

**Report from the Priest Associate: The Rev. Christine Muise**  
**For the Annual Vestry Meeting February 7, 2021**

2020 was my second full year as the Priest Associate for The Anglican Parish of St. Anne and St. Edmund in Parksville. What a year we have been through together!

**One Open Circle: A Centre for Spiritual Growth, Compassionate Action and Creative Arts**

**Ministry in Teamwork: Spiritual Growth**

Services of Holy Eucharist and Morning Prayer in 2020:

Out of total numbers, my own contribution includes: (numbers are taken from Vestry Book)

Co-Presiding: 1 (\* a few more in actuality)

Presiding and Preaching: 35 services –

(Streamed online-only from March 22-July 26 & November 29-present)

(Live limited space services from August 30- November 22)

Care Home Facility Services: 2 (pre-covid)

Memorials/ Funerals/Celebration of Life: 1

Ash Wednesday & Holy Week Services: 6

World Day of Prayer: 1

1 Drive Through Blessing and a Carol at St. Edmund's

Sharing in worship with the Rev. Andrew Twiddy and our congregation is a true expression of Christian discipleship. There are strong commitments in the work of ecological discipleship, reconciliation, and the work of justice.

**Clergy Day:** Our Diocese had a Clergy Day at St. Philip Cedar on January 23, 2020. We had a presentation from Matthew Humphrey who is one of the contributors to the diocesan wide study book: Watershed Discipleship mentioned in our Lenten Journey.

**Lenten Journey: February 26-April 1: Spiritual Growth and Creative Arts- Reconciliation**

During Lent this year, we dove in mid-week sessions with Spirituality Beyond Borders and in Sunday worship on the Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice Edited by Ched Myers, Foreword by Denise M. Nadeau. We each took a chapter to read and reflect upon and we worked through the content of the book together. Continuing with the Journey of Advent Reconciliation regarding the Anglican Church of Canada Documentary:

**Stolen Lands: Strong Hearts** we continued our project incorporating 94 ravens and the calls to action. [We had been preparing for our Gala Weekend with National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald "All My Relations" however this was cancelled due to Covid-19 Pandemic] Our Lenten program began in-person however, after March 18, 2020 we switched to Zoom due to Covid-19 Protocols.

The Raven 94 Calls to Action Installation quietly continued with the dedication of Colleen Day. Through the Fall and prior to the beginning of Advent each strand of Calls and Ravens were completed.

One of the most profound strands included empty boxes and a few 'Spirit-Ravens' to represent the Calls to Action that are about the Missing Children and Burial Information for those who did not survive Residential Schools. This work, like reconciliation, is ongoing.

### **Ministry Review**

I have remained at 60% time. I took my holiday time from July 16-August 13, 2020.

For my Continuing Education, I took a course online through Coursera from the University of Alberta in Indigenous Studies.

The current plan for growth with our Incumbent includes 'Youth Opportunity', 'The Reverend Twiddys' gradual decrease in time', and our continued commitments to 'Let Our Light Shine.' This contains no plan for any increase in time for me to exercise my ministry. In this light, I have taken on a Temporary Permanent Parttime Team Leader position at Ravensong Aquatic Centre to supplement my income.

### **Mission and Outreach: Spiritual Growth and Creative Arts**

I spent 2020 as the Secretary for the Oceanside Community Action Team (CAT) as a member of the Faith Community. There are CAT's across the province that have brought together community members, local agencies, health agencies and first responders to deal with the Opiate Crisis facing us at this time.

The 'Assisi Shelter' of Oceanside HEARTS (Homelessness Ecumenical Advocacy Response Team Society) began its operation of a Cold Weather Shelter out of St. Anne's Log Church on December 18, 2019. Staying at St. Anne's allowed us to increase our capacity from 8 to 18 individuals each night. From December 18, 2019- March 17, 2020, the Assisi Shelter hosted more than 75 individual guests.

On March 17, 2020 in consultation with Public Health Dr. Paul Hasselback, Shelter Leads Perry Perry and Jerold Paetkau and I had to make the difficult decision that due to the Covid-19 Protocols of Physical Distancing and expectations of Hygiene that the shelter would have to close. We kept the port-a-potties onsite not only for homeless in the community but also for other people needing one as there were very few options. (Outreach workers in the community utilized these). The closure of St. Anne's was the beginning of a new form of ministry for OHEARTS in direct work with our Parish. With the work of Perry Perry, we were able to procure 2 spots in a local hotel for 2 of the former guests from Assisi Shelter. 5 former guests stayed on the property of St. Edmund's (in the doorway). Perry Perry, Mandy Truman, Kathy Miller and I worked to serve dinner with meals available from some of the funding for the Assisi Shelter. On Thursday March 19, Emma Irving from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) along with Cathy Matthews from Forward House were able to manage to arrange for a one-month hotel stay at another hotel. Perry, Mandy, and I continued to do wellness checks and bring food to those in the hotels and to check in on our former Assisi Shelter Guests at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen (one of the very few outreach services available for those suffering from poverty, hunger, and homelessness).

On April 24, our 5 guests at the one hotel were at their month end stay covered by MSDPR along with others who had been covered through the assistance of Emma. On April 24, 2020, 5 guests from the hotel came to the property of our Parish and tents were set up on the grassed access roads for 5 people. Perry Perry, in conversation with BC Housing over 2 days, was able to procure 16 rooms for the use of OHEARTS for people experiencing homelessness and vulnerable to Covid-19.

This outreach has continued to evolve each day. Mandy and I both pivoted in our work together as the West Coast Day Program and Ravensong Aquatic Centre were closed due to the pandemic and the need for us to be continuing the outreach to the homeless was clear. I stepped off the board to officially be on the ground working and Kathy Miller has tirelessly contributed her gifts and skills as OHEART President. Mandy and I did wellness checks and helped link people in with services and appointments and we did room checks and cleaning.

Sherry Thompson (now a board member) procured a SPARC BC (Social Planning and Research Council of BC) Grant for research and homelessness outreach. This is an ongoing project. I now work a few hours a week as Coordinator of the SPARC Grant and Mandy Truman is the Shelter Manager. What began as the Assisi Shelter in St. Anne's became an organic outreach to people experiencing homelessness and we began linking in with each organization as they rebooted with covid-19 protocols. Mandy, Perry, and I met people at the soup kitchen, various hotels and 'camp' scenarios and the process of offering shelter in the community through the OHEARTS Covid-19 Response Hotel began. Meals are delivered to hotel guests and to people experiencing homelessness every day of the week. Our ecumenical partners include our own congregation contributing to the making and plating of food out of the kitchen of St. Edmund's as well as volunteers from our area of churches. OHEARTS funding in partnership with BC Housing has meant that we have been able to provide employment opportunities for support workers for our guests at the Hotel Shelter. The current contract goes until March 31, 2021.

I will continue to be an advocate for people experiencing homelessness, addiction, mental and physical illness, and barriers to inclusion in our community, in our healthcare and in society at large.

### **Letting Our Light Shine:**

Mentoring Youth is critically important in this time of isolation and pandemic. Connecting young people to spirituality, faith and hope is needed in our community. The ability to build and sustain relationships, take care of our cemeteries and property, to assist with administration, cleaning, and appropriate pandemic protocols is integral to our continued functioning. Mentoring also connects us to the teachings of our youth. This includes being attentive and responding collectively to the Calls of Reconciliation in learning from Autumn Peltier an Anishinaabe Indigenous clean water advocate and Chief Water Protector for the Anishnabek Nation. It includes the youth voices to us regarding the Climate Crises in listening and advocating with Greta Thunberg and other climate activists. What we choose to do with God's Creation and Creatures matters.

Mitigating Elder Isolation is integral to our congregation and beyond. Finding creative ways to safely connect and offer connection and love is our continuous call. Just as our youth have teachings for us, our elders have wisdom and experience to share. The connections that continue within and beyond the parish, by phone, by Zoom, by Facebook and by physically distant yet socially cohesive ways are at the heart of our relationship together. Each Sunday the space at the Parish of St. Anne and St. Edmund is held in connection with all of us who have gathered in time and beyond time, connecting us to the web of life and love that is at the heart of our faith and our call to follow Christ.

Responding to Homelessness is a long journey as we travel with our friends who have experienced homelessness. We are experiencing a grave series of crises—a housing crisis, a health pandemic, a drug crisis combined with serious gaps and barriers to assist people in these situations. There is a lack of basic housing, rental units, stabilization beds, treatment, and recovery beds and second stage housing. Our work with OHEARTS will continue to be an intimate journey as we struggle with the ‘least’ of these, the under-served in God’s kin-dom.

Greening our Ways for me is the opportunity to RETHINK, REFUSE, REDUCE, REPURPOSE, REUSE, RECYCLE, ROT (7 R’s). Our faith demands that we be good stewards of God’s earth, that we work to be conscious and conscientious in our journey together, that we work to raise awareness and work to be agents of change and hope in creating sustainable systems of life. The journey of Watershed Discipleship certainly directs us to fall in love with the sustainable systems around us, to know our watershed intimately and to tend for the care of the creation and creatures that are connected. Of course, this leads us to caring for the entire planet!

Spirituality Beyond Borders will continue to be at the heart of what ‘Church’ will continue to be during these times in our world. Our relevance and need for young people (aged 30-60) are where there is the greatest opportunity for organic growth to meet the deep spiritual need of our times. Many people in this pandemic have struggled in mental and spiritual ways. Spirituality Beyond Borders is a program that reaches beyond our current ‘physical’ buildings and ‘structures’ to offer contemplation, and to plant the seeds of action in a good way, grounded in the wisdom of the mystics, in partnership with programs such as the Centre for Action and Contemplation, the Ideas and Ideals of Watershed Discipleship and so much more. It is the journey of reconciliation and reconciliAction in both personal and corporate ways.