

# DIOCESAN EPOST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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## Underwriting the online revolution

Just as our church doors closed in 2020, some new doors opened as the parishes throughout the diocese explored other ways to reach out to the community. Fortunately, our diocese had already laid a solid communications foundation before the pandemic hit. A substantial investment in technology throughout the diocese allowed parishes of all sizes to be well positioned to reach out to the parishioners during COVID-19.

In the last five years, the diocese has spent more than \$53,000 to raise the tech bar, aided by grants from the Vision Fund. Starting in 2016, the diocese developed a new integrated website framework and paid the set-up fee for all parishes to have new websites of their own with similar branding and design. Recognizing that churches need ongoing operational support, the diocese has



*A new labyrinth for St. Philip, Oak Bay, completed in 2018, was one of the projects supported by the Vision Fund. Read about the legacy of this initiative on page 12.*

been offsetting website hosting and domain registration costs for the last two years and plans to do the same in the 2021 budget.

This initiative allows parishes to share events at the click of a button and collaborate in ways that were previously impossible. “These past few months we have discovered new and possibly in some ways more effective communication than ever imagined,” said Brian Evans, archdeacon and interim incumbent at St. John the Baptist, Duncan.

Over the summer, the parish had several coffee gatherings in the parking lot as well as drive-by blessings at Pentecost and drive-by milestone birthday celebrations. But the real outreach was the pre-recorded 20-minute prayer service each week (modified morning prayer) inclusive of a homily that has been well received. “With the use of Vimeo, Facebook and the parish website, this service has reached far beyond our own boundaries. I would never have thought there would be people in England interested in “my words” on a weekly basis,” he said.

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## Education fund receives bequest

A long-time Anglican parishioner has left a generous bequest to help train lay ministers in the diocese.

Elizabeth Hyde left \$10,000 as a cash legacy to the lay training fund, administered through the Educational Trusts Board. Her daughter, Charlotte, said her mother was adamant that the funds were needed to support opportunities for training lay people rather than clergy.

“Lay ministry and leadership

development is an important component of our diocesan vision for the renewal of our Church,” said Ansley Tucker, who is the board vice-chair as well as dean of Christ Church Cathedral and diocesan administrator. “Ms. Hyde’s gift provides an unexpected and welcome infusion of cash into our lay ministry fund and will allow the Educational Trusts Board to expand its reach. We are very grateful.”

Hyde had a lifelong passion for history. Born in Hertfordshire, UK, Hyde earned a history degree from the University of Oxford (St. Hugh’s). She and her husband moved to Canada in the 1950s, settling in Winnipeg where she earned a PhD in medieval history from the University of



*Elizabeth Hyde*

Manitoba. Charlotte joked that her mother considered any event after 1500 as “recent.” Her obituary noted she enjoyed activities such as “translating Latin cartularies.”

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# Kudos to stellar synod staff



**THE VERY REVEREND M. ANSLEY TUCKER**  
DIOCESAN ADMINISTRATOR

It is often said that ministry is like an iceberg: 90 per cent of it is beneath the surface. In my role as diocesan administrator, I have come to believe that the same is true of the work of our synod office staff. Over the past nine months, I have had the opportunity to observe their work at close range. Here is some of what I saw.

A lot of what our staff do is to provide advice and assistance concerning problems faced by individual parishes. These problems may be related to financial difficulties, to property concerns, to the recruitment and deployment of clergy

or other staff and – sadly – to resolving disputes and dissatisfactions. Much of this work is delicate or confidential; most Anglicans would be (and should be) unaware of it. But it is happening. Every day.

A long-departed archbishop of Toronto once quipped, “No problems: no jobs!” While this is true, it would be a mistake to think this is the most important aspect of the work we entrust to our diocesan staff. They also work as proactively as possible to help us find ways to implement our diocesan vision. This is leadership. Again, much of this has been “out of sight” during the pandemic, but it has continued during COVID.

One webinar series on living out our covenant of baptism focused directly on our commitment to lay leadership and ministry formation. Another, on re-imagining church in our changing culture, introduced participants to emerging models of ministry. Yet a third project has been the establishment of a much-needed conversation and support group called Bon Appetit for our newer clergy. All these projects fall under the umbrella of “faith in formation.”

Under the rubric of “faith in action,” our ministry resettling refugees is second to none, and the need continues to grow.

Our refugee coordinators, even working flat out, cannot keep up with the demand. Currently, we have a wait-list of 350. This is also an area where we are collaborating successfully with people of all faiths and none – a clear example of “engaging God’s world.”

The third major emphasis in our diocesan vision is “faith in foundation.” These are the things that simply must be done by our diocesan staff if we are to function in good order, and to remain in compliance with such agencies as the CRA, or our insurers. They include the administration of payroll and benefits; negotiating insurance and managing claims; remittances to vendors, grantees and the national church; banking and financial reporting; the administration of our electronic collection plate; and so on.

On top of all this, COVID-19 has placed extraordinary demands. Our finance officer has spent countless hours following changing developments in the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and preparing our applications for assistance. Other staff produced and communicated our diocesan COVID-19 safety protocols, pivoting quickly and good-naturedly each time the rules changed.

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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.

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# How is our diocesan vision functioning?



BY BRENDON NEILSON

Over the last couple of months, I have been reflecting with the diocesan council on the state of the vision. Our collective intention to be a renewed people with renewed hearts and renewed spirits has been with us in some form since 2014. It is worthwhile doing some reflection together on how we are doing on this journey of renewal. Before we can move to a fuller assessment or evaluation of the vision, it is important to get an idea of how it has been used, or how it has functioned in our diocese.

One tool that is often quite revealing is to think from within different metaphors. Each metaphor highlights certain aspects of what we are trying to understand and hides or diminishes others. The following three images are options for how we might understand

the vision and how we would like it to function.

Has the vision functioned as a lens? Like coloured glasses, the vision allows us to see our collective life in a particular light. The categories (action, formation, foundation) highlight the way we understand the various tasks and goals to which we have committed ourselves. The lens-vision allows us to see our work and the world in this way. All the activities and initiatives in our shared vocation are seen through the vision lens that allows us to see and describe things in a similar way across the diocese, geographically and across our areas of passion and giftedness.

Has the vision functioned as a map? The vision portrays the terrain that we must navigate on our journey of renewal. We see each of the directions as locations for exploration and appreciation as we make our way toward renewal and transformation. The map-vision gives us a description of what we will encounter along the way, the valleys and mountains, the places of difficulties, the unexplored as well as the well-worn paths. A map helps us locate ourselves in relationship to what is around us, and points to areas where we might venture in the future.

Has the vision functioned as a mirror? The vision is a mirror that allows us to see ourselves in a certain way. In this image the vision is interpreting us, as a kind of tool of self-understanding. The map-vision allows us to see ourselves highlighting or expanding certain areas for examination. It provides us with a way of seeing and analyzing our life together to assess if we are living up to who we intend to be. What does the vision tell us about ourselves? Where do we see growth, where do we see need?

Each of these images brings with it a series of questions and insights. I hope that you can take some time in your communities to consider how the vision has functioned in your parish. Has it been a lens, a map, or a mirror? Or maybe another image reveals its use in our lives.

Vision implementation is a long-term project that is necessarily difficult to measure. The journey of transformation and renewal is continuous, and it involves those deep convictions that we seek to live out in our lives and in our communities. The time is right to reflect and revisit our relationship to the vision as we look toward a renewed future together. ■

*Brendon Neilson is the vision animator for the diocese.*

## Underwriting the online revolution

*Continued from cover*

Most recently, in 2020, the diocese spent close to \$5,000 for Zoom licenses for all parishes and a Vimeo license with live streaming available for use by all parishes. In 2019/2020 the diocese also provided \$500 computer grants to upgrade parish office computers. We may sometimes be fatigued by the frequent screen time, but for many,

online platforms are the only way to visit with others or participate in worship services.

Due to the tech improvements, rural and urban churches can both connect easily. “It’s about ensuring that our parishes have what they need to communicate effectively in a technology-driven world,” said Catherine Pate, communications director for the diocese. “We were beginning to fall behind, and there is an inequity amongst parishes in being able to afford to upgrade equipment and have a strong presence online. Now we are all on a more even playing field.”

The situation is still hampered by poor internet coverage in remote areas. Pate urges church leaders to pressure government for action on this issue. “We now need to work together around fair access to the internet in remote communities,” she said. “The church needs to be involved in speaking out about this as a justice issue and push government and industry to provide this essential service throughout the country.”

*Susan Down with files from Catherine Pate.*

RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS** RENEWED **PEOPLE**





## Reflections and Predictions

### Pandemic offers launchpad for message

BY ALASTAIR SINGH-MCCOLLUM

St. John the Divine, Victoria, began this pandemic like many other Christian communities, taking a reactive rather than a proactive approach to using technology in order to try and maintain some sense of 'normalcy' in the strange times we found ourselves in. Our services, initially broadcast live through Facebook and YouTube, soon became Zoom meetings which celebrated a commemoration of the sacrament rather than a kind-of eucharist. We shared a sense of mourning that we couldn't join together in the holy meal, but at the same time recognized that the physical sharing of the eucharist could be remembered and marked in our prayers using the technology we all quickly were getting to grips with using day by day. And for those who had any difficulty 'plugging in,' advice and assistance were provided.

We took the opportunity to create a shared daily space for prayer on weekdays at noon: a mix of recorded, 'Zoomed', and Facebook Live versions of the midday office, which has grown a certain following, usually a dozen viewers for each live broadcast with up to 400 views later. A new sense of being a 'praying community' which enlarged our own physical community has emerged. These

midday prayers began to offer a space for more creative use of liturgy and other resources and are led by members of the leadership and congregation of the church.

Meetings quickly went online, and we have learned that in this world of 'screen fatigue' it is better to try and keep them shorter, preferably nearer one hour rather than the two hours we used to budget 'IRL' (In Real Life).

As the pandemic has continued, and in the most recent shutdowns, the more creative approach has continued – as we have managed a 'hybrid' version of the service with music and a leader in the church building and other contributors taking part via Zoom. Our approach to using technology has been led by a few innovative folk, particularly our associate warden Karen Coverett and our musical director David Stratkauskas. They have researched and implemented various aspects of our livestream technology from hardware and software to the use of our website and the best shape for our liturgical offerings. As is often the case in church communities, finding personnel who can do these things and then trying to prevent them from burning out is proving to be a struggle.

We have tried to balance the sense of wanting to be curious, creative, even

innovative, with the need to create an online space that is welcoming and comforting for our community – somewhere that feels familiar in a world where pretty much everything feels different. We also continue to ask how what we are offering can engage with and encourage the participation of those outside our parish community. Unlike a usual Sunday-by-Sunday gathering in our church building, it is difficult to find a way where new people can 'drop in' to a Zoom worship meeting – particularly as we try to balance openness with safety in our online gathering.

As 2021 dawns, I think that the church at large will need to continue to ask questions about inclusion, welcome, and openness in on online spaces. At St. John, we will continue to offer our daily online prayer, and to 'livecast' our worship even beyond the blessed day when we can again gather, as we have found a larger community who do seem to want to explore faith and connect through digital means. We are hoping that this pandemic can offer a launchpad into new and creative ways of sharing our message of faith, hope, and love and offer a space both online and physically which is welcoming, gracious, and safe to explore matters of spirit, justice, and worship. ■

*Alastair Singh-McCollum is an archdeacon and incumbent at St. John the Divine, Victoria.*

### A New Year's prediction

BY CHRISTOPHER PAGE

*Meeting challenges with tenacity and grace*

The beginning of a new year is often a time when prophets dust off their skills

and try to peer into the future to predict what may lie ahead.

But who could possibly have predicted at the beginning of 2020, that we would be in the place we find ourselves today? COVID-19 has brought uncertainty and change in almost every area of life. The church has not been spared from this upheaval.

Much that we cherish has been stripped away. We have lost ways of being together that were strong and nurturing. It has been tempting at times to feel overwhelmed.

But I have been deeply moved and profoundly encouraged by the determination I see all around me to adapt to the challenge of these days.

I could never have dreamed that I would find myself leading services in which most of the congregation would be "Zoomed" onto a screen above my head, while a small gathering participated scattered around the pews in the building. Who could have thought that in one service, the sermon would come from a

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## A New Year's prediction

*Continued from page 4*

parishioner in Mexico, with music from nine musicians around the city, a reader in the church building, prayers offered from another home, and a children's time projected from a local park? Who could have imagined drive-around trick-or-treating to parish family homes, do-it-yourself Advent wreaths delivered to families and a virtual Christmas pageant with no one in the building?

These are not things I could have made happen. I have depended for these

initiatives on the dedication, skill and talent of a host of creative people in our community. We have been learning and growing together, finding new ways to connect and experimenting with how church might be done in these strange times.

So, based on my experience of the past 12 months, there is one prediction I can make with confidence.

I predict that, at all levels of society and no less in the church, we will continue to meet the challenges that lie ahead with creativity, tenacity, grace, flexibility, determination and commitment.

I see abundant evidence that the church is fulfilling Paul's injunction "of stewards that they be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2).

In the spirit with which we have met the new realities COVID has forced upon us, I predict we will adapt. We will continue to find new life together. We will carry on bearing witness to the steady stable power of love that is our reason for doing this thing we call "church" whatever it may look like moving forward. ■

*Christopher Page is the incumbent at St. Philip, Oak Bay.*

## Mount Douglas Manor wins commercial building award

BY PETER DANIEL

A seniors' residence developed by the Mount Douglas Senior Housing Society has won the 2020 award of excellence in affordable housing from the Victoria Real Estate Board. The honour is presented at the annual Commercial Building Awards, held annually in November (the 2020 awards were on video).

The award for this new project as the best affordable housing building of the year is a credit to the society, diocese and all involved who made it a reality. Anglican Church Women (ACW) donated a large suburban Saanich property to the Mount Douglas Senior Housing Society in the early 1970s. Society directors came from the ACW and Anglican parishes. Faithful stewardship by the society has provided safe housing for low-income seniors, with 80 units of affordable rental housing in the first rambling two-storey structure from the 1970s carefully maintained.

When all mortgage debt on the first building was repaid, the society committed to a new building for affordable rental housing for seniors on the vacant northern portion of the property. This major financial undertaking



*Mount Douglas Manor*

consumed over three years of advocacy with neighbours and the municipality of Saanich before approvals were finally granted.

The society financed construction of a new three-storey affordable housing building, which took over two years to construct. The housing units were filled within a month of completion in 2019. It is easy to understand why. The new project offers comfortable amenity spaces and extensive landscaping with walkways and raised planting beds where residents can grow vegetables and flowers.

Under the leadership of the board chair, David Cooper, and his building committee, the development was completed with a team of professionals including Number Ten Architecture and Citta Construction.

All consultants and trades on this project understood the need for affordable rental housing and committed to a program that brought the new building in on schedule and

on budget – not an easy task in this market. The contractor invited over 175 subtrade bids to keep the project in line. The society was fortunate to find a capable professional administrator during development. Her attention to detail has made the project a success for happy residents in both the existing and the new buildings.

The diocese assisted with some bridge financing and professional advice from its former asset manager, Peter Daniel. Financing was secured through Vancity and the TD Bank. Mortgage insurance from CMHC has kept financing rates low so that rents stay affordable.

Bishop Logan and Isobel McKenzie, Seniors Advocate for BC, both attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony on completion in the spring of 2019. She complimented the diocese and the society for the work they continue to do to increase the affordable housing stock for seniors. ■



# The universal heart of puppetry

BY TIM GOSLEY

Before puppetry, my existence was tickled by an unfettered spiritual curiosity. I was born Anglican, but my spiritual foundation was poured during the long 1960s (1955 to 1973). We in the Me Generation created individualized belief systems by melding pop culture with a spiritual mashup of Zen, New Age, First Nations, Hindu, Wicca, and psychedelics, all to the strains of ragarock music. The resulting dual tension between the frivolous and the profound would be a perfect environment for me to create a puppet show.

The University of Victoria's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS) welcomed me as its 2019/20 artist in residence (after my third application). I was assigned an office, given a stipend, expected to attend departmental activities and interact with faculty and my fellow fellows, many of whom were working towards their graduate degrees. The principal reason I was there was to create *The Heart Coffer: A Puppeteer's Quest for the Universal Heart*. I was not expected to teach, but I was expected to give a final public talk about my project, and I was encouraged to give smaller informal presentations at the department's daily coffee talks. I gave three. One explained Runaway Moon Theatre's (Grindrod, B.C.) community-based 'suitcase shows,' where participants, most non-performers, use storytelling along with objects and puppets contained in a suitcase to answer the question, "How did you get here?" The second involved bringing in two Québécois puppet artists to discuss the differences between puppets and object manipulation. And the third was post-COVID-19, when the talks became coffee Zoom chats. I showed video clips of spiritual connections to puppets through examples such as the Northwest's First Nations, 19th-century Austrian theosophist puppeteer Richard Teschner and contemporary artists



Puppeteer Tim Gosley is surrounded by his creations including his sidekick, Little Yellow Guy.

including Vermont's Bread and Puppet Theatre. I gave a sock puppet workshop (via Zoom) to some of the department members' children.

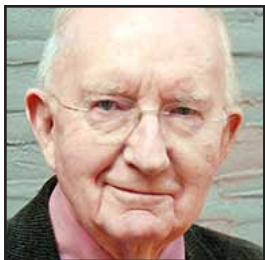
The purpose of the CSRS artist in residence position is to explore the department mandate outside of the academic box. Puppets do this well, at least I do, as I am far more intuitive than empirical. There was a mutual fascination between my loosey-goosey, new age, mind space, and their academic inquisitive rigour. They seemed sincerely intrigued to see inanimate objects imbued with the illusion of life, and I enjoyed their different articulations towards the power of the puppet. One person was intrigued by their extension into animism. Another called it magical that the puppeteer could be visible and immerse an audience into the world of wireframed shadow puppet characters. Magical thinking is a term used gingerly and usually derogatively in academic circles. In my jester-like role at the centre, I could jibe at the dichotomy of their fact-based material methodology towards understanding the belief-laden and invisible realms of spirituality.

Personally, the residency was an opportunity for me to marry my two principal interests: puppets and spirituality. And I discovered that puppetry has the alchemical potential to turn the mundane world into spiritual gold. I was exploring this prior to the CSRS, but by working at the centre, my creation process became more conscious.

*The Heart Coffer* was intended to explore world traditions regarding anything to do with the heart, ephemeral or eternal, and then corral this information into a puppet performance, not as a scholarly work, but rather as thoughtful entertainment. The resulting volume of heart information was vast and nebulous. I struggled for a point of view, a lens through which an audience could engage. The natural gravitation within my research took me to books and icons from my youth such as Allan Watts and *The Autobiography of a Yogi*. Also, I became fascinated by near-death experiences (NDEs), in which some people, when momentarily clinically dead, experience their life-forces separate from their bodies and enter a chamber of bright light where they are overwhelmed by love and empathy. They often talk with a messiah or representative from their belief system. This research impacted *The Heart Coffer* in two ways. First, at some point NDEs will be able to be empirically defined and may be a missing link to connect science to the spiritual realms (The connection of science and ancient spiritual teachings is a theme throughout the show). And as someone whose spiritual foundation was formed in the long 1960s, I wondered who I might see in the light chamber at the end of the tunnel when I die. This gave me the point of view I was searching for to present the show.

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# A brief encounter



## Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

By late afternoon he came down out of the hills to a wooded valley. He noticed that the forest floor was tinder dry. Even this far north the drought had the region in its grip.

After a while he came to a cluster of makeshift huts. He saw a woman gathering twigs. He stopped because he realized he must be an alarming figure after the long journey north.

They looked at one another for a moment before he risked breaking the silence. He gasped out a single word: "water." She turned towards the huts as if to flee. He called after her, "I'm starving. Please - a morsel of bread." She turned to him. "I have nothing" she said. "A handful of meal and a few drops of oil. These twigs will burn and let me bake some bread. I have a young son. After this there nothing left, so we will die." Her tone was one of utter resignation.

As he listened he realized something was possible if he could reassure her to trust him. He pleaded "Share the bread with me, and I can help you." Undecided,

she stood there. Then she beckoned him to follow her.

The makeshift shelter was built against the wall. A small boy came out to her and she held him for a moment to reassure him. Then she lifted the cloth flap, and the three of them went in.

It would be the beginning of a months-long relationship that allowed the three of them to survive. He became the forager for food. She was able to do the chores that made life liveable. The boy turned more and more freely to this strange, powerful figure in his life, his trust increasing until he and the stranger would go together on their searches for food and fuel. The stranger introduced him to a larger world, telling him of a distant king's court, of the great sea to the west and of the vast desert to the south and east.

Then one day everything changed. He was some distance from the home when he heard crying. Racing back, he found her sobbing and gesturing to the interior of the hut. The boy was spread comatose on the rough clothes where he and his mother slept.

It was obvious that this was no simple slumber. He asked quickly what had happened. Many years of living in the desert made it all too obvious that the child was a victim of the sun.

For what happened next, he was absolutely unprepared. Turning from her child, his mother, her face twisted with grief, spoke with an intensity and deliberation he would never forget. Something dark from her past, some suffering he would never know, took possession of her. Making every word a weapon she said, "You have come to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son."

Something told him he must act. He lifted the limp, slight body in his arms, threw it over his shoulder and climbed the ladder to his own small sleeping chamber.

A fierce sense of defiance swept through him, a defiance of this awful loss, the drought, the famine, even the God that ruled the elements and the fragile journey of human life itself.

Crouching above the child, legs straddling the small figure, hands stretched to cover the child's small hands, he bent to the boy's open mouth, filled his own body with breath, then fiercely forced the breath of life into the child. Again and again he did it, tirelessly keeping up the frantic rhythm. Near despair, he paused before beginning again, breath upon breath until, exhausted, he fell on the small body, hearing himself beseeching the very source of life to relent its hold, then letting his head fall on the child's shoulder in utter exhaustion.

His sleep must have been only momentary. He woke to feel a stirring, to see eyes looking into his. Sweeping the boy in his arms he stood at the top of the small ladder. Below him he looked into eyes he realized he had come to love. Between them they tended the child.

*The day would come when he would say goodbye and leave. Scripture has no record of his ever returning to them. He would risk his life to defy a king and the dark influences that were changing his country. That struggle would go on until he died. We know him as Elijah the Prophet. ■*

*Herb O'Driscoll is a retired priest, conference leader and prolific author of books, hymns and radio scripts.*

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## Connecting religion with a need for justice



### My Journey

BY ELAINE JULIAN

### *A regular feature sharing the stories of clergy in the diocese*

I was born and raised in small-town southern Alberta, with a United Church minister for a father and a United Church minister's daughter for a mother. Both my father and grandfather were strong "social gospel" ministers and so I grew up connecting religion with the need to work for justice. I moved away from the church during my late teens and early adulthood, only to be gradually called back through my longing for a deeper connection to the Holy and the help and support of many mentors and my Campbell River church family.

I was active on the council of Campbell River United Church and in what was then Comox Nanaimo Presbytery. I was also drawn to contemplative practices like centering prayer, lectio divina and labyrinths. I was aware of some small United Church congregations which could afford only part-time ministry and were unable to find ministers. I gradually felt called to minister with those communities.

I intended to become a designated lay minister, but with the help of my discernment committee discovered that God was leading me into ordained ministry. St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon was just beginning to offer online options, and I knew that their program and delivery model suited me. In an early phone conversation, the principal at the time, Lorne Calvert, said, "If this is the place for you, we'll make it happen." I completed my first year by distance learning, my second year on campus in Saskatoon, and then did a 20-month residency with Cumberland United Church that included frequent trips back to Saskatoon for intensive courses. I was ordained by BC Conference of the United Church of Canada in 2016.

I was a professional librarian for most of my working life and came to

ministry after retiring from Vancouver Island Regional Library in 2012. My ministry with Cumberland United Church included two more years after ordination. It was a privilege to walk with them as they discerned that they couldn't continue as a congregation, as they disbanded, and as they made faithful decisions to free up resources and make space for the new church plant now known as Weird Church Cumberland. My interim posting with St. Columba Anglican-United Church in Port Hardy is my first experience working within the Anglican Church. My hope is that the church will continue to grapple with social justice issues like Indigenous reconciliation, climate justice, and racism so that the Gospel and the life and work of Jesus remain in a dynamic relationship with the world we are called to serve.

I'm semi-retired now, watching the tides from the home I share in Campbell River with my spouse, Harvey Kimball, two cats and one dog. I continue to serve in short-term appointments with several congregations and as pastoral charge supervisor with Denman Island United Church. I am also very happy to be a companion with the Emmaus community in Victoria. ■

*Elaine Julian is interim incumbent at St. Columba, Port Hardy.*

## The universal heart of puppetry

*Continued from page 6*

I would create *The Heart Coffin* as seen through the eyes of a white, privileged, hippy, Baby Boomer utilizing the ancient tools of puppetry. In other words, it would be seen through a caricature of myself, providing the potential for levity for the audience, and authenticity for the performer.

The public talk to complete my residency's obligation was postponed from March to November 2020 due to the pandemic. The advantage of the delay was that I had time to finish the creation and I performed it along with two live musicians

for small, mask-clad, distanced audiences and that performance was live-streamed.

What constitutes a puppet is in the eye of the beholder. "I was expecting to see more puppets," commented one attendee at our tiny COVID-sized performance. Most people see puppets as the Muppets, Punch and Judy, or marionettes. However, as a puppet artist, I like to broaden the definition to include object manipulation, shadow and light puppetry, live video projection including moving collage creation. *The Heart Coffin* broke new puppetry ground by using oyster shells as guru puppets, low-tech laser shadows to define invisible dimensions, and animated Post-It Notes to exemplify the banality of the material world. It mixed traditional puppetry with the experimental in a series of vignettes

I call an esoteric variety show. Different puppet techniques can visually exemplify the different dimensions and realities within the spiritual realms.

And so, *The Heart Coffin* performance became the sum of its parts. Each mini-exploration became an additional puzzle piece towards a larger meditation considering what constitutes the entirety of the universal heart. ■

*Tim Gosley has been a professional puppeteer since 1980, working with the Muppets on Fraggles Rock and Canadian Sesame Street. His own creative pursuits have led him to explore the worlds of LED shadow and light puppets, low-tech live video work as well as more traditional family forms.*



# Dorcas ministry ships parcels

BY ALICE TRUEMAN

The Dorcas outreach ministry run by the Anglican Church Women of our diocese has long sent Christmas parcels of new clothing and necessities, first to the Anglican missions in the Caledonia region and then to the Diocese of Caledonia, a practice ongoing since before 1860. In early years, the bales went north by ship to Prince Rupert and the Queen Charlotte Islands and eastward on the mainland. Today they are delivered by Canada Post. This year we sent to six villages: Masset and Old Massett on Haida Gwaii, Port Edward, Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, and Fort St. James. This is fewer than normal this year as one parish was so overwhelmed with the pandemic crisis that the church was unable to cope with the distribution.

In 2020, the boxes were packed in St John's church hall in Duncan on October 27 and mailed the next day. All boxes arrived safely and were collected from the local post offices within five days of mailing – a record. With COVID-19

threatening us, packing was not the usual social occasion. To keep the number of volunteers to fewer than eight at a time, we worked in two shifts. The morning team began arriving by 7 a.m. and sorted the donations, divided into bags for each place, and assembled a heap for each location. This group completed their tasks by 11:15 a.m. The afternoon team arrived at 12 noon, assembled the boxes, packed, labelled and taped. Strict protocols were followed with everyone wearing masks, keeping two metres apart, and following the directional arrows taped on the floor.

I want to thank everyone who contributed donations, transported bags and boxes to Duncan, helped on packing day, and handled the mailing run. Barbara Coleman arrived at 7 a.m. to unlock the door for my husband and me, provided lunch, and worked until the afternoon team finished. A very special thanks to her. Many thanks to Gail Crawford for organizing the mailing, and to Canada Post.

*Now is the time to start knitting for 2021! We need sweaters, toques, scarves, mitts, slippers, socks in child and adult sizes, afghans, quilts, and items for the joy bags given to people in distress. The need is great for baby items including clothing (knitted items, sleepers, and onesies in*

*infant sizes six months or larger), receiving blankets and afghans. Kits are available for Dorcas knitting containing yarn and patterns. Contact the diocesan office. ■*

*Alice Trueman is the Dorcas secretary for the Anglican Church Women.*



*Glenis Evans of St. John, Duncan helps pack the parcels for the annual shipment to remote communities. Photo by Gloria Hockley*

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## Education fund receives bequest

*Continued from cover*

Following a relocation to Victoria in the mid-1980s, Hyde joined parish of St John the Divine, Victoria, and volunteered through the 1990s in the diocesan archives. Hyde died on September 10, 2020, at the age of 91.

The lay training fund was established

to help lay people acquire training to equip them for service in the church, and any lay person in financial need can apply for the funds (which are a maximum of \$1,000 per grant) to cover course fees, travel, accommodation, meals, learning materials and other specified expenses toward training offered by a formal institution.

Lay people can apply by completing the lay training application found on the diocesan website at [www.](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/other-committees)

[bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/other-committees](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/other-committees) or under Resources>Funding>Educational Trusts Board. The Board meets five times per year, and the deadlines for application are January 15, April 15, May 15, August 15 and October 15. Applications can be emailed to [etb@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:etb@bc.anglican.ca) or mailed the synod office. ■

*Susan Down, with files from Tara Saracuse.*

## Consecration and Installation

**Saturday, January 30, 2021**  
**11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Please save the date and plan to join us, via live-stream on the diocesan website, Facebook or YouTube for the consecration and installation of our 14th bishop, the Rev'd Anna Greenwood-Lee.

## Personnel Updates

- Elaine Julian has been appointed interim minister to St. Columba, Port Hardy, by the United Church of Canada.
- Elizabeth Barnard (née Welch) has resigned as incumbent to St George in Cadboro Bay, effective December 31, 2020.
- Heather Robinson has been appointed interim priest-in-charge at St Philip by-the-Sea, Lantzville, beginning December 7, 2020, for the period of four months.
- Penelope Kingham has announced her retirement as incumbent to Holy Trinity, North Saanich and archdeacon of the Haro region, effective April 15, 2021.



**SAFE HOMES,  
BRIGHTER FUTURES**

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**THRESHOLD**  
HOUSING SOCIETY



# Coping with COVID: St. Peter, Comox

BY GLENN LAWSON

The pandemic has made it challenging to maintain churches everywhere. That is especially true for smaller parishes in our diocese. In the next issues we will hear from several voices about that challenge. This month: St. Peter, Comox, a parish with about 200 active members. The annual budget passed at the annual vestry meeting was \$260,000. -ED

Through a combination of support programs, flexible and timely financial management, a faithful body of parishioners and taking the opportunity to provide a ministry to a broader community, we expect to break even by year-end.

When COVID struck and in-person church services ceased, I anticipated a significant shortfall in income, both in reduced offerings and decreased rental income. I was not sure where expenses would end up; many of the expenses are fixed costs, but others, including staffing and programs, can vary. We budgeted for a net income of \$45.

Up to the end of October, our offerings were down by \$17,800, less than 10 per cent. Hall rental income was down by almost \$5,000, which was partially offset by unbudgeted rectory rental income. The



*Sulin Milne, rector at St. Philip, Comox, prepares for her class called Praying with the Body, a program of meditation and gentle exercise. Photo by Freddie Milne*

CEWS wage subsidy helped to mitigate the effect of decreased offerings. Excluding a one-time Vision Fund contribution towards youth ministry, our total income to the end of October was down by \$10,500, or just over five per cent.

The continuing strength in offerings might be attributable to a couple of factors: continuing donations from faithful parishioners, regardless of whether they can attend in-person services; and secondly, the quality of the ministry delivered online. Our rector, Sulin Milne, is animated, telegenic and delivers

an excellent message. In this time of COVID-19, some of the social amenities of attending church are not available, making the message from the minister that much more important.

We are also fortunate in having a dedicated team that produces the on-line service. While all are in-house volunteers, they deliver a professional-quality service. We are blessed in many ways that were less evident prior to COVID-19.

On the flip side of the financial equation, our expenses are \$8,600, or four per cent under budget. There were decreased expenses in several categories, the most significant ones being: operations (reduced travel and kitchen expenses); worship (deferred AV equipment acquisition); and human resources (custodial and locum costs). There was a significant increase in buildings and grounds expenses due to the renovation of the rectory, an unbudgeted \$20,000 cost. This was undertaken as a long-term investment, returning \$1,500 per month in revenue.

In the end, excluding the youth ministry grant but including the rectory renovation, our net income at the end of October was one per cent over budget. We are hopeful that we will be on budget by year-end. ■

*Glenn Lawson is the treasurer at St. Peter, Comox.*

## Kudos to stellar synod staff

*Continued from page 2*

During our visioning process, we heard the need for consistent, timely, accessible and high-quality communications. This has seldom been more important than it is now. A year ago, who could have imagined electing a bishop electronically? But we did it, and flawlessly. Or conducting the

business of the diocese on Zoom? Or helping parishes to put worship online? Our communications department has helped us adapt to the restrictions and opportunities COVID-19 has placed upon us.

I want finally to recognize the respect paid to our diocesan staff by the rest of the Anglican Church of Canada. Their competence has put us on the “mattering map” – and we should be grateful and proud to know that Gail Gauthier, Barry Foster, Catherine Pate and Brendon Neilson have

all been tapped to assist the church national with the “big questions” currently facing us.

Much of this work goes unseen, but like an iceberg, the strength and solidity of our church, and our capacity to be faithful ministers of the gospel, is rooted in what lies beneath the surface. We owe our synod office staff our gratitude and admiration. ■

*The Very Rev. Ansley Tucker is rector of Christ Church Cathedral, dean of Columbia and the diocesan administrator.*

RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS** RENEWED **PEOPLE**



# Vision Fund reports legacy

BY IAN ALEXANDER

In late November 2020, the diocesan Vision Fund delivered its final report to the diocesan council. The fund was established by synod in the fall of 2015, to use a small portion of the reserve funds generated from disestablished parishes. The fund's goal was to "faithfully seed local, regional and diocese-wide initiatives that give tangible expression to the diocesan vision," in anticipation of a future fundraising campaign to continue the work permanently.

Originally intended to have a limited life span of three years, the Vision Fund was extended by a further two years to serve as a bridge to the Transforming Futures initiative. Over that five-year period from 2016 through 2020, the Fund disbursed close to \$600,000, in the form of about 100 grants for 70 different projects. Most grants were awarded on a matching funds basis, with the proponents expected to contribute a portion of the full project cost, though exceptions were made in cases of need and new start-ups. Priority support was also given to proposals that went beyond parish boundaries and reached out into the broader community.

In keeping with the forward- and outward-looking spirit of the diocesan vision, almost two-thirds of spending was devoted to the pillar of "faith in action," including projects falling under the categories of engaging God's world, emerging communities, and the single biggest recipient, at more than a quarter of the total: reconciliation and beyond. After these three, the next highest value of grants went to youth and family life. Clearly, this was a shining example of the diocese putting its money where its mouth – and its heart – are.

But numbers alone do not tell the story of the Vision Fund. Virtually every Anglican on these Islands and Inlets has been touched in some way by the work the fund made possible. We seeded new entities like the Star of the Sea Centre for Spirituality on Salt Spring Island and the Chapel Gallery

at St. Matthias, now both ongoing and self-sustaining. Other permanent legacies range from labyrinths in Oak Bay and on Pender Island, through an expanded choir loft at St. Barnabas, in Victoria, to kitchen improvements and audiovisual enhancements at several parishes. We funded numerous retreats, conferences and training programs on subjects from reconciliation and dismantling racism to pastoral care. And we invested in the future, through pilot projects and feasibility studies, such as Wild Church, the Emmaus residential initiative, and a potential affordable housing study on Pender Island.

Care was taken to distribute funds equitably to all parts of the diocese, including support for several community projects in Port McNeill, a new regional interdenominational youth ministry in the Comox Valley, and assistance with Indigenous ministry at Port Hardy.

Thanks to the Vision Fund, there is much tangible evidence of the diocese's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples: a longhouse tent at the regional correctional centre; First Nations art for the chapel doors at St. John the Divine, Victoria; and the fund's single largest beneficiary over four years: the mentor-

apprentice program for the revitalization of Indigenous living languages, among many other examples.

Space does not permit an exhaustive review of the outcomes and impacts of the Vision Fund; a full list of projects is available on the diocesan website. Meantime, what have we as a diocese learned from this five-year undertaking? Among other things: that there is no shortage of creative energy in this diocese, a lot of it in the minds and hearts of dedicated lay volunteers! That a little bit of seed money can translate into a lot of encouragement – and sometimes free up more money from other sources. That pulling a compelling project plan together takes time and effort, but it pays off. That trying new things and working across parish lines doesn't always come easily or naturally, but can be encouraged, and reaps surprising dividends.

Perhaps most importantly, we have learned how much we can accomplish together. Now, we need to maintain, enhance and build on that momentum as we move into the next phase of our life together as Anglicans in this time and place. ■

*Canon Ian Alexander served as chair of the Vision Fund jury from 2016 through 2020.*



*Projects supported by the Vision Fund have included the Comox Valley regional interdenominational youth ministry, UVic Multifaith Centre's youth pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, new labyrinths in Victoria and on the Gulf Islands and a longhouse tent with original Indigenous art at the regional correctional centre.*