

MORE Mission Schools

See Page 5

A Missional Experiment

See Page 8

Loving is hard!

See Page 12

THE DIOCESAN TIMES



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JANUARY 2020 A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Parish holds vigil for violence against women and girls



Photo: Two of the dozens of supporters who gathered in support of the Vigil for Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls.

By JOHN STONE

Launched in 1991, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence against all persons, especially against women and girls. The observance runs from November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to December 10, international Human Rights Day and the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Within that time, especially in Canada, December 6, the date of The Montreal Massacre, is also remembered.

On Friday, November 29, the Parish of French Village held its fourth outdoor vigil in recognition of this significant international period of observance. In spite of feisty weather and a wind chill well below freezing, a gathering of

over forty women, men and children met at Redmond's Plaza at the St. Margaret's Bay crossroads to promote awareness of the tragic reality of gender-based violence. Scores of miniature red silhouettes lined the embankment of the #3 Highway, stark reminders of the deadly toll of that violence, all of it at the hands of men in intimate relationships with women. Within the program officiated by the Rev. Brianna Andrews, prayer readings framed the lighting of fourteen candles signifying the victims of the deadly rampage at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal in 1989. Dr. Verona Singer, Adjunct Professor in Criminology at St. Mary's University and Director of Femlantic Research & Education, spoke of the pervasive nature of violence, including sexualized violence, against women and girls. The statistics, especially those involv-

ing Indigenous females, are staggering. Lynn Blackburn, whose murdered sister Paula was represented by a life-size Silent Witness silhouette statue, spoke to the personal cost of domestic, gender-based violence. MLA Hugh MacKay outlined provincial government approaches to this issue, addressing it in the context of all genders, including those belonging the LGBTQ community. A particularly poignant contribution by members of the Band with No Name was the singing of Standing in The Rain. The lyrics were written by Leslie Monaghan who created them while standing in a personal vigil in a snow storm outside the legislative buildings in New Brunswick. Following the service participants walked in silence carrying placards which denounce violence and promote action and advocacy on behalf of all victims of violence.

Mission to Seafarers supporter has unwavering support

Nina Meisner, now in her nineties, a resident of a small Lunenburg County village has had a long time passion for the Annual Shoe Box Campaign of the Mission to Seafarers. As a member of St. George's Anglican Church in East River she gathers people of her church to provide items for twelve shoe boxes. These are sent to the port Mission to be given out to visiting sailors who are in our port over the Christmas season. Years ago, there were many more church participants and more boxes packed but as a result of dwindling congregations in

rural areas Nina relates that there are only six of them making up the twelve boxes. She carefully divides the items needed and delegates one to each person who provides six of that item. Nina is not at all discouraged by the fewer participants but keeps her resolve to this good project of community outreach.

When asked why she does this, Nina replied that it feels good to be kind to these people who come to our port from warm countries and face the shock being unprepared for the cold while being so far

from their homes and families. It is a very gratifying way to spread the love of the season for such a worthy effort.

If you visit St. George's Church in East River in the Parish of Chester you will find Nina actively continuing her liturgical ministry by regularly reading at Sunday worship.

Photo: Nina Meisner with some of the many shoeboxes ready to give to visiting sailors.



COLUMNIST



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The Rector gets plastered

We had quite an exciting lead up to our Christmas celebrations here at St. Bart's. It was a scary time, a sad time and yet a time of thanksgiving in many ways.

A week or so before the big day Jason was putting a few decorating touches around the church. This job is normally done by a group of parishioners who volunteer to stay after the Sunday service and hang the greening so to speak. Jason thought he would get a bit of a head start and climbed a ladder to put the large Angel on the top of the tree that has place of honour just below the pulpit. To add to the confusion and potential disaster, three-year-old Charlie was with his Dad and more than anxious to share in the duties.

We are not sure how it happened, or how long Jason lay on the floor under the toppled tree. We do know that Charlie was a hero that morning because he ran and found help for his stricken father. Charlie is never one to do things quietly if a good loud bellow can be used and this day he was at full volume. His crying and howling could be heard right across the yard



ST. BART'S BY THE BOG

Sarah Neish

to the Rectory. Benny Smith happened to be driving up to the house and spotted a coatless Charlie running across the frozen lawn, arms flying and mouth wide open as he called for help.

Benny found Jason, unconscious and bleeding with his body covered with the Spruce and his leg at a very unnatural angle. 911 was called, Charlie was comforted, and the tree was dragged away from the now groggy rector. Benny is nothing if not efficient and he had Jason

covered with his jacket and the cuts on his head bandaged using the first aid kit from the vestry before he summoned my Orin.

When Orin was summoned by a concerned Benny, I went along to lend a hand. Because we are quite a distance from 911 help, we had to do our best as we waited for the ambulance. I was glad I had gone along for the ride so to speak. One look at that twisted leg told me that we should not move Jason. I found a lap rug in the trunk of our car to help keep the patient warm and Orin did his best to reassure Jason that we all would survive without him at the Altar on Christmas eve.

Miranda was in the city with baby Anna. Miranda is finishing her Pastoral Care certification this term and Anna goes to Day Care. Normally Charlie would be there too, but Jason thought a day of male bonding was a good idea ...and bonding they did!!

The upshot of our day of excitement was a 'plastered priest' a rather bent Spruce tree without an Angel on top a subdued three-year-

old who wanted to stay as close to his Dad as he could and a parish who has rallied around our rectory family in their hour of need. Nothing like such an accident to bring out the good in all of us.

Our retired clergy stepped in to look after the Christmas services and the home communions, Miranda's parents came to lend a hand on the home front. Food came to the door day and night until every meal was looked after, and the cookie tins were filled to overflowing. Benny took over tending to the wood stove, a job he once had with Rev Billie, and Jason learned a huge lesson! He did not need to do everything himself because he had help.

Jason has his left leg in plaster and is learning to use crutches. He will be out of service for at least two months, but we will manage here By the Bog. That's what we do!

I'll keep you posted.

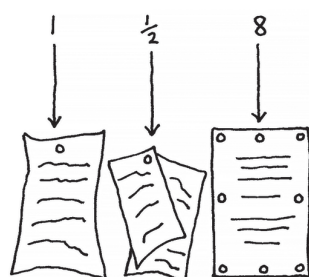
Aunt Madge

CHURCH NOTICE BOARDS

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS



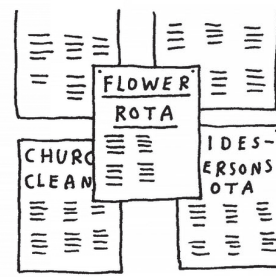
WRATH (DIRECTED AT INVALID ADDITIONS)



GREED (USING TOO MANY OF THE PARISH PINS)



SLOTH (NOT REMOVING OLD NOTICES)



PRIDE (COVERING UP OTHERS' WORK)



LUST (COVETING THY NEIGHBOUR'S FONT, LAYOUT, ETC)

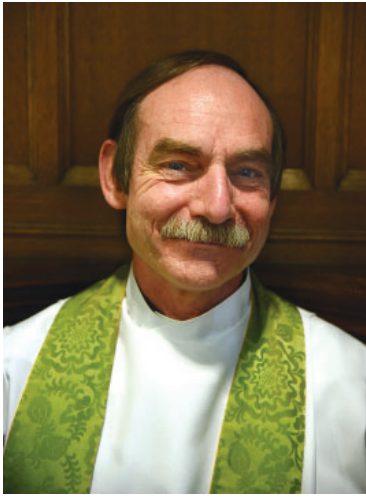


ENVY (RIVAL CHURCHES POACHING OUR CONGREGATION)



GLUTTONY (OVERINDULGENCE, ETC)

GUEST COLUMNIST



The Very Reverend Paul Smith,
Dean of the Cathedral Church of
All Saints

There is more that unites us than divides us

It is an odd experience to be writing a message for a post-Christmas publication, before the first Sunday of Advent. (The earliest written record of the proverb or idiom “cart before the horse”, by the way, dates from the 16th century) I can only presume that by the time you read this, Advent and Christmas will have come and gone and you and I now stand with feet somewhat gingerly planted in this New Year of 2020.

It will soon be time, if not already done, to pack away the ornaments and decorations for another year and wedge the artificial tree back into the attic or toss the real one to the curb. But before we put Christmas away let us remember that the birth of the Christ child is not the end of the story, but the beginning. We are now in the season of Epiphany, a word that translates from the Greek as; a manifestation, an experience of sudden and striking realization. It is what we might call an “aha moment”. Wikipedia, from which I borrowed that definition goes on to say that; Epiphanies are relatively rare occurrences and generally follow a process of significant thought about a problem. I hadn’t really considered Epiphany being the answer to a problem, but that is worthy of some significant thought indeed!

In our Christian context, The Epiphany refers to a realization that Christ is the Son of God, perhaps most profoundly illustrated in Luke’s account of the visit of the wise men (Luke 2:1ff). The star that pierces the darkness of the heavens guides these mysterious visitors from the East that came seeking a newborn king. Stopping in first, as courtesy and protocol required, they visited the local authority, Herod, seeking his guidance for what had taken place in his precinct. Realizing that this “stable genius” was more concerned about his own reputation and grasp on power, than what God might be revealing, they departed for Bethlehem, dream-warned never to return again.

And in perhaps the last place they would have thought to look, in the relative obscurity of Bethlehem, the “house of bread” they find their epiphany moment, overwhelmed with

joy, says Luke as they knelt before their king. And, says Luke, they return “by another road”, their lives take a different direction.

So what might this mean for us as we enter this New Year? What difference does the revelation that Christ is the Son of God mean to us? What “problem” might this Epiphany be revealing an answer to? Division, fear, suspicion, alienation, the questioning of reality and truth itself in our time are reason enough for us to throw up our hands in despair and simply walk away, to fend for ourselves. It is easy to convince ourselves that the problems of this world are bigger than any one of us can handle or hope to impact. But there is a price to be paid for leaving things to chance, to naively hoping things will just work themselves out without us.

The poet Mary Oliver wrote:

*Oh the house of denial has thick walls
and very small windows
and whoever lives there, little by little,
will turn to stone.*

There is more that unites us than divides us, whether it be as a global community or as believers in the One who continues to break through with sudden and striking realization. You can be the place wherein God makes manifest the incarnation of love.

Let close with the poem/prayer of Howard Thurman:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.*

Blessings to you all in this New Year.

Dean Paul Smith

*Oh the house of denial
has thick walls
and very small windows;
and whoever lives there,
little by little,
will turn to stone.*

Mary Oliver



REV LAURA MARIE PIOTROWICZ
RECTOR, ST. JOHN’S, LUNENBURG

Imagine if we considered who is excluded



A few years ago, in a bible study, I challenged our group to consider what we don’t know about the oft-told narrative of the Epiphany. The bible doesn’t tell us the how many wise men/kings/magi there were, what their names were, where their (ambiguously ‘east’) hometowns were, how long it took them to travel to Jesus and family, if they all arrived together, etc. We had a great conversation about how the

hymns and popular accounts were better known than the scriptures.

It was a wonderful opportunity to re-examine what is known about this community of generous gift-bearing guests and what has been presumed; what has been made into a story or interpretation that then gets handed down as fact from generation to generation. Our conversation led us to consider other narratives that we have come to know and believed, without necessarily fact-checking. And how a lack of verification can lead to pre-conceived notions that can greatly impact relationships and communities. Such ideas can then serve as justification for identifying and excluding “those people.”

Imagine if we considered who is excluded in our own

lives, based on a deeply-help understanding that may be inaccurate. Gender inequality is just one area we can consider: even in Canada women have lesser representation than men in government and the workforce (especially in management), lower access to health care and education, are more likely to experience violence and exploitation. Women of colour, indigenous women, and LGBTQ+ struggle even more.

Imagine, then, if we examine the cultural narratives that suggest that this is both normal and acceptable? Imagine if we can re-learn the story to remove the discrimination for future generations?

It doesn’t have to be hard: it can be as simple as re-telling the story through a

lens of equality. An example: a red-haired friend has a beautiful hand-carved nativity scene that was a gift from her mother. The wise people include a red-haired woman, who is part of the community bringing gifts to the Christ child. It’s a simple demonstration of inclusion and equality, on display for all the guests - and for her daughters, who can imagine themselves within the narrative of grace.

This Epiphanytide, I invite us to reflect on our own stories, those narratives that inform and support our daily lives. At Christmas we have received the great gift of perfect love; now at Epiphany we can choose to carry that love into the world. We are the bearers of the story: may we tell it in a way that honours God’s love for us all.

NEWS FROM AWAY



Photo by Hanson Lu on Unsplash

Dear Diocese.

Although Psalm 148, the appointed Psalm for Christmas 1, is near and dear to the heart of this environmental activist, I haven't often been able to preach on it. That Sunday has often been a last hurrah for singing Christmas Carols, so Lessons and Carols has always been on the agenda in every parish I have served in. And having survived both the personal and professional journey through Advent and Christmas, especially the whirlwind of Christmas Eve services, I was always more than happy to take advantage of Lessons and Carols so I could take a breath, re-charge my batteries and enjoy a last round of carols. So I confess that I haven't been disappointed that I missed the opportunity to preach on that Psalm on Christmas 1 either.

So, writing about Psalm 148 in this column this month has been a gift. Ironically, a gift on the Sunday we take in the powerful gospel about the arrival of some special characters who bring special gifts to the stable in the Christmas story. But I digress.

The joy expressed by the writer and the celebration of all of creation experienced through the Psalm begins with. "Praise the Lord, Praise

the Lord...Let them praise the name of the Lord, for (God) commanded and they were created." Is the gift of Psalm 148.

That Psalm is a reminder that we live in a world where all of God's creation is important. The inclusion of all of creation in praising God in this Psalm reminds me of morning prayers led by First Nations elders at sunrise on chilly mornings expressing thanks to the Creator for each and every bit of creation.

The sky and the stars. The heavens and the water. All that lives in the sea. The weather. The soil and the plants. The animals and the birds. Each and every thing is sacred, including the tiniest creatures like insects and bacteria. And we are all related because we all share the fact that we were created by the same God. We are also interdependent. Everything God created is important because together, in harmonious balance we have a healthy world.

St. Francis of Assisi taught us that too. He articulated it in a way in my humble opinion bridges the Christian Psalm of praise and the First Nations morning prayers I have been honoured to be part of, highlighting spiritual

commonalties.

I heard that expressed recently at an intergenerational conversation our Environment Network hosted. (Thank you St. Margaret of Scotland Church.) A gathering where all people were welcome, where people of various ages, from various faith backgrounds, came together to talk about how we might keep the conversation going and include all people. How each one of us has impact on our brothers and sisters, earth, sky and water and how instead of being the problem, together, we can bring the gift of solutions.

The Environment Network wants to include you in the on-going conversation. So I leave you with the questions:

What is your parish doing to live out our baptismal vow to "strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth?" And will you share with us the gifts you bring when you care for creation?

Blessings from the outer world,

Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies
Coordinator, Diocese
Environment Network

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He's wondering why his January 2020 edition of *The Diocesan Times* and the *Anglican Journal* are not coming? He forgot to renew his subscription!

Image credit: Mel Malton



Bishop Ron says

"The Diocesan Times is our own newspaper. It tells our local parish stories and diocesan events.

So renew your subscription and stay connected throughout the year."

Resolving to live our Baptismal Covenant in 2020

CYNTHIA PILICHOS, ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN BOARD



Here we are with a brand new year ahead of us, full of possibilities . . . and potential pitfalls. Many of us will embrace the ubiquitous making of New Year's Resolutions, maybe focusing on the usual ones of physically getting in better shape: losing weight, exercising, drinking more water. Or, we might want to improve our minds by reading more meaningful books, watching documentaries rather than "fluff", attending public lectures. We may resolve to spend more time with family, to get together with friends more often, send cards and letters of appreciation and gratitude more regularly. We might want to grow spiritually, with a greater emphasis on prayer and meditation. We may even turn these broad improvements into small, realizable goals, with step-by-step action plans, as a way to ensure success.

There is great value in having goals and a plan for how to achieve them. There is great value in addressing self-improvement in the various ways that are a major focus for us with each new year. What I would like to suggest, however,

is that we commit ourselves, as Christians, as Anglicans, to live our Baptismal Covenant in the days, weeks, and months ahead, especially to commit to those vows of seeking and serving Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves, and of striving for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being.

With each worship service, we repeat those baptismal vows of belief in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We share these beliefs publicly and probably convey them in our private prayers. The way in which the world needs to see the good news of God in Christ, however, is how we, as Christians, treat one another, and not just those we like, or those who are likeable, but those who are "the other" and, above all, those who

make it hard for us to like them. We are challenged to treat all people, regardless of race, creed, or likeability with respect and dignity.

Jennifer Llewellyn of Dalhousie's Shulich School of Law, and an internationally recognized expert on relational theory, uses the term "equality of relationship" to express how we need to be living with one another. Equality of relationship means that we accord one another equal respect, dignity, care and concern. Sounds very like our baptismal promise to respect the dignity of every human being, doesn't it?

There is a dearth of equality of relationship in our world today, and there are leaders in positions of power who would have us believe that denigrating those who differ from us in some significant way: religion, race, ethnicity, and culture, or even those with whom we have a difference of perspective, are fair game to be treated with disrespect, even dehumanized. When people in positions of power behave in this way, it seems to give license to such behaviour, serves to normalize it, and legitimizes the actions of those who thrive on a social culture of "us" versus "them",

with the "us" having greater value than the "them". As Christians, we are called to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves. When we reaffirm our baptismal vows, we respond with: "I will, with God's help". So, with God's help, let us start 2020 by reaffirming the vows of our Baptism and let's resolve to live them throughout the year and not just to the end of January!

Let us build our awareness that even when we do not intend to exclude someone, we may be doing so, unintentionally. Have we allowed ourselves to realize how intimidating it could be for someone new to our church, even an Anglican familiar with the liturgy, not to mention how it could be to the person for whom the whole experience is novel? Do we allow ourselves to realize that our organizations within the church can seem to be a very "closed shop" to an outsider? Again, we do not set out to make a newcomer feel uncomfortable, but the outcome for the new person may be one of decided discomfort. And, we haven't left the church building yet!! How are we out in the community? Do we show

the face of Christ and seek his in others? Do we respect the dignity of every human being, in word and action? Do we strive for equality of relationship?

The Anglican Church Women Board encourages parishes to recognize Women's Ministry Sunday on the first Sunday in February – February 2 in 2020 (or any other Sunday that works for the parish). More recently, we have been encouraging a focus that embraces not only the women, but all who are exercising a ministry, so men included. We have also been encouraging parishes to recognize the ministry that their women and men are engaging in both within the church, but also well beyond, in the community.

There are many opportunities for Anglicans to exercise their ministry and to live out their baptismal vows in their professional lives. Let's resolve, therefore, as women and men of faith, to start the new year, and continue throughout 2020, living our baptismal promises, confident that we will be able to do so, with God's help. Happy New Year!



2020 MORE Mission Schools

Start the New Year off with boldness!

We are hosting nine regional MORE Mission Schools throughout the diocese, from January to April.

This fourth round of workshops is titled **MORE Bold**, and helps participants (re)discover their faith story. Best practices and tips will be shared about how to tell God's story of hope and good news for the world. Module 4 explores what it means to be a disciple today, especially related to our Anglican identity.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED! See: www.nspeidiocese.ca or call 902-420-0717 (ask for Lisa).

Archbishop Ron Cutler and a team of lay and clergy leaders facilitate each FREE workshop. They run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

- | | | |
|------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| • Dartmouth | - Jan. 11 – St. Peter's Eastern Passage | (Registration Deadline Jan. 8) |
| • Fort Sackville | - Jan. 18 – St. Nicholas Westwood Hills | (Registration Deadline Jan. 15) |
| • Chebucto | - Jan. 25 - Trinity, Halifax | (Registration Deadline Jan. 22) |
| • Northumbria | - Feb. 1 - St. James' Pictou | (Registration Deadline Jan. 29) |
| • South Shore | - Feb. 29 - St. James' Mahone Bay | (Registration Deadline Feb. 26) |
| • Valley | - March 14 – Christ Church, Berwick | (Registration Deadline March 11) |
| • Eastern Shore | - March 21 - St. James' Seaforth | (Registration Deadline March 18) |
| • Cape Breton | - March 28 – T.B.A. | (Registration Deadline March 25) |
| • Chignecto | - April 4 - All Saints', Springhill | (Registration Deadline April 1) |

MORE is based on God's desire to give the world MORE of what it really needs – hope, love, and freedom. We encourage each congregation to bring a team!



Photo: Provincial synod members at their October meeting in Halifax.

Provincial synod meets in Nova Scotia

The Council for the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada met in Halifax on October 24 to the 26. This was the first meeting of council since the last provincial synod. It was a time of prayer, of gathering together, and

building fellowship.

Among the reports and presentations, there was two main purposes for the meeting. The Province has been in discernment for decades to come to terms with what God is calling us to be and do. Rev.

Cathy Lee Cunningham led us through a process of reflection to examine what we can do together that is relevant in our mission field, realistically do-able, and faithful to the Gospel. This is an ongoing work which will require future

discussions.

The second item was a conversation with Michael Thompson from General Synod and Archbishop Linda Nicholls, our new primate, about the future directions of the national church. There

are many challenges and opportunities that shape the church's vision and ministry for the years ahead. But in all our structures, whether national, provincial, or local, we remain faithful to our calling as disciples of Jesus.

“Where are they now? Where are you now?”

In 1994, I was recruited with a team to help bring emotional and spiritual care to two refugee camps in Zaire, Africa. It was the Rwandan genocide. We had arrived in Goma Zaire, aboard an Antonov airplane, loaded down with supplies for the camps in Northern Kivu Province. We did not know what to expect. Our arrival had been delayed by the UN because of an outbreak of Cholera which had killed thousands of refugees. What I experienced in those two camps of over 2,000,000 people was horrifying and traumatic. We would enter a place that neither journalists nor UN workers would go. Having arrived we focused our efforts on sick children at a Care Canada hospital set up in the second camp. Entering into a giant tent filled with hundreds of orphaned children we were dismayed at what we saw. The ages of the children ranged from a few months to 6 years old. What we immediately experienced haunted us. It still does. Their eyes were glossed over in shock, sadness,



BRYAN HAGERMAN

fear, grief, and trauma. And although several hundred children occupied this tent, it was eerily quiet.

We spent a few weeks cuddling children. Most had seen their parents hacked to death by neighbours, others had died by disease perpetuated by the genocide. 25 years later, I wonder how these now young adults are? And I ask? “Are they still living under the mercy of that

experience, or are they under the power of their own agency, and growing and contributing positively to society, in spite of their previous horror?” I am going back some day to find out.

Psychologist David Emerald has written a terrific book, entitled “The Power of Ted.” He describes two routes. 1) We view ourselves at the mercy of the circumstances which has created our emotional pain. And here lie immobile. 2) We take personal agency over our own lives, no matter the pain. It is the second path however difficult that is recommended.

The Rwandan refugee children (now adults) could have easily settled into the victim malaise. Who could blame them? Or they could say, “no I am going to move away from being under the mercy of trauma and, engage the agency of mental health and release.” Easier said than done, yes. Never underestimate the power of deep trauma on one's life, especially where one witnessed loving parents

being hacked to death. But never underestimate human resilience. So, my enduring question is, “where are they now,” under the power of their own pathology, or agency?

For those of us who have suffered from, and are currently enduring our own emotional crises, the question still begs. “Where are we now.” Have we chosen the path of victimhood or agency? Being the victim is an easy repose. Bitterness, anger, depression, is like a warm coat. It becomes an easy repose as we moan the poor me dialogue. And in so doing we remain under the power of something or someone's mercy. The difficult path is the one of personal agency. On this path we determine (agency) to get help, to become emotionally well. This movement forward is often determined by cognition (what we know) and will. (the motivation to find improvement.) The two are in tension. Will moves towards cognition and resolve, when a greater purpose is discovered. That purpose motivates will.

This is often what we need to discover for agency to be enabled.

In the Christian mindset, that motivation (will) can come from God the Holy Spirit. He is the one who unleashes within us a desire to get well. He gives us purpose. We find guidance into such agency by access to; His word, His indwelling presence, His promises, the power found in the Sunday Liturgy, and in communal worship. Add to this the outside source of a Psychotherapist. Agency is an engagement forward into wellness. Jesus was all about agency. This is what the resurrection is all about. Of course at the first sign of an illness we ask God to take it away. And if he does not he has given us professionals who can give us help. God uses all helping professions to guide us into personal agency. So, “Where Are You, Now?”

DR BRYAN HAGERMAN
ST PAUL'S CHURCH OUTREACH
COUNSELLOR
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It's A New Day!

Funneling to Faith

BY REV. LISA G. VAUGHN

Vital Church Maritimes 2019 conference keynote speaker, Rev. Jeff Potter shared a dynamic approach to missional ministry for congregations. In his third talk, entitled Give it Away, the priest and lead pastor at St. Stephen's Church in Maple, Ontario, explained his *Funnel Model of Social Engagement*.



Rev. Lisa G. Vaughn, Diocesan Parish Vitality Coordinator

Speaking to the crowd of 110 registrants, Jeff talked about the expansive, all-encompassing notion of mission for God's church. "Mission is the whole story of salvation. It's a theme, ... the whole sweep of scripture," he said. "It's not a feature of the story, it's the whole thing."

After eight years of being closed, Jeff re-opened St. Stephen's and started a new congregation that thrives today with a Sunday evening worship and a variety of missional activities for the neighbourhood.

Life together as gathered faith community revolves around a centre of gravity, he said. "Finding our centre (means) we are called to be a people marked by radical, self-giving love, seeking to draw others into relationship, and making known the presence of God."

Formerly a lawyer with a large Bay Street firm, the priest on observing how we tend to engage in Churchland, describes his Funnel Model of Social Engagement as having three distinct stages. The first is related to the environments whereby people who are not actively connected with a faith community come into contact with church people. Some examples would be a parish barbeque, lecture series or a Christmas bazaar.

"Things that are wide open where a whole range of people might come engage with them in even if they want to remain a long way away from our churches," Jeff said. "It might just be that for the promise of a free hot dog this is enough to have them wander onto our lawn. Stage 1 is something that lots of churches tend to do."

At the bottom end of the funnel is Stage 3. "I think of all the things that punctuate the inside life of our church communities, the people who are active believers, who feel like the church is their's," he explained. These activities include Sunday worship, mid-week Bible studies and prayer groups.

"So you've got sort of the inside cluster of the bottom-end of this funnel, and you've got this kind of open-to-the-world thing at the top of the funnel. The middle is where that kind of gets churned up a bit," he said.

"So I would suggest that Stage 2 is this area where people have the opportunity to have repeated social contact with increasingly 'churchy' content, but where they're still able to have their arms out and sort of



Photo: Vital Church Maritimes 2019 conference keynote speaker, Rev. Jeff Potter

maintain some distance from the church. They're not sure if they really buy anything into this and that's not necessarily why they're there. It's just this space for continued frequent social contact."

Jeff shared that there is movement within the illustrative funnel. "The only force that is at work in this model is gravity," he said. "So the theory is that everything kind of swirls together and gets tossed around a bit and so in fact there's this pressure downward. It's quite gentle and natural. And there's also this churning motion as such, so the folks who are insiders in this Stage 3 level, they end up having their faith stretched, and deepened and changed as they interact with folks at different levels of this model."

Most congregations struggle to create this intentional environment that is Stage

2. These are the recurring activities where non-church people are connecting with church people and they feel that they belong.

"One of the defining features of it is that it allows for repeated contact. It's not a one-off," he said.

An example of Stage 2 is Little Lamb Drop-in, an all-age weekly gathering for people who are seeking friendships. A place to hang out, the church hosted free welcoming space with toys, simple crafts and refreshments.

"It turned out that once people realized that ... there wasn't a catch, that we weren't just waiting to spring anything on them, the community really developed," Jeff shared. "So we developed this level of trust over time and people would ask things like, "Gee, you're awful normal, why would you be part of the church?," he laughed.

Other regular congregation-related activities that shifted to be Stage 2-type of ministries are a rural thrift shop that became a buzzing community hub and an annual turkey supper that morphed into simple monthly breakfasts. In all these examples, people of faith worked to build natural, genuine relationships with new people over time.

St. Nicholas' Westwood Hills' parishioner and warden, Tanya Moxley said most of our churches have great possibilities to turn Stage 1 activities into Stage 2 ministries. "I think it's more

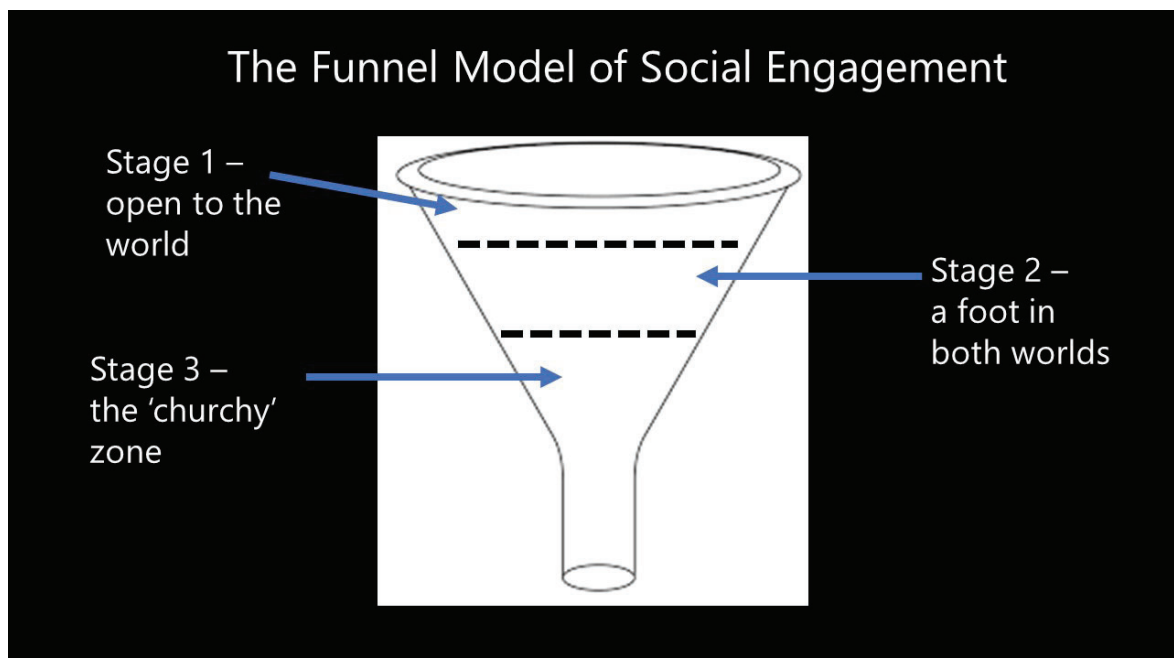
the orientation. I think there are lots of things we're just not taking advantage of for the opportunity to transition from a (Stage) 1 to a (Stage) 2," she said. "There are ways to welcome people back. We do a lot of one-off things where we don't collect information because we feel like we're stepping on peoples' toes, but if we got everybody's e-mail address we could remind them of the next one."

Building relationships with our neighbours means having clear rules of engagement. "We're trying to respect the sensitivities and social contract that hovers around us," said Jeff.

At St. Stephen's parish leaders focus all their programs and ministries towards growing genuine friendships with new people.

"I don't particularly care what the program is," said the priest. "I'm open to just about anything my community wants to do. I view my job is to say yes to as many things as we can as long as what we do is working towards relationship."

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. and Anglican Net News, "Six-Minute Study".



A Missional Experiment



Photo: Rev. Charles Bull with Brianna Decker, Ellery Hale Wright and Sam Swain outside Cousins Restaurant in Halifax.

BY VICTOR DAY

As with most parishes, at St. Margaret of Scotland in Halifax we have been considering how to reach more people in our community, and spread the Good News to those many people who are not likely to come to our Sunday service just on their own initiative.

We have started an active Missional Committee, chaired by Ted Johnson. With the help of a Diocesan grant we are trying three different initiatives. The first one involves having monthly services at a neighbourhood senior's apartment complex (Samuel Prince Manor), and is going very well, reaching a number of keen seniors whose mobility and/or transportation issues make it difficult for them to attend any church. However that is an activity that various other parishes in our Diocese do as well. Another initiative, for parish members to visit each new homeowner in our area with a "welcome basket" (actually, a reusable shopping bag with our parish logo on it) and including information on local churches and a copy of the new testament if they want one, will be beginning in January 2020. The third initiative, an event which took place on November 16th, is the most novel idea, which I will describe in this article.

The idea had three elements. One was to try to begin a chain of human kindness in our community, spreading the belief that "it is better to give than receive". This involves

giving people modest gift cards (\$10 gift certificates to a neighbourhood restaurant), along with an attached postcard of our church building (see image) and a message on the reverse of the card (see image). Our hope was that many people would pass it along, and perhaps it would be passed along further, and so would begin a chain of positive kindness in our community. The second element was our intent that the passing along of the postcard of our church with its location and website information, would help raise our profile in the community. We had hoped to get some broader media attention about this initiative and did contact local media about it, and two indicated they would come, but, unfortunately, they did not. (**That's insight #1: it's not easy to get public media attention for simply positive events.**) We publicized it on our own Facebook and web pages, although of course those mainly reach "the already churched". The third part of the idea was to provide our youth group with an opportunity for introductory missional activity.

Insight # 2 came from our initial efforts to have the event at a local branch of large chain restaurant. Although the local manager was supportive, just a week prior to the planned date higher corporate administration vetoed the idea. The explanation cited was a "no soliciting" policy, even though we were not soliciting, we were giving. It would have been acceptable if there was

no church postcard attached; so it appears the association with a religion was what was worrisome to the corporate point of view. I think that's a sign of the times. In contrast, a locally owned and operated family restaurant, "Cousins", was 100% welcoming and supportive.

Insight #3 was that youth were fine with the idea, especially the idea of spreading kindness in the community. Of course it helped that we have an active youth group which already is involved in Outreach charitable work, e.g. the "Sandwich Club" that makes sandwiches for homeless people. In the end only three youth (see picture) were able to attend this event on November 16, although it turned out that just three was enough to achieve what we

On Saturday morning November 16th, we first met briefly at the church for pictures, donning St. Margaret of Scotland t-shirts, and straightforward instructions. (Basically, pass the gift certificate to people as they leave the restaurant, indicating that it is a free gift, intending to spread kindness in the community, and that there is more explanation on the back of the postcard.) It turned out to be a very cold day, so the youth and a couple of us adults ended up standing just inside the most used entrance/exit to the restaurant, with the youth giving out the certificates and cards (which were stapled together) to people as they left. (If you're wondering why only to people leaving, not entering, it's so that they would not be tempted to use

them right away, and would have more opportunity to give them away to someone else.)

Insight # 4 comes from the reactions of the 50 recipients. Almost everyone reacted in these stages: first, wariness/suspicion, about a stranger (even a pleasant youth in a church t-shirt) approaching them, and trying to hand them something. (This was so strong that the youth learned to emphasize clearly that "IT'S FREE"). The second stage was puzzlement, about why someone was giving them something of value, for free. (Once they realized it was a church activity, a few offered us money, which of course we refused.) Third, once they "got it", and understood that it was meant to be passed on, that it was about spreading kindness, then they almost all reacted very positively. (There were a couple of unfortunate souls who couldn't get past their initial suspicion, refused even a free gift, and hurried away, but they were the small minority.) When I asked the youth what they learned from the experience of the day, they cited the reactions of the people as the most interesting part, i.e. almost everyone initially wary, but then positive.

I think there is a metaphor therein, about spreading the Good News, generally.

Finally let me share an anecdote about one person's reaction that was perhaps the most hopeful sign.

After he took the certificate and card, and walked to his car and read it further, then walked back to one of our adult volunteers outside the door and simply said "That's some church you got there!"

Passing on a little kindness

The attached gift card is a simple act of kindness, in a sometimes difficult world.

If you do not need it, please pass it on to a friend, or better yet, to a stranger.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35

St. Margaret of Scotland Anglican Church
3751 Robie St., Halifax
www.stmargaretofscotland.ca

Rev. Charles Bull
charlesbull97@gmail.com

Open Minds and Loving Hearts

And the winner is?



Photo: The 2019 winner of the Pete Stanfield Bursary, Shirley Cole receiving her presentation from Bishop Ron Cutler..

BRUCE MOXLEY
FRIENDS OF THE BISHOP 2019
REGIONAL DINNER

On November 5, 2019 at the regional dinner in Bridgewater, the Friends of the Bishop announced the winner of this year's Pete Stanfield Bursary.

The Bursary fund makes an annual award to an Anglican student studying at AST for full time ministry, ordained or lay, in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

This award is intended to recognize academic ability and demonstrated contributions to

the building up and support of the Anglican community at AST.

The bursary serves a very important role in shaping the future leaders of our Diocese by providing financial resources that help ensure that we have individuals who are well prepared to lead their congregations and this Diocese wherever God is calling us to go in the future.

The 2019 winner of the Pete Stanfield Bursary is Shirley Cole. Archbishop Ron and Bruce Moxley presented Shirley with a cheque for \$1,800.00 at the regional gathering held at Holy Trinity in Bridgewater where 50 people enjoyed turkey dinner arranged by the ACW and gathered to reflect on what Archbishop Ron and Rev. Jodie Clarke had to say regarding the impact being made in the diocese and its future leaders as a result of the work of the Friends of the Bishop.

The Friends of the Bishop is dedicated to help shape

the future of our diocese not only today but in the years to come through the Pete Stanfield Bursary and through its support of the Bishop's discretionary fund.

Originally known as The Bishop's Men, Friends of the Bishop was founded in 1974 by Pete Stanfield with a mandate "to assist the Bishop with both finances for a discretionary fund and advice".

It's an important gap that is filled by the Friends. Currently the Diocesan budget provides only \$1,000 to the Bishop for discretionary purposes. The Friends of the Bishop goal for 2019 is \$13,000.00.

Why is this work important? As members of Anglican congregations in the Diocese, we all look to the clergy for support in times of stress or loss. But who provides that role for the clergy? By raising additional funds, the Friends of the Bishop assist the Archbishop in filling this role and enables him to assist clergy with items such as, medical costs not covered

by the Diocesan benefit plan, school support for children, bursaries for post-secondary education, counselling for clergy & family members, special projects to support extraordinary initiatives to enrich the life of the Diocese.

Through the work of the Friends of the Bishop, not only is Shirley a winner, but really the whole Diocese wins as a result of the needs that Archbishop Ron is able to address with the funds raised by the Friends.

If you want to become a member or make a donation to help us reach our 2019 goal, simply contact the Diocesan office at 420-0717 or mail a cheque to the Diocesan office, noting that it is to support the Friends of the Bishop. For more information please check the diocesan website www.nspeidiocese.ca or email us: friendsofthebishop@nspeidiocese.ca

Friends of the Bishop membership is open to anyone interested in becoming a member, including clergy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deacons Douglas Beck, Taunya Dawson and Benjamin Lee were ordained to the priesthood on Thursday December 5, at the Cathedral Church of All Saints.

Rev. Chad McCharles resigned as rector of the Parish of Mahone Bay and Executive Secretary of Synod, effective January 31st, 2020.

Rev Kay Knott appointed interim priest-in-charge (1/2 time) of the parish of Trinity until December 31st, 2019.

Rev Shirley Cole appointed interim priest-in-charge (3/4 time) of the parish of Kentville effective December 1st, 2019.

Rev Jane Clattenburg appointed interim priest-in-charge (1/2 time) of the parish of St. Albans Dartmouth effective December 2nd, 2019.

Time Out for Women



Photo: Marjorie Davis with guest speaker, Cynthia Pilichos

St. Luke's Anglican Church, Dartmouth, N.S.

Time Out for Women celebrated its 40th Anniversary on October 7th.

Every Monday, for the past 40 years, winter and fall, women have been gathering at St. Luke's at 1 p.m. They accomplish a wide variety of handcrafts, rug hooking; knitting; hardanger; quilting; knitting; cross-stitch and tatting. Some women attend strictly for fellowship.

During our celebration tribute was paid to the

founding members and to all those continuing today.

Guest speaker Cynthia Pilichos, thanked both the committed women handcrafters and the parish of St. Luke's for making the 40th anniversary of handwork and fellowship known as "Time Out for Women" possible. She referenced Psalm 90:17 - Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us, yes, establish the work of our hands! Cynthia noted that this verse in Psalm 90 emphasized both God's favour

on the work of one's hands, as well as the important element of community.

In coming together on a weekly basis at St. Luke's, the Time Out for Women members were reminded that their handwork skills transcend time and space, connecting them with women globally and throughout history. Moreover, that in sharing these skills in community, one is able to see how they have been, and continue to be, essential "social glue". Cynthia thanked those attending the 40th anniversary celebration of Time Out for Women for their talent, reminding them that it was not only a gift, but a gift from God, one carrying a commitment to give back: Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God (Leo Buscaglia).

As we look to the future we continue to strive and use our talents and enjoy fellowship within the church community.

MARJORIE DAVIS
ST. LUKE'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Stepping up and stepping out



Photo: Self-stick mini-poster for go on the back of washroom doors to help prevent human trafficking.

BY MARY STONE

What an animated group they were at the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Mothers' Union Fall Rally!

Approximately 90 members and guests gathered at St. John the Evangelist in Lower Sackville in October to address the theme 'Stepping Up and Out'. This theme was

a follow up to the May rally with the Anglican Church Women, the focus of which was Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking. It also was a response to the resolution on Human Trafficking passed at the Diocesan Synod in June. Our interactive program began with a video clip of our former Anglican Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, encouraging us all to continue to address the

issue of human trafficking.

In light of this, each Mothers' Union branch was challenged to think about the needs in their community and to come up with ideas that would engage young people in that community, finally settling on one activity. The aim of this activity would be to provide young people with a place to gather and participate in an event where there would

be ample opportunities for chatting and sharing.

It was amazing to hear all the discussions and the sharing of ideas. The members were motivated and excited to have the opportunity to discuss this topic even though it was challenging and difficult at times. One of the important aspects of this was having a good portion of time to actually chat and work together, to express opinions and to collectively come to a decision.

Following this generation of ideas, the members recorded what resources they already had, what they would need, what steps they would take to make their plan happen. Branches were encouraged to make comments and suggestions on each others' ideas. The final segment was to look at how their plan lined up with the Mothers' Union aim and objectives and to the MULO process (Mothers' Union Listening, Observing, Acting)

The members were reminded of the Rev Debbie Strickland Fund and how to access monies to support a project that positively affects their community.

This was a full day's work, interspersed with prayers, yoga, a delicious lunch, silent auction bidding, purchasing

Mothers' Union resources, donating 271 pairs of socks for the needy, and the renewing of friendships.

As one participant observed '...not only was there incredible fellowship, but also a wonderful exchange between groups and the sharing of everyone's brilliant ideas.'

Mothers' Union aim:

To demonstrate the Christian Faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms.

The Mothers' Union Objectives:

- Promoting and supporting marriage
- Encouraging parents in their role to develop the faith of their children
- Maintaining a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service
- Promoting conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children
- Helping those whose family life has met with adversity.



Photo: Some of the many suggestions that were generated from the Mothers' Union Fall Rally at St. John the Evangelist in Lwr. Sackville.

Diocesan Youth Conference 2019

BY REV. WILL FERRY



Photo: One of many group gatherings at NYC this year at the Malagash Bible Camp.

Photo by Joe Young

DYC (Diocesan Youth Conference) 2019 was a wonderful time for all involved! It was held the weekend of October 25-27. We were back at Malagash Bible Camp, which is a beautiful camp along the Northumberland Strait. The theme of the weekend was Hunger and Thirst, and the theme verse was Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." We spent the weekend learning about the Five Marks of Mission, which are

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We had workshops, led by Mike MacKenzie, The Rev. Cate Ratcliffe, Jillian Jackson Rutledge and Su McLeod from PWRDF. Mike helped us learn

about responding to human need, as we collected clothes and toiletries and packed them into backpacks for needy young people in Cumberland County. Rev Cate's workshop focused on proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, and Su's workshop focused on transforming unjust structures of society.

Saturday afternoon was a fun large group activity led by Su and Jillian, and which focused on safeguarding the integrity of creation. We went down to the beach and used everything we found there, from marine debris to seaweed and driftwood to create images of the seven days of creation. We spent the rest of the afternoon exploring the theme of safeguarding the integrity of creation. Saturday evening we relaxed and enjoyed each other's talents at a campfire.

Our worship on the weekend was excellent and creative, and well led by our chaplain Sandra Fyfe. Bishop Ron was able to join us for part of Saturday afternoon, and led us in our closing worship on Sunday. As always seems to happen at NYC, we had a wonderful time. New friendships were made, old friends were seen again, and we ate lots and lots of delicious food!

Community connections in Amherst



Photo: An aerial photograph/map of the town of Amherst.

BY WILL FERRY

After Mission School 3, the Spiritual Development Committee at Christ Church in Amherst was intrigued by the booklet of missional ideas that was handed out. We read all the different ideas for missional activities and tried out several of them. One that we kept coming back to be the idea of community connections. We spent a lot of time in discussion and prayer, discerning how to take this idea to the larger

congregation.

We knew that everyone in our regular congregation had a life outside the church building. Even those who come to the building every week, even those who are here most days have a life outside the building. We volunteer, we have jobs, we live in neighbourhoods, and of course have family and friends that we see regularly. However, sometimes when we come to church, it's like we leave that part of our lives at the door. In the same way, when we leave

the church building, it can be like we leave the Christian part of ourselves at the door.

We wanted to find a way to help people connect these sometimes-separate parts of their lives. We wanted to find a way to learn about where other members of our community spent their weeks, and to get people thinking about how to bring the good news they hear about at Christ Church out the doors with them and into their ordinary lives.

On Christ the King Sunday, we tried an activity during our Sunday services. The Town of Amherst had very kindly provided us with a really great aerial photograph/map of the town. The scale was just right – we could see individual buildings, but the whole town was encompassed on the photograph. Street names were all labeled, so it was easy to find particular places. We backed the map on cardboard and set it up on an easel.

During the sermon, after a short sermon and introduction, members of the

congregation were invited up to place pins in the map for locations where they spent the most time. Everyone had fun as they analyzed the aerial photograph, saw their community from a whole new angle, and tried to find their houses, offices, and other places. Everyone who was in the church building for our services that day participated.

The folks who couldn't come up to the front talked to pewmates and friends about where to place their pins. By the end of the day, the map was bristling with pins, and the church community had a whole new perspective not only on the town, but on the churches roles and relationships within Amherst (and the wider county as well).



Photo: Members of the congregation placing pins on the town map for locations where they spent the most time.

Resolving to love harder when loving is hard

By CATHY LEE CUNNINGHAM,
RECTOR, CHURCH OF THE GOOD
SHEPHERD, BEAVER BANK

"We are born in community — fully connected to another human. Without connection, we cannot survive. It's in our DNA to belong."

-Radha Agrawal, Co-Founder & CEO, Daybreaker & Co-Founder, Thinx, Belong: Find Your People, Create Community & Live a More Connected Life, p. 1

Greetings and peace to you, in the name of Jesus, celebrate the beginning of not only a new year, but a new decade as "a new humanity" through the waters of our baptism (BAS, p. 146)!

THE PAIN OF EXCLUSION

Have you ever felt the deep and abiding pain of being excluded by a group of people or rejected for what you believe, who you are, the colour of your skin, the people you spend time with, or where you happened to be born or who you happen to love?

Jesus did.

Have you ever been judged unjustly, based on the wrong, unchecked assumptions or limited thinking of another person or group? Or demonized for what you stand for? Or don't stand for?

Jesus was.

TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELVES

When Jesus calls us to "love our neighbour as ourselves" he is literally calling to us out of this lived human experience of life, of knowing the pains of his own rejection by others. Out of that deep communion with us, he calls us to love the one who is nearest to us in any



Rev. Cathy Lee Cunningham

given moment, whether we like them or not, whether we think they belong or not.

He calls us as his followers to at least try to create a sacred connection rooted in our common humanity — powered by the knowledge that we all belong to God and that no one who seeks a relationship with God is to be excluded.

He calls us to move forward into the difficult conversations, instead of running away from them. He shows us that's how real, courageous, lasting, effective community is built. Where everyone has a beautiful place. A voice. A home. A seat at the table.

The lack of understanding that we are witnessing now in human history is frightening to many of us. The divisions that have emerged based on politics, human sexuality, climate change, gun control, religious difference, race and immigration — to name only a few — are certainly dangerous, destructive and detrimental to our communities, our relationships, and our common future. And they permeate our life together in the Body of

Christ.

One thing is for certain: where we are discerning our mission together, there will be differences, and very likely, conflict. In these times as church, many of our congregations and organizations are under fiscal and human resource duress, and where an organization is stressed, conflict is certain to emerge. If that conflict is not approached with love and skill, pain — inflicted on one another — will surely come. Indeed, it already has.

History — ancient, modern, recent — has taught us that when we reject one another and shut ourselves off from meaningful conversation about our differences, all that we will build is more ruins to be cleaned up with sadness by future generations.

SO, WHAT ARE WE TO DO, TO TRULY LIVE OUR LIVES, "LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR AS OURSELVES?"

Here's a good starting piece of advice, shared from the stage at the first Women's March:

"When it gets harder to love, let's love harder."

- Van Jones, CNN Host, Author and Co-Founder of the Dream Corps, at the Women's March on Washington, January 21st, 2017

BELONGING + COMMUNITY: TWO DEFINITIONS

In her book, *Belong: Find Your People, Create Community and Live a More Connected Life*, Montreal-born-and-raised Radha Agrawal, gives us a manual for loving harder when it becomes harder to love. In it, she teaches the art of community-building based on the willingness to do the hard



work of self-reflection and reaching out to others. I offer her definitions of belonging and community for your reflection (p.17).

BELONGING is:

"a feeling of deep relatedness and acceptance; a feeling of 'I would rather be here than anywhere else.' Belonging is the opposite of loneliness. It's a feeling of home, of 'I can exhale here and be fully myself with no judgement or insecurity.' Belonging is about shared values and responsibility, and the desire to participate in making your community better. It's about taking pride, showing up, and offering your gifts to others. You can't belong if you only take."

COMMUNITY is:

"a group of three or more people with whom you share similar values and interests and where you experience a sense of belonging."

Although we might change her number to "two or three",

it sure sounds like what an inclusive Christian community is supposed to look like and evoke in the hearts and souls of its members to me.

THREE QUESTIONS AND SOME RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED:

Have we created this for God, where we're planted to serve?

Are we choosing to remain stuck when we find it harder to love?

Are we pushing through, to find new ways to love harder?

RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

READ

Belong: Find Your People, Create Community & Live a More Connected Life by Radha Agrawal

Community: The Structure of Belonging by Peter Block

WATCH

Free webinar with Peter Block <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUPAFSbcEHY&feature=youtu.be>

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Teach us to Pray:

Treading safely into the unknown



Photo by Warren Wong on Unsplash

In September 1939 Great Britain entered the Second World War and by December, the terrorized nation was gripped by dread. On Christmas Day in a BBC radio broadcast, King George VI concluded his message of encouragement by reading from a poem, written by Minnie Louise Haskin, brought to his attention by his daughter, Princess Elizabeth. The poem, entitled *God Knows*, begins this way:

I said to the man who stood

at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

And he replied:

“Go out into the darkness and

put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light

and safer than a known way.”

A brief scroll through your news feed often reads like a Litany of Despair. On any given day, headlines shout dire warnings of wars and rumours of war, or detail the escalating climate crisis, and catalogue the growing incidence of extreme famine in the east and disproportionate food waste in the west. Such bad news stories pummel us with sexism statistics, enumerate how often racism occurs and record all the other “isms” that are continuously being added to our lexicon.

Late night talk show hosts have said that since the November 2016 election, they haven’t had to search far for writing material - the daily headlines sketch skits for them. However, even they have become saturated by the glut of brazen tweets and outrageous antics. In an attempt to balance things (and perhaps, for their own sanity) Seth Myers and Stephen Colbert are both proffering “good news” stories as part of their line-up. Colbert hosts a segment he calls “Meanwhile” and Myers makes time for “The Kind of Story We Need Right Now” in which both give airtime to stories of grandmas who fend off mountain lions or of the boy who invites all his lonely, elderly neighbours to share a



Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith

meal and soon the house is full of those once strangers, now friends. Here are these often cynical comedians telling stories about ordinary people at their humble best rather than solely anecdotes of those who stoop low, revealing their meanest, most greedy, impeachable selves.

As people of faith, do we have anything to offer a troubled world? Climate scientist Gus Speth says that the top environmental problems ‘are selfishness, greed and apathy; and to deal with these, we need a cultural and spiritual transformation.’ Then soberly he adds, “we scientists don’t know how to do this.” Hey! Isn’t this precisely what we have to offer a world so in need of not just good news, but The Good News? Isn’t this at the very

heart of our mission as hearers and doers of the Word?

Among the many gifts we have to extend this worrying world is that of hope, the counterbalance to that Litany of Despair and which, after all, is the centrepiece of our faith. We say that “our hope is in the name of the Lord”; but we don’t always live as though we really believe it. I don’t mean the Monty Python sort of hopefulness that simply looks on “the sunny side”. We’re called to delve deeper, to interpret the signs - to bear witness to the new thing God is doing in our midst.

A new year often begins with the resolve to do better, to be better. Rather than making resolutions that will likely wane, let’s pray to live more fully into the promises we’ve made to follow Christ. For resolutions fail, while such vows commit us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly, hand in hand, with our God - all days and in all ways - as we walk one another home.

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

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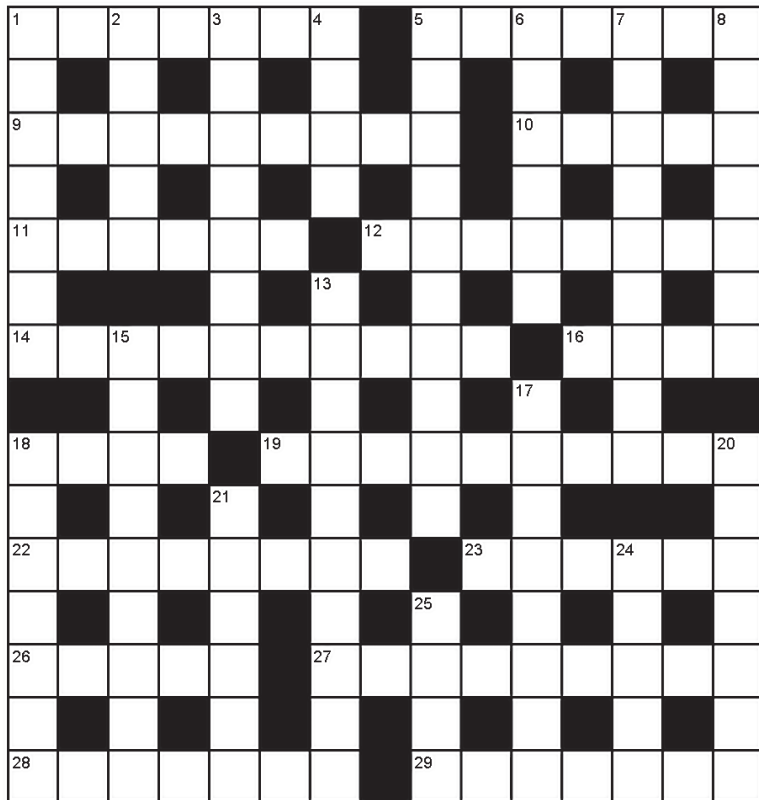
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Bible Crossword

by Maureen Yeats



JANUARY Puzzle



2020 January Puzzle Clues

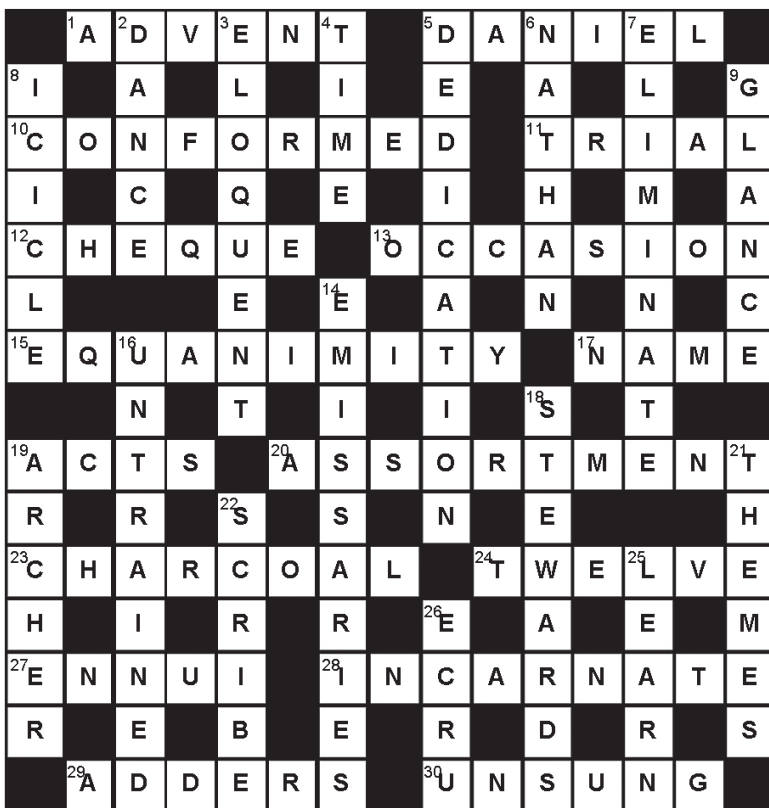
ACROSS:

- 1- Companion of Paul, to whom he wrote two epistles (7)
- 5- A named angel (Luke 1:19) (7)
- 9- Two-hulled sailboat (9)
- 10- A disciple, said to have been given "the keys of the kingdom" (5)
- 11- Recent medical school graduate (6)
- 12- Sweets offered at the end of a meal (8)
- 14- Glass building where plants are grown (10)
- 16- "He saw James...and...John...mending the ____." (Mark 1:19) devices used to catch fish (4)
- 18- An apostle, author of many epistles (4)
- 19- Document, photo, etc., attached to an e-mail (10)
- 22- What the year 2020 is (4,4)
- 23- "(Jacob) called that place ____." (Gen. 28:19) place name meaning house of God (6)
- 26- Make wavy (5)
- 27- Large, usually waterproof, protective sheet (9)
- 28- "Put ... ____ on his feet." (Luke 15:22) open shoes (7)
- 29- "And they took up ... twelve ____ full." (Matt. 14:20) wicker containers (7)

DOWN:

- 1- Sound made by an analog clock (7)
- 2- Sacred piece of choral music (5)
- 3- Pod of a tropical tree, seeds of which are edible (8)
- 4- City in northern England (4)
- 5- Brittle spicy cookie (10)
- 6- Road that goes around a community (6)
- 7- Speak on behalf of one in difficulty (9)
- 8- Small, slender, large-eyed lemurs of southern India (7)
- 13- Lowest women's singing voices (10)
- 15- Level of schooling (9)
- 17- Spotted, speedy wild cats of Africa (8)
- 18- Homes of kings and queens (7)
- 20- "To one he gave five ____." (Matt. 25:15) massive sums of money (7)
- 21- Inability to see at a distance (6)
- 24- Divide into two equal portions (5)
- 25- Edible crustacean that walks sideways (4)

DECEMBER Solution



FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY Sunday, February 2nd 2020



Mission is Possible: Empowered by God

Women's Ministry Sunday promotes and recognizes the many ways that women live out God's mission in the church and community. **Mission is possible when women and men, empowered by God, minister together, witnessing to the Gospel.**



The love of Jesus calls us
In swiftly changing days,
To be God's co-creators
In new and wondrous ways;
**That God with men and women
May so transform the earth,
That love and peace and justice
May give God's kingdom birth.**

*Anglican Church of Canada
Common Praise Hymnal #434 verse 4*

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65 years celebrated in Annapolis Royal

Donald Neish was ordained Priest in Holy Trinity Church, Country Harbour Mines on Nov. 30th, 1954 by Bishop Waterman. He was Rector of Antigonish, Country Harbour at the time.

The story goes that there was a wild snow storm on the day, but the church was full of friends, fellow clergy and family. We think this was the first, last and only Ordination held in that church.

Donald went on to serve in two parishes in the Diocese of Niagara and returned to Nova Scotia in 1970 to Emmanuel Spryfield and then to The Church of the Holy Spirit Dartmouth where he was Rector for 19 years before retirement. He was named a Canon of the Cathedral Church of All Saints by Archbishop Peters in 1991. After retirement he served as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Rosette and for a time the Parish of Clements. He is now Honorary Assistant Priest at St. Luke's Annapolis Royal where he takes an active part in the spiritual life of the parish, teaching a teen Sunday School class and celebrating the Eucharist at the Mid-week service.

Photo: Rev. Donald Neish congratulated by Archbishop Ron Cutler on the 65th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Photo by P. Hafting

Canadian Church Calendar
calendrier de l'Église canadienne

Anglican edition / édition anglicane

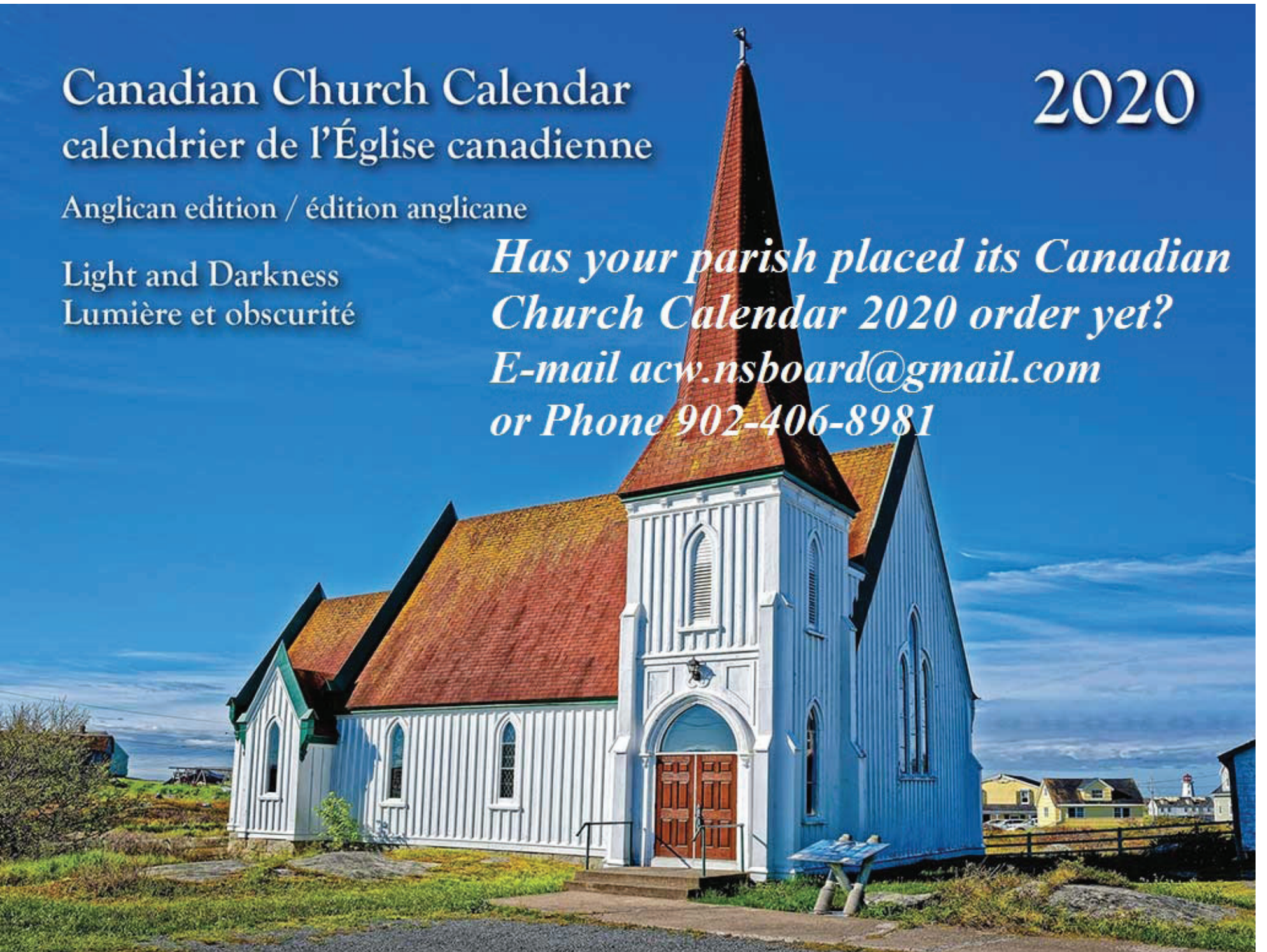
Light and Darkness
Lumière et obscurité

2020

Has your parish placed its Canadian Church Calendar 2020 order yet?

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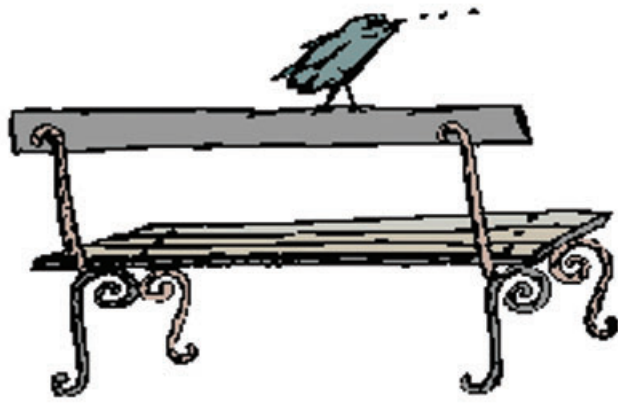
Shouldn't we all try to be in community with each other?

By Deacon Ray Carter

A new year is here and the old one is retired. Some people make plans for the next twelve months and some just kick back and see what the year brings. An annual event in our household is a family meal where the conversation always shifts to New Year's Resolutions. I am quite famous around the dinner table for never making such a vow. It seems most are forgotten by February anyway. I recently had an experience which may change this situation for me.

I visited a Roman Catholic Church nearby and noticed a picture on the wall of the hall with a title below it that said "The Body of Christ." The picture was of the common picture of Jesus, which we often see portrayed: shoulder length hair and beard. A good-looking white guy. Probably not at all accurate but recognizable to most Westerners. I was confused by the title "The Body of Christ" under the picture until I got very close to it. The picture was composed of hundreds of tiny pictures of people. There were men and women of all ages, children and infants, all composed in such a way as to represent the face of Christ when all put together. Well, now I understood the title!

The picture is a modern representation of a very old concept in the church. You will recall the words of St. Paul in his first letter to the



View from the Deacon's Bench

Corinthians:

"Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many."

This is a truth of our church. The community is made up of all its parts, all the different people who come together as the body of Christ. And we Anglicans like to think we are inclusive. We say every one is welcome. But are they? The LGBTQ+ community is welcome. In some churches by some people. Women are welcome. But not as clergy in some churches by some people. So we do have open and inclusive communities, but not in all our churches.

I have been very fortunate

to spend time in other communities in my neighbourhood that not everyone gets to see. I have been welcomed into the community of people who live in our homeless shelters. These folks have community in all senses of the word. A quick check of the dictionary gives the following definition for community :

a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes interests or goals-the sense of community an organized religion can provide.

Check and check! They have it all, and they are super inclusive.

The same goes for the guests at the soup kitchen. The people all seem to know each other and look out for one

another. Both of these groups welcome me into their midst, as in my role of a Deacon I represent the Church to the World. They are very inclusive!

As I write this in late November 2019 the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church and others recently marked the "World Day of the Poor". The focus of this day is a sculpture by Canadian Timothy P. Schmaltz and depicts Jesus as a homeless person curled beneath a blanket on a park bench. The face is covered and the only indication that the figure is Jesus are the visible wounds on the feet. The sculpture makes me think of the words of Matthew's Gospel chapter 25 verses 35 and 36: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty

and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

As I understand this passage, shouldn't we all try to be in community with each other? Not just in our churches, but in our broader communities. And shouldn't we all try to be inclusive of everyone? This can be a very difficult thing for some of us to do, but shouldn't we make the effort? As I enter the year 2020 I will be making my first New Years Resolution ever. I have managed to go sixty-five years without one. My resolution is this: I will not judge, and I will be inclusive in all I do. (Well, maybe that's two resolutions, but why not set the bar high!)



Photo: Sculpture by Canadian Timothy P. Schmaltz depicting Jesus as a homeless person.



Photo: As the New Year begins, the path before us is unwritten.

Photo by Robin Schreiner on Unsplash

Epitaph

A poem by Merrit Malloy

Meditations before Kaddish

When I die give what's left of me away
to children and old men that wait to die.
And if you need to cry,
cry for your brother walking the street beside you.
And when you need me, put your arms around anyone
and give them what you need to give me.
I want to leave you something,
something better than words or sounds.
Look for me in the people I've known or loved,
and if you cannot give me away,
at least let me live in your eyes and not in your mind.
You can love me best by letting hands touch hands,
and by letting go of children that need to be free.
Love doesn't die, people do.
So, when all that's left of me is love,
give me away.

I hope these beautiful words bring comfort to you. This poem called "Epitaph" by Merrit Malloy is one of numerous poems that recent editions of the Reform Jewish prayer book add as meditations before the traditional liturgy, Kaddish. The Kaddish is not limited to mourning, but is used throughout Jewish temple/synagogue service including those services that include a life celebration. The central theme of the Kaddish is the magnification and sanctification of God's name.

PAUL SHERWOOD, EDITOR