



Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia



# DIOCESAN POST

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

MARCH 2019

# Your Church Out Here

*Vision Fund helps build community at St. John Gualbert*

BY TONY REYNOLDS

I am sitting with more than 20 people on a Friday at noon enjoying a spectacular potluck with chicken pot pie, marinated venison, smoked salmon, roasted veggies, goat cheese and crackers. People come in from across the community and everyone who arrives, no matter how late, is welcomed and introduced around the table. After the lunch, Craig Murray brings out his guitar and leads the crowd in popular songs taken from the Potlikkers Songbook. It's all part of the scene at St. John Gualbert, a shared Anglican-United Church ministry in Port McNeill.

Two years ago, the congregation usually had six people at a service on Sunday morning. They have

had a succession of minister/priests, each for a relatively short time and, as each left, the congregation declined in numbers. Craig and Deborah Murray, who had moved to Port McNeill to retire after passing their Nimmo Bay wilderness resort business over to their children, attended St. John but were increasingly disheartened at the state of the parish. "Why did you not just walk away and look elsewhere?" I asked. "Because there were far too many people in this community who needed the services this multi-purpose community church could provide," Craig replied.

Today the services attract 32 people, growing steadily. The difference is due to the Murrays and a few other committed individuals with support from the Vision Fund. They needed a new roof for the church and a refurbished annex, but they applied to the fund for initiatives that would

make the church more relevant to the wider community: money to have community dinners, to provide weekly



Photo by Tony Reynolds

## Faith in Action

*In a Country Churchyard: St. Peter, Quamichan in Duncan rests on a prominent knoll overlooking grounds that will soon burst into bloom, carpeted with lilies and other spring flowers.*

programs for children and elders, to make over a little second-hand bookstore into a welcoming gathering place. They also wanted to transform a long board fence with a colourful garden mural to be painted by dozens and supervised by local artist Heather Brown.

For the roof and renos, they went to the community, going door-to-door to businesses and residents to

raise \$120,000. The roof is done, new book shelves and new paint appeared in the annex, and a spacious deck was completed so that those who are wheelchair-bound can view the activities in the community garden and enjoy the fence mural, a blaze of design and colour. Some months back, Bishop Logan was enjoying the potluck lunch one Friday, hammering nails into the new patio; he

commented to the Murrays, "This is where your church is - out here."

The book store's reorganization generates a steady profit, even at \$2 a book. Open daily, it has become a valuable gathering place often while other family members participate in activities in the sanctuary, where pews have been replaced with padded chairs.

Deborah is a lay reader and celebrant *Continued on page 7*

## Tripping over Gender

*A panel challenges the audience at UVic*

BY PHYLLIS THOMPSON

Take a romp through the Bible and reflect on how gender is presented. Read more about strong women such as Hagar and Mary. Stay in the church; it can be a safe place

when it's inclusive and welcoming.

Those were some of the suggestions delivered at a panel discussion called Gender, Justice and the Church. Held Nov. 29, 2018, as part of the John Albert Hall lecture series, at the University of Victoria, it was co-sponsored by UVic's Centre for Studies in Religion & Society and the Anglican Diocese of B.C. through its John Albert Hall Trust. The session was led by panel

moderator the Rev. Michelle Slater, lead minister at Victoria's Oak Bay United Church, who noted that we "trip over the word 'gender' and the challenges it poses."

Guest panelists were the Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, a United Church minister, author, and former member of the Ontario Legislature; and Jennifer Henry, Anglican educator and activist, and executive director of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice

Initiatives. The third, Dr. Gina Messina, a Roman Catholic theologian from Ursuline College in Ohio, was unable to attend but sent a video statement.

After 25 years' experience working in gender, indigenous, and migrant justice, Henry is an activist for same-sex marriage and a staunch supporter of faith-based activism in gender-equity issues. She had once believed that in a male-dominated

church and society, women's groups would emerge to fight injustice and violence done to women everywhere.

Henry now believes that our early understanding of gender was limited. Now she is aware of "a profound difference, one that shapes not only faith-based activism for gender equity, but potentially the theology that animates it." What is needed now, she says, is *Continued on page 7*

# Prophetic Preaching



## Dean's Corner

BY ANSLEY TUCKER, DEAN

Sermons come in various forms. Some use the sermon to teach, or to explain the readings. Others see the sermon as an evangelical tool, or as moral exhortation. Some clergy preach by way of story.

What we heard in the cathedral on a January Sunday was an example of classical biblical prophecy, the sort of thing we hear from Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Jonah. The guest preacher was American author and ordained Presbyterian, Christopher Hedges, also a Pulitzer prize-winning journalist. His sermon was a blunt critique of the Church's

engagement (or more precisely, lack of engagement) with what he considered the most pressing issues of our time. He began by warning of the death of the planet, and of compassion, and defined the role of authentic religion as the willingness to grapple with systemic evil, and to do our very best to reverse the trajectory towards extinction.

The biblical prophets take extreme issue with the politics of their day, make no bones about naming or blaming, and condemn the people of God for their inaction and willingness to go along. Their message is highly politicized

and threatens destruction or military defeat if people don't repent and change. "Forty days more," cries Jonah, "and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Their goal is to spur people to keep the impending crisis from unfolding.

Often, the prophets meet with great resistance, including death threats and imprisonment. Their preaching "afflicts the comfortable" (as Jeremiah says), and people don't like it. This is one reason prophetic preaching is so rare in our churches; very few preachers have the stomach for the kind of antipathy prophetic witness arouses.

At the cathedral, some were relieved to hear the Church concerning itself with the state of our world; others were offended at what they considered the politicization of the gospel, and at the bleak outlook from Hedges. To be sure, prophetic preaching fails on the "feel good" factor, and in this, his homily was true to form.

But then, perhaps the Church's role is not always to "comfort the afflicted" (as Jeremiah also says).

*The Very Rev. Ansley Tucker is dean of Christ Church Cathedral.*

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### Submissions

News, letters and other articles are welcome. Please limit articles to 500 words and letters to 200 words. Submissions must include name and contact information of the author.

Pictures must be a resolution of 300 DPI and in sharp focus. Clearly and accurately identify the name of all subjects as well as the person who took the picture.

### New Submission Deadlines

January issue - November 25  
February issue - December 25  
March issue - January 25  
April issue - February 25  
May issue - March 25  
June issue - April 25  
September issue - July 25  
October issue - August 25  
November issue - September 25  
December issue - October 25

**All material is subject to editing.**

**Volume 53, No 3**



# Empowering Women



## PWRDF Corner

BY GEOFF STRONG, PWRDF  
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE

*A woman of Samaria came to get water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me some water." For his disciples had gone to town to get food. The woman of Samaria said to him, "Why do you, a Jew, make a request for water to me, a woman of Samaria?" She said this because Jews have nothing to do with the people of Samaria.*

- John 4:7-9

In speaking to the woman at the well, Jesus deliberately ignored Jewish customs of not speaking to women in public, and of being hostile to Samaritans whom they regarded as foreigners. When the disciples returned from town, even they were upset with Jesus for speaking to the woman. However, this unnamed woman in John's gospel, amazed by Jesus, was later said to have brought so many to the Christian faith that she was described as

equal to the apostles. She even drew the attention of Emperor Nero, was brought before him to answer for her faith, and suffered many tortures, eventually dying a martyr after being thrown down a dry well.

Women of most cultures, including our own, have suffered greatly from gender inequality. In instances where women have gained a measure of equality, in Europe and North America over the past 100 years, the whole culture has benefited. The most basic rights for women – to own property, to vote, to have equal education, equal job opportunities, to be free from sexual harassment, to have the right to self-determination, to drive a car, and a whole host of other rights previously possessed only by men – are just decades old in North America. Few of these rights exist today in most developing countries. When empowered with basic rights, both socially and in the home, women have equal say on whether and when to have children, or whether to work outside the home for pay. These rights eventually benefit everyone and have resulted in helping to moderate the exponentially-growing population globally, along with vastly improved living

conditions locally in Europe, North America and China.

PWRDF recognizes that gender inequality is often at the very root of slowing the progress of developing countries. Improving the lives and situations of girls and women addresses the injustice of gender-based gaps and leads to greater benefits for whole communities. To this end, gender equity and female empowerment is part of most PWRDF projects, often subtly, but it's there. Microfinance programs have been specifically directed at opportunities for women to earn an income, to provide education and training of women farmers, prenatal education for and access to health care facilities for pregnant women, and opportunities for women to advocate for themselves through training and education. Some projects have even provided education of men in non-traditional roles such as care-giving and cooking.

To learn more about PWRDF work, visit the web site at [www.pwrdf.org](http://www.pwrdf.org), or ask your incumbent priest to invite the Diocesan Representative, Geoff Strong at [geoff.strong@shaw.ca](mailto:geoff.strong@shaw.ca) [pwrdf.bc.anglican.ca](mailto:pwrdf.bc.anglican.ca) to give a presentation or sermon on PWRDF at your parish.



Photo by PWRDF

*A micro finance cooperative is a project funded by PWRDF for 500 low-income women in the city of Pemba in Mozambique.*

## Metchosin Pilgrimage

*Join the spiritual journey*

The route is along the Galloping Goose Trail, through the old church yard with its wonderful blossoms, ending at St. Mary Incarnation Church, 4125 Metchosin Road. Parking is at St. Mary Incarnation, and a shuttle service will take you to one of five start points on the Trail, between three and 23 kilometres from the church. We will have flexible starting times between 8 am and 1 pm, to aim for the same finishing time by 5 pm. Everyone is welcome to gather for a Pilgrim's Supper at 5:30 pm and to share experiences.

-Wally Eamer

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DAWNA & ANNALISE WALL



ELIZABETH WELCH



# Imelda Secker

## Bishop's executive assistant retires

BY SUSAN DOWN

After years in a position where scheduling and details are vital, Imelda Secker is planning to not mind the clock during her retirement. "One of the first things I'm going to do is take my watch off," she said.

She moved to Victoria from Alberta and joined the diocesan office in 2000 as a receptionist following a 30-year career as a legal assistant. She soon took over as executive assistant to the bishop, serving three: James Cowan, Logan McMenamie, and Caleb Lawrence, interim diocesan administrator and retired archbishop.

Working in the legal and episcopal worlds was similar, she says: running an efficient office and making sure the leaders have what they need when they need it. "What I really liked was creating relationships with parish administrators, clergy, the bishops and the people

whom I served." She tried to make it to as many inductions and ordinations as she could. She retired in early 2019.

Born in the Netherlands, the youngest of seven children, Imelda moved to Canada with her family in 1953. She was raised a Roman Catholic and remains faithful to that church. However, she sees the Anglican discussion on issues such as same-sex marriage to be really positive. "I admire the Anglican Church for bringing it forward and people talking about it. You wouldn't see that in the Roman Catholic Church," she said. "People of same gender want the same things heterosexual couples are entitled to – to get married in the church. It's more of a justice issue than anything else. People have begun to realize – at least I hope they have – that before we are anything else, we are human beings, whether we are male, female, heterosexual, transgender, whatever. We are all entitled to justice."

During her time with the diocese, Imelda, 69, has seen major changes such as the work of reconciliation and

hard decisions to close some churches. For her dedication, she was named a canon in 2014, and at Synod in 2018, receiving a new episcopal award – a silver dragonfly – for exemplary leadership with the Bishop.

She also earned the respect of her bosses. Said Caleb Lawrence, "We shared a common understanding that we were there to enable and support the ministries of both clergy and parishes, from the perspective of 'What would Christ do?' It was a joy to work alongside Imelda through those months, and I appreciated the comments of several parish administrators who told me that Imelda was their role model. In many ways Imelda epitomized for me one who lived out both love for God and love for God's people in that central place in the life of the diocesan family."

The Anglican Church's biggest challenge is the same for all of organized religion: staying alive, says Imelda as she leaves. "They have to think about doing church differently because the younger generations are not interested



Imelda Secker

Photo by Susan Down

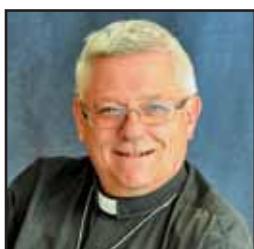
in going to church every Sunday, in worshipping always in a church building; they want different things. They are not keen on having to tithe when a lot of the money goes towards keeping up a church building."

On women priests. "We are getting pretty close to half and half (in the diocese)," said

Imelda. "Women may have softened the diocese and brought a more compassionate attitude. When you have a committee with women, things will change."

As she begins to enjoy her new life in Sidney, where she lives with sister Clementien, she muses, "Everything changes and nothing changes."

# Driving to the House of God



## My Journey

BY LON TOWSTEGO

*The Rev. Lon Towstego was inducted Feb. 2 as incumbent of the Parish of Central Saanich. My Journey is a regular Q&A series featuring new incumbents.*

### Tell us something about your background.

I was born and grew up in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I was sent by my parents to a Gospel Hall for Sunday School and to a Roman Catholic convent for kindergarten. Today, I see that ecumenical time as vital,

formative and life-giving. I believe that God carried me through a time of wandering the wilderness of life until my adult faith experience.

I am happily married to Marian, my number one supporter and soul mate. We have a blended family of six adult children, and now have five grandchildren and another on the way.

### Did you pursue another career previously? If so, what is your work background?

I grew up loving, riding and ultimately racing motorcycles. This led to a career in the motorcycle industry that involved all aspects: mechanic, salesperson, store manager and owner. As time went on, I realized that the part of this work I really enjoyed was interacting with people and hearing their stories. But I still

love motorcycles, too. Today, I collect old off-road motocross bikes. I own a mint condition Can AM motocross bike.

Along the way I became very involved in a new-found adult faith. I was baptized in Courtenay Four Square Gospel Church and through an Order of St. Luke event at Mount Washington, was introduced to the Eucharist and to Anglicanism. I soon became Anglican.

I became very involved at St. James, Nanaimo in various roles: parish council member, Synod representative, Alpha program participant and leader, and eventually as a warden. After prayer and soul-searching about what was most important to me, I went to the parish priest, the Rev. Michael Wearne (who died Jan. 25), who heard me say aloud that I felt a call to ordained ministry.

### What route did you take for your studies?

I began with on-line studies from the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad in Saskatoon where I subsequently attended and completed the bachelor of theology and master of divinity degrees. I am now working towards a doctorate with a focus on congregational development.

### What do you see as the greatest challenge in the Anglican Church?

Relevance to the average person and an ability to speak to people about the Triune God and matters of faith in language and ways that they can find an entry point for themselves. We need:

Education about the vocation and call to ordained ministry to invite, encourage and assist young people to look at ministry in the church.

To see and acknowledge the presence of God in all people's lives, vocations, and careers.

To see the world as the House of God. We take this well beyond church walls and see it as the Celts do. When we are dismissed, the gathering for worship is complete and the service to God's world begins.

### What was the most unusual sermon you have ever heard?

The Rev. Michael Wearne once preached at St. James about age. He said that in God's kingdom we can be forever 21 years old. He went on to encourage us to think young and enthusiastically! I try to live by that. Anglicans really do have more fun as we worship the living Christ in our midst!

**RENEWED HEARTS RENEWED SPIRITS RENEWED PEOPLE**



# Author Kit Pearson Gives Back

*Third-generation  
Order of Canada  
recipient a  
committed  
member at St.  
John the Divine*

BY ANNE MOON

Thanks to a little bit of old-fashioned snobbery, St. John the Divine in Victoria can count the newest Member of the Order of Canada, Kit Pearson, as a parishioner.

Kit owes her religious affiliation to her grandmother, who urged her husband Hugh to give up his Presbyterian ways and join the denomination she perceived as being more fashionable: Anglicans.

Hugh, the new Anglican, went on to win the Order of Canada in 1976 for his trailblazing work in broadcasting, as did his son Sandy (Kit's father), honoured in 1993 for his volunteer work. The order was established in Canada's centennial year, 1967, to honour Canadians who make a difference to their country.

Kit, 71, retired long ago from a career as children's

librarian to become a prize-winning children's author, an accomplishment that earned her membership in the Order of Canada in 2018. Her 13th book, *Be My Love*, came out Feb. 16 and *The Magic Boat*, a picture book collaboration with her partner, artist Katherine Farris, will be published in French and English this month. She will be wearing the snowflake emblem of the Order of Canada at her book launches in Toronto and Victoria. She has a spare—just in case one is lost.

Born in Edmonton, and having worked in Toronto and Vancouver, Kit came to Victoria in 2005, to be with her partner, now living in Oak Bay. She soon chose to attend St. John's, where she likes the ritual: "There is a combination of tradition and flexibility with the Book of Alternative Services and the Book of Common Prayer...and the music is superb," said Kit, who describes herself as a cradle Anglican, although one who has also explored other forms of spirituality such as Buddhism. Kit is St. John's second parishioner to receive the Order of Canada: the other is distinguished jurist Ted Hughes.

Kit is an active member of the parish as a community choir member, reader during services, food bank volunteer and refugee family supporter.

When she offers the prayers

of the people, she uses relevant poetry as she crafts her words. She even slid in a prayer written by Jane Austen (her favourite writer) on Austen's birthday. Her practice reading aloud as a children's librarian means she enjoys reading the Gospel.

"Kit has contributed much to the life of St. John the Divine and to the wider diocese, as an active and committed member of the church, faithful Christian, and in sharing her gifts: writing for the Cathedral's Easter Eve liturgy and through teaching others prayer through writing," says The Ven. Alastair McCollum, rector at St. John's.

Kit has bonded with a church-sponsored refugee family of 10 recently arrived from Eritrea. Her mother's century-old christening dress came out of storage for Hannah, the first Canadian member of the family, who was baptized in January.

"Kit has shown great warmth in clothing the family, introducing the children to the joys of libraries and books, shepherding two young lads to and from school and acting as guide, counsellor and friend at medical appointments," says the chair of the refugee committee, John McLaren.

Kit's newest children's novel, *Be My Love*, features a



Photo by Anne Moon

Kit Pearson.

young heroine, Maisie, who lives on Mayne Island (where Kit and Katherine had a cottage for some years) with her Anglican clergyman father, who happens to be shell-shocked—what we would now call PTSD. It is set in 1951 and Kit describes it as a "coming-out story."

"It is not my story," she hastens to add. "Maisie is far more aware than I was."

*Book launches: Kit and Kath will read from *The Magic Boat* on March 16, from 1-2*

*pm at Munro's Books, 1108 Government St., Victoria. Kit will launch *Be My Love* on April 24 at 7 p.m. at the Victoria Central Library, 735 Broughton St., and she will be feted at a celebration after the 10 am service at St. John the Divine on April 28, in the memorial hall. Families especially welcome.*

*For more on Kit Pearson: [www.kitpearson.com/bio.html](http://www.kitpearson.com/bio.html)*

*Anne Moon is a retired journalist and parishioner at St. John the Divine.*

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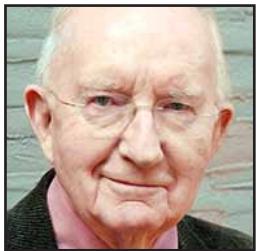
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# My Friend Neddy



## Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

### Donaguile 1934

*Reverend Canon Dr. Herbert O'Driscoll's latest book, A Greening of Imaginations – Walking the Songlines of Holy Scripture was published in February by Church Publishing Incorporated. A book launch and signing (and a public interview with Canon Ian Alexander) will be on March 27 at 10 am at St. George's Cadboro Bay. It is part of the "Wonderful Wednesdays" series. Light refreshments are available from 9:30 am.*

A photo turned up recently from the boxes in the basement, one of these small black and white photos slightly yellowed with turned-up corners. In it, I

am four years old. Looking quite secure and at ease, I am seated astride the farm donkey.

The person who lifted me up was John, the hired man on the farm. The reason I remember this long ago moment was what John did as soon as I had the rope reins in my hands. Pointing to two lines of darker fur on the donkey's back he traced them carefully with his finger, one across the donkey's shoulders, the other from his mane back along the spine. He then told me the story of how these two lines are found on every donkey.

However, before I tell you this story, let's think for a few moments about Neddy and his kind.

Somewhere on every Irish farm there would be a donkey who would perform many necessary lowly tasks. However, he had one role we could almost call genteel. Two graceful carriage-like vehicles were kept under cover in one of the farm barns. These were the traps. They were comfortable to ride in, their seats being cushioned and their rubber-tired wheels well sprung.

The donkey liked the trap. Far more frequently than when

he was pulling the plain old cart, he could be persuaded to break into a canter. I suspect he appreciated the lightness of the trap and the much greater ease in pulling it.

There were of course many adventures with the donkey. I recall the day my brothers and I decided that Neddy would cheerfully accept all three of us on his back and take us for a short ride. By this stage I was 14, my brother Terry was 10, and Percy was about to be five. We put Percy up first as a kind of trial balloon; Neddy stood quite still. Terry then climbed up, hung on to Neddy's mane and kept Percy in his arms. This time the donkey stirred sufficiently to communicate a quiet protest. It was when I got up on his rear haunches that the dear long-suffering animal decided he had had enough of these summer visitors. Suddenly he began to move off. Terry held on to his mane for dear life while at the same time holding Percy. I held on to Terry. Neddy's trot became a canter.

It was at this point I could see that we were heading for a

large clump of nettles whose sting I knew to be quite painful. In vain I yelled at Terry to try to steer Neddy from what I think in retrospect was his plan to teach us a lesson. Just as we reached the nettles, with devilish cleverness and intent, he came to a sudden stop, whereupon we slid sideways from his back and ended up in the nettles, to be stung wherever our skin was bared, hands and arms and lower legs. Weeping was loud and bitter and came to the ears of our mother who spent the next half hour preparing a bowl of chamomile lotion, an old remedy for the assuaging of nettle stings, its reputation considerably better than its efficacy.

Boyish memories to be remembered now with amusement. But these are not the only things I remember of a small humble creature who shared our lives for those sunlit days of long-ago summers. I recall his graceful attributes, for instance the way he walked, his small hooves pointed forward and placed almost delicately on the ground, his large soulful eyes and the way he would allow his head to be cradled for a moment under one's arm.

Most of all I recall the story that John Brennan told me all those years ago when he first lifted me on to Neddy's back as a very small boy. He carefully traced with his finger the lines on Neddy's fur. "Every donkey has those lines" he said. "Do you see how they form a cross?" I was all attention. The lines of darker fur were very clear.

Then, very simply, in terms that a small boy could understand - and indeed would never forget - John told me the wonderful story. He told me of the day when Jesus chose a donkey to ride on as he entered Jerusalem, and how from that day Neddy and all his creaturely kind received those lines on their fur to remind us all that it was a humble donkey who carried our Saviour through the shouting crowd that filled Jerusalem, and who walked on a vast carpet of soft green olive branches.

*Herbert O'Driscoll is a retired priest, the author of a number of books, hymns and radio scripts as well as a conference leader in a number of provinces of the Anglican Communion.*



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# Your Church Out Here

*Continued from cover*

and, following training, was authorized by the United Church to both baptize and serve communion. Responsible to Bishop Logan, she was one of three non-Anglicans to be awarded the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia at a ceremony at Christ Church Cathedral in October 2018.

Craig was appointed by Bishop Logan as his warden. He is chair of the parish council, handles all the financial matters and gets things done. "Sometimes it's difficult running this place only with volunteers. The only person getting a wage

is the lady who cleans the church once a week. People are what is important here and people take up about 90 per cent of our time."

Here we see Transforming Futures at work. The parish is open to having another priest/minister, but still could not afford one that would be full-time. Instead, this could be part of what is being called "emerging church," one with dedicated lay leadership, nurtured and supported by the resources of the wider church and where the emphasis is unmistakeably on the people it serves, its community and the Gospel message of grace.

Back at the potluck, what strikes me about the folks around the table is the warmth and vigour of their interactions, and their laughter. Some are wheelchair-



A colourful garden mural brightens a long board fence at St. John Gualbert.

bound, some are otherwise disabled and their neighbours ensure they have what they need. Craig and Deborah are deep in conversation with people. "Knowing people in depth, that's what takes the time," Craig says, "Listening and having something to say that is relevant to the reality of their daily lives, that's what important." Deborah adds that "The most important person on a Sunday morning is the stranger you do not know."

That characterizes the spirit that greets you when you visit the parish of St. John Gualbert, the patron saint of foresters and loggers, in Port McNeill.

Tony Reynolds worships at St. Peter, Comox. Previously, he was a journalist, farmer and executive director of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

## Tripping Over Gender

*Continued from cover*

allyship, defined as a clear recognition of the differentials between women and men, an awareness of how each gender views and experiences oppression, then "a deliberate choice to strive for allyship across the differences and use those in solidarity with others."

DiNovo's focus has been on gender identity. Her years in government were spent working across party lines (as an Ontario MPP) to promote private members' bills legislating LGBTQ and trans' rights as human rights and banning conversion therapy. She was the first woman to sign the 1971 Gay Rights Manifesto and the first cleric in Ontario to officiate at a gay marriage. She asked the audience to "take a romp through the Bible" and look for stories which are "queer positive," where gender identity needs more and serious attention, citing the Sodom and Gomorrah and Last Supper stories. She spoke of her experience with one congregation whose numbers were dwindling, but once they became "queer positive" the congregation grew.

Messina, in her video, addressed the Catholic Church's "blind spot" regarding women in the church, particularly its teaching of "complimentarity as an anthropological fact." This

teaching perpetuates the idea that women's role is as wives and mothers in the home and men are to be out in the community, engaging in work, she says. As a result, Messina says, this "not only diffuses the value of women, but is damaging to men as well." As an American, she's also aware of the extent to which the separation between church and state is being overlooked: that religious teachings can easily impact governmental policies on such issues as pay equity for women and reproductive rights. Those teachings, she says, "are oppressive in our religion, but also in our broader culture."

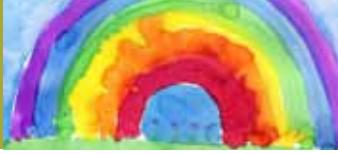
There are many varieties of Christianity, not just one, they agreed, and we must learn to talk across the differences. The afternoon session was lengthy and lively, and well worth attending. The panelists were enthusiastic, and the audience was willing to be informed and challenged. New perspectives were offered and more questions raised; one can continue to hope that from this attention, understanding deepens and allied activism grows.

Phyllis Thompson is the proofreader for the Diocesan Post and a frequent contributor. A member of St. Mary, Nanoose Bay, she taught English at the University of Saskatchewan.

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# Council Begins Work to Set Goals for 2019-2020



## Fly on the Wall

BY CATHERINE PATE

*This regular column reports on the activities and decisions of Diocesan Council, the “synod between synods” of our diocese. Download monthly meeting minutes at [bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/diocesan-council](http://bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/diocesan-council).*

Following its regular Bible study, significant time was given at the January meeting of Diocesan Council to the important work of establishing goals for the Council’s work over the coming year and leading into the next Synod.

The three areas of priority identified for further goal development include:

- Transforming Futures
- Reconciliation and Unity in light of General Synod 2019
- Vision Implementation

At its February meeting, Diocesan Council will work to develop clear, measurable goals for each of these priority areas and will use these to measure its progress in the remainder of 2019 and into the New Year.

### Transforming Futures

After taking on the part-time role following Synod 2019, Michael Wimmer has resigned as Transforming Futures facilitator, citing the need to focus on his responsibilities as incumbent at St. Michael & All Angels in Chemainus. The diocesan fundraising initiative will therefore be led by a team of synod leaders including staff and volunteers with the support of an outside fundraising consultancy. Barry Foster, the diocesan executive officer, will act as point person on the initiative and all enquiries can be directed to his attention by emailing [bfoster@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:bfoster@bc.anglican.ca) or calling the synod office 250.386.7781 x248.

The bishop is asking all diocesan leaders including clergy, officers and committee members to prayerfully consider being amongst the first to pledge their commitment to Transforming Futures.

Following an upbeat discussion on Transforming Futures, Diocesan Council passed a motion to approve a capital project at Trinity Anglican + Lutheran Church in Port Alberni. This project will improve pedestrian access and will provide fully accessible washrooms in a larger entrance area between the church and hall buildings. Funds for this project will come from the diocesan consolidated trust account, Rick Hansen Foundation and monies raised through Transforming Futures. This is an exciting project that will enable the church to connect with the wider Port Alberni community, and it may allow this property to be used as a place of refuge in emergencies. The project has support from the mayor and council in Port Alberni.

### Asset Management

Peter Daniel, diocesan asset manager, reported on the Rogers Court Society project at St. Peter and St. Paul, Esquimalt. Following a lengthy process on plans to connect the heritage church and the new building, it is expected that a Heritage Alteration Permit will be issued by the Town of Esquimalt in February 2019.

Construction start for this project, which is financed by the diocese, CMHC, Vancity and BC Housing is planned for summer this year. The project will include a main floor ministry centre and four floors of affordable seniors’ housing.

The Mount Douglas Senior Housing Society building under construction in suburban Saanich is due to be completed this April. This 84-unit affordable seniors’ housing project will complement 80 affordable housing apartments on the same site, originally dedicated by Anglican Church Women in the 1970s. Long-term financing for the project is secured by CMHC mortgage insurance to TD Bank at a committed rate of 3.75 per cent over a 10-year term with a 40-year amortization period.

Plans for the Rogers Court project in Esquimalt and for the Mount Douglas Seniors Housing project can be seen on the diocesan website [www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/asset-management](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/asset-management).

### Communications

Council approved a new Information Security Policy and Social Media Policy for use across the diocese. Catherine Pate, diocesan communications officer, will be holding information sessions for parishes about the new policies in the coming months. Hard copies of the policies, along with a generic policy acknowledgement form have been sent to all parishes and are available for download on the diocesan website at [www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/policies](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/policies). These policies supersede any that may currently be in place at the parish level.

A significant component of the Information Security Policy is the establishment of standardized emails for parish ministry. Personal email addresses will no longer be used for the following parish ministry roles: wardens, treasurer, incumbent, Safe Church liaison, PWRDF coordinator, parish office.

At their discretion, parishes will be encouraged to use additional standard emails for other ministries as appropriate. This change represents a critical development towards ensuring the safety and security of the personal information of both staff and volunteers working on behalf of the diocese at all levels.

### Finance

The following are motions approved by Diocesan Council at its January meeting:

- 2019 budget (includes projected deficit of \$123,493)
- \$5,000 vision grant for The River preschool—a St. Barnabas initiative (based on a 2018 application)
- Sheltered Housing consolidated trust fund (CTF) 2019 income to be designated to Threshold Housing
- Vision Grant funding for 2019 set at between \$75,000 - \$100,000 (upper limit based on success of Transforming Futures funds received by the synod in 2019).
- The unspent, undesignated balance of the \$1.5 million earmarked at Synod 2016 for vision work to be carried forward for initiatives in keeping with the original purpose of the funds.

## Faith in Foundation

### Bishop's Calendar - March 2019

(as at Jan 24, 2019)

2 Emmaus Community - Visioning Day	21	Finance Committee Meeting
5 Archdeacons, Dean and EO meeting	24-29	National House of Bishops Meetings
9 Parish of Salt Spring – Induction of Gyllian Davies	30	Diocesan Council Meeting
17 St. George the Martyr - Parish Visitation	31	Nanaimo Correctional Centre Visitation

### Personnel Updates

J. Barry Foster has been appointed as the diocesan executive officer as of January 15. Barry comes to us from the Diocese of Calgary where he served as the executive officer and executive archdeacon.

Christopher Samsom, curate at St. Peter, Comox, is on loan to the Diocese of Saskatchewan. Christopher will be assisting Bishop Michael Hawkins with parishes in transition effective January 15, 2019.

### Inductions

Lon Towstego as incumbent of the Parish of Central Saanich, on February 2 at St. Mary, Saanichton.

Elizabeth Northcott as incumbent of the Parish of St. Mark, on February 23.

Gyllian Davies as incumbent of the Parish of Salt Spring on March 9.

### Season of Discipleship

As part of its ongoing work, Diocesan Council reflected at its January meeting on discipleship and how the Season of Discipleship will inform its work in the coming year.

- The Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod has developed a useful guide titled *In Sure and Certain Hope* for those involved in medical assisted dying ministry. The guide is available for download on the national church website.

The chancellor further recommended that Diocesan Council review its HR, workplace and Safe Church policies, and put in place appropriate provisions to address the issue of cannabis by clergy, staff, volunteers and church users.

*Catherine Pate is the diocesan communications officer, responsible for supporting and animating effective communications in all expressions of the diocese.*