O, Canada* followed by *God Save the King*. As the Postlude, the piper, Mike Chisolm, performed *Highland Cathedral* a thrilling finale to a nostalgic service of honour and remembrance.

On Sunday, November 26, the congregation was delighted to greet the Rt. Rev. John Stephens as he visited his parish of St. Stephen, West Vancouver (the oldest parish in West Vancouver). The congregation was also happy to welcome, deacon, the Rev. Christine Magrega, recently retired from full time diaconal ministry at St. Augustine's, Marpole. The music in worship at the Celebration of Holy Eucharist for the Feast of the Reign of Christ was enhanced by trumpeter Paul Dubnik and soprano Catherine Crouch. ✠

BC Climate Emergency Campaign Bishop John at the November 7 Event

On Tuesday, November 7, Bishop John Stephens returned for the day from the Loon Lake Clergy Retreat to speak at the BC Climate Emergency Campaign Report Card event.

The two-year-old BC Climate Emergency Campaign is an alliance of civil groups of which the diocese of New Westminster is a member.

A brief article was posted on the Canadian Observer's website on November 8.¹ The message from the speakers presenting that day on behalf of the BC Climate Emergency Campaign is that BC is not on track to meeting the proposed and desired climate goals.

In the article Bishop John is quoted saying:

"We are in a climate emergency, and we need to act as if we are in a climate emergency... This is the time to act. This is not the time to hesitate." ✠

¹ The Canadian Observer's article can be found online at <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2023/11/08/news/bc-not-track-meet-climate-goals-civil-society-groups>

Clergy Day | Contemporary Liturgical Resources

Thursday, November 16 was the final Clergy Day gathering for 2023. Active Clergy of the diocese are expected to attend these sessions held in the Conference Room at the Synod Office three or four times a year. The day begins with worship at 9:30am followed by a morning session, lunch break and an afternoon session which wraps about 3:30pm with Bishop John Stephens's offering a reflection on the day and an update on his activities.

The theme of the day was *More than we can ask or imagine: Contemporary Liturgical Resources for the diocese of New Westminster*. Using Advent as a case study, the Rev. Canon Rob James, Associate Professor, Anglican Formation and Studies at the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) and the Ven. Richard Leggett (now retired), former Vicar of Holy Trinity Cathedral and former Archdeacon of Westminster presented how to use the contemporary liturgical resources authorized for use to enrich and expand the worship life of parishes in the diocese. The recent liturgical resources being used in the Church of England were of particular interest to the clergy gathered that day.

It has been confirmed that the Spring Clergy Day will take place, Wednesday,



The Rev. Canon Rob James presenting. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Ven. Richard Leggett.

May 1, 2024. Details about the day will be communicated to the clergy of the diocese as they become available. ✠



LEFT Seth Klein speaking about zero emissions economy. MIDDLE Bishop John with Dr. Melissa Lem (President of Physicians for the Environment) and member of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver. RIGHT Mike Bomford on regenerative agriculture. PHOTOS Bishop John Stephens

St. Hilda's Invests in Insulation

SUBMISSION Janet McIntosh, Christine Pawley, & Michael Starr

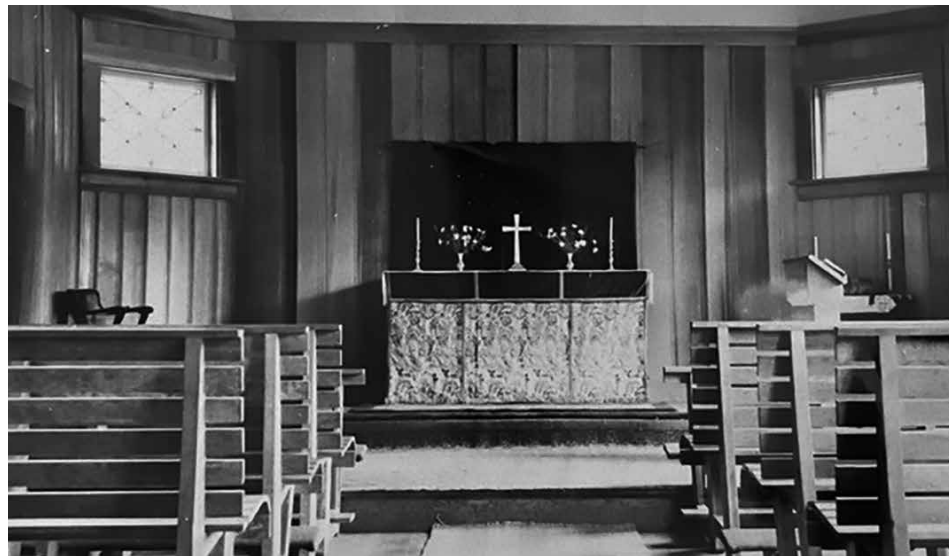
This fall, with an eye to reducing the church's carbon footprint as well as its heating costs, The Parish of St. Hilda's, Sechelt has been preparing for winter cold by increasing its insulation in key spots.

The first area of concern are the two "Tiffany" style windows that were presented to the church by the Union Steamship Company for the first permanent church building in 1936. In the old church, they were prominently situated on either side of the altar. When the old church was dismantled in the mid-1980s, they were saved and incorporated into the new building, a lovely reminder of the church's history. However, infrared photos of the church taken last winter made it clear that they leak heat. To help with the cost of insulating these windows, the parish applied for a Diocesan Climate Emergency Grant of \$1,000. The application was successful, and as a result the parish has installed additional double-paned windows on the outside of the stained glass.

The second area of concern was more extensive. The church's Hall was built over 70 years ago—from 1949–1950—and was a prime candidate for a dramatic increase in its insulation. First, fibreglass

batts were installed under the floor with the help of labour and materials donated by parishioners and friends. Then the parish contracted with a hazardous materials specialist to remove the existing two inches of insulation in the attic. This process was not for the faint-hearted, since it was filled with vermin excrement and urine, not to mention a number of God's little creatures (deceased), and the workers had to wear hazmat suits. Once the attic was clear, another contractor blew in a much larger quantity of loose fill fibreglass. This should raise the R value (a measure of how well the insulation can resist heat travelling through it) from about R8 to R40. To help pay for the insulation project, the parish received a grant of \$12,500 from the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors program, and an additional donation of \$1,000 from a generous parishioner.

As a result of these efforts, less high-priced heat will be flowing out to the wide world beyond, and we should feel warmer in the Hall this winter. A bonus of the Hall's better energy efficiency is that heating in the winter will be even more efficient and cost effective when, as planned, the baseboard heaters will be replaced with a heat pump, for both warmth and cooling depending on the seasons and the need. ✦



A view of the chancel of the old St. Hilda's church with the stained-glass windows on either side of the altar. PHOTO Helen McCall (this photo is held by the Sechelt Community Archives)



LEFT One window in its current location. PHOTO Christine Pawley RIGHT The insulation install team arrives. PHOTO Meg Stevens



LEFT Suited up and ready. PHOTO Janet McIntosh RIGHT Hazardous materials removed and bagged. PHOTO Janet McIntosh

Land Acknowledgements | A Discussion

SUBMISSION Kerry Baisley, ODNW

Following worship on November 19, 2023, over 30 parishioners from St. Anne's, Steveston spent time with Kerry Baisley, Missioner for Indigenous Justice, exploring what Land Acknowledgements are and what they can be.

It was an opportunity for people to ask questions and share concerns about what a Land Acknowledgement actually means and if there are any consequences or commitments involved.

The goal was to explore our individual thoughts and ideas about Land Acknowledgements rather than trying to convince everyone to think the same way.

We shared how it can be "grounding" and used to centre us where we find ourselves. It recognizes the people who have lived here and cared for the land for thousands of years. Honest concerns were expressed whether such actions could be used in the future in a land claims process. Kerry responded this is unlikely given the fact such arguments have not been used in any land claims actions to date. Recent court cases have focused on assessing continuous and exclusive occupation of land as the basis for a claim of title. We also explored how "just saying the words" without any commitments to actions makes the process more about "correctness" rather than engagement.

We spent time hearing how Indigenous identity is directly connected to "the Land." Ray Aldred and Matthew Anderson's recent book *Our Home and Treaty Land* was recommended as a resource.

In our everyday speech the word "treaty" is thought of as a document made to resolve conflict. For Indigenous Peoples the word "treaty" is about engagement and maintaining right relationships, not correcting past negative ones.

At the end of the session people were asked to write down words and questions they had about Land Acknowledgements now and compare those thoughts with the ones they had recorded when we started the session.

One individual came up to me and said, "One of my words changed, and the word I added was 'relationship.'" It is all about relationships, with ourselves, with others and with the Creator. Hopefully, we will continue to share, have deep respectful



Kerry presenting at St. Anne's. PHOTOS Marnie Peterson



ABOVE A good range of age groups represented at the lunch and Land Acknowledgment presentation.

conversations, and grow in the relationships that truly matter. ✦

The Caprani Brothers

On Thursday, November 23, diocesan communications mobilized to produce Bishop John's annual Advent Pastoral video presentation for the diocese. Diocesan filmmaker/videographer, Cliff Caprani was as usual on hand for primary photography, but this time he brought with him his younger brother Peter. Peter had arrived at YVR from Dublin for a brief visit to attend his sister-in-law's (Cliff's spouse) Nicky Stowell's memorial service at St. Anne's, Steveston (November 25, 2023), and to support his big brother during this difficult time. Nicky died October 11, 2023 following a year of health challenges.

As many know, Bishop John was born in Ireland and his family have very deep roots in the Emerald Isle. The bishop and Peter had a great talk about the part of the country where the Stephens family is from and reeled off the names of numerous villages in the vicinity. Peter who had a long career as an insurance adjustor had clients in that part of Ireland and knows the territory very well. It was great fun to listen to their discussion.

However, the principal purpose of this Around the Diocese piece is this photo which I was lucky to get and wanted to share with *Topic* readers. ✦



Peter and Cliff Caprani. PHOTO Randy Murray

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Clergy & Staff News Around the Diocese

Bishop John Stephens has appointed the Rev. Alecia Greenfield, Rector of St. Anselm's, Point Grey, effective, January 1, 2024. Alecia will leave the roles: Vicar of the Parish of Holy Cross, Vancouver; Regional Dean of Kingsway; and the Synod staff position as Special Projects Facilitator in the Mission and Ministry Department.

Following a successful search, the bishop has appointed the Rev. Matt Koovisk, currently of the diocese of Brandon to be the next Rector of St. John the Baptist, Sardis. The Rev. Koovisk has supplied diocesan comms with the following brief bio:

"The Rev. Matt Koovisk is currently the Rector of St. Mary's, Virden; St. Mark's, Elkhorn; St. John's, Reston; and Christ Church, Melita, as well as the Secretary of Synod and the Diocesan newspaper editor, The Mustard Seed, in the diocese of Brandon. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from UBC Okanagan, a Master of Divinity degree from Huron College at Western, and a Master of Theological Studies degree and Master of Theology degree from Trinity College at the University of Toronto. He has put those degrees to good use, as he has taught in the Licentiate of Theology program (a pre-degree program) at Huron since 2019.

His church interests include liturgy, music (he is a pianist, organist, and trained tenor), and pastoral care. Outside of the church, Fr. Matt does love watching sports from time to time (when his schedule allows), and spending time with friends and family. He is also a civilian instructor with the local army cadet corps in Virden, which catapulted him into being the Chaplain to the Brandon Cadet Training Centre in the summer of 2023.

He is excited to return to BC to be closer to his immediate family, all of whom still live in Kelowna."

The Rev. Koovisk will begin this new ministry at St. John's on February 1, 2024.

On November 16, 2023, the Rev. Joanne Eppy-Schmidt began a one-year term as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of St. Laurence, Coquitlam. The former rector of the parish, the Rev. Eric Mason completed seven years of ministry at the Coquitlam parish in August 2023. Here is a brief bio, supplied to *Topic* by the Rev. Eppy-Schmidt.

"A native of New England, Joanne grew up in a vibrant college town, which inspired her lifelong interest in learning, her faith, the arts, and outdoor sports. As an undergraduate at Princeton University, she began the journey into the Episcopal Church and ultimately to ordination, graduating from Yale Divinity School in 1988. Integral to her studies was her engagement with the power of the arts and storytelling in ministry and preaching.

In the first ten years of her ordained ministry, she served as curate at St. Matthew's in Pennington, New Jersey. In her last year there, Joanne began to apprentice with Storytelling Arts, Inc. — a secular nonprofit organization of storytellers teaching in underserved and urban communities. Joanne worked with maximum-security adolescents for ten years in the Juvenile Justice System.

Returning to diocesan ministry as a supply and short-term interim priest, Joanne served in nearly 40 parishes in eight years. During this time, she also mentored students in Preaching and Storytelling at Eastern Baptist Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary and provided storytelling workshops for laity and clergy at several locations in the United States and Canada. Subsequently, Joanne was delighted to return to the Episcopal student congregation at Princeton University as interim chaplain.

In June of this year, Joanne retired from her six-year appointment as Associate Rector at

Trinity Church, Princeton, New Jersey. In this large congregation, she established a thriving youth group, an anti-racism program, pastoral care in local assisted-living facilities, and innovative worship.

Coming to the diocese of New Westminster is a new and exciting challenge and a wonderful opportunity for which Joanne is very thankful."

The rector and trustees of St. John's, Shaughnessy (SJS) are thrilled to announce that Professor Graeme Langager of the UBC School of Music will join the leadership of the parish as Choral Director, beginning December 4, with his first service on December 17.

Graeme Langager is Director of Choral Activities at the University of British Columbia School of Music. Graeme is a

passionate, dynamic, and thoughtful conductor and teacher; he has worked around the globe, serving as a guest conductor, adjudicator, and clinician in Europe and Asia, and across North America. Graeme is from Lethbridge, Alberta and was born into a musical family. He began singing and playing instruments from an early age. He grew up immersed in church music, and often performed in church with his family. He completed graduate studies in choral conducting in the United States and taught in universities there before returning to Canada in 2009. He served as music director at several churches during that time. Graeme is thrilled to be joining the SJS community and is excited to serve the choir and the congregation.

Rector of the Parish of St. John, Shaugh-

nessy, the Rev. Terry Dirbas said:

"This is an exciting development in our mission to make excellent choral music in the Anglican tradition central to our worship. Even in an increasingly secular society, humans long to see and feel the presence of the divine. We believe that excellence in music can help us experience a narrowing of the gap between the imminent and the transcendent, bringing us closer to God. Such experiences of the beauty of holiness in our worship life not only refresh us as worshippers, but also inspire us to carry out God's mission in our daily lives. Alongside our Principal Organist and Artist-in-Residence, Michael Dirk, Professor Langager's appointment will enable us to grow both our repertoire and quality of musicianship, initially through our Sunday morning Eucharist, monthly evensong, and other sung services on feast days. We feel privileged to be able to offer this addition to the sacred music life of Vancouver."

It was announced on December 4, 2023, that Bishop John Stephens has appointed the Rev. Nick Pang to the position of Special Assistant to the Bishop succeeding the Ven. Douglas Fenton who had been serving as a consultant part time since early September of 2023. This position was created due to Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Philippa Pride's medical leave. The Rev. Pang's ministry will fulfill the roles and responsibilities in the job description of the Executive Archdeacon and will begin on February 1, 2024.

The following is a biography that he submitted to the bishop's office.

"I'm grateful for the calling of the Holy Spirit, the diocese of New Westminster, and Bishop John to this ministry.

Growing up between a United Church congregation and an Evangelical school, the breadth of Christian community has always been important to me, and I'm excited about the opportunity to support the people and structures of a forward-looking and faith-filled diocese.

I began my ordained life in the diocese of Montreal in 2013, with a downtown curacy before moving to the beautiful Laurentians where I was tasked with developing the administrative structure for a ten-point regional ministry. In 2018, I moved to the diocese of Kootenay to take on ministry in the parish of Penticton where we worked hard through the pandemic to build up a witness to the liberating Kingdom of God, especially among those living unhoused within the community.

One of my deep-seated desires in life is to be a bridge-builder between places and people. To that end, in Montreal I served for three years as Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer, serving on the board of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism as well as various local dialogues. I represented the Anglican Church of Canada to the Canadian Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Witness as well as to the World Council of Churches' 2013 Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, where I served as co-moderator of one of the Pre-Assembly gatherings focused on Youth and Reconciliation.

In the diocese of Kootenay, I served for four years as Coordinator of the diocesan refugee Sponsorship Agreement. During that time, I worked with a small team including a professional evaluator to run a major program review and to overhaul our operational structure.

I believe that good, transparent, and equitable process is a gift to the flourishing of any institution, especially the church. As my partner is fond of saying: Love is in the details. In my personal time I have a longstanding interest in the Japanese martial art Aikido. My spouse Anne and I currently live in Kelowna." ❖



The Rev. Alecia Greenfield. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The Rev. Matt Koovisk. PHOTO Submitted



The Rev. Joanne Eppy-Schmidt. PHOTO Submitted



Professor Graeme Langager. PHOTO Submitted



The Rev. Nick Pang. PHOTO Submitted



So Long & Thanks for All the



Rose and Randy Murray with the Very Rev. Peter Elliott prior to processing out after their wedding ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral, May 19, 2007. PHOTO Martin Knowles



Randy Murray with Peter Trotzuk and Michele Ray leading the music in worship at the 2008 Synod. PHOTO Neale Adams



Clare Morgan and Randy sing the Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark-King's lyrics advertising for the perfect Dean on the Very Rev. Dr. Peter Elliott's 20th Anniversary as Dean and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, September 7, 2014. PHOTO Jon Paul Henry



When covering worship always bring your own Hymn Book. Randy and Archbishop Melissa Skelton after a diocesan liturgy, circa 2015. PHOTO Bayne Stanley



Bishop John Stephens, Randy and Rose Murray, Thomas Roach, ODNW and the Rev. Stephen Rowe at the Ven. Douglas Fenton's farewell dinner, January, 7, 2023. PHOTO Wayne Chose

As you read this either online after December 28 when the PDF of this issue of *Topic* drops (notice the use of current argot), or via the hard copy mailed to your home or parish, I will have been officially retired from my former position as Communications Officer and Editor of *Topic* at the diocese of New Westminster for two weeks. My retirement date was December 15, but due to vacation and compiled overtime my last day in the office was December 4, and I spent it doing the final preparations for publishing this issue with my longtime colleague, Jennifer Ewing. Jennifer has designed every issue of the 134 we have produced since August of 2009. There are so many people to thank for their support and contributions over the years, however, to err on the side of caution and remove the risk of leaving people out I reserve all my public thanks for Jenn. Without Jenn, *Topic* would've been considerably different and not for the better.

Over the past almost 15 years, how we

communicate has changed drastically and much of my time has involved: digital communications, public relations, promotion, filmmaking, event planning and production, and researching and subsequently sourcing hardware and software to keep us all connected during the pandemic. However, *Topic* has always contributed to the flavour of the overall diocesan communications stew. For more details about *Topic* and the people responsible for its inception and continued presence, I commend to you the 50th Anniversary issue, distributed just before COVID-19 took hold of us in February of 2020.¹ All who worked on that issue were very happy with the result and in expectation that there may be more than just subscriber interest in the publication, extra copies were printed. These are available at the Synod office, 1410 Nanton Avenue in Shaughnessy.

As I bid farewell, thanks to all for joining me on this 15-year exploration that I hope created a snapshot, a view of a decade and

a half in the life of the Anglican Church in this part of the world in newsprint. Following this note in the *Opinion* section are submissions from all the regular *Topic* op/ed contributors. I had only made arrangements with one of the regular participants to submit to the January/February 2024 issue, the other contributions just arrived in my inbox, all accompanied by very kind wishes for my happy and healthy retirement. There are also contributions from two new voices, and I hope that they continue to share their thoughts, faith, and fine writing skills with *Topic* readers.

Deo Gracias

Randy Murray
December 4, 2023 ✚

¹ The 50th Anniversary issue of *Topic* is online at <https://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/news/topic-50th-anniversary-edition-online>



LEFT Melanie takes a selfie at a Hope, BC gas station with Randy and the late Bishop Jim Cruickshank in 2014. Melanie wrote at the time: "One event that I will never forget is when you (Randy) and I took Bishop Jim Cruickshank up to Ashcroft for the centennial of the Provincial Synod. To sit in the back seat of the car and listen to you two reminisce and talk life, theology — that was amazing. Bishop Jim almost made us late because he insisted on dessert in the diner we ate at in Hope, even though we didn't really have time. And then when you and I were ready to pack it in at the roadside motel that night, he was just gearing up and wanted to go to the pub! I treasure that trip." PHOTO Courtesy of Melanie Delva



Working on the 50th Anniversary edition of *Topic* in 2019. LEFT Diocesan Communications Officers and *Topic* Editors, Joanne Leslie (1984 – 1989), Neale Adams (2000 – 2009), and Randy Murray (2009 – 2023) browse some vintage issues supplied by Elizabeth Murray, ODNW. PHOTO Conrad Guelke RIGHT In this photo we see all four communications officers and *Topic* editors of the diocese of New Westminster, and the first editorial board chair and first ever *Topic* editor. Left to right: Lorie Chortyk (Communications Officer and Editor, 1989 – 2000); Randy Murray (Communications Officer and Editor, 2009 – 2023); Joanne Leslie (Communications Officer and Editor, 1984 – 1989); Elizabeth Murray, ODNW (Editorial Board Member, 1970–1972); Neale Adams, ODNW (Communications Officer and Editor, 2000 – 2009); and Conrad Guelke, ODNW (Editor, 1970–1976). Other members of the committee not in the photo, the late Lyndon Grove (Editor, 1976 – 1984); the Ven. Ronald Harrison (Associate Editor and Photojournalist, 1972 – 1984); and Jennifer Ewing (Graphic Designer, 2009–present). PHOTO Rachel Taylor



At the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster, Investiture of New Members for 2022, three members of the diocesan communications team: Wayne Chose, ODNW and Jane Dittrich, ODNW and beaming proudly, Communications Officer, Randy Murray.

Dear Randy,

I write this with tears in my eyes as you — my lovely, humorous, hardworking, and talented colleague, collaborator, creative partner, friend — and I complete our final *Topic* together before you leave on your next adventure. Our time together started at Christ Church Cathedral when I would fill in as a temporary Graphic Designer when you were part of the Cathedral's staff team about 15+ years ago, and now you're leaving but not without a proper *Topic* send off. There aren't many photos of you around the diocese as you are often the one behind the camera, but I hold *Topic's* photo archives and was able to collect the following photos with some (but definitely not all) of your favourite people. You will be greatly missed my friend.



Randy and Jenn with a donut and wine, November 30, 2023. PHOTO Jane Dittrich

Smiles & Love, Jenn ☺♥✚

OPINION

Not Amusements or Distractions, We Must Risk Delight

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

Some winter mornings, I wake up to a view of Vancouver Island's mountains. Their stunning silhouettes, both the Vancouver Island Range and Beaufort Range, are lit up on snowy peaks by light from the east. Below them the Morrison Plateau shows off every little hill and clear cut. The water between the coast and the Island is never all one blue but shifting cerulean, cobalt, ultramarine, even viridian. Very calm patches might be yellow ochre and a cloud, magenta.

I live in a neighbourhood where most of the structures were constructed 60 years ago. The various roofs of the modest houses further below my window are softened by that morning light. The lanes and streets below are quiet, some dogwalkers, some keeners running or cycling up or down the steepish hill. Did I mention the trees? So many old ornamental maples and plums, so glorious in the autumn and now twigs and branches, called "horticultural architecture." Ferries on the water: the Salish Orca or the Salish Heron going between the coast and Comox. The little ferry from Powell River to si' yi yen (Texada Island) waits patiently for the big ferries to arrive and depart.

Deep visual delights. Then there are the winter days when all I can see is grey and grey and greyish. If you are familiar with Toni Onley's water colours of the BC coast, you will know there is no end to grey hues. Fog on the Malaspina Strait and the Salish Sea can be so thick that houses across the street cannot be seen. The storms here make our little house rattle.

Did you make resolutions for January 1? How are those working for you? Maybe "intentions" is a more soul-friendly word. I intend to take on a new discipline. Easier to do in spring but also possible in storms, delight is both a gift and an intention. Delight as a "city of refuge."

If you have sat under very good Old Testament teaching, you may remember something about the "cities of refuge." Six



View facing northwest from a Powell River beach. PHOTO Chris Babcock (iStock ID#1328889531)

cities set apart by Moses as places of safe asylum. Originally for those who were in danger of violent vengeance, no one knows to what extent or how long they were used. The principle is mercy. Metaphorically, it can also speak of refuge for those who follow the Way of Christ, beset as we are by idol-addicted cultural norms, doomsayers, and misguided authorities. A place of rest for the over-stimulated and the wary and weary, a respite for those who seek delight. Not to hide from the challenge of being Christ in the world but a breather for the purpose of refreshment.

As a disciple of delight, how and where can I find one of those cities?

Right here by my morning window. The Vancouver Island poet, Stephen Berg writes everyone can access this even in "slim light, the gift of place, the blessing of belonging," "...now the snow is thinning, as it does when the temperature-droop of dawn arrives and stars drive blind behind clouds. The bursting ordinary clouds. The bountiful raggedy snow."

When weary Jesus went by himself to the hills to pray, did the Maker delight in

morning light and evening shadows?

We don't need to make difficult journeys or seek out stimulating entertainment. How often those can be exhausting. Where is your place of refuge? It may be deep in some absorbing hobby. Not a hobby where you must produce something but an activity that stills the mind and lets it exercise wonder. Exercise wonder? Can't it come to me easy as it does to a bright-eyed child? Yes and no; you may have to exercise some discipline in order to come to a place of wonder and delight as a regular habit. How easily we are distracted from that by enticements that really have no lasting value.

Open your sketchbook or journal and put down a first line. Savour the reading of a book you have once loved. I knew a cancer nurse who would go on her breaks and sit below the Tabernacle that holds the reserved sacrament in the hospital chapel. No longer mobile? Embroider a labyrinth on a pillow and just quietly walk it with your fingers. Learn a non-doctrinal chant and keep it singing in your heart all day. Arrive at prayer without rushing. On the door of the meditation room place a sign

that reads, "Knock only if the house is on fire or if Jesus has returned."

We tend to hear the word "discipline" with a negative connotation but are we not disciples on a Way? Some disciples report that they can stay with delight even in traffic jams or hectic households. Hmmm, I intend to learn that.

Whatever you may think about the BC Ferries (let's not go there), to see them glide in the velvety dark night on their last runs, all lit up like moving Christmas ornaments, the child in me goes *clap clap*.

Delight is both a gift and an intention. Yes, I am inordinately privileged to live in this diocese and with a view of water. But I have also lived in dank basement suites and one-star hippy hotels. If there is a window, there is sky, if there is sky there are clouds. There is no end to the study of clouds.

Berg writes in *If I Were to do it All Over Again*, "I will be a disciple of gratitude, an acolyte of contentment." About a grey Burnaby day, "...some soul by the window who smiles... at the glory of this thin space, with a street address and a postal code that is like anywhere in the world open to the deep mists and the holy grey rain of a winter day."

My little home on a hill is "a refuge from the stormy blast" and delight is "my eternal home."

The epigraph in Berg's book is by Jack Gilbert:

*We must risk delight.
We can do without pleasure,
but not delight. Not enjoyment.
We must have the stubbornness
to accept our gladness
in the ruthless furnace of the world. ♣*

Hannah Main-van der Kamp, a writer living in Qathet (Powell River), is learning Indigenous place names. It's her privilege to live gratefully and respectfully on a slope in the traditional territory of the Tla'amin people.

A Deep Loyalty

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

Archbishop Michael Peers who recently died, was for many years the respected Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada. He and I were contemporaries and went through various appointments in early curacies and then parishes; then he to Bishop and Archbishop. I eventually became Dean in two Cathedrals. All of this was what used to be called the *Cursus Honorum*. No, it didn't mean some form of curse! In Latin it means the course or career track. Much of this kind of neat linear series of promotions began to die out around the 1960s, as many things did.

However, it is for his wisdom and subtle wit that I recall Michael. And within that wit I recall one of his wittiest moments. It was about the parish I was in at the time, incidentally my first.

The scene shifts to Huntley in the Ottawa Valley in 1960, I'm all bushy-tailed and eager to change the world. A few things about it. It has three churches. This meant in those highly organized days that it has three of everything. Julius Caesar would have loved it. Remember from your skimpy Latin (mine is). Julius was not a modest man. He wrote six books about his Gallic Wars, and we had to do a few of them in boarding school. Julius' first statement became famous. His opening sentence was "*Omnia Gallia divisa est in tres partes*" (which you can easily guess at), and so was the

... "*Omnia Gallia divisa est in tres partes*" ...

parish of Huntley. Three choirs, three choir mistresses, three graveyards, three vestries. Three treasurers, three vestry clerks. Three Sunday services. Everything except three rectors, but at the venerable age of 30, I loved every minute of it.

There came a time soon after we arrived — wife Paula and two small girls 4 and 2 — when the parish told me that they were thinking of planning a hall for the increasing life of the parish.

The question was, where to build it? Which church had the right? Instant straightening of backs and reasonably friendly discussions! Problem was that Christ Church down the Third Line was the parish church but the village a few miles away on the TransCanada has St. James' the newer and stone church. St. John up the highway was quite small and had no pretensions to greatness but kept a close eye on not being left out. Heaven knows how many meetings, cups of tea and whatever. It's a long story but in the end a happy one.

Suffice it to say that St. James' met and strongly voted yes. Then Christ Church did, and it went the same way. St. John's was last

and most problematic. The meeting was in the house of their churchwarden's mother, and it had become well known that her vote for the new hall would be only over her dead body. This was worrying because she was the parish matriarch.

There were 15 around the parlour table in the big farmhouse. Including, the Local MLA, his brother, equally significant in the parish, the proprietors of the farms whose families were parishioners, and Paula, my wife (by the way, she and our hostess, the matriarch, sat together).

Eventually, chat died down, heads were bowed, suitable Biblical text read by yours truly as rector. The *Bible* began by "Except the Lord build... the builders build it but in vain," a wicked imp within suggested I put a gloss on the reading to the effect that if the Lord was building this then why did it matter so much where it would be built. But I resisted.

Finally, the moment. Paper and pens distributed. The question was asked if St. John's vestry would join the other two churches of the parish. I've long forgotten the exact wording. In time the voting was

collected and taken into the kitchen by the MLA and the churchwarden. The wait began. People looked everywhere but at each other. The report was handed to me. I was flabbergasted. A unanimous YES!

Relief all round, but wait, this meant the impossible had happened. The matriarch must have voted yes after all her dire threats. The surprise was delight, the approval loud and long. Our hostess held up her hands. To cries of "But how?" "Why?" "We all thought..." etc., etc.! Our hostess signalled for quiet. Then, with a hint of a resigned smile, she turned to Paula said very deliberately (this I do remember exactly), "But how could I vote NO when I was sitting beside the rector's wife." There was a moment of silence, everyone gave her loud, long applause and family members swept in with trays of tea and good things to munch.

End of story. Well, no, because I want to tell you what Michael Peers said, and he was a wise man, referring to all this. He said, "There is a certain kind of parish where if the greatest genius in Christendom became rector only three people more than normal would be in church. If on the other hand if the greatest fool in Christendom became rector of the same parish only three people less would be at church!" Have I not said many times that the past is a most wonderfully interesting place? ♣

The Sheer Silence

STEPHEN ROWE

Regional Dean of Peace Arch, Rector, the Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey

*“God said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’
Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord,
but the Lord was not in the wind;
and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake;
and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire;
and after the fire a sound of sheer silence.”*

1 Kings 19:11-12

As an introvert, perhaps it is not a surprise that this is one of my favoured quotes from Hebrew scripture. When clergy of the diocese of New Westminster met on Retreat at Loon Lake recently there was a moment of sheer silence. It doesn't happen very often. It was on the first day and there was no wind, no birds singing and for a few moments there was total silence as I stood by the lakeside.

As some know, even though supposedly reticent, I also have quite a bit to say! So, silence is something that doesn't occur in my life very often. During my working life I have always been fortunate to have a space (a room) to work in, especially if I am writing a sermon or emails. Much as music is important to me, I do prefer silence when I'm working, in fact I can't really work without quiet. I wouldn't have lasted very long in a shared workspace.

For me, the essence of this passage is how we discover God. Elijah is told to stand by because God was about to pass by. And although God is often associated with wind, earthquakes and even fires, God was in none of these, but in sheer silence.



Loon Lake, November 6, 2023. PHOTO Stephen Rowe

Too often, we seem to forget, unless we are quiet, unless we listen, God will find it hard to get through to us. As we live busy lives, it is sometimes hard to make time and space to be silent, to sit still long enough for God to speak to us. The wind, earthquakes and fires in our lives are often of our own making, but also occur because of the circumstances in which we live and those who live with us. My youngest granddaughters remind me that as a parent you rarely get much break from busy, lively, and energy-filled toddlers. Of course, those who live alone often experience the opposite, with too much silence. Most of us are prone to fill any silence we might have with music, the television or simply talking to others.

I was so glad to find a few moments of sheer silence that morning at Loon Lake. The reminder for me to seek silence, to not run away from it, to not always be busy and active, rather than resting and being quiet. For unless we sit still, unless we disengage from the noise and distractions of our lives (both good and not so good), how do we ever expect God to communicate with us. ✠

Our Wounds Become Gifts We Bring to Jesus

An Epiphany reflection

MARGARET TRIM

Licensed Lay Preacher, St. Paul's, Vancouver

We waited for the coming of Jesus through Advent. We celebrated the birth of Jesus at Christmas. And we are now in the season of Epiphany where Christ continues to reveal Himself to the Nations. I have always looked at Epiphany as the season of seeking Christ through glimpses of joy. Where joy is, there Christ will be found. Then, that joy becomes my gift to bring.

Opportunity still abounds for glimpses of joy, but what if the places where we explore need to be expanded. Through Scripture we know that Christ also appeared in places that did not feel of joy. He appeared in the locked rooms of fear, in homes of grief, on a road of shock where he was not recognized, and by a coal fire of guilt where he was once denied.

And so, I wonder if this year we are being called to look and go deeper. Just as Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds, what if Jesus is offering us that same invitation now. I wonder about this, because it seems that the more we try to return to the “before times” of the pandemic, we realize that the “after times” isn't actually the same. And so, I think it is important to allow ourselves to look deep into the wounds of these past few years through the very wounds of Christ.

Why must it be through the way of the wounds? Haven't we already experienced enough? Yet as we acknowledge and feel our wounds, we become more able to engage with the wounds of others. We know that the experience and the impacts of these

past few years was and is and will not be the same for all. We have heard so many stories both of good news moments and of devastation. And some stories will never have the chance to be told.

These past few years have been a time of such isolation. And from this isolation we have emerged with a greater sense of

disconnection, weariness, unacknowledged grief, and heightened anxiety. These are symptoms of trauma and trauma can impact one's ability to engage the world as one did before the events. The after will not be the same as the before.

And so, I wonder, in this season of Epiphany, if we are being asked to follow



PHOTO Submitted by Margaret Trim

the contours of Christ's wounds. To gently reach the centre where we also meet our own wounds and the wounds of others. That does not sound very joy-filled at least not as we begin. Through these wounds and these wounded places, we encounter the One who longs to whisper the release of pain and the heaviness of heart. We once again find the protection of restful times of sleep and the healing powers of deep breath.

To enter these wounds, we see glimpses that we did not expect. We discover we are not alone in our stories that now contain possibility and new imagination. From the depths of our wounds, we find a stillness that comes from the very breath of Christ. And we, too, begin to hear and feel Christ's words to the disciples, “peace be with you.”

This healing breath of peace invites each part of the body to begin to release the impacts of these past few years. Something begins to shift so that our stories can now be shared through words, feelings and/or sensations. The self becomes freer and has the capacity to engage with the world around. Wounds meet wounds in ways that bring understanding and agency of action. We begin to have glimpses of hope, wonder, safety, and a new kind of joy.

And so, my friends, may it be our very wounds that become the very gifts we bring to Jesus. May it be through Christ's wounds that we are healed. And through the healing of our wounds, may we become beacons of His revealing. Amen. ✠

Lest We Forget

LESLIE BUCK

Topic essayist, Parishioner at Christ Church Cathedral

One Sunday in the middle of November 2023, the morning Eucharist began with the singing of *O God our help in ages past*. It was Remembrance Sunday. Having begun with that traditional prologue, the liturgy ended with the traditional epilogue: a bugler playing the *Last Post*, a bagpiper playing a Scottish lament, and an Act of Remembrance. Unlike many similar occasions in the past, there was no display of flags, no singing the National Anthem, no listening to John McCrae's exhortation to "Take up our quarrel with the foe."

The prologue and epilogue recalled a past reality, but between the two there was a sincere and heartfelt effort to address the realities of our present world, and not the one that has passed.

We prayed a Litany of Peace, broadening our observance to include not only service personnel, but also civilians (whose deaths in armed conflicts now far outnumber those of the armed forces), peacemakers and peacekeepers, and those responsible for avoiding war in the first place. The choir sang a *Litany of Reconciliation*, acknowledging the hatred, covetousness, greed, envy, indifference, lust, and pride on our part which lead to war.

The preacher took up the theme, explaining how in 1940, the medieval Cathedral in Coventry had been destroyed



St. Michael's Cathedral, Coventry, England. PHOTO Claudio Divizia (iStock ID#178803083)

in an air raid. Soon after the war the Cathedral had been rebuilt, and the Dean had established a ministry of reconciliation with three guiding principles: healing the wounds of history, learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity, and building a culture of justice and peace.

Many years later, the preacher continued, a survivor of the bombing had encountered a visitor to the Cathedral who confessed to piloting one of the planes

that had destroyed the Cathedral. The two of them acknowledged that they were now at peace. They mutually enacted one small but genuine and gracious gesture of reconciliation.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, I sat recalling a vague memory of my first Armistice Day in 1937, as it was then named. At that time, we remembered only the Great War, known also as the War to end all Wars. Two years later hostilities were

resumed so that now we remember, and must distinguish between, First and Second World Wars.

Over the years, the manner of our remembering those two wars, it seems to me, has changed considerably. I see fewer red poppies and there is no widespread silence at 11 o'clock on Armistice Day as there once was. World War I that the poppies signify is being forgotten, and who can wonder why? We have long ceased remembering the Napoleonic Wars which, in their time, had been (for Europe, at least) equally cataclysmic.

Still sitting there, I wondered how others, my companions in the Remembrance Liturgy, had felt about it. Very few of those in church that day could have had personal memory of World War II, the last one fought by Canada in response to an aggressor. But perhaps their parents or grandparents may have been alive then. What would they have remembered: the London Blitz? the Dresden Inferno? the Hiroshima Atom-bombing?

The shape of our Eucharist on Remembrance Sunday has changed and will no doubt continue to change. Among those changes, should we, perhaps, consider another change of name? Might it be called Reconciliation Sunday? ✠

Listening For & Embracing the Change

ART TURNBULL

Retired Priest of the diocese of Ontario, Honorary Assistant at St. Matthew, Abbotsford

It is too easy for some of us to be Anglicans. It is too easy for many of us to be Canadian. I am a cradle born Anglican and a born-in Canada-citizen. I realize that I take my life for granted.

To be comfortable in a parish congregation, to share in Communion, is quite confusing for non-Anglicans. The rights and freedoms, and just the ease of daily living, is not always so for those who are new to Canada.

It was recently made clearer to me that my taking for granted is a privilege not shared by all. I was invited to an evening presentation entitled, *Explorations in Belonging*. Hosted at Archway Community Services. This event held in Abbotsford focussed on how immigrant and refugee women, newcomers to Canada perceive belonging and exclusion in the community.

"How can I belong if I do not even exist in society?" exclaimed one newcomer.

A university research team presented the findings of their work with women. The process of research used photo voice as a technique. The 40 participants took photos that described how they belonged and how they felt excluded. The group then discussed the images. The results were then displayed with captions, a visual message of reality. Many common themes emerged: feeling that one belonged, connecting, sharing, nature and space, lack of access to resources, recognition, or non-recognition of credentials, one's status as an immigrant, and accent of speaking and listening.

Some newcomers found support in local faith congregations. Some connected to agencies because of a relative's guidance. Others searched for months before venturing out to make actual connections. One identified the feeling of belonging as she walked alone in the vast wooded areas. Another found the wideness of open space in nature frightening. To belong or to feel excluded takes many shapes.

I, as a Canadian born man, never



PHOTO Bernard Bobo (iStock ID#1468596167)

thought of the many ways people connect, nor was I aware of the many walls that create exclusion. The barriers for many newcomers are in place largely due to those of us who take belonging for granted.

Trends in immigration and Canadian demographics invite closer examination. Born in Canada models of citizenship are becoming a minority in many ways. The integration of newcomers into the nation and into communities is an essential element for the future growth of Canadian society.

Churches confronted with an aging population and an ethnic English culture are confronted with a new reality. How do we Anglicans continue to provide worship and ministry with newcomers who are now the neighbours Jesus says we are to embrace? The Gospel according to St. Mark has much to guide us as we move into this new future. Many newcomers are *crying in their wilderness* as they seek the voice that calls out, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Those calling want to find paths that welcome and embrace them just as who they are.

My privileged life within the Church and in Canada needs to be awake to hear, "Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come." The time is now as I engage with newcomers. My cradled ways need to accept the image of God that I share with each newcomer. As an Anglican and a Canadian, I need to listen for the changes now upon us. In my opinion, taking things for granted will no longer work. ✠

Intimations

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

More than anyone else I know; Wordsworth wrote most tellingly and beautifully of the precious years of childhood. In his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality... in Early Childhood* he writes:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting... for trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home."

Wordsworth was suggesting nothing less than the possibility that before we are given birth into the world that will become our home, we bring with us into this world a memory of a divine influence that, while it fades as we mature, never entirely leaves us. I think this is why among my great joys is sharing with you some of those moments that Wordsworth calls "intimations of immortality," moments when that never forgotten early world breaks through in places and at moments we least expect them.

Come with me to such a place and such a moment. The place is an old well half hidden in a deep shaded gully about half a mile from my grandfather's farm in Ireland. In the summer it was often my task to go to the well for water for the farm kitchen.

The track would wind down into the gully to the dark mouth of the well. Sometimes a sunbeam would pierce the still depths. I would sometimes think of the well as the entry point by which people from another world could come into mine. It would take many years before I would read the Celtic traditions around such wells, traditions that predated Christianity by millennia, speaking of the well as a sacred place where the waters of the goddess flowed from her womb and fertilized the earth.

There was another place, very different. The vaulted roof of my parish church was richly adorned with planets and stars painted in gold. One day we children were told, "When you boys and girls sing loudly those planets and stars shine more brightly with the light of another world." And so it was, because when I looked up they did indeed shine more brightly and I knew



Sanctus: "Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory"

another world was near.

Yet another moment. I am in confirmation class, seated on the carpeted floor of the rector's study, a fire flickering and dancing in the grate. The warm book lined room is a weekly oasis from the Spartan rooms of our boarding school close by. I treasured every weekly session.

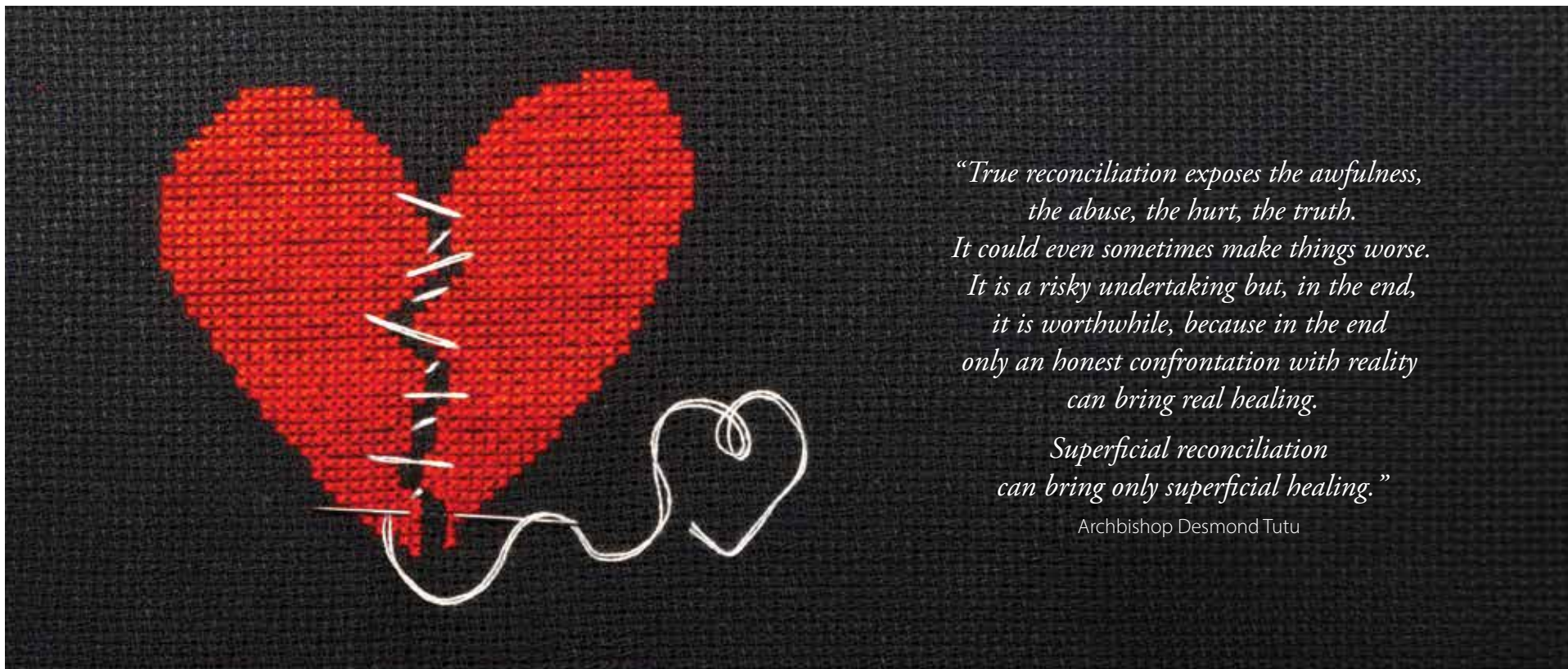
The rector points us to a place in our open Prayer Books. He asks one of us to read. A voice responds.

*With angels and archangels
and with all the company of heaven,
We laud and magnify thy glorious Name,*

*Evermore praising Thee and saying
Holy Holy Holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.*

The voice falls silent and in the silence the rector says very quietly and solemnly:

"Do you know that when those words are said in Church something wonderful happens? The wall and the window behind the altar fade away and we look at a vast host of creatures and people. Some are angels but there are also all those who have worshipped God before we were born and who still worship in Heaven. And, for a moment, when we say or sing these words we all worship God together. Then the wall and the great window return and the wonderful moment is over. Always remember these words. This wonderful heavenly song is called Sanctus." ✠



“True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but, in the end, it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing. Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

PHOTO Natalija Grigel (iStock ID#691600518)

Imagining the Possibility of Peaceful Coexistence

The Role of Compassionate Listening

DR. KATHLEEN COYNE

Compassionate Listening & Boundless Compassion Facilitator Coordinator, *siyaya* Reconciliation Process, Gibsons, British Columbia

On October 7, the world woke to yet another sharp reminder of the enduring legacy of hate; this time through unspeakable violence against civilians and the beginning of a bombardment of revenge also disproportionately impacting civilians, especially children. No doubt that the willingness to act in such inhumane ways has its origin in intergenerational trauma. For many Jewish people around the world, October 7 echoed the atrocities they or their ancestors experienced during the Holocaust and triggered existential fear, kept alive through ongoing acts of antisemitism in their own communities. October 7 also reflected the intergenerational grief of Palestinians displaced from their homes during the *Nakba* (the Great Catastrophe) of 1948, and the rage against a regime that still now limits their every move, arrests and sometimes kills Palestinians indiscriminately, and expropriates land for Israeli settlements within internationally recognized Palestinian borders.

Both peoples have lived with the uncertainty of existential threat for generations, a perpetual state of profound grief. Speaking of the liberation of Jews and others from concentration camps, Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, Victor Frankl said: “At the end of uncertainty, comes the uncertainty of the end.” Not knowing what the future holds and only ever having a tenuous possibility of peace, both Israelis and Palestinians, victims of intergenerational trauma, are understandably unable to imagine peaceful coexistence.

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, a physician from Gaza now living in Toronto, lost three children in previous Israeli bombing of Gaza and dozens of extended family members in the current bombardment. In 2011, he wrote a book entitled *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctors Journey*. A recent New York Times editorial describes a phone call with him in which he was asked, after all he has been through, if he is still now a man committed to peace. His reply: “The only real revenge for murder is achieving peace.”

Is it Possible?

No doubt achieving peace and reconciliation is an extremely complex endeavor. But it begins with listening. September 30 was the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. It is a day when Canadians acknowledge the enduring harms done by Canada’s colonialist policies and commemorate the intergenerational trauma First Peoples experienced for centuries. Many communities honour this day by listening, learning, and standing with First Peoples as friends and neighbours.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation is a relatively new day of remembrance, fulfilling a key recommendation of National Truth and Reconciliation of Canada Commission report released in 2015. The report followed from six years of cross Canada hearings with testimony from more than 6,000 residential school survivors and their loved ones and provides a list of 94 *Calls to Action* for all levels of Canadian society to play a role in healing the intergenerational harm. In recent years, the Government of Canada is implementing, albeit slowly, other recommenda-

tions including the establishment of funds to compensate for the trauma of residential schools, resources for First Nations to reclaim cultural identity and funds to address inequality in services to First Nation children in care. Slowly, awareness of the deep commitment needed for repair to be remotely possible is growing.

It has been a long time coming. As Garry Feschuk, former chief of the shishalh Nation and Co-chair of the *siyaya* Reconciliation Movement, repeatedly says:

“It will take a million steps to reach reconciliation between our peoples in the shishalh swiya, and right now, we may only be on step 500... but we’re on our way.”

Being Attentive to the Suffering

Thinking of conflict around the world and our own colonial history brings to mind the words of Christian mystic Simone Weil: “Pain and suffering are a kind of currency passed hand to hand until they reach someone who receives them and does not pass them on.” This is our task for this time—to take responsibility for the “sins of our fathers” and courageously refuse to pass them on.

To be a full partner in peace and reconciliation requires a deep capacity for compassion—the awareness of suffering, the ability to be with it with loving kindness and the willingness to act. But how do we hold profound intergenerational suffering without also being overwhelmed? How can each of us be a positive force for change?

Listening

Drawing from what has been learned from reconciliation and trauma recovery work in the past 50 years, there are several key stages before reconciliation and forgiveness is possible. First, it is important that safety be established. In the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict this means an enduring cease fire. Next, each person and group must be able to tell their story and name the pain. Nobel Prize Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu who was the Chair of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission said that:

“True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the hurt, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking but, in the end, it is worthwhile, because in the end only an honest confrontation with reality can bring real healing.

Superficial reconciliation can bring only superficial healing.”

Without doubt, the process of listening must be followed by action starting with apology and recognition of the harm done and genuine efforts to repair the damage. In Israel and Palestine, this would be an endeavor of gargantuan proportions, requiring massive and multi-faceted support of the global community. Only then would the people impacted begin to be open to the possibility of forgiveness. Only then is peace remotely possible.

Forgiveness as a Gift to Future Generations

Forgiveness does not mean absolution or letting “bygones

be bygones.” It means not letting the painful experience(s) control one’s life and purposefully reconnecting with alienated parts of oneself. A subsequent choice is then possible: to release the person who did harm from any involvement in one’s life or to re-establish a relationship in a way that is meaningful for the person harmed. The most important step is then possible to re-establish authentic connection with one’s own self and community.

Forgiveness is letting go of our attempts to change the past. Forgiveness is a choice we make for ourselves, to free ourselves from the pain of our basic human dignity having been so violated, to create a new story. According to Desmond Tutu, “The path of forgiveness leads us back to where we were trapped, so we can rescue the parts of ourselves we have given up.” In essence, forgiveness frees us to begin imagining a new story, a story where we are the empowered one. Within this recognition of our common humanity is the possibility of transformation. Forgiveness then can be a gift for future generations.

Forgiveness starts with telling the story. Once it is told and heard compassionately, the pain is no longer carried alone. As we hear each other’s stories, we are transformed and able to recognize our shared humanity. According to Tutu: “Forgiveness opens the door to peace between people and opens the space for peace within each person.” Or in the language of the *Compassionate Listening Project*, “Creating peace one person at a time.”¹

Every day now we are bombarded by yet new atrocities committed by both Hamas and the Israeli Defence Forces and, through the news and social media, hear graphically of the deep, deep suffering of Palestinian and Israelis families whose lives were profoundly changed on October 7. It is difficult to offer fair witness. We can’t help but notice injustice that we connect most with and we are invariably tempted to take positions.

I invite you, no matter where you live, to not turn away, to pay attention, to open your heart and try, with all your might, to keep it open to the intergenerational pain that is at the root of this and so many conflicts. Let compassion be your “position” when asked to take a side and “listening” be the strategy used to support awareness raising. Applying the teachings of Dr. Loretta Ross, American activist and scholar, it is time to “call people in” to our collective yearning for peace. And then be ready to move forward.

As compassionate listeners, our role now is a vital one: to compassionately hold space for people—ALL people—to speak their truth, to reflect and offer deepening questions in a way that supports them to reconnect with their alienated self, the part that has been violated yet so yearns for peace. This time—the time we are living in right now—requires nothing less: complete courage, radical hope, and timeless patience to do this one person at a time. ✦

¹ To learn more about the Compassionate Listening Project please go to their website at <https://www.compassionatelisting.org/>