



## Parish spreads Christmas joy

St. Luke's Anglican church in Dartmouth sent more than 60 hampers of food to families in need this Christmas. The annual event is organized in the church basement and dozens of parishioners show up to help out. Rows upon rows of 'filled to the brim' tote bags are assembled and then distributed

within the community. It is a parish event involving the young and not-so-young to bring in the boxes of food and package the totes.

*Photo right: Some of the younger helpers took time for a photo.*

*Photo below: Some of the dozens of food totes getting prepared to go.*



*Photo: The altar set up for midnight mass in the Old Crow Heritage Centre.*

What a total and complete blessing to be allowed to spend the holidays in the midst of another culture and see how they celebrate the seasons. In this case, time has gone by so quickly and we were into

Advent, then Christmas and New Years almost like a whirlwind. In Old Crow, it's like taking a little step back in time and it was a lot of fun. The season started with a beautiful Christmas Concert

## Christmas & New Year's in Old Crow

at the little school, one of the few schools in Canada the still recites the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of each school day, in Gwitchin, of course. The following day the community was invited into the school for lunch, when your community school has 34 students, flexibility is the name of the game. I don't think I have ever seen teachers work so hard, show more creativity and innovation, and still enjoy themselves and demonstrate obvious pride in what they are doing. After school was let out for the season, there were games, contests, challenges and any number of activities available everyday and evening at the community center...this little community really comes together and celebrates well. In fact, I even tried my hand at a soup making contest and surprise of all surprises, I placed second...not too shabby for an out-of-towner. Everyone gets into the spirit of the season, I can honest say the Santa came to my house and then he went next door to the community center to meet the children...I dare say that's getting close to Santa's

Workshop. We didn't forget that God is active and in the north as well, Christmas Eve Midnight Service in the Heritage Center was just beautiful, outside it was clear and cold (-27). Have you ever walked out on a clear cold night with lots of stars over your head and a crunch of the snow under your feet... that's what Christmas Eve was like here in Old Crow... just beautiful. In the middle of the service, while the Christmas story was being read, I could not help but let my mind wonder, just for a moment... what must it have been like on that clear cold night when the shepherds encountered the angel announcing the birth of the Christ child, and the awesome vision of the heavenly hosts praising God out in the backwaters of nowhere. God chose the lowliest of the low and the meekest of the meek to bestow the world greatest message. Even though they couldn't have known at the time... what a privilege was being bestowed on them that night. I, too, felt very privileged to be sharing this tiny piece of the story with the folks of Old

Crow. For that tiny space of time it was truly magical, a mystery in the making. Following the Christmas service, there is always food at the community center and everyone is welcome. The conclusion of a perfect night. New Year's Eve was no less special, approx. 70 people came to midnight service, a nice quiet Evening Prayer service with time near the end for a few carols and a count down to fireworks at midnight to welcome in the New Year. Here a handshake is almost like a form of blessing that says welcome to the new year, I wish you will. New Year's Day brought another service, and at supertime a feast put on by Chief Bruce Charlie and his council. A time of feasting and fun and opportunity to pass along wishes to those you may have missed the evening before. What a wonderful time and place to celebrate the arrival of the Christ child and departure of the old year, 2016. Happy, Healthy New Year in 2017.

REV. H.A.(BERT) CHESTNUT  
OLD CROW, YT

COLUMNIST

# Dinner at noon and 'leavins' for supper

Christmas is long past and we are nearing the season of Lent here By the Bog. There have been some changes at the rectory since the New Year. Miranda has returned to University to complete her Theology degree following her maternity break. Baby Charlie travels into the city with her each morning to spend his day in child care and Father J is left to fend for himself.

Well, I say "fend for himself" but if the truth be known, he seems to find lots of folks more than ready to look after him. Most days he can be found with his size 12 feet under some table at dinner time.

We country folk call the noon meal 'dinner' and it is usually the big meal of the day. My mother used to call it "the cooked meal". I could never understand this as a child because I thought she was always cooking... breakfast, dinner and supper! However supper did tend to be leftovers from dinner; or 'leavins' as Grandpa called them. Grandpa was



ST. BART'S BY THE BOG  
Sarah Neish

not a fan of 'leavins'. Once a day was enough for any meal he would say and no amount of turning it into hash or salad or stew could change it enough for him. He always complained ... and always licked his supper plate clean. Grandma just smiled and passed him the jar of homemade Chow that seemed to make anything worth eating in his eyes.

I grew up in a multi-generational household I

think it would be called today. Grandparents were always a part of my young life.

Father J has a huge appetite, he is a big fella, and the people of his flock like to keep him well fed. Miranda has nothing to worry about as far as her man and his stomach are concerned! AND he often leaves with a few plastic containers of 'leavins' for supper at the rectory.

Feeding the clergy of the parish has been a long tradition here By the Bog. I can remember having the Rector for a meal when I was growing up and as a young bride I continued to carry on that tradition.

St Bart's was often the first parish for the newly ordained. When I was young, that almost always meant a young bachelor fresh out of College starting his ministry with us. They needed tending to, feeding and attention when life got heavy for them. The families of the parish were always ready to step in and lend a hand and we seem

to have fallen right back into that practice now.

I know that things have changed for the Rectory family but they seem to be making the needed adjustments. Charlie is thriving at Day Care, Miranda is doing what she feels is God's calling for her life with special courses on Pastoral Care. She is looking towards a career in Hospital Chaplaincy. Jason is preparing for his first Lent as rector with plans for weekly Bible Study and a few extra services as we approach Holy Week and Easter.

Benny Smith keeps the wood stove stoked and the wood box by the back door of the house full so that Miranda and Charlie have a nice warm home to greet them each evening and the folks of The Bog keep everyone well fed and well cared for to the best of our ability. After all if Jason feeds our souls, the least we can do is feed his family.

I'll keep you posted,  
Aunt Madge



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## CAROL SERVICES

IT IS TRADITIONAL FOR THOSE WHO ATTEND CLERGY GATHERINGS TO DISPLAY THE NUMBER OF CAROL SERVICES THEY TOOK THIS YEAR



THOSE WITH SINGLE DIGIT FIGURES ARE FROWNED-UPON MERCILESSLY

Dave Walker © 2016

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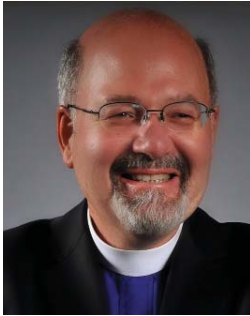
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## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

# Entering the conversation



The Rt. Rev. Ron Cutler,  
Bishop of Nova Scotia and Prince  
Edward Island

Many years ago I heard a story of an event that took place at a gathering of primates of the Anglican Communion. During the discussions the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, asked the archbishops: what makes the Anglican Church unique within the breadth of Christianity? The answers touched on our liturgies, our history, our form of governance and structure. They all conveyed something of our identity, but Archbishop Desmond Tutu (at the time Archbishop of Cape Town) said that what makes Anglicanism unique, is that all are invited to the table and no one can tell you to leave the table, you may choose to go but no one can force you. The table he was speaking of, was the place of meeting, the place of conversation, the place where we listen for God's leading. Perhaps this discussion never happened, but I hope that it did.

At Christmas I received a book partly authored by Archbishop Tutu. His has been a remarkable story of faith lived in some of the most trying circumstances. His understanding of the gospel has certainly been one where "the afflicted have been comforted and the comfortable have been afflicted", yet throughout his

ministry we see the evidence of a great joy. One of the most significant features of his ministry has been his example of drawing people from very different perspectives on a wide range of topics, into dialogue. As he has said; "if you want peace, don't talk to your friends, talk to your enemies."

Dialogue, conversation, respectful listening, these are all opportunities to learn, to be stretched, to grow or to refine

our sense of God and God's call to us. These opportunities also acknowledge a basic truth of our faith; as Christians, we are a part of community. It seems self-evident, but it also seems that we often forget this amid all the talk of personal faith or self-realization. The Gospels bear witness to that: It is for all the world that the Saviour comes, it is all the world which is drawn unto him and it is into all the world that the disciples are sent. Though we might experience God as individuals, we need to always be aware that the outworking of God's dream for the world is found in community. For a long time I have been both perplexed and challenged by how we come to understand God's call to us in communities. I believe that all of our life in faith is lived in community and that we cannot truly live the life of

faith in isolation. As an introvert, I crave times of silence and solitude, but these are times when I am refreshed for living in community.

This is a time of the year when congregations and parishes meet for annual meetings (and when we are planning for our diocesan Synod). Canon 35 describes the business which must be transacted at the annual meeting, but the gathering of the congregation must do more than look at reports, review financial statements, elect officers and pass a budget. This is a place where we seek the knowledge of God's call to us as a community of faith at this moment and in this place. We tend to think of very specific places where God's leading may be discerned: in the quiet of prayer "the still small voice may be heard", in worship (Isaiah heard God's voice at worship in the temple), in our reading of and reflection upon scripture, but what about at the meeting table? A place where all are invited. I know that I have been at some meetings over the years where it seemed to me that the 'good news' was noticeably absent, but those experiences must not deter us from using these opportunities of gathering to search together for God's love and power. As our current primate once remarked, when he was our diocesan bishop: "Never forget that the gift of the Holy Spirit came to the church at a meeting".

The early church met to discuss and to pray and to discern. We cannot discern without making space, without listening to one another, to the knowledge that each one has gained through their walk with God. Church meetings are not just about expressing personal opinions or advancing a personal agenda. The discussions that take place when we gather in God's name, must focus on our life lived in the light of God's redemptive love, God's call, God's commission. The practice of beginning a meeting with a time of scripture study doesn't cut into the efficiency of a meeting, instead it focuses us on the task we really need to do. Keeping the bible opened on the meeting table, at the passage that we stated with, provides not only a reminder but also a place to return to when the discussions might be going 'off track'.

In many cultures around the world, the meeting place is a place for listening, more than speaking. Is it possible that at the annual meeting we might encounter those messengers from God - the angels? In order for that to happen everyone present needs to be listening attentively and with expectation. Just remember: you have two ears and one mouth - you should listenable least twice as much as you speak!

+Ron

**"Never forget that the gift of the Holy Spirit came to the church at a meeting!"**

## Forgiveness is difficult for most of us

February is the month of love. Couples exchange gifts and go on dates. It is a time to celebrate marriages. However, when a marriage relationship goes sideways, some dynamics are always present - hurts, wounded hearts, and a need for forgiveness.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the Gospel message. Sadly, we are not often taught how to appropriate this gift from God. Jesus was passionate about forgiveness. In the Lord's Prayer, He stated, "Forgive us our sins as we have already forgiven those who have sinned against us." (Matthew 6: 12 NKJV) At the end of this famous prayer, Jesus underscores the importance of forgiveness with these words - "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly



Rev. Dr. John Roddam

Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14-15 NKJV) OUCH!

However, I have come to a deep understanding. If God

commands us to do something, He will give us the capacity to fulfill it, with His help.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was a beloved British Poet Laureate. He is second only to William Shakespeare as the most quoted poet in English Literature! He was renowned as a statesman - humble and gracious.

Later in life, he published a volume of poetry which won critical acclaim among his peers. Shockingly, a young critic offered a profoundly negative review. The arts community and much of England were scandalized. Several months later, Pope was seen to have lunch with that very same critic. One of the Laureate's friends drew him aside and chided him for being seen in public with the "scoundrel." Pope responded

by indicating that he had forgiven the young man. The onlooker was stunned. Perhaps a deeper consideration was warranted. After all this was the same dear man who penned the words, "to err is human; to forgive divine..." Is there anyone you need to forgive? Have you been disappointed in, slighted, betrayed, or wronged by someone? Yes! We can all identify with this.

There is a grace needed to "forgive from the heart" as Our Lord demanded (Matthew 18: 35 NKJV). We cannot do this on our own. Jesus demonstrated the grace to forgive several times in the Gospels. How profound it is to note that Our Saviour declared from his seat of execution, "Father forgive them..." (Luke 23:34 NKJV)

This has inspired many in the 'process' of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is difficult for most of us. We want justice. We want to see the other person punished for the hurt they have caused us!

Once, as I fought to forgive someone who had betrayed me, leaving me deeply hurt, the Lord gave me a simple prayer:

**"Lord, I choose to give \_\_\_\_\_ a gift he/she does not deserve. I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_."**

Sometimes I've needed to put my name in that prayer. I always feel a deep release and peace as I struggle and ultimately pray that prayer from my heart. I believe it will work for you too...

# MISSION (is) POSSIBLE:

## Diocesan stories of people responding to God's call

### "Place and Space for Grace"

BY REV. LISA G. VAUGHN

The ancient roots of the word "welcome" are derived from a German term meaning a "desired guest".

Parishioners at St. James', Kentville, have not only put out the welcome mat, but also "The Welcome Table." They open their doors regularly to any and all guests, eager to build relationships with new people.

A free community meal, called "The Welcome Table," is hosted once a month in the church hall. Lovingly prepared by coordinator Sheila Vidito and several other cooks and servers, some 30 to 50 local residents share in a hot, delicious meal and some live entertainment.

"It's a space and place to meet, eat and greet," says the rector, Rev. Cathy Pharo. "(The Welcome Table) expands people's lives," she explained. "Eating with others is important when you live alone. ... Some of them, their lives are small."

Whether it be because of poverty, or tiny living spaces or few family members nearby, the community meal at St. James' gives townsfolk an

opportunity to come out on a Saturday night and have a special dinner with friends.

"It's seen as a place of support," said Rev. Cathy. "People know your name, your situation and ask how you're doing. This is a place to come and be cared for."

Some of the volunteers mingle with the guests, along with the rector.

"As a priest and pastor it gives me a chance to meet people from outside the congregation," she said. "It's about relationships."

At each Welcome Table event congregation members donate ingredients for the dinner which usually includes soup, salad, main entree, potatoes, vegetables, rolls and desserts. Sheila says six or seven parishioners offer their time and culinary talents to help host their special guests on the third Saturday of the month. The missional ministry is supported by congregation members of a variety of ages.

Sometimes the children and youth bake the cookies and help serve. A couple of faithful 80-year old women offer their ministry gifts too, along with several young people. "Everyone works well



together," said Sheila. Guests are invited to The Welcome Table, mainly through word of mouth and "Open Arms Resource Centre" in Kentville, a Christian-based volunteer network helping people in the neighbourhood. Paul Wood, a helper from the early days of The Welcome

Table (about eight years ago), assists by offering live music. A recreation coordinator from the local Evergreen Home for Special Care, he plays with the band, made up of a keyboardist, two guitar players, a bass guitar and vocalists. They share gospel tunes along with other music

favourites. Rev. Cathy says The Welcome Table is so much more than just good food. It helps St. James' congregation, as they are blessed to be a blessing to others. "As we are fed so we feed others," she said. "It's about relationships."

## Mission School on the road in 2017

MORE is coming! Our diocesan travelling MORE: Mission School has three upcoming dates for five regions in February and March.

MORE – Mission School, module #1 is the first in a series of day-long workshops that is being hosted regionally all over the Diocese in the next couple of years. It is a response to the requests that came from the table discussions at our Diocesan Synod gathering in May of 2015. Many clergy and lay leaders are seeking help to understand just what "mission" is, what it looks like and how

congregations might shift to be more "missional."

The workshop is engaging for participants, with lots of small group discussion, a case study and MORE! We encourage each parish to bring a TEAM! Everyone is invited – lay and clergy. Bishop Ron Cutler and the Innovation Group team facilitate each session.

This first session of "MORE" is an introduction to mission, parish discernment, Fresh Expressions of church, sharing & witnessing, and missional community.

There is no cost, but

registration is required. Each session runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and lunch is provided.

1. Chebucto, Dartmouth and Fort Sackville Regions - Feb. 4 in St. Peter's Hall, (3 Dakin Drive, Birch Cove, off the Bedford Highway). REGISTER by Feb. 1.
2. Northumbria Region - Feb 11 in Christ Church Hall, 50 Bridge Avenue, Stellarton. REGISTER by Feb. 8
3. South Shore Region – March 4 in St. John's Hall, Townsend Street, Lunenburg (corner of Cornwallis St.).

REGISTER by March 1.

CONTACT: Kathy Saunders (902) 420-0717 or [kasaunders@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:kasaunders@nspeidiocese.ca)

MORE Mission Schools for the Valley and Eastern Shore are being arranged. Stay tuned!





# Let the Christ-Light Compassion journey begin!

BY CATHY LEE CUNNINGHAM,  
PART-TIME RECTOR OF THE  
CHURCH OF THE GOOD  
SHEPHERD, BEAVER BANK AND  
FOUNDER, THE VOCAPEACE  
INSTITUTE

**G**reetings and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus!

Every year, on February 2nd, we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. According to the Gospel of Luke, Mary and Joseph went to the temple in Jerusalem to present their firstborn infant son to God, to fulfill the Law of Moses.

At that same time, the Spirit called Simeon and Anna to be there in the temple. As soon as they saw Jesus, they knew that their longing for the redemption of Israel had been fulfilled. That God had heard their cry for a more compassionate world. That God indeed had compassion for them and hadn't forgotten them. That the moment had come for that truth to be revealed through Jesus, in human flesh and in their times! What pure joy that must have been for them, after having long-lived life under the brutal Roman rule.

Stephen Reynolds beautifully conveys the meaning of this ancient moment for us today in the wonderful Anglican liturgical resource, *For All the Saints: Prayers and Readings for Saints Days*:

"In celebrating the feast of the Presentation, the people of the Church become like Simeon, who cradled the infant Light of salvation in the crook of his arm and knew him to be as fragile as a candle-flame. In baptism, in meditating upon Scripture and in the Eucharist Christians cradle the same Light and take responsibility for the life of Christ in our world." (p.76)

So, on this feast, this Candlemas, when we bless our church candles for the coming year and give thanks for the Light of God made manifest in the flesh of the Christ-Child, how will we live out our responsibility keep the flame burning? How will we cradle and nurture it in the crook of our own arms in this present day? One possible answer, perhaps THE answer: capital "C" Compassion.

**THE SIMULTANEOUS  
POWER AND FRAGILITY  
OF CHRIST-LIGHT  
COMPASSION**



Rev. Cathy Lee  
Cunningham

The power of the candle-flame to bring comfort and hope to us in the midst pain, loss, injustice, tragedy, even war is known to just about every human being on the

planet. When we mobilize our collective good intentions as a human race, to remind ourselves that even in the midst of the worst darkness, love prevails? Too many times.

No matter what, we keep gathering. We keep mobilizing. We keep the flame burning. Time, after time, after time. It is the empathy we have for one another that keeps us gathering and that empathy has a name: Compassion. That Compassion has another name: Jesus. Jesus, who, as an infant was cradled in the arms of Simeon in the temple has one call to us: to keep His Compassion alive in an increasingly callous world. Sometimes that's easier than others. That's why we need each other, and Christ-light Compassion, and a plan.

it - so that it doesn't go out. So, too with our hearts: when we open ourselves to have empathy for one another, we open ourselves up to experience the kind of pain that might crush us. If that happens to us too many times there is a danger: that the gentle protective cover will turn into an impenetrable wall. Or worse, that we will give up altogether. That is the risk of true, vulnerable, take-up-your-cross-and-follow-me discipleship.

While there will always be moments when our protective stance fails and a strong wind or fast motion forward extinguishes the flame, even despite our best intention to keep it burning, as God's people we have been given the inner and collective

who have become risk-averse because of pains too deep to bear, the healing remedy might be to channel the never-give-up spiritual strength of Simeon and Anna in those fear-filled, I-think-I'll-just-run-away-and-give-up moments.

Each year at Candlemas when we bless our candles for the church, we are called to fearlessly open ourselves to consider both the strength and fragility of the Christ-light Compassion we find in Jesus. As with our vigil flames, to keep the Christ-light Compassion burning in our hearts and parishes requires great care, intention, deliberate action, gentleness and a deeper awareness of ourselves, our surrounding environment and where the light is needed.

## AN INVITATION: THE CHRIST-LIGHT COMPASSION JOURNEY

So, now, I'm inviting you to join me on a year-long journey of candle-flame and compassion-tending, of learning to cradle Christ-light Compassion in our arms as Simeon did, and to see it as Anna did. To feel its strength and power and fearlessly explore it's (and our own!) fragility. For the next few months, I'm going to resource you to do just that, using Karen Armstrong's, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* as our guide.

To join me on the journey, you might wish to pick up: a copy of Karen's book (title above); a journal; a few good writing pens or pencils (make them coloured, if you wish!); plus - of course - your Bible and your Prayer Book.

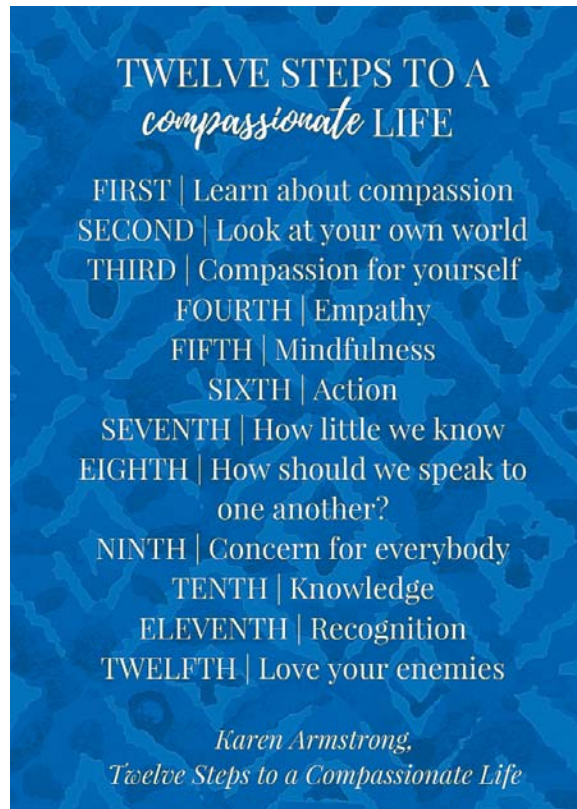
In Armstrong's book, the first step is to Learn about Compassion. So let's start learning. Go to [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org). I guarantee, you'll find more than enough resources there to begin your learning journey. I'll see you back here in the March Issue, with the next step on our shared Christ-light Compassion journey.

## A NEW COMPASSION PAGE FOR YOU!

Head to [www.vocapeace.com/compassion-journey](http://www.vocapeace.com/compassion-journey), to get access to the fully-updated Compassion Page, to support you and your parish to explore and act on The Charter for Compassion in 2017.

resources to keep trying, to keep our hearts open, to keep risking and to succeed. The unavoidable fact is: a candle-flame is simultaneously powerful in its ability to ignite hope in our hearts, while also infinitely fragile in a world where so many wild winds blow. Outdoor Easter Vigil anyone?

For those of us who have "been burned" in this life,



planet. Christian. Muslim. Jew. Hindu. Jain. Zoroastrian. Atheist. Agnostic. Buddhist. Pagan. Taoist. Sikh. Baha'i. Confucian. Shinto. How many times in recent history have all of us gathered together around the world and lit our candles as a powerful act of unity, healing and community after violence has struck? When we are grieving the loss of beloved family members and

## THE SIMULTANEOUS POWER AND FRAGILITY OF OUR BEST INTENTIONS

When we look at pictures of candle-lit vigils on Facebook or Instagram, in newspapers and magazines (or the Diocesan Times!) most vigilers have their hand carefully and gently placed near their candle-flame - almost cradling

# It's A New Day!

## Let my people go!

BY REV. LISA G. VAUGHN

One of the greatest joys of discipleship in the church is the thrill of watching a new leader soar in ministry. The deepest sadness often comes when a leader – lay or ordained – is restrained and prevented from being all they can be for God's kingdom.

In these days of our parishes moving from a maintenance-mode of church (inward-focused) to being missional (outward-directed), a truly shared leadership team is essential. Our ability to be vital, healthy and most importantly, to expand our capacity to do effective ministry, can no longer be the responsibility of one or two key people. This means creating a leadership culture.

To be clear, a leader in the church is any baptized person. By way of our baptismal covenant we affirm the identity and ministry call of every Christian, the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5).

Anglican author Robert Warren in his research for, "The Healthy Churches' Handbook: a process for revitalizing your church," says that the most healthy lay and ordained ministry teams had leaders with an enabling

**Leaders are at their best when they make the raising-up of other leaders a priority.**

style.

"They were good at affirming the gifts and contribution of all. This is well beyond the one-man (or one-woman) band. Here were people willing to trust and affirm others in the exercise of their ministry," he writes.

"The perspective of these leaders was consistently one of seeing their role as enabling the ministry of the whole church rather than doing the ministry for the whole church themselves," he said. "They celebrated the gifts of others rather than feeling threatened by them."

Some of the benefits of a strong shared-leadership team:

- More hands and feet mean more ministry gets done.
- The workload is

shared resulting in a healthier balance of responsibilities.

- A variety of gifts are exercised (1 Corinthians 12) offering diverse options for worship, programs, etc.
- Expanded relationship networks (increased opportunity to engage more newcomers).
- The joy of joining with others (belonging) and participating in the call of God to the community.
- Broader feedback and review of ministry effectiveness.
- Everyone is (feels) valued for their particular offering of service.

These strengths give life, enjoyment and energy to a congregation, whereas the "lone-wolf" model of

leadership steals vibrancy. Some of the dangers from a (clergy or lay) leadership style of one (or two) doing most of the ministry:

- The church's mission is stifled and declines (only the basics and urgent ministry needs are addressed).
- Chronic exhaustion and leadership burnout (sickness and possibly the departure from church life altogether).
- Limited time, energy and creativity for innovative approaches to ministry.
- Isolation and loneliness of the leaders.
- Untapped and unappreciated gifts of other congregation members.
- It is not God-honouring.

Whether they are small or large, urban or rural, churches with healthy, strong mutually-shared ministry teams thrive. Ultimately, it is up to leaders to actively invest time and energy into creating this life-giving model. American author and pastor, Bill Hybels says leaders are at their best when they make the raising-up of other leaders a priority.

In his book, "Courageous Leadership: field-tested



Rev. Lisa Vaughn  
Diocesan Parish Vitality  
Coordinator

strategy for the 360° leader", Hybels writes, "When a leader develops not only his or her own leadership potential, but draws out the leadership potential of scores of other leaders as well, the kingdom impact from one life is multiplied exponentially."

He says, "It produces far more fruit than any single leadership achievement could have. The impact of that leader's life will be felt for many generations to come."

True shared leadership in ministry requires these essentials too:

- Realistic expectations for clergy, lay leaders and the general congregation.
- Entrusting and 'releasing' of new people to take on responsibilities.
- An emotionally healthy perspective in 'sharing the glory' with all members of the team.
- A substantial investment of time and energy in raising-up, training and coaching leaders.

For resources on how to create a culture of shared leadership ministry contact me (902-420-0717 or lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca). A free seminar called "Help Wanted: parish leadership development" is also available.

Rev. Lisa G. Vaughn is the Diocesan Parish Vitality Coordinator. For articles, inspiration and insights on congregational vitality and mission see the Facebook page "Parish Vitality Coordinator – Diocese of NS & PEI."







Photo: The Pikangikum Band Council with the PWRDF and Habitat delegation.

# The right to water

BY ALLIE COLP

I was listening to “Because News” on CBC radio a few months ago, and Joe Mimran (the founder of Joe Fresh) was talking about Canada and said “We are blessed to be in this country... Yeah, we’ve got problems, and yeah, we could do things better, but when you look around at all these other countries, I’m telling you we’re lucky.”

Candy Palmer (a CBC broadcaster) interjected to say, “You wouldn’t say that if you were born and raised on [an Indigenous reserve]. I love this country as well, but for so many people the experience of living in Canada is not that.... When you’re into your second decade of needing to boil water to take a shower or to brush your teeth you don’t have that same feeling about this country.”

I was so glad for her ability to be bold in that moment and to interrupt the conversation

to call attention to a serious issue in our country, and an issue that is often overlooked. Water rights, in particular for indigenous communities is something that the National Youth Project, an initiative that invites Anglican and Lutheran youth from across Canada to learn about and fundraise for a particular issue, has been focused on for the past 4 years.

This project, Right to Water, encourages young people to deepen their understanding of issues related to water rights, to work to develop relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people in their own communities, and to raise money to help outfit homes in Pikangikum with clean water and wastewater services.

Pikangikum is a small Indigenous community in North Western Ontario where about 95% of homes don’t have water. This means that they need to use outhouses to go to the bathroom and go

to community holding tanks to get water for cooking and cleaning. The work to outfit homes is being done through a partnership between the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) and Habitat for Humanity Manitoba.

In December, I had the opportunity to visit Pikangikum with the Executive Director of PWRDF, the Vice President of Habitat Manitoba, and a fellow member of PWRDF’s Youth Council. We went to meet the Band Council of Pikangikum, to begin to get to know some of the people there, and to see some of the homes that would be outfitted with all of the fixtures and fittings for water and wastewater.

*It’s hard to find a word to describe the feeling of being in the same country that I feel like I know and love, and to see people living such a different reality than me.* To see people going outside in a serious snowstorm

(no exaggeration – our flight out to the holding tank for some water, and to see how normal a part of their day to day lives this is, is something that I am still wrestling with, and probably will for a long time.

The work of Habitat Manitoba and PWRDF in Pikangikum isn’t the whole solution – it would take decades and millions of dollars for them to outfit every home with water – but the lives that it will impact will be so greatly improved for having access to water in their homes. And the advocacy that is happening alongside this

work, will hopefully call the government to action to help take care of this community, helping Pikangikum be part of PWRDF’s vision of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.

Photo: A community water holding tank in Pikangikum.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### TO ALL PARISHES, CLERGY AND MEMBERS OF THE DIOCESAN SYNOD 2017

Notice is given that the 147th Session of Synod of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will be held on Thursday, May 25th, through Saturday, May 27th, 2017 in the McInnes Room, Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, 6136 University Avenue, Halifax.

All motions and resolutions to come before SYNOD 2017 should be received by the Executive Secretary of Synod no later than Friday, February 24th, 2017 at 5pm at the Reception Desk, Synod Office, 1340 Cathedral Lane, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 2Z1, or emailed to: [execsecsynod@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:execsecsynod@nspeidiocese.ca)

No resolutions will be accepted after the above deadline or from the floor of Synod.

For guidance, refer to “Instructions for Writing Diocesan Synod Resolutions” available at: [www.nspeidiocese.ca/synod2017/page/diocesan%20synod%202017.aspx](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca/synod2017/page/diocesan%20synod%202017.aspx)

Further information about SYNOD 2017 will be communicated as it becomes available.

This notice given by The Right Reverend Ron Cutler, Bishop of the Diocese of NS and PEI.

Rev. Aidan Kingsbury retired from active ministry as one of the associate parish priests in the Anglican Churches of Pictou County, January 31st, 2017.

Rev. Judi Phillips appointed rector of the Parish of New Ross, ½ time, February 1st, 2017.

# The medicine of immortality

BY DAVID W T BRATTSTON

Unlike denominations with unstructured and informal forms of worship, the liturgical churches (Eastern Orthodox, Armenians, Ethiopians, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics) hold the Eucharist in great reverence and maintain firm regulations as to how Communion elements are to be treated and to whom they may be distributed. These regulations are not modern inventions, nor did they originate with superstitious monks in the Dark Ages. The present article looks at Christian regard for the Eucharist before AD 250 to show how the earliest believers shared the same practices as liturgical denominations today. The ancient writings are the common heritage of all Christians because they date from before the division into present-day denominations, and could have originated only in apostolic times.

**In the earliest Christian centuries, extremely respectful treatment was shown toward the bread and wine (or body and blood of Christ). The reason appears in Justin, a Christian writer in the mid-second century who was later martyred for the Faith: “not as common bread and common drink do we receive these...we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.”**

Half a century earlier another martyr, Bishop Ignatius of Antioch, described the Eucharist as “the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying but which causes that we should

live forever in Jesus Christ.” This was not the better-known Ignatius Loyola but his namesake fifteen centuries earlier.

In AD 217 Bishop Hippolytus in central Italy set out existing church practice as to how clergy were to continue to conduct worship services. He also intended it as a guide for detecting and taking action when clergy departed from the worship heritage passed down from the apostles. He wrote that the consecrated elements are not to be allowed to fall to the floor or be lost or treated carelessly; this is corroborated in the same era in Tunisia by the church father Tertullian. Nor were church mice and other animals to be permitted to consume them. The bread and wine were to be consecrated only according to a prescribed ceremony, which must be in an orderly manner, without talking or arguing taking place, and such that Christians preserve their good reputation, and their worship practices not be ridiculed by non-Christians. Shortly afterwards, the church father Origen wrote that people are not to receive them “in haphazard fashion”. These, of course, are echoes of Saint Paul that church services must be conducted “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14.40).

This same Origen illustrated better than anyone else the great reverence Christians in the AD 240s held the sacramental elements. Unlike Ignatius or Hippolytus, he was not urging his hearers to show respect but was using one existing church practice as the grounds or analogy for other spiritual exercises. Origen was taking the example of the treatment of the Eucharist as a standard practice on which to build his argument to encourage them to adopt an additional soul-

building activity. Both he and his congregations took high respect for the sacramental elements for granted and as well-established:

You who are accustomed to take part in divine mysteries know, when you receive the body of the Lord, how you protect it with all caution and veneration lest any small part fall from it, lest anything of the consecrated gift be lost. For you believe, and correctly, that you are answerable if anything falls from there by neglect.

Partly because outsiders might not know how to demonstrate proper respect, it was forbidden to give Holy Communion to them. From the earliest times, it was considered sinful to consume the sacrament in an unworthy manner. According to the Apostle Paul, “whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” and “he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” (1 Corinthians 11. 27, 29). This was repeated almost two centuries later by Origen when he warned that Christians who partake unworthily will receive the Lord’s judgment, again as a proposition accepted as a given by all his hearers.

The Didache was a church manual and guide to the Christian life written in the late first century, when some apostles were still living. It limited participation in the Eucharist to people who had been baptized, citing Jesus’ command that we must not give what is holy to dogs. Half a century or more later, Justin similarly confined Communion to people who believe Christian doctrine, had been baptized, and live as

Christ had taught. Another sixty years later, Hippolytus’ church manual

and universally accepted. The sacrament is not put into trays as among

**Partly because outsiders might not know how to demonstrate proper respect, it was forbidden to give Holy Communion to them. From the earliest times, it was considered sinful to consume the sacrament in an unworthy manner.**

would also admit to Holy Communion only people that had received Christian baptism. One of his charges against the leadership of a rival party within Christianity was that they indiscriminately gave Communion to everybody.

To further safeguard against disrespect of the sacrament and prevent people from eating and drinking unworthily, there were restrictions even on the baptized. In the first century Saint Paul required examination of conscience prior to receiving (1 Corinthians 11.28) while the Didache not long afterwards mandated confession of sins. It also required resolution of disputes with other people before participating.

**Liturgical denominations have always provided further protection by requiring communicants to come to the front of the church and to receive the sacrament only from the hand of a duly authorized minister commissioned for this purpose.** In AD 212 Tertullian referred to this procedure as already ancient

Calvinists and passed along the pews like a collection plate where anyone can serve themselves, even an unbaptized visitor who has never been in church before.

Considering the veneration some churches accord the Eucharistic elements—as witness the protections surrounding them—Christians of all denominations should show great respect for the sacrament and due consideration for the consciences of their hosts when at a Communion service in a church other than their own.

*Further reading: Gospel of John 6.48-58 and 1 Corinthians 11. 20-36.*

*The quotation of Origen is from pages 380 and 381 of Origen: Homilies on Genesis and Exodus translated by Ronald E. Heine (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982) Copyright © Catholic University of America Press, Inc.*

*Dr David Brattston lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia and published articles on religion in publications world-wide.*

## Free program to help frame Formation

Congregations that actively nurture disciples are more likely to be growing – in depth of faith and in numbers. Research from the Church of England’s key report, “From Anecdote to Evidence” (2011-2013), shows that offering opportunities in Christian Formation helps people experience God and be nurtured in that relationship.

The authors say, “Two-thirds of churches which said they offered encouragement through specific discipleship courses or courses preparing

members to be Christian witness in their daily lives, showed growth.”

Christian Formation refers to the very beginning stages of helping people explore faith and how to foster an (re-)awakening in belief and devotional behaviours. Clearly, this is so much more than an education program. There are various ways to emphasize Christian Formation for existing parishioners, and potential, new disciples. It may also include simple conversation exercises (i.e.,

Faith Sharing Cards), studies for all ages, prayer groups, retreats, sermon series, articles, spiritual disciplines, and other initiatives that can serve to nurture faith explorers.

As part of our diocesan ministry strategy the Building Healthy Parishes Team (VSST) is focusing their efforts on helping lay and clergy leaders prioritize this basic building block, providing practical tools to help support this essential work.

Parishes can examine questions related to

approaches in Christian Formation through a PowerPoint presentation available for FREE download and use in their communities.

**The short introductory program for leaders is easy to facilitate with talking notes and questions, as well as a hand-out.**

It takes 15 minutes to present, not including any discussion time used for the reflection questions. To access the Christian Formation PowerPoint see [www.nspeidiocese.ca](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca) website. Then

click on the ‘LEADERSHIP’ drop-down bar and go to ‘VSST & Task Groups’ to ‘Healthy Parishes.’ It can be used at church council meetings, as well as other parish gatherings.

Do you need more information or have a comment? Share them with BHP Team Lead, Tanya Moxley ([stewardship@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:stewardship@nspeidiocese.ca)), or Parish Vitality Coordinator, Rev. Lisa Vaughn (902-420-0717, [lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca)).





## Longest Night concert at St. James Kentville

Each year, St James Kentville hosts a Longest Night of the Year Concert. The calming sounds of Celtic Harpists Ardyth and Jennifer along with the enchanting storytelling of Rev. Mel

Malton are a soothing balm in a season that demands much of us.

In keeping with tradition, St James directs the proceeds of this annual concert to Outreach Projects. Our

twelfth annual concert combined with a parish Advent project makes it possible to direct \$1006.00 to the Right to Water Project – the PWRDF'S Youth Council Initiative.

Beyond providing a source of safe and accessible water this project is built on the pillars that inspire PWRDF – Advocacy, Education, Partnership and Strategic Giving.

*Photo: Harpists Ardyth and Jennifer and Rev Mel Malton along with some of the Longest Night concert goers.*

### LETTERS from AWAY

Dear Diocese,  
I have to confess. I can't stay away. I probably spend too much time in the diocese to be considered living away and thanks to friends and family in Nova Scotia I have become the ultimate "couch surfer". Being a couch surfer was beginning to bother me until I realized that Jesus and his followers have never been stationary either. His ministry was on the road and just like me, he had wonderful friends like Lazarus, Mary and Martha, who also invited him for sleep overs.

When I thought about it, I realized that Jesus was mobile before he was even born. An expectant Mary arrived at Elizabeth's door shouting out a manifesto in anticipation of his birth, then in a very pregnant state she travelled with Joseph to the stable where she would give birth to the Messiah. With God as their compass, visitors, shepherds and magi would travel to welcome the newborn.

Epiphany, the season we are presently in the midst of kicks off with an account of the journey of the Magi,

a story full of mystery and intrigue. Visitors from the east, holy astronomers, follow a star and become heroes involved in covert activity after an encounter with a ruthless king.

I began writing this article the day we celebrate the Feast of Holy Innocents, when King Herod was alerted to the fact that Jesus, the Messiah, seen by Herod as a threat to his power, had been born. Because of the heroism of the Magi, Jesus and his parents were able to hightail it out of the country, escape the evil king and become

refugees. Not everyone was so fortunate then. The story is the similar today.

A staggering number of innocent children still die because of ruthless leaders. However, the upside is the heroism, the stories of acts of kindness by those who care about and care for today's refugees. Similar to the story of a few courageous people from the Far East today, we heart stories of the incredible numbers of people who display compassion right here at home.

This edition of the Diocesan Times arrives in the midst of

Epiphany, a time specifically set aside to celebrate the discovery of the revelation of God in human form in the person of Jesus Christ.

Like the Magi who played a critical role in the story of the Messiah so long ago, God is revealed among us today in the most unexpected places and persons, including those who come to the aid of today's refugees here in our diocese, in small and in big ways helping to make their journey smoother.

Blessings from the outer world,  
Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies

# Teach us to Pray: Prayer and the big, wide world

In the parish where I serve, we've made tentative (and admittedly, sometimes timid) steps into the amazing culture that is the World Wide Web. In 2011, in connection with a significant anniversary, we launched a parish Facebook page as a way to connect with the world beyond us – to let people know our location, advertise our services and events and share with one another (parishioners near, the winter “snowbirds” and those moved away) the story of our life in the context of the story of Christ's presence in the world. It's been an intriguing adventure. It has been most of the things we'd hoped for – and there have been some surprises, blessings really, along the way.

Having a “web presence” (and learning a whole new vocabulary, Lol!) has indeed brought people to worship with us. We've advertised special services as well as regular Sunday worship. Posts have attracted attention from former members, and children of current members who live elsewhere now, adding their “likes” to news from home. We also appeal to relatives of parishioners who have never been here in person but come to join us regularly in cyberspace.

We are, we admit, “house proud”. Our church building is, well, stunning, full of exquisite stained glass, skillfully hand-carved wood and gleaming brass. The comment section on many posts reflects readers' pleasure in looking at our space. The page has also been a great way to get the word out about fund raising events, the progress of our parish garden, the



Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith  
Diocesan Representative, the  
Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

installation of our new signage and the lighting of our outdoor Christmas tree. We're blessed with the work of a tireless and talented photographer who has taken literally thousands of photos of our worship, ministries and parish activities. A look at her SD card will confirm this!

There have been other unexpected trends. Something that amazes us is the response from people from “afar”. We've been astounded to discover we have page “likes” all the way from Austria, Kenya, Zambia, Australia and Iraq. Individual photos and albums of pictures receive favorable notice from people in both Canada, the United States and “friends” we've made in the UK.

While most posts featuring pictures of our worship and activities receive response from local family and friends, the posts that receive the most (sometimes in the thousands) “likes” and the highest number (occasionally in the hundreds) of “shares” have been posts with a simple evocative photo accompanied by a simple prayer. Though I admit I haven't done extensive

research into the “science” of what makes people react to what they see and read, I have to say that it appears that people are looking for words to articulate their feelings, words to express their biggest fears, their highest hopes, their deepest longings. For instance, when we've posted prayers for peace – which, lately, has been often, the response has been very high – and often from people from further afield than our immediate neighbourhood. The simple prayer we posted following the bombing at the Boston Marathon in April 2013, with a photo of paper peace cranes was this:

“Loving God, give rest to the victims of violence. Comfort their families and all who grieve for them. Help us in our fear and uncertainty, and bless us with the knowledge that we are secure in your love.

Strengthen all those who work for peace, and may the peace the world cannot give reign in our hearts. Amen.”

The response to this post was humbling and drew us in to the wider prayer of the followers of Christ. Sadly, and thankfully, we had similar responses to posts following terrorist attacks in Paris, Brussels and Orlando . . .

Pictures of a stunning sunrise, or a dramatic sunset accompanied by prayers in awe of God's creation, have generated many “amens” and even longer, detailed comments – and sometimes, even requests for prayer. Prayers for the safety of emergency workers and snow plow drivers during recent dangerously stormy weather received comparable results. The photos are often local. The prayers, sometimes from

our various prayer books or other sources, and often from our own hearts, seem to touch a cord, give voice to a restless thought or a weary mind, and seem to serve as a quiet pause in an frequently frantic-paced and noisy world.

We are encouraged to pray at all times and in all places, for all sorts and conditions. Perhaps offering simple prayers and contemplative photos are a way to reach those looking for a place to belong, seeking a place, and words, to pray. Prayer invites us to be part of a wider community drawing us closer in the Body of Christ.

REV. FRANCES DROLET-SMITH  
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE,  
THE ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF  
PRAYER

Photo: Vicki Fioratos



## STAY IN THE LOOP!

WANT TO KNOW about to all the latest events, activities, resources and news in our Diocese? Subscribe to a free, weekly e-newsletter called “The Anglican Net News.” This e-mail lands in your Inbox only once a week and is chock full of important

notices, programs, fundraiser events, and much more! To subscribe send your request to [netnews@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:netnews@nspeidiocese.ca). For submissions to the ANN, the deadline is Tuesday (same e-mail address). Join our Facebook page.

Search for “Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island” and then click “Like.” Ongoing activities, photos, prayer requests, news and inspirational images are shared regularly.





## LENTEN



### Quiet Day

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**SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017**  
**10:00 AM – 2:30 PM**

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Marjorie Davis at 902-462-3637  
[davisnow@eastlink.ca](mailto:davisnow@eastlink.ca)

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## February Clues

**ACROSS:**

- 1 – and 4A, poet, Anglican priest and hymn writer 1593-1633 (6, 7)
- 4 – See 1A
- 8 – Narrow lane (5)
- 9 – February 2 feast, also known as the Purification of St. Mary the Virgin (9)
- 10 – Apostle who replaced Judas (Acts 1:12-26) (8)
- 11 – Sir James M. \_\_\_\_\_, he wrote "Peter Pan" (6)
- 13 – "They removed the \_\_\_\_\_ and ... let down the mat on which the paralytic lay" top of the house (Mark 2:4) (4)
- 14 – Most precipitous (8)
- 17 – Instrument used for cutting cloth (8)
- 18 – "But (the Canaanite woman) came ... saying 'Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ me.'" assist (Matt. 15:25) (4)
- 22 – Room where business is transacted (6)
- 24 – Least likely to fall (8)
- 26 – Little by little (9)
- 27 – Son of Cain (Gen. 4:17) (5)
- 28 – Give a new name to a book (7)
- 29 – Additional people (6)

**DOWN:**

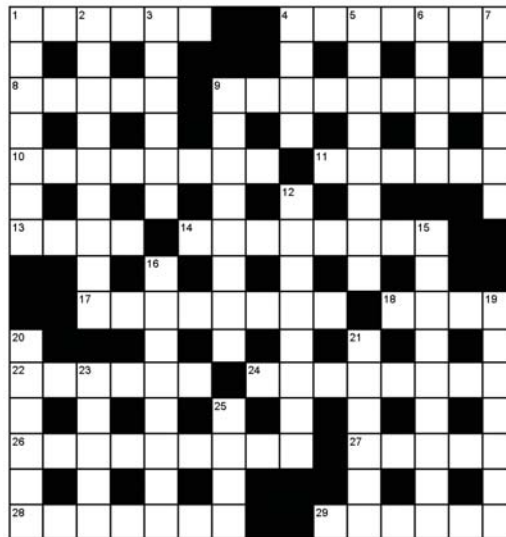
- 1 – Formal features of a language (7)
- 2 – Offerings of bread and wine in the Eucharist (9)
- 3 – Relief carvings (6)
- 4 – "Immediately the fingers of a human \_\_\_\_\_ appeared" part of arm below the wrist (Dan. 5:5) (4)
- 5 – "Satan will be \_\_\_\_\_ from his prison" let out (Rev. 20:7) (8)
- 6 – Cartoon character who chased Bugs Bunny, \_\_\_\_\_ Fudd (5)
- 7 – "You have \_\_\_\_\_ that the Lord is good." experienced (1Pet. 2:3) (6)
- 9 – "You \_\_\_\_\_ mortals in punishment for sin." discipline (Ps. 39:11) (8)
- 12 – "Then Herod \_\_\_\_\_ called for the wise men." not openly (Matt. 2:7) (8)
- 15 – "Be perfect, \_\_\_\_\_, as your heavenly Father is perfect." in consequence (Matt. 5:48) (9)
- 16 – Second lowest rank of British nobility (8)
- 19 – Throws, for example, a baseball (7)
- 20 – Large, tawny wild feline, also called puma (6)
- 21 – Visible, tangible thing (6)
- 23 – "My soul is satisfied as with a rich \_\_\_\_\_." banquet (Ps. 63:5) (5)
- 25 – What you are reading is a \_\_\_\_\_ (4)

# Bible Crossword

by Maureen Yeats



## February Puzzle



## January Solution



# VERITAS

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Prayer the Church's banquet, angels' age, God's breath in man returning to his birth, The soul in pilgrimage, the heart in paraphrase ...

— George Herbert

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## VIEW FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

# Can we make a difference to someone struggling?

BY MADONNA FRADSHAM

As this article will appear in the February, I wish you a happy love month. It seems ridiculous to only say I love you on Valentine's day so may you see it, say it, feel it and hear it every day and why not carry the sentiment all year.

But, I digress. For several months I have known this article was to be written and as is usually the case I began praying for some wisdom and guidance as to the leading of the Holy Spirit in its theme. Many times, I have tried to turn my mind to other topics but eventually had to give in.

On New Year's Eve my husband and I were all set to watch the "most spectacular fireworks" ever to be seen in Charlottetown and they were going off right over the church so perfect viewing. We called our 19 year old to join us. After two or three volleys, she quietly remarked "this must

was time to share my story of dealing with mental illness and the things that help me. It is my hope that it will help others understand some of the thoughts and feelings and be more aware of ways we can help others.

On November 17, 1999, I awoke to a lovely sunny morning, made a few business calls and was ready to set out for work. The next thing I know is waking up on the floor an hour later, not knowing who I was or much about anything else. I had crashed, physically and mentally. For several months, my doctor had been expressing concern about the amount of stress I was under and advising me I needed to stop and get counselling. He also felt my physical health was suffering as infections were becoming more common for me. I pooped it all. After all, I was an accomplished professional, former teacher, business owner, parent, grandparent

disbelief, the refusal to accept the truth, the physical pain and that nothing around me seemed real. Coupled with that was an immune system that seemed to crash as well as there were months of fighting new infections, new allergies and such a foggy mind that there was no question in my mind I was crazy.

I put on a very brave face but inside my body was in constant movement, like it was being shaken by some outside force. It took 5 months to overcome the infections and begin the long road back. That was the beginning of what became diagnosed as a form of PTSD, panic and anxiety disorder and the death of the person I believed myself to be.

I was afraid to get out of bed, terrified of the telephone and the computer, couldn't concentrate, read or even face other people. Oh, did I mention how ashamed I felt? How was I going to face anyone? What were people saying about me, i.e. my board, my staff who'd been left in the middle of end of year projects? How would it affect my husband and family? And yes I asked, "why me, God?" but my next thought was why not me? My faith was critical in helping me cope.

I was told I would be off work for three months, then six then a year until the psychologist finally delivered the truth. I would no longer be able to return to any form of scheduled employment. It took me a long time to accept that diagnosis. Even then I was determined to continue with my volunteer work as a Deacon.

The things that really helped me through once I was willing to let others in on my situation and open up were:

- Someone willing to listen, to just let me talk about everything I was feeling
- A brother who took my calls in the middle of the night and never said he had to sleep
- Friends who dropped by and took me out for a walk, drive or a tea, or just were present
- Drivers to my appointments in

Summerside

- Children who visited so their dad wasn't feeling so alone
- A professional psychologist, family doctor and naturopath willing to hear each other's suggestions to help.
- Weekly sessions, bi-weekly and later monthly, quarterly for 11 years. now on as needed basis.
- Family sessions and feedback
- Mild medication.
- Cognitive and behavioral therapy.
- Incredible support from my rector and others in my parish family, filling in when I panicked just before a service and had to preach. Being respectful and waiting the many times I forgot where I was in the middle of a Gospel reading. Lots of hugs and care expressed, but no one ever took over the reading. My dignity was intact because of that respect shown.
- Accepting I was not crazy but have a mental illness.

I had the very best care available for a number of reasons not the least of which was an excellent health care plan that allowed me the privilege of accessing counselling on a cost-shared basis. And the financial ability to do it. Personal support systems with my family, friends, church and broader community who allied my fears and severely reduced my tendency to feel shame. I have come out the other side but even with that there will always be bad days when I do not function well and don't respond to the telephone or the computer in fear. The difference is I know strategies that can help me through.

For many people, those kinds of supports are not available and mental health resources are very limited for any of them. Stressors that we never experienced in our youth are causing many young people to turn to drugs, alcohol or other ways to stop the pain. Just reflect for a moment on the things creating stress in lives today and the increased mental health issues as a result. It can hit any sector of society. Universities have set up counselling clinics on

campuses, companies have EAP plans but most of the general population must rely on public funded plans. It's overwhelming to think about it. So the question becomes "how can you or I make a difference to someone struggling?" As you can see from my list above, the personal contact, listening, listening, listening is perhaps the most important thing we can do. Reach out to the person who stands apart, or perhaps the person who is most hyperactive. A simple smile and hello might make a difference. Add our voice to the rallying cry for mental health services and participate in easy fundraising initiatives such as Let's Talk Day. Be careful how we label anyone.

In the past three weeks in my personal sphere, I have mourned with young people on the one year anniversary of their sixteen year old friend's suicide; regretting that they hadn't told anyone about the concerns they had about her mental health. In some way, they felt responsibility for her death.

I listened to a young man describe his frustration as has needed the services of a psychologist and recently overheard a friend's parent call him crazy. Torrents of tears flowed as he shared this story.

Many of our homeless are people suffering with a mental illness, some of whom have a very serious PTSD as a result of not only war but life's circumstances. Add our voice to efforts to find adequate housing for them and the many families in crisis.

Mental illness is all around us. I have shared my story in the hope that by doing so others might recognize some of the symptoms and feelings they have experienced or are experiencing. I also hope it will spur conversations and encourage taking steps to help others.

**Perhaps most of all, it reminds me to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit and go where I may not want to go but in faith put one step forward as I continue my journey. May it be so with you. Sending all of you love and of course warm hugs this month and always.**

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**I was afraid to get out of bed, terrified of the telephone and the computer, couldn't concentrate, read or even face other people. Oh, did I mention how ashamed I felt? How was I going to face anyone? What were people saying about me, i.e. my board, my staff who'd been left in the middle of end of year projects? How would it affect my husband and family? And yes I asked, "Why me, God?" but my next thought was why not me? My faith was critical in helping me cope.**

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be terrifying for anyone with PTSD after fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan.”

There it was! The final shot as it were across my bow and the sinking feeling I was to write about something I know a little about, mental illness. For months, TV ads, newspaper articles, court cases, TV interviews and personal contacts seemed to bombard me. It seemed to be a message from the Holy Spirit that it

and recently ordained Deacon in the Anglican Church. I was also heavily involved in many community based activities regarding social issues. I could juggle it all! These activities were my lifeblood.

I went belly-up in seconds. My whole life as I experienced it was gone in a flash. To describe how it felt is difficult as it brings back the fear, the loss of mind control, the dependence on others, the