

# EX CATHEDRA

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA

SPRING 2020

## DEAN AND BISHOP-ELECT PARKER WRITES ...

In my first “From the Desk of Dean Parker” column for Ex Cathedra in the autumn of 1999 I wrote the following:

*It is truly a great joy for me to address you as your Dean. I am unabashedly proud of our Cathedral, the diversity of people and activities, the glorious music, and the great talent, freely given, that makes it all happen. Most of all, I appreciate the breadth and depth of worship that is at the heart of our ministry: people are invited into the mystery of God in an atmosphere of well cared for and well executed beauty.*

Further along, I wrote this:

*During any transition in the leadership of a parish, it is normal for people to wonder about future directions. In the course of extensive interviews*

*during the appointment process with the Cathedral Committee, Bishop Baycroft, and Coadjutor Bishop Coffin, prospective candidates for the position of Dean were asked to talk specifically about how things might proceed in the future. My response went something like this: “It is clear that the need to continue the Cathedral’s current strong liturgical and pastoral ministry—including a visible diocesan, civic, and ecumenical role—is central... At the same time, there is always a need to review, reflect, and refine in order to keep existing ministries fresh and to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal new possibilities. I believe that the energy associated with the beginning of this new phase in the life of the Cathedral will allow*

*us all to consider, in new ways, what God is calling us to. With the trust and love that will come as we get to*



A dean, bishop-elect and grandfather looks to the future with faith, hope and love.

*continued on page 12*

## WE'RE FIGHTING FOR PEOPLE —CAN WE FIGHT FOR OUR PLANET?

By Albert Dumont

It is a spring like no other I have lived through in my almost 70 years of life. A virus (COVID-19) is travelling like a poisonous fog into our villages, towns and cities. It seems that unless we are careful and sensible, some or even many among our family, friends and neighbours could be stricken with a virus which can potentially be deadly. Human beings are on their guard; some, understandably, have been overcome with fear and anxiety. Thoughts of self-preservation are entering the minds of those among us who have lost faith in spiritual beliefs and they are now hoarding items from stores, not caring that others, neighbours included, might be left short. It is the way of an imperfect world.

In the forest, life is unfolding this spring season as it has in all years past. I hear the voices of ravens and crows, calling out to declare a territory as their own. The deer are once again grazing in open fields. The songs of robins, cardinals and red-winged blackbirds fill

the woods behind my log house, placing into the passing breeze a serene calmness and a reinvigorated sense of hope.

From my balcony, I draw in a deep breath to taste the season and refresh my belief that spring represents the opportunity to start over — it is after all the season when my sobriety began. I look into the heart of the forest and see that the pines somehow seem greater to me this spring. They stand like a powerful army on the distant horizon to which all other trees of the forest send forth their respect and honour. The birch, maple, balsam and all other trees are aware of what the pines bring to the land in the way of tranquillity. The trees of the forest

know that Creator's blessings are, for them, everlasting. The snow slowly melts and I walk in it without footwear. My footprints in the snow reveal how weak and small I am in this wondrous world we make our home in. It brings me to a place of profound humility and I question my right to breathe the purity of the wind I feel this day. The touch of human beings upon the land has been so utterly destructive. I feel shame. And I ask, "What will be left for my grandchildren's grandchildren?"

A good and wise friend once told me, "human beings are ugly but everything else of Creator's making is beautiful." It is in the spring that we truly see the spiritual wonders of



*See Dumont on page 11*

## FEELING FAITH MADE TANGIBLE AT THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

By Canon Doug Richards

Just over a year ago, I was in Jerusalem on a pilgrimage led by our Dean. I did not anticipate how life-changing this pilgrimage would be. To visit the many different sites and to experience the holiness of each of them. To sing Silent Night in the grotto of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, to walk beside the Sea of Galilee, and to journey the Via Dolorosa, were all spiritually uplifting. However, one of my cherished memories is walking into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and experiencing for the first time the place where it is believed that Jesus died, was buried, and where the women found the empty tomb.

When I entered the church, I came face-to-face with a beautiful fresco of the burial of Jesus. It is almost life size and takes up an entire wall opposite the entrance. It depicts Jesus being taken down from the cross, prepared for burial, and placed in the tomb. It is awe inspiring. I could have sat

there the entire day and meditated on the different parts of it.

Walking into the sepulchre itself, the place where they laid Jesus, was very moving. We could go into the sepulchre in groups of four and spend about a minute within. The atmosphere in it was charged with faith. It struck me that this is the place where Jesus' body once lay. It was quiet in there, with only the sound of our breath. It felt like we were in the sepulchre for an eternity, but our time ended far quicker than I had hoped.

This experience changed everything for me about Easter. Before entering the sepulchre, my experience of Easter was only from reading the gospel stories — something that lived within my imagination and my faith. But when I came out of the sepulchre, Easter had become very real. I had touched the place where they laid Jesus' body, I had seen the empty tomb, and I had smelled the centuries of



incense that had marked the prayers of the faithful. The experience now was tangible — etched in my memory — and I forever had been changed.

Something that I became aware of while walking around the church and sitting in the courtyard was the murmur of the many people speaking in hushed tones. There were people from the four corners of the world in this place. From a small group of people who spoke Aramaic two thousand years ago, the Good News of Easter had spread. People come from all over the world to witness this place and then return home and tell others about it.

*See Vicar on page 12*

## THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES OF 20 GREAT YEARS



Shane with his children, a week before he started as dean  
Left to right: Felan, Rosemary, Liam, Shane.

Shane Parker has been our Dean, head of our Cathedral family and good friend for 20 years. Here's a few memories to share as he moves on to become our bishop.

### *From Peggy and David Morgan:*

When we set out last year to join Shane on the third pilgrimage he has led to Israel, it is only fair to say that we were not entirely sure what we had let ourselves in for. Yes, it was a part of the world we were anxious to see for ourselves, and, yes, we were confident in his leadership and organization, but we really were not ready for the enthusiasm he had for his subject, any subject, touching on the Holy Land. We have both had the good fortune to work closely

with him, enjoying his very capable leadership of our busy parish life. But this was something different: enthusiasm and warmth aplenty, but the boyish charm and excitement of sharing even the smallest piece of something so special will stay with us forever. While we are sad to see him leave as our Dean, knowing that he will be nearby as our bishop takes away some of the sting.

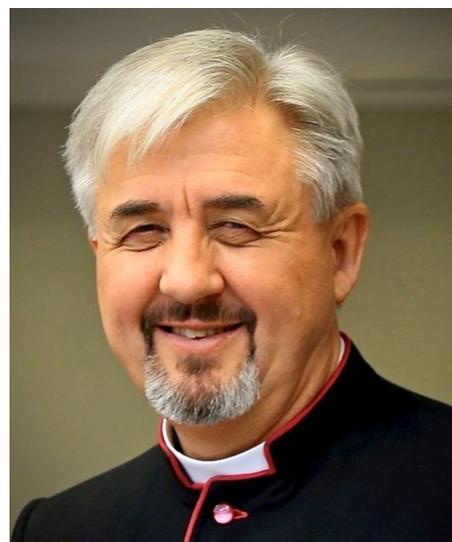
### *From Gwynneth Evans:*

Shane has led three pilgrimages to the land of the Holy One; I went along in 2017. I remember being not far from the Church of the Nativity, at an ancient site where shepherds watched their flocks by night. From there to the church is an

elegant tree-lined boulevard, where I was dawdling, in search of flowers. Suddenly, Shane's voice came from behind me: "But you have been a teacher, haven't you? You know that we have to stay together." I was taken from my reverie and shaken into obedience.

### *From John McBride:*

Cynthia and I knew Shane when he was the assistant curate starting out in Cornwall, so our friendship goes back 30 years. Eighteen years ago, I was shaking hands with Shane in the reception line at the New Year's Levee. He casually (or so I thought) asked me what I was doing. I replied not much, as I was approaching retirement. A few days later he asked if I





With the Very Reverend Hosam Naoum, Dean and Bishop-elect of Jerusalem

could help out for a brief period as the parish administrator during a renovation project. "Just watch over the place during construction." He was not, I realize, too clear which renovation project. The Lauder Hall renos came and went, then Cathedral Hall was demolished and the new hall built and then surprisingly, 15 years later, my renovations oversight was done! Shane has his methods; but working with him was never a job, it was a wonderful 15-year collaboration with a friend.

***From Albert Dumont:***

I can't help but admire and honour a good man like Shane Parker, who places his faith beliefs in the forefront of all the hours of his day, so he can counsel, lead and be a role model and mentor to all who have contact with him. Like the Golden Eagle Shane and I once saw, who allowed the canoe we were in to come within 20 feet of it before the great bird spread its wings and took to the sky from the branch it was perched upon, Shane holds the sky as the limit he strives to reach as a spiritual

guide for the people of his flock.

***From Catherine Ascah:***

One year, on Advent I, I was scheduled to preach but woke up to discover I had completely lost my voice. I texted the Dean to give him advance notice. "Houston, we have a problem...I've lost my voice," but got no reply. When he arrived and came into my office with a cheerful "Good morning, Madame V," he was confronted with wild gesticulating and hand signals on my part. "What's the matter?" he asked. I waved my



Dean Parker leads pilgrims in the land of the Holy One

## MEMORIES

### From page 5

sermon manuscript in the air and mouthed, "I have no voice!" It was the first time I had ever seen him look even mildly alarmed. He had precisely eight minutes to get homily thoughts in order before the service started. Which, of course, he did.

### *From Sally Gomery:*

When our son Edward was about 12 years old, I asked Shane one Sunday if he would mind talking to him about some issue, because I thought that Edward could benefit from his insight. Shane gave me a quizzical look and

told me that he and Edward had already talked at length about it. And I realized that Shane had taken the time to build an independent relationship with each of my kids, and that each of them looked to him as someone they could turn to when they had questions or problems.

### *From Christine Jannasch:*

When Stephen and I talk about the Dean, we think of him outdoors: striding along on pilgrimage (in Gatineau Park and on evening walks in the Holy Land), leaving his followers wishing for Seven League Boots; celebrating Eucharist on the shores of

the Sea of Galilee; renewing baptismal vows at the Jordan River; hiking in Ireland; gardening around the condo; and kayaking on lakes and oceans. May he continue to find renewal outdoors in his new ministries.

### *From Ron Medas:*

Shane's guidance has enlivened all the Cathedral's ministries: I think of Cathedral Arts. Its diverse programming — from special concerts for Black history month, to thought-provoking lectures on reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples — have drawn many newcomers to the Cathedral. I have also experienced his pastoral skills. Years ago, facing major surgery, I was comforted by him praying with me. On the day of surgery, although busy preparing to leave on vacation, he found time to call for an update.

### *From Pat Johnston:*

Jesus replied [to the lawyer] "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers..." So begins "The Good Samaritan." When I close my eyes just now, I can hear Dean Parker telling this



Dean Parker celebrates the Eucharist at the Sea of Galilee



Dean Parker presides at the blessing of the animals

parable to a group of pilgrims on their bus, heading out of Jerusalem towards Jericho. As he read, we watched the undulating hills and barren and unforgiving landscape. We could imagine the foreigner who took pity on the wounded man, extending compassion and mercy to him. The Dean concluded the story with Jesus' words, "Go and do likewise." When I think of a story that captures the essence of my friend Shane, I think of his warm care as a pilgrim leader, wise, thoughtful, sensitive, compas-

sionate, and all of that with a great sense of humour.

*From Judith Dowler:*

In the old days, before the Great Hall was built, the Cathedral kitchen was a long narrow room with a door off one end that led to the staff parking lot. Often, arriving from a meeting, the Dean would come in that back door to find the kitchen crowded with members of Cathedral Women making up trays of sandwiches for a tea or a funeral. "Blessed are the sandwich makers," he would say. Indeed, we did feel blessed. As an occasional organizer of Cathedral Women's events, I looked forward to his participation in our planning. He always emphasized that fel-

lowship, not funds, was the important outcome of the events we hold — contributing to a collegial working environment for us all.

*From James Calkin:*

I don't think I knew how to listen before coming to this place and working for Shane. This sounds extraordinary, I know, coming from a professional musician: one whose whole métier consists of creating and listening to sound. But it's true. Shane is a subtle and intelligent listener. He is empathetic, fair, and disciplined. He not only inspires and persuades, he attends and hears. I count it one of the great privileges of my career to have been challenged and shaped by his model.



"Daddo" heads into the future

## THE WORLD'S ON HOLD, BUT HUNGER DOESN'T GO AWAY

By Karen McBride and J.B. Coutts

One cold night this winter the Great Hall was transformed into a karaoke pub. Members of the Cathedral choirs volunteered their time and talent to help raise almost \$3,000 for the food justice ministries of St. Luke's Table and the Dalhousie Food Cupboard.

Throughout January, parishioners were invited to bid on popular songs they wanted to hear. The final number of the night, Celebration by Kool and the Gang, was a joyful outpouring of singing and laughter, as the audience joined in a dance line around the Great Hall.

No one had known what to expect from this new type of fundraiser, but pub-goers were happily surprised — as someone said, it was like attending a big, intergenerational wedding.

In retrospect, we can see the karaoke night was particularly well-timed, an infusion of cash to provide support for some of the city's most vulnerable people, made all the

more so by Covid-19. While the need for physical distancing has shut down day programs offered by the Diocese, the need for food goes on.



Cathedral choristers present karaoke in support of food justice ministries.

“The St. Luke's folks are really, really struggling,” said the Venerable PJ Hobbs, director of Mission for the Diocese of Ottawa. Many of the people who turn to St. Luke's Table live with addiction and mental illness, in some of the city's worst rooming houses, or are sleeping rough, he said.

However, while Covid-19 has taken some of their social

support away (they can no longer spend their days or eat their meals together at St. Luke's) food support continues. Before COVID-19, St. Luke's was the largest meal program in Ottawa. Now, employees are packing and distributing 150 to 180 meals a week.

The program's costs have tripled. The diocese approached the city early on, and will receive a share of the federal government's emergency funding for charities. “We are very very grateful for the money our city partners have offered us,” PJ said, “...but we are certainly accepting donations from our friends in the community.”

Cathedral members have also long supported the Dalhousie Food Cupboard on Bronson Avenue. They are also in greater need during these challenging times.

You can donate to St. Lukes online at: [www.stlukestable.ca/index.php/how-to-help](http://www.stlukestable.ca/index.php/how-to-help) Dalhousie Food Cupboard at: [www.dalhousiefoodcupboard.ca/donate.html](http://www.dalhousiefoodcupboard.ca/donate.html)

## CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER DURING COVID-19

By Canon Hilary Murray

The world turned upside down for many of us when we had to face the reality that our church, our place of comfort and support, was no longer available as of Sunday, March 15. Initially I do not think we fully grasped what it would mean to participate in the act of “self-distancing.” I think many of us accepted that we would have to pass the season of Lent in our own homes, separate from our church community, but were hoping we would be back together in church for Palm/Passion Sunday and definitely for Easter. However, with changing news each day, very quickly we came to the realization this Easter would be spent in our homes and not in the beauty of our Cathedral.

Immediately the challenge arose — how do we as church remain connected to one another? How do we continue to be a supportive presence especially to those who are more vulnerable: our most senior members, those who are single and living a distance away from

family, those who do not have any family or strong support networks? How do we as church shift from traditional ways of connecting to one another and create new ways of reaching out?

As Canon Pastor I have discovered many gifts of faith which I received from many of you. The biggest gift, which defines all of what we are doing, is the gift of God’s love which is being shared freely with and for each other. Through this gift, many of you have taken risks by going out of your way to help others with delivering groceries, running errands, assisting in caring for pets and children, and much more.

We have found innovative ways to connect face to face with each other through our computers using different social media websites. Some have used Google Hangouts to meet for dinner, talking and learning how to make family spaghetti sauce recipes. Some use Zoom for group check-ins, planning and chats, as well as for one-on-one support. We are also



staying connected through telephone calls. A simple phone call can let a fellow parishioner know they are in our hearts and minds and are being prayed for. Members of the pastoral care team have begun participating in corporate virtual midday prayer services, being present in spirit to offer prayers for each other, those in need and the community.

However, what all these new ways of staying connected to one another have in common at their core is God. In God we offer support and share God’s love with others. And in all these actions we are shining a light of hope into a world full of fear and uncertainty, while acknowledging the many expressions of God’s grace.

## OVER THE DISTANCE, MUSIC CONNECTS US

By James Calkin

Like groups and institutions around the world, our three choirs, organists and conductors have not gathered since mid-March, since public worship shut down at the Cathedral and distanced our community from one another. “Distancing” means the regular paths by which the choirs engage and contribute, uphold and are upheld are, for the moment, closed: rehearsals, services, concerts, team-building, travel. It has become vital to find ways to keep our choirs connected to parish life.

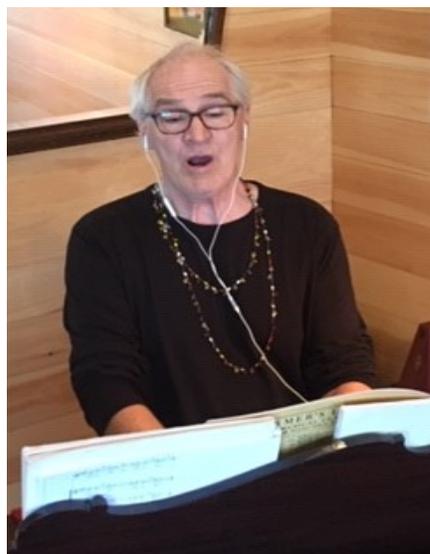
Over the last several weeks we have worked to bring the voices of our choristers, the acoustic of our church and the timbre of our organ into the Cathedral’s online services. You may have recognized in those solitary unaccompanied voices or in those archive recordings of our choirs familiar accents or turns of phrase. We even made physically distanced music by having multiple choristers record themselves singing, so we could weave their voices together.

These sounds may have brought faces, images and memories to mind. I hope they have brought you, virtually, closer to this place and enriched your experience of worship in this holy season.

At the same time, we are nourishing the esprit de corps of our choirs. For the girls this has meant, in partnership with our head choristers and deploying every ounce of technology available, we have regular virtual team meetings where we check in on one another, assign weekly challenges, brainstorm, trouble-shoot — and even sing “Happy Birthday.” They are restless. They miss their friends. And they miss this place. Together, though, we look ahead and prepare positively for that day when we can sing together once again.

During all this, perhaps more intensely than at any other point in my career, I have been moved by the way our music and our singing bring comfort and to witness the power of the Cathedral choirs to inspire and guide people

(especially young people) to a faithful life of service. In 2012 when I was interviewed to be associate director of music I was asked: “What, to you, does it signify that together the Cathedral choirs and their work are a ministry?” I have often thought since about that question and its underlying premise. And while we initially take on these roles as professional musicians (organists and conductors), the ensuing years and this moment in particular have unveiled a calling far more urgent and enriching.



Gary Dahl records himself singing for the Palm Sunday service.

## COLD DAY, WARM WELCOME: INDUCTING VICAR DOUG RICHARDS

From the sermon given by the Reverend Canon Beth Bretzlaff:

Doug, your enjoyment of this place and ministry, your gentle and solid presence, and your support of your colleagues, is evident.

For someone of your experience, used to flying solo as an incumbent, choosing to become part of this Cathedral team says much about your desire to always keep learning, and your commitment to working in partnership.

Doug, you are a warm, honourable, faithful man, and a fine priest.

And you are also someone who has been through difficult and challenging times, and come out the other side of those with grace and an open heart.

Life and ministry are challenging and inherently risky.

Like skating, the falls are usually sudden, as the bumps and cracks are not always evident; and they are hard, knocking the wind out of us (just ask the Dean!)

But many have gone before us; their lives giving us inspiration, and the courage to get back up and keep going.



Dean Shane Parker and Canon Pastor Hilary Murray welcome Canon Doug Richards to his ministry at the Cathedral.

## DUMONT

From page 2

Creator. The stirring soil holding the roots of the great trees tightly — so the tree can stand and send oxygen into the wind — is seen by us as old but age has not slowed the land's vigour and energy. The earth produces what she is directed to by her allies and guides, the moon, fire, waters and the winds.

The springtime of the year reminds us that we, the people living on the planet at this time are duty-bound, through the teachings passed on to us by our ancestors, to do all we can to ensure health and wellness for those things whose absence would spell the end of humankind.

We will overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. Influenza is not what will wipe us out. What can and will kill us is the pollution we heap daily on Mother Earth. When we kill water, we kill ourselves.

## DEAN

### From page 1

*know one another better, I am confident that we will be enabled to celebrate our strengths and gladly identify and address areas that can help us grow stronger.”*

My pride in our Cathedral, its people and its ministries, has become even deeper over the last twenty years; as has the love and trust that grew as we shared in the evolution of our ministries, the development of our properties, and the extension of our role into the wider community. Together, by the grace of God, we have made the Cathedral to be strong and vital as a parish, as the mother church of the diocese, and as a sister cathedral in the world-wide Anglican Communion.

The discernment process to appoint a new dean will begin in May, in consultation with the Cathedral Committee and others. As I wrote in 1999, the appointment of a new Dean will be a time of reflecting, reviewing, and refining, allowing everyone to consider, in new ways, what God is calling you to be at this time. I am confident that

our new dean will bring her or his strengths to your strengths, and that the ministry of our Cathedral will grow even stronger.

This transition in leadership is happening as an ominous pandemic runs its course—and it is good to keep our eyes on the time when it has passed, as it surely will. God is with us as the coronavirus pandemic unfolds, calling us to see how greed and exploitation cause great harm, and how compassion and wisdom cause great healing. The primary mission of our Cathedral, as it stands tall in the centre of the nation’s capital city, is to embody and proclaim the strong love, indestructible hope, and calming peace of Easter.

Easter is the most profound statement of God’s abundant, gracious love: there is always more than we can see, there are always more possibilities for life—especially when it feels like life has been taken away. The resurrection of Jesus tells us that the hope we need to lift us up and move us toward the time when this pandemic has passed is invincible and everlasting. So

let us not be afraid to embrace the future and look forward to it; let us be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love, all the days of our lives.

## VICAR

### From page 3

This is an amazing place. It changes people and calls them to a deeper experience of faith. I felt the call to a deeper faith as I explored this holy site. May we all, in this time of distress and anxiety, feel the call to look for the risen Christ in our world today, and to find in each other a peace that will move us from fear and anxiety to faith and adoration.

## Ex Cathedra

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