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Bishop John Stephens' Easter Message

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of the Diocese's
Oldest Wooden
Buildings

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Two Liturgies on a Late Winter's Day

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor



LEFT & RIGHT Archbishop Skelton passes the crosier of the diocese to Bishop Stephens and reads the words: "I pass to you this crosier, a symbol of your office as Bishop of New Westminster. May Christ the Good Shepherd so uphold and sustain you that you may lead with courage and guide with love those committed to your charge."

It all came down to one day, one cold, drizzly Sunday in late winter, February 28, 2021. The outgoing diocesan bishop, Archbishop Melissa Skelton had announced her retirement ten months previously. She would "age out" on March 14, 2021, and of course would adhere to the rules of the Anglican Church of Canada directing bishops in active ministry to retire at the age of 70. At that time the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic was just under two months old and the world that we know and certainly church as we know it had changed and would continue to change. Most of us adapted, Zoom licenses were purchased, YouTube channels were launched, websites were updated and the life of the faithful continued. And part of that *continuing* would be the organizing of an Electoral Synod, the election of a bishop on October 3, 2020 (in this case a coadjutor bishop), the ordination and consecration of that bishop on January 23, 2021, culminating in the conclusion of one episcopacy and the beginning of another on February 28.

It wasn't just the Installation and Seating of the 10th Diocesan Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster at 4pm that afternoon, there was also a morning Choral Eucharist for the Second Sunday in Lent to be celebrated at 10:30am. This was the principal Sunday service at the Cathedral Church of the diocese, Christ's Church. Both liturgies were livestreamed with only the principals present celebrating the Eucharist. The afternoon liturgy was more complicated than the morning which necessitated a larger tech crew, and some additional lay support for the worship. The January 23, 2021 Ordination of the new bishop was similar, so Archbishop Skelton had early in the year connected with the folks at Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and submitted a safety plan respecting the Provincial Health Officers orders that no more than ten people may gather in one space for religious ceremonies marking major life events, but asking for some leeway on use of the other rooms that comprise the main sanctuary level of the Cathedral space. As the ordination followed



Bishop John Stephens smiles as his friend Derek Simpkins takes a photo on the plaza before the liturgy begins. PHOTO Derek Simpkins

by the installation of a bishop is something that happens on an average of once every 12–15 years VCH decision makers were understanding and accepted the submission for the two liturgies.

The Morning Liturgy

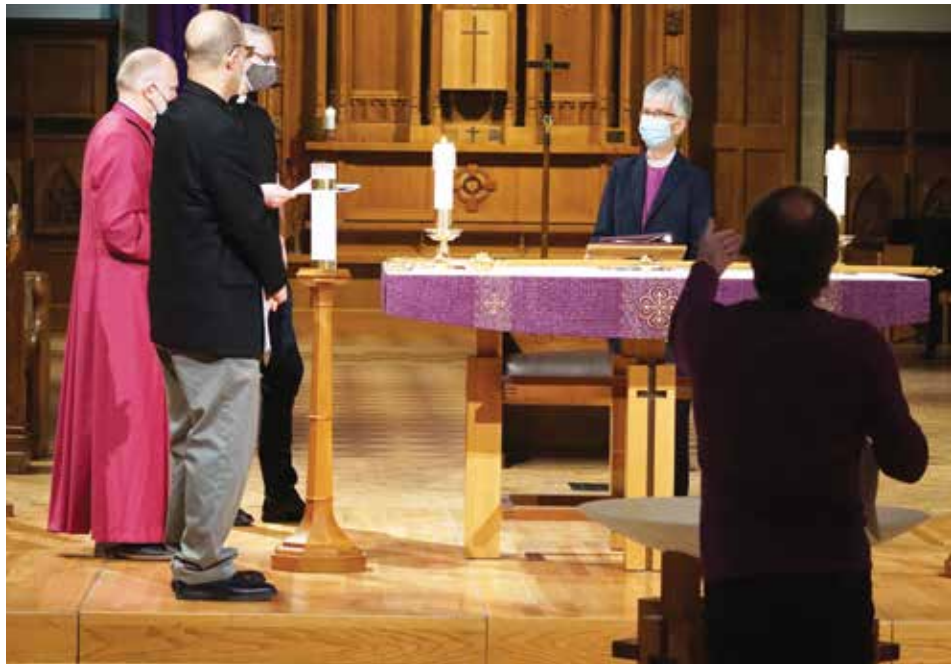
The Cathedral's livestreaming staff were given the morning off on February 28 as Proshow Audio Visual contracted by diocesan communications needed to set up the day before, Saturday, February 27. Both Archbishop Melissa Skelton and Bishop John Stephens were present for the morning liturgy. For the final time in her episcopacy, Archbishop Skelton preached and presided at the Eucharist. Bishop Stephens assisted with the prayers and served at the altar along with Deacon of the Word and Table, the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss. The Rector of the Cathedral and Dean of the diocese of New Westminster, the Very Rev. Chris Pappas was part of the Sanctuary Party along with the Cathedral's Administrator, Liturgical Assistant, Vincent Carey as MC. Cathedral Warden, Tegan Smith was the reader and led the intercession. Organist and Director of Music Rupert Lang led the music in worship with stellar support of an SATB quartet consisting of members of Cathedral Choir.

Following words of welcome and parish announcements by Dean Pappas, Tegan Smith invited Archbishop Skelton to join her near the ambo (lectern, and physically distanced of course) as she offered a few words of gratitude for the archbishop's ministry and presented her with two gifts both inspired by the parish's desire to pursue reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples. One gift was an Eagle pendant in silver created by Indigenous artist Ralph Burgess and the second was a replica of one of the specially designed and created Debra Sparrow blankets that are displayed in the Cathedral's narthex. Tegan Smith explained that the Eagle is the spirit animal which is the closest to the Creator. Archbishop Skelton was moved by

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Archbishop Skelton prepares for the Eucharist.



The principals gather for a rehearsal.

Two Liturgies on a Late Winter’s Day

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

these gifts and thanked the parish through Tegan for all that the Cathedral community has done for her and meant to her over the past seven years.

In her sermon, Archbishop Skelton took the Gospel for her text, *Mark 8:31-38*. She began the sermon which she had titled *What We Take With Us* by saying:

“The process of moving one’s things discloses much about a person—and here I’m speaking of myself of course, in that, next week, I will be moving from my home in Canada to my house in Washington state. No it’s not just about learning about yourself as you sort through the stuff of your life and put them in three piles labeled ‘keep,’ ‘toss,’ ‘throw away.’ Rather for this move, a move from a role I have loved, a people I have loved, a country I have loved, what’s fascinating to me is what I’m choosing to take in my car, and not entrust to movers, as I cross the border... It says a lot about what’s important to me as I go through what many call a ‘transition process’: an experience that is very much a process of dying and being reborn, of letting go of many, many things, trusting that something new

will emerge as I let go.”

The archbishop then listed the things that she will take and why they have special meaning. Archbishop Skelton then began to explore the text within the context of what Peter is facing as he learns of the transition facing his teacher, Jesus:

“That Jesus is soon to begin the bumpiest process of transition imaginable, one in which he will have to give up his friends, his role among them and his status as an up and coming rabbi-messiah. And of course, this transition, Jesus’s transition is not about his moving house across a border. Instead, it’s about his arrest, his trial, his crucifixion, his death and his resurrection.” ✠

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A video of Archbishop Skelton’s sermon is available on the diocesan website at vancouver.anglican.ca/podcasts/media/2021-02-28-what-we-take-with-us. It is highly recommended.



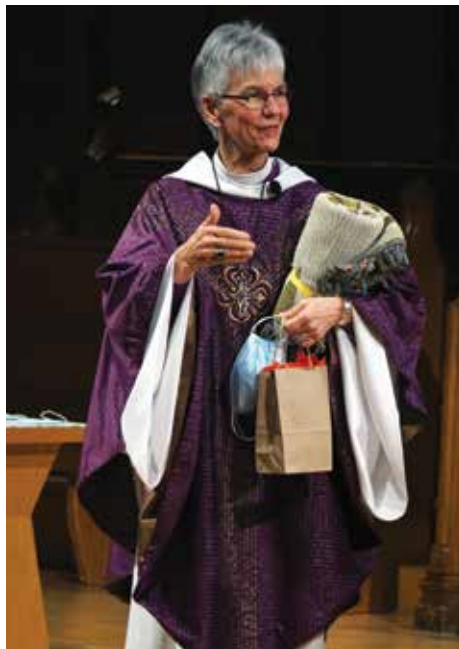
Dean Pappas welcomes the online congregation.



LEFT Cathedral Warden, Tegan Smith describes the gifts being given to Archbishop Skelton.



MIDDLE Archbishop Skelton thanks the Parish of Christ Church Cathedral for their generosity, love and care during her seven years.



RIGHT Chorister, alto, Margaret Ferguson.

Growing communities of faith in Jesus Christ to serve God’s mission in the world.



Published eight times a year as a section of the *Anglican Journal* by the Archbishop and Synod of the diocese of New Westminster.

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Issue This is the 3rd issue in the 52nd year of publication

Deadline For Submissions
April 23 for the Summer issue

Subscriptions
Please subscribe online at
www.anglicanjournal.com/newssubscription/

Address changes in writing to
Topic c/o Anglican Journal,
80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 3G2

Printed & Mailed By
Webnews Printing Inc., North York, Ontario

Circulation
1,760

The Anglican Church & The Anglican Communion
A global community of 80 million Anglicans in 64,000 congregations in 165 countries.

Website For the latest news and events go to
www.vancouver.anglican.ca

The Anglican Church of Canada
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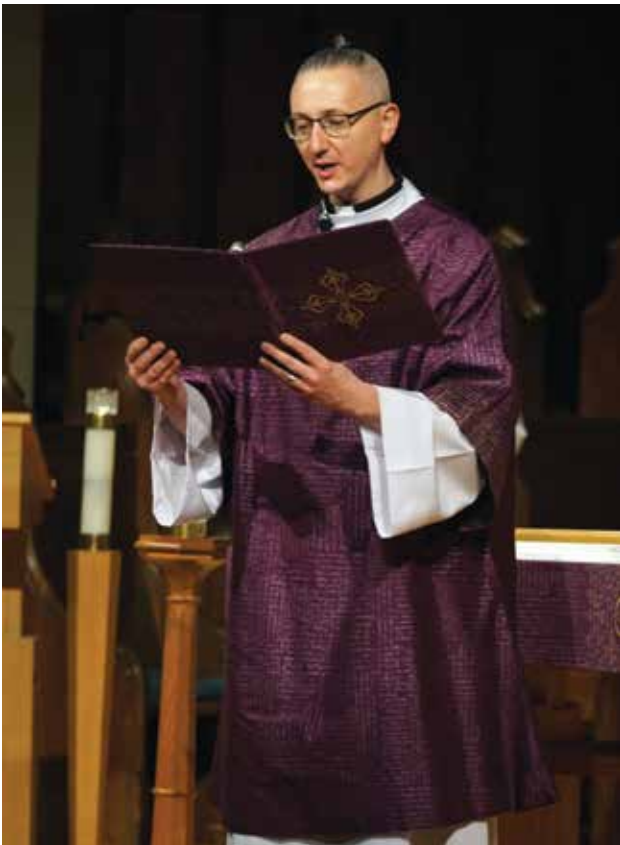
The diocese of New Westminster
The Anglican Church in the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley and on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, located on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish First Nations, consisting of 69 worshipping communities.



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Thank you!



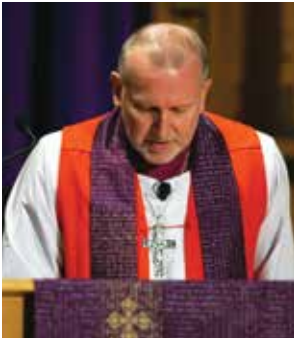
The Gospel Mark 8:31-38 is proclaimed by the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss.



Rupert Lang at the organ with soprano, Lucy Smith and baritone, Jake Gramit.



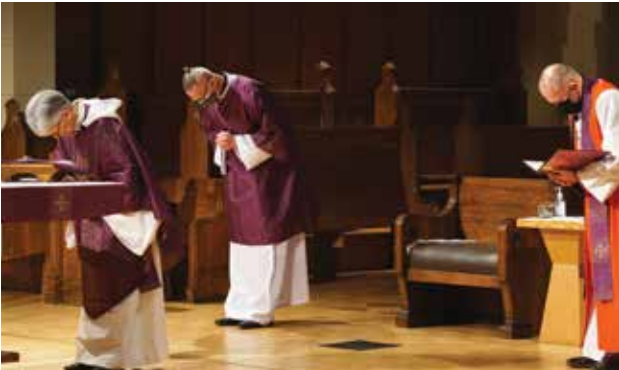
LEFT Archbishop Skelton shares the final sermon of her episcopacy, *What We Take With Us*. RIGHT Altar cloth detail.



LEFT Bishop John Stephens leads the Nicene Creed. RIGHT A view of the chancel during the intercession.



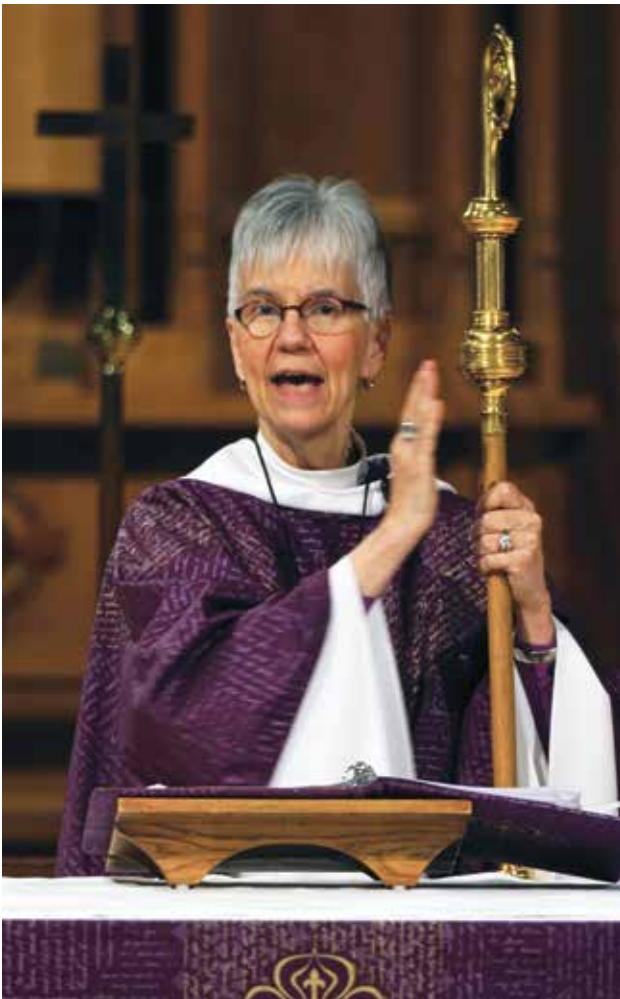
Prayer over the Gifts.



Sanctus.



The Eucharist.



Archbishop Skelton blesses the congregation for the final time as diocesan Archbishop.

COPEs

AND THE HOME FURNISHINGS THAT INSPIRED THEM

CartoonChurch.com



Proshow Audio Visual site lead, Darel Simpson relaxes after rehearsing for the Installation Eucharist.



Bishop John Stephens on the plaza with his friend, photographer Derek Simpkins.

Two Liturgies on a Late Winter's Day

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The Afternoon Liturgy

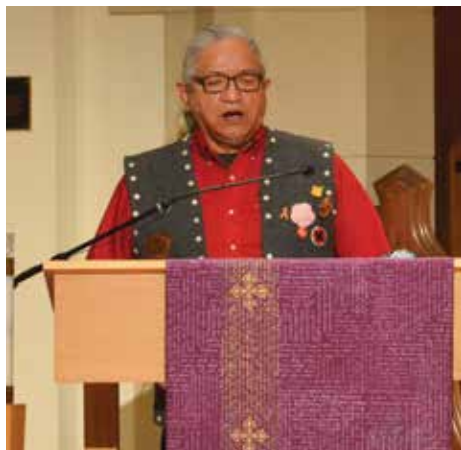
The Installation of Bishop John R. Stephens as the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster took for its theme the passage from the Epistle for the liturgy, *1 Peter 2:4-10* and specifically verse 5: “Like living stones, let yourselves be built.” The lectionary day selected was Ember Day or more accurately the day after the three spring Ember Days for 2021, February 24, 26 and 27. There are four sets of Ember Days, three days in the calendar year, roughly around the start of the four seasons, set aside by the Church as a way to mark the passage of seasons through prayer and fasting.

The livestream began at 3:35pm with a 25 minute video featuring eight pieces of music performed by a diverse group of talented people from around the diocese. For three of the eight pieces, the music was composed by the artists. These music “videos” were augmented by 350 photographs depicting members of the diocese of New Westminster, at worship, service and play. A number of parishes submitted photos never before seen outside of their communities and the rest were assembled by diocesan communications. Following the video, the live action began with Dean Christopher A. Pappas, welcoming the online

congregation who were watching from around the diocese, the nation and around the world. Next, there was a territorial acknowledgement and welcome offered by Kelvin Bee, ODNW of St. James’ and then the liturgy moved outside to a celebratory welcoming song for Bishop John offered by members of Urban Aboriginal Ministry (UAM): Jessica, Natalie, Koven and Havden. This took place on the Cathedral’s exterior west facing plaza at Burrard and Georgia Streets in downtown Vancouver. Drizzle with showers had been present all day and the tech crew and the event’s producer were very nervous about having the camera, mics and operators outside in what could have increased at any moment to full-fledged rain. However, a well-placed plastic bag (sourced by the Cathedral’s organist and Director of Music, Rupert Lang) and some good luck kept things dry, and the exterior shots worked well. Inspired by the joyful drumming and singing of the UAM group it was time for Bishop Stephens to take a crozier and strike the Cathedral’s main door three times.

The door was answered by Dean Pappas who said these words:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Elder Kelvin Bee, ODNW.



Members of Urban Aboriginal Ministry offer a celebratory song of welcome on the plaza.



UAM folks with the camera and the bishop.



Dean Pappas answers the three knocks and opens both doors wide to welcome the new bishop.



The procession up to the chancel platform.



Chancellor George Cadman, QC, ODNW reads the Certificates.



Mebbo Basvi reads Isaiah 44:1-8 in the Shona language.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“John, Bishop in the Church of God and our Bishop, we welcome you to your Cathedral Church, the symbol and centre of your pastoral, liturgical, and teaching ministry in this diocese.”

Bishop John responded saying:

“I thank you for your welcome. I promise, with God’s help, to be a faithful pastor and servant among you. I pray that the ministry we share may be pleasing to God and may strengthen the life of this diocese located on the unceded ancestral lands of the Coast Salish People and the whole Church of God.”

With that part of the process completed, the procession led by Deacon of the Word and Table, the Rev. Alisdair Smith entered the narthex and continued through the empty nave to the chancel platform where Archbishop Skelton awaited with the diocesan crosier. Preacher for the Eucharist the Rev. Louise Peters and the Executive Archdeacon of the diocese, the Ven. Douglas Fenton were already in place in the chancel. The Chancellor of the diocese of New Westminster, George Cadman, QC, ODNW positioned at the ambo read the certificate of ordination signed by Archbishop Skelton and the other consecrating bishops, the Right Reverends David Lehmann (Caledonia) and Lynne McNaughton (Kootenay). With the legal business completed, Archbishop Skelton said:

“I pass to you this crosier, a symbol of your office as Bishop of New Westminster. May Christ the Good Shepherd so uphold and sustain you that you may lead with courage and guide with love those committed to your charge.”

She passed the crosier to Bishop John who then followed her around the altar to the *Cathedra* (Bishop’s throne) as all those present said:

“John, we, the people of this diocese, receive you as our Bishop. Be among us as our pastor and leader. May the Lord stir up in you the flame of holy charity and the power of faith that renews the world. Amen.”

Bishop John sat down and was greeted by sustained applause. He then offered these words:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Midori Seo, ODNW reads the Epistle, 1 Peter 2:4-10 in Japanese



The preacher, the Rev. Louise Peters.

Two Liturgies on a Late Winter's Day



Now seated on the *Cathedra*, Bishop Stephens prepares to address the online congregation.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

“Well, here we are once again. A liturgy that is important in our Anglican tradition and historical in the life of this diocese and yet so few of us can be here in person at our Cathedral. There is a sadness to that. I really had hoped that at this point in the process connected to this pandemic I would be able to see you all, be with you all; see your faces, hear your voices, sing together, worship together, pray together, invite the presence of the Holy Spirit together, laugh together. There is so much that is missing today: between my family, my friends, fellow clergy, colleagues, parishioners of all the parishes of this great diocese, I wish that we could be together to share in this moment.

But as I thought about this more, I realized that this cannot be the focus, not the scarcity, but the abundance, for I am so appreciative of your prayers and your presence on this livestream. So many of you have offered good wishes, support, kind words and encouragement of God’s grace and blessing at this time. And I am so grateful. I still wish we could share this time together, but I know so many are walking this new path with me.

My commitment from here is that I will be working very hard to be with you in the days, weeks, months and years ahead. If at first it is on Zoom, livestream or other online technology, hopefully soon it will be in person, but I will be making much effort to come to be with you. I will be contacting clergy and inviting them into conversations about our faith, our diocese, our parishes, our priorities. I have started by meeting with archdeacons and regional deans, but this will expand. I want to join you in your parish worship or come to your meetings or coffee hours or events or find ways that we can connect. These times of connection will be so important for me in my ministry as I serve as your bishop. The life of the parishes is central to the life of the diocese and I want to support, encourage, strengthen and lead to greater development the parishes of our diocese.

We live in an incredible place to do ministry. We have so many gifted clergy and lay leaders. We have beautiful and transformational worship of great variety. There is inspirational ministry that takes place every day of the week, even in a pandemic. There is rich teaching, learning, adult education, children’s education, youth learning and growth. There is beautiful pastoral care and other incredible ministry that allows for healing, grief, compassion and hope. There is new understanding that we must care more attentively to the ways that we might live on this planet with greater care, and also how we treat one another on our daily walk. Together we will seek new ways of growing the churches and other places of ministry, growing in faith, growing in trust that the Holy Spirit is leading us to new places and new heights.

Together we are the diocese of New Westminster. And as I begin my time as the bishop of this amazing diocese, I ask for your ongoing prayers, encouragement and insight. I ask for your hard work and commitment to moving forward in a complicated world, but a world eager to know more about God’s grace, new vision and new hope. In this time of Lent and this time of pandemic I urge you to stay focussed on what

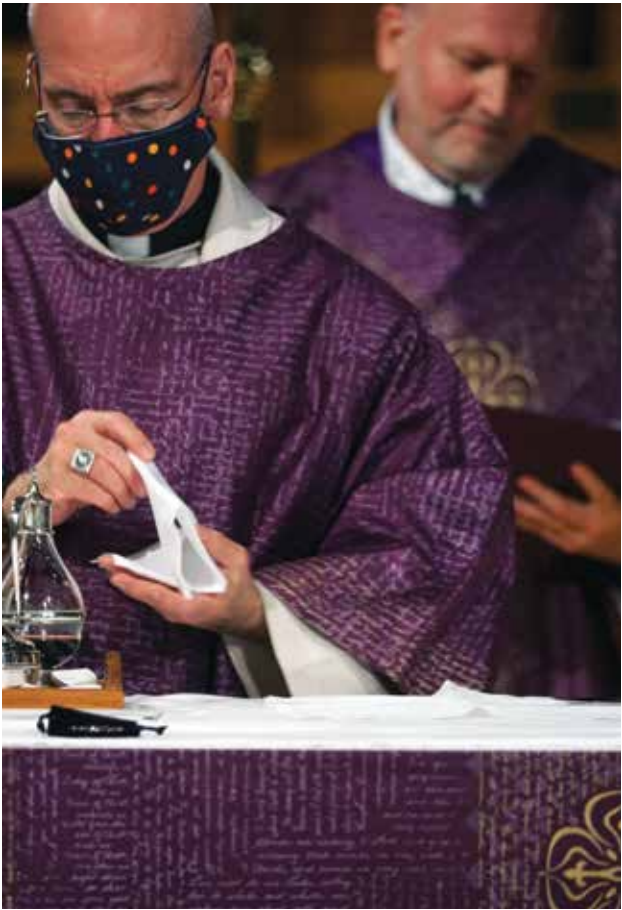


LEFT Intercessor and video editor, Patrick Gregg. RIGHT Soprano, Lucy Smith and baritone, Jake Gramit. Lucy and Jake are a married couple and therefore do not physically distance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



A view of the chancel during the Intercession.



The Rev. Alisdair Smith (with Bishop John behind) prepares the altar for the Eucharist.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

we are all about: communities transformed by the gospel of Christ. A Gospel of new life that changes us to view the world with God's eyes and God's love and God's peace.

May we live that out together."

Following the bishop's address, the Eucharist for Ember Day continued. Mebbo Basvi recently arrived from Central Zimbabwe read *Isaiah 44:1-8* in the *Shona* language. The quartet under the direction of Rupert Lang sang a setting of *Psalm 87* by Rupert Lang dedicated to Bishop John on this, the occasion of his Installation. Midori Seo, ODNW read the Epistle, *1 Peter 2:4-10* in Japanese and Rev. Alisdair Smith proclaimed the Gospel *John 17:6-19*. The preacher was the Rev. Louise Peters, Bishop John's friend and colleague from the Territory of the People. The Rev. Peters began her sermon with a T.S. Eliot quote, "I said to my soul, be still and wait... wait without thought for you are not ready for thought: So, the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing." Rev. Peters spoke of service and of servant-leadership and offered wisdom to help guide Bishop John as he begins this new ministry. She concluded her homily with prayer:

"John, may God always guide and bless the work, prayer and service you do in Christ's name.

Living Stones in this community of New Westminster, Beloved of God, may the Holy One always guide and bless the work and prayer and service you do in Christ's name together. May you continue to be built as God's spiritual house...

Together may you: Stand still and feed. Sit still and listen.

Hold hope and wait, trusting in the 'slow work of God' (Teilhard) and the 'stillness the dancing' (Eliot). Amen.

The intercessor was Patrick Gregg who also edited the ten minute video that followed the conclusion of the liturgy. The video consisted of eleven submissions, one from each deanery of the diocese offering unique and innovative words of welcome for Bishop John Stephens.

And then it was time for the Offertory followed by the Eucharist. Bishop John Stephens celebrated the Eucharist for the first time as the Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster.

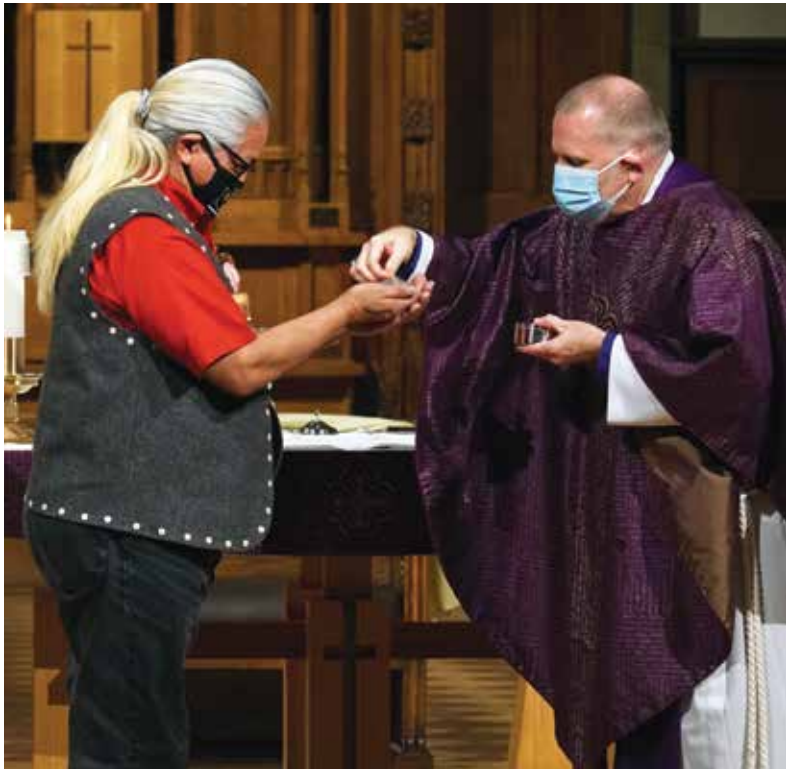
Prior to the Dismissal, Bishop John called Archbishop Melissa Skelton forward to present her with two gifts. The first was a blanket, blue in colour, the shade of blue of the badge of the diocese. Mebbo Basvi and Midori Seo wrapped the archbishop in the blanket. Once she was blanketed Bishop John said:

"Some of you will know that over the past six weeks in particular Archbishop Melissa, Her Grace, has been mentoring me and guiding me and supporting me to be a Bishop in this Church. It was not an easy task, for the role of a bishop is complicated and varied in these days. But it will come as no surprise to you that Archbishop Melissa has been exceptional as a teacher, mentor, leader as our Diocesan Bishop and for that I am extremely grateful. You will know that she has brought healing and hope to our diocese. Hope and understanding that many people, even in the world of this day, are interested in knowing more about this Jesus Christ as our way, truth and

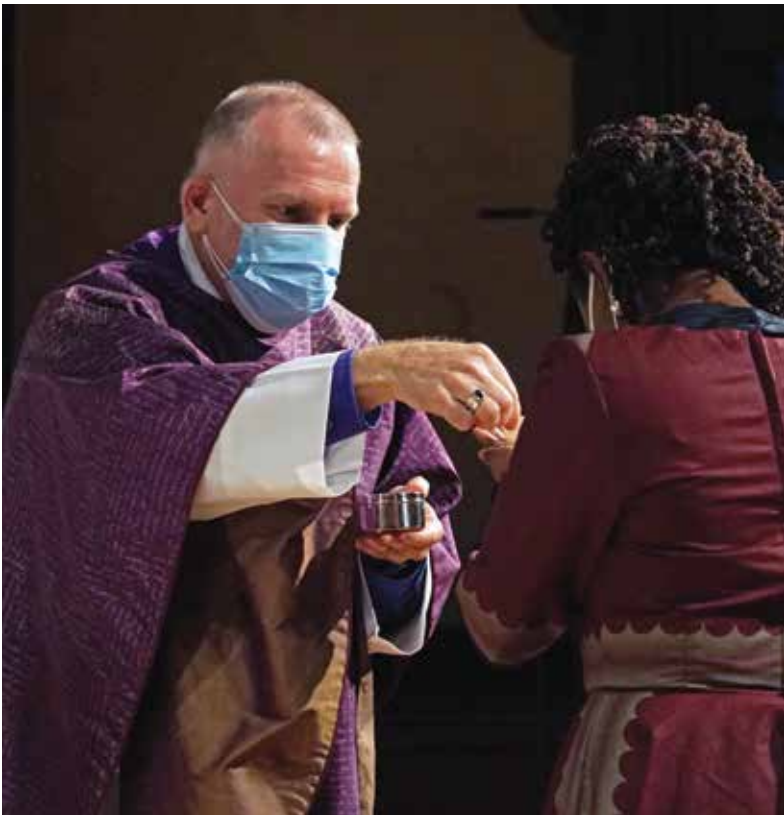
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The Sursum Corda. For the first time as diocesan bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Stephens presides at the Eucharist.



Kelvin Bee receives the Body of Christ.



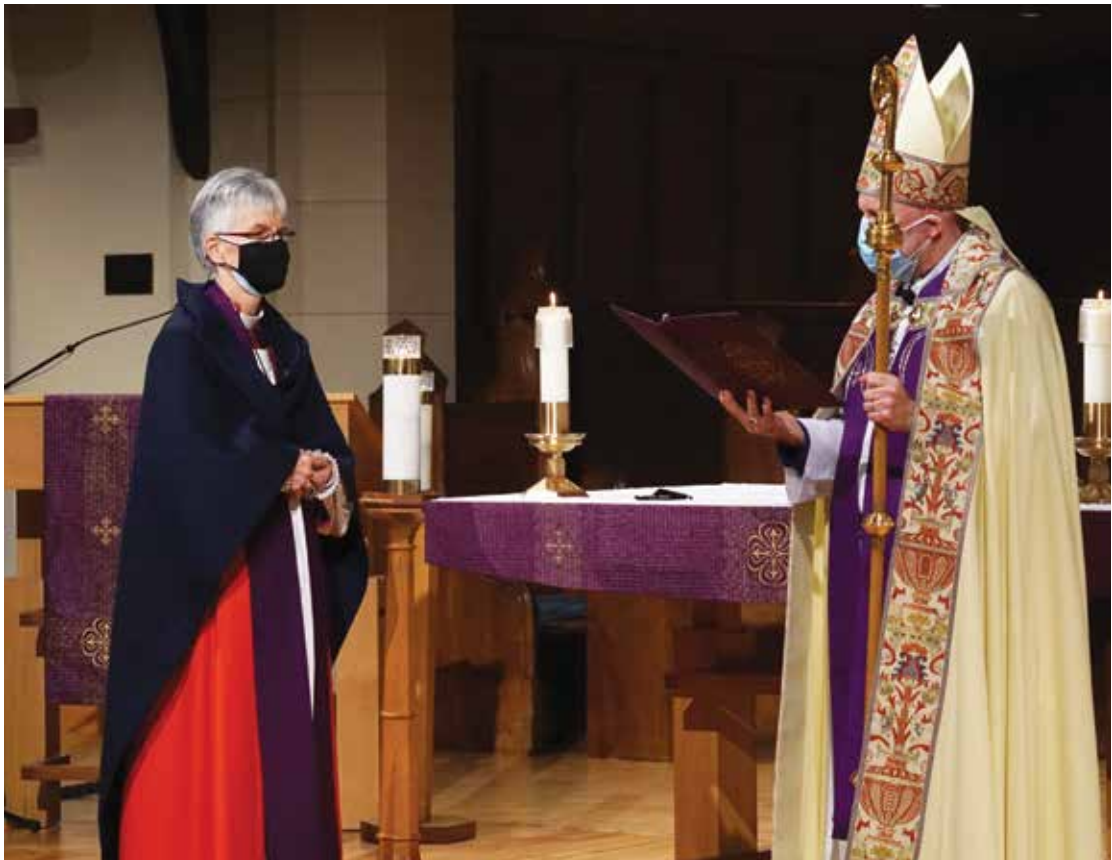
Mebbo Basvi receives the Body of Christ.



Archbishop Skelton receives the Body of Christ.



Mebbo and Midori "blanket" the Archbishop.



Bishop John thanks Archbishop Melissa.

Two Liturgies on a Late Winter's Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

life. She has brought incredible insight and purpose as to what it means to be the Church and what it means to be leaders in this time.

If you have heard Melissa speak about Parish Development you will know that she has for seven years and even some time before that, with markers and flipcharts shown us that we are called to be places that Gather, Transform and Send. Places that invite and welcome, places that offer beautiful and significant ways to consider God's wisdom and purpose, places that send us out into the world to be the Church. She has Gathered and Transformed us and on this day, we now send her out, with our blessing, our love and our assurance that she will always be a part of who we are as the diocese of New Westminster. As a sign we offer you this blanket."

And then he handed her a small felt pouch, which she opened revealing a silver cross. Bishop John said:

"I'd also asked Alvin Adkins, Haida artist to once again create a piece of beautiful art that reminds Melissa of us. But more than that it is a cross with a hummingbird on it: a sign of prayers and wisdom and peace. May this cross be a sign of God's blessing, wisdom, peace and love upon you Melissa now and always."

The day concluded as it had begun with gifts given to the retiring archbishop, blankets and silver, crafted and created by the descendants of the people whose cultures have existed on these land for thousands of years, these lands where the diocese of New Westminster is located.

The liturgy closed with the hymn, *Go to the World*. ✠

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A video of Rev. Louise Peters' sermon is available on the diocesan website at vancouver.anglican.ca/podcasts/media/2021-02-28-installation-of-the-10th-bishop-of-new-westminster



Displaying the silver cross and hummingbird created by Haida artist Alvin Adkins.



From left to right: Archbishop Melissa Skelton, Bishop John Stephens, the Rev. Alisdair Smith, Dean Chris Pappas, Chancellor George Cadman, QC, ODNW and Archdeacon Douglas Fenton pose for a photo.



Meanwhile in East Vancouver Jane watches the livestream in extreme comfort. The purple socks are a nice touch. PHOTO Jane Dittrich

The Light of Christ Cannot Be Blocked Out of this World

An Easter message from Bishop John

THE RIGHT REVEREND JOHN STEPHENS
Bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster

*“Early on the first day of the week,
while it was still dark,
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb...”*

Our Easter gospel, the pinnacle of all gospel readings for we Christians, starts with humble beginnings. Like the Christmas story, which is also centred on very humble beginnings in how God entered into time and space in this world, Easter begins much the same. A woman, a saint of our Church, went to be with the lifeless body of her companion and friend. She ventured out of her home while the world was in darkness but anticipating new light with the coming dawn. She went to the burial ground in hopes of just being closer to the body of Jesus. Mary of Magdala, set out in the dark of a new day anticipating probably nothing besides death but discovered eternity. She discovered that place where heaven and earth are linked, where present time and eternal life are joined, where God would change this humble beginning into a light that could never be extinguished. For Christ had risen from the dead. The darkness and death of this world was not to have the final say but God’s hope, God’s forgiveness, God’s new life would have the last word. We need to hear and know and discover this good news for ourselves, perhaps even more so this year.

Easter, having lived through so much time of pandemic



TOP & BOTTOM Camino. PHOTOS Courtesy of Bishop John Stephens

and heaviness and worry and fear, will feel different in 2021. We have been living such cautious and careful lives for more than a year, and we need our Easter celebrations to go well beyond humble beginnings and enter a new level. We need to push past the darkness, the fearing and troubling anxiety of living in an epidemic and discover more fully the true hope and calling that God has for us in this world and beyond this world. The empty tomb that Mary of Magdala discovered was not empty of the body of Jesus but was filled with new life. She discovered the holiest of holy grounds and found that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else would be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Romans 8:38-39*). This is transforming and life altering. Mary Magdalene could not be the same afterwards and neither can we. The empty tomb is our sign that indeed God is beyond the limits we might want to place on God. That those definitions and predictabilities we might want to prescribe to God are insufficient. That God’s grace exceeds our own limitations. That death and time and place are not restrictions for God who first breathed life into us. For Alleluia, Christ is risen!

A few years ago, I was blessed to have the opportunity to walk a portion of the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. We had a very long train ride to get to our starting point. We arrived late and there was little left of the day when we found our accommodation. We had a quick meal and settled in for the night ready to start on the pilgrimage route before the dawn of the next day. My wife and I were both tired, but we had trouble sleeping. It was hot, there was a lot of traffic noise despite this being a small town, and the local roosters were crowing well before the sun broke the horizon. The alarm went off and neither of us were ready to face the day. But we ventured out anyway. Stumbling in the darkness before dawn we sought directions from our host. “How will we know when we are on the right path?” I asked in great innocence. “You will know,” she said, confidently. “You will know. Buen camino,” she offered as she went about her day. And despite the dark we found our way, we found our path, we found our pilgrimage route, we found what we were seeking... not what we were expecting but what we were seeking. Much like Mary Magdalene, setting out in the darkness, it made room to see the true light: the light of resurrection and new life, of new purpose and new meaning, of new relationship with God repaired and renewed.

As the sun eventually broke the horizon, light started to come to the path we walked. Light for us to see where we thought we were going, only to discover that the light revealed much more than that. It revealed that God is not predictable, the Holy Spirit continues to move amongst us, the light of Christ cannot be blocked out of this world but will continue to shine beyond our definitions and beyond our planning. The light of Christ will not be dimmed by pandemic or crucifixion or death or an expected end. The light of Christ continues to shine from that burial garden of long ago but even in our own lives and our own purpose.

Such is Easter. It is the place of discovery that God is with us and calls us beloved in this world and into the world to come. The resurrection of Jesus is the eternal message that we are forgiven and freed. And so, while the pandemic still exists around us, may we know the peace and joy of Easter. A peace and joy that is beyond all understanding but centred on that moment long ago when Mary Magdalene discovered an empty tomb... only to realize that it was actually filled with new life. Alleluia, Christ is risen!

O God of resurrection and Easter, bless our homes and our lives with Alleluias. Fill our hearts and souls with the transformational message that Christ is risen: linking heaven to earth, uniting our souls to God’s purpose, inviting Christ’s peace into our fears. May we live as resurrection people confident in your grace and love. In the name of Jesus, the resurrected one we pray. Amen. ✠

Love is Going to the Next Level

The February 11 Farewell Party held on Zoom in Honour of Archbishop Skelton

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

“Love is going to the next level.” Those were the words printed on the small strip of paper recognizable to all who have ever cracked open a fortune cookie or popped a Christmas cracker. This particular fortune was held up to the screen for all to see by the Most Rev. Melissa Skelton as she began her remarks during the February 11, 2021 Farewell Party honouring her seven years of servant-leadership in the diocese of New Westminster. “Love is going to the next level” she read, and then explained that on the morning of the 2020 Episcopal Election on October 3, after dressing in a navy blue suit that she had not worn for some time, she put her hand in a jacket pocket and found the fortune, placed there and forgotten following a restaurant dinner some time before. On October 3 she was moved by those potentially prophetic words and how they fit into what would be taking place that day... an Episcopal Election to find her successor.

Archbishop Skelton went on to examine that phrase and how it relates to the love, gratitude and appreciation that she was experiencing through the fond good-byes and tributes received from hundreds of people via Zoom. A “next level” of love.

An hour or so before her address on Thursday, February 11, the online party began just after 7pm, facilitated by St. John’s, Shaughnessy tech volunteers, Bruce and Patrick Gregg and co-hosted by Charlotte French, ODNW and the Ven. Louie Engnan, Archdeacon of Fraser, the Vicar of St. Michael’s, Surrey and the Vicar of Christ the Redeemer, Cloverdale. Charlotte and Fr. Louie had also led a small group organizing the event. Registration was open to everyone. It was a great turnout with participant totals throughout the 90 minute party staying pretty much around the 300 mark. If watching in “Gallery” view there were many pages of faces, some couples, mostly singles all gathered to say “farewell” and “thank-you.” There were also dozens of guests not visible but gathered via cell phones.

Off the top, Charlotte and Fr. Louie welcomed the “crowd” and let them know that there were some special guests in attendance, including: Archbishop Skelton’s husband, the Rev. Eric Stroo; her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren; brother and sister-in-law; one of her two sisters and brother-in-law; a close friend from the US; and the Rt. Rev. John Stephens, Coadjutor Bishop of the diocese and soon to be installed as the Tenth Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster on February 28.

The majority of the program consisted of video offerings assembled by the six regional archdeacons and Diocesan Council, skillfully edited into a watchable program by Bruce and Patrick Gregg. Most included still photos and brief video messages with a focus on the region and the parishes of that archdeaconry. There was a wide range of messaging, everything from thank-you greetings, to compelling personal stories of what Archbishop Skelton’s ministry has meant to our diocese and to the speaker personally. There was an on location history of the Gateway neighbourhood of Surrey presented by the Rev. Stephen Laskey which segued into a mock shampoo commercial with the Rev. Paul Woerhle peeking out from a shower stall and praising the qualities of *Anglican Shampoo*, a nod to Archbishop Skelton’s former position as a brand manager in the shampoo division of *Procter and Gamble*. A particularly



The Fortune found in Her Grace’s pocket.



The St. Alban’s sign with completed message.



The co-hosts, Charlotte French, ODNW and the Ven. Louis Engnan with the Guest of Honour.



The Gong Dance.

clever piece was a time-shifted video of young people at St. Alban’s, Burnaby putting up their farewell message on the church’s exterior signage.

The Diocesan Council presentation assembled by Sharon Grove, ODNW consisted of a number of written testimonials displayed on the screen and narrated on the

audio track. Chancellor, George Cadman, QC, ODNW and Treasurer, Bob Hardy, ODNW were included in the presentation. The Chancellor and Treasurer have been in diocesan leadership with Archbishop Skelton for all seven years of her episcopacy.

The Rev. Eric Stroo is well-known for his song parodies, and for this particular offering, a tribute to his spouse, he chose the Neil Diamond 1966 classic made famous by The Monkees, *I’m a Believer*. The song was performed by Randy Murray, and the video assembled and edited by Cliff Caprani using stills from diocesan communications’ archives and footage from his own archives. Here is the text:

*I thought parish growth was just a fairy tale
Meant for someone else like Joel Osteen.
Everything upset me, everywhere I went
Congregations folding like a tent.
Then I saw Her Grace, now I’m a believer.
Not a trace of doubt in my mind.
God above,
I’m a believer! She’s an achiever, I’m satisfied.*

*I thought church was nothing but a sinking ship,
Destined to go down to Davy Jones.
We were losing courage, Going under fast,
Every year was harder than the last.
Then I saw Her Grace, now I’m a believer
Not a trace of doubt in my mind.
God above,
I’m a believer! She’s an achiever, I’m satisfied.*

The final presentation of the evening was from the folks at St. Michael’s, Broadway (aka St. Michael’s, Vancouver, aka St. Michael’s, Multicultural, aka St. Mike’s). This is the parish where Deacon, the Rev. Eric Stroo has served for the past five years. Members of St. Mike’s Filipino community offered a video of a gong dance in tribute to Archbishop Skelton. It was an emotional few minutes as the Archbishop watched this cultural gift in her honour take place on the screen. It was a memorable moment encapsulating some of the key accomplishments of her episcopacy, development of parishes and the focus on one of our diocese’s greatest attributes and resources, our diversity.

When it was time to conclude the party, the mics of hundreds of devices muted for the previous 90 minutes were turned on and a chorus rang out, dozens of voices thanking Archbishop Skelton for her time with us and sending prayers and many blessings as she returns to the Episcopal Church and her life with Eric in Seattle. ✠



Archbishop Skelton and the Archdeacon of Burrard, the Ven. Fr. Kevin Hunt.



A very full Zoom screen, one of many.



On her last Wednesday at the Synod Office, February 24, Archbishop Skelton and Teddy.

A Letter to the Diocese

On Thursday, February 25, Archbishop Skelton circulated the following letter to the diocese of New Westminster. It was sent out via diocesan email, it was posted on the diocesan website's news pages and also circulated via Social Media accounts.

Greetings, People of the diocese of New Westminster

I write to thank you for many, many things and to say something about what happens next for me after February 28. That day will be my last day as your archbishop and will also be the day that I hand both the Diocesan crossier and the episcopal leadership of this exceptional diocese over to Bishop John Stephens.

Being your bishop and then your archbishop has been the highlight of my vocation in the Church. The role has been about as perfect a fit as possible with who I am and what I love to do in life. And the fact that I have gotten to exercise this role in this part of Canada, well, it doesn't get any better than that!

Thank you for the many blessings you've bestowed on me and on my husband Eric. Despite the separation that COVID-19 has brought to the two of us over the past year, this experience has very much been a partnership, turning what was a joy into an even greater joy.

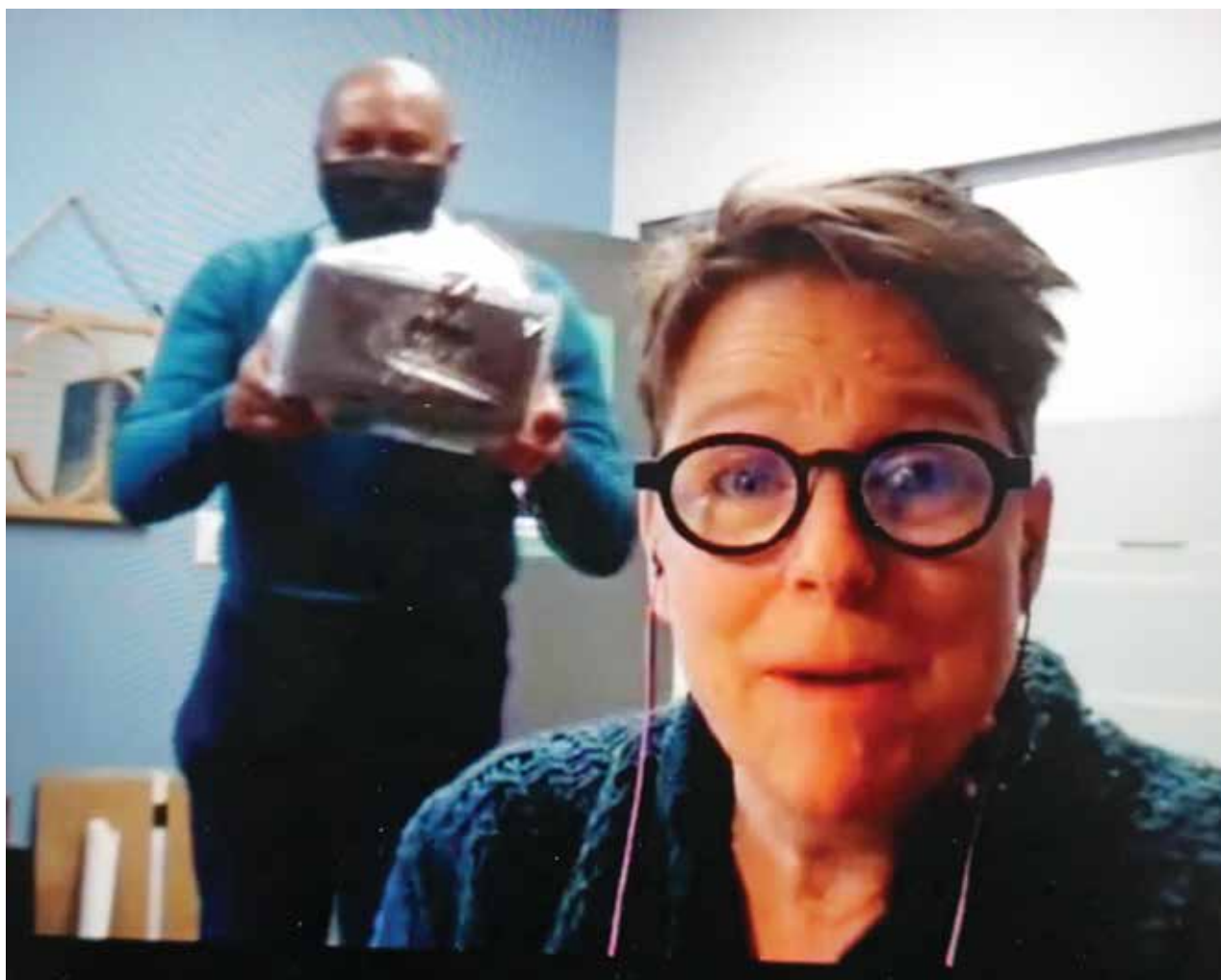
You may have seen the announcement that I will be serving as an Assisting Bishop back in the diocese of Olympia after my retirement on March 1. Please know that in doing this, I will be remaining in the Anglican Church of Canada as a retired bishop and will be assisting in the diocese of Olympia in small ways as are helpful to my dear friend Bishop Greg Rickel. I mention this to say that while I'm physically returning to the US, I remain canonically and spiritually connected to the Anglican Church of Canada and to all of you. My email address after retirement will be melissamskelton@gmail.com. Bill Siksay in the Bishop's office will have my home address.

Please know that I will carry you in my heart and in my prayers as you and I both make our transition to the good things that God has in store for us next. I have every confidence that Bishop John Stephens will lead you toward a promising and rewarding future, one that I believe this diocese deserves!

With all my love,



Rev. Carrothers on Zoom.



Rev. Glover sneaks in with a cake, during the Zoom Farewell luncheon.



Rev. Carrothers displays the cake.

Farewell Tasha!

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Tuesday, February 16, a Synod Office “Farewell” luncheon via Zoom was held for departing Missioner for Parish Development, the Rev. Tasha Carrothers. Tasha began her ministry on Synod staff in 2007 and has remained for more than 13 ½ years. During the second half of that tenure Tasha responded to God’s call which she had heard frequently through her life and entered into discernment and training for ordination. Tasha was ordained to the diaconate December 1, 2018, and to the priesthood June 15, 2019. For the past 18+ months Tasha has been the Assistant Curate at Holy Trinity Cathedral a part time ministry position in conjunction with her part time position at the Synod Office. In late January it was announced that as of March 1, 2021, Tasha would be the new Vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, a fitting appointment for both parties; an innovative, inclusive and active parish with a unique liturgical style and an innovative, progressive priest skilled in parish and congregational development.

As is the Synod Office custom regarding “Farewell” luncheons, at approximately 15 minutes into the Zoom gathering, Archbishop Skelton invited the first staff member to offer words about Tasha and then call in the next person. The sharing included some tears and some laughs. The newer members on staff were quick to praise Tasha for her much-appreciated efforts to make them feel welcome and part of the team. Those of us who have worked with Tasha for much longer periods, spoke of her: skill, knowledge, tenacity, enthusiastic spirit, openness to new experiences and concepts, and the inquisitiveness that goes along with someone who has dedicated themselves to being a life-long learner.

When the last staff member had spoken and it was time for Tasha to speak, Director for Mission and Ministry Development, the Rev. Tellison Glover, turned off his camera and crept next door to Tasha’s office, quietly opened the door and entered, masked and holding a cake box, which he deposited on the desk. Following the cake delivery and “reveal” by the recipient, Tasha responded to each and every staff member’s comments, graciously and eloquently with periodic swipes at the tears that every now and then welled-up.

Many of the newer staff members received information that they probably didn’t have before, particularly regarding the relationship between Archbishop Skelton and Rev. Carrothers. The two had met a number of years prior to Archbishop Skelton’s election as the 9th Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster when Tasha and a colleague travelled to Washington State to attend the Episcopal diocese of Olympia’s College for Congregational Development, the programme created, developed and led by then-Rev. Canon Melissa Skelton. Tasha admitted that her expectations for what she would learn at the “College” were low. In fact, she admitted that she was planning an early exit strategy prior to the first session. However, her experience at the College completely absorbed her, she became an acolyte of the methodology and a pupil of the leader. This developed into a mentoring relationship which has continued for over a decade. In many ways the connection made by Tasha+ and +Melissa was the beginning of a profound period of change and growth in the life of the diocese of New Westminster, and it is fitting that both their ministry paths are changing at the same time.

Rev. Carrothers was kind enough to take some time out from her busy transition schedule to answer some questions and share some thoughts with *Topic* readers.

Q. Let’s start off with a three-part question: When you came on staff at the Synod Office in 2007, what was your job title and what were your responsibilities? How has that changed in almost 14 years? Would the Tasha of 2007 be surprised at what the Rev. Carrothers has accomplished and was any of this in your future plans back then?

A. My job title in 2007 was *Ministry Assessment Process Resource Associate*. I didn’t know what “resource associate” meant, but at Synod one year, the Synod MC, the Rev. Stephen Rowe gave me a shout out as having the most obscure job title in the office. I helped the Rev. Paul Borthistle, then Director for Mission and Ministry Development, roll out the Ministry Assessment Process (MAP). I worked with parishes that were engaging a comprehensive assessment and visioning process, ideally with other parishes in their geographic region. MAP was a response to a widely shared awareness that every year there were fewer people in church to look after a lot of ageing buildings. How could we do ministry better together? It was not a popular program

—mostly people felt that this was a good question to ask, but that the answer was that some other church should make a radical change such as shared ministry, merging or closing. Or that MAP was a disguised attempt on the part of “the diocese” to close them down. Still, church leaders were always kind to me, and I learned a lot. The outcomes of MAP appear to be extremely modest, particularly given the amount of effort on the part of lay leaders and clergy. But I have noticed that parishes that took it seriously are no longer looking backward at the *glory days*, but are more oriented to the opportunities and challenges in front of us here and now.

Q. How has your ministry in parish and congregational development shaped you for ordained leadership?

A. In some ways I’m like Charles Atlas on one arm and a 20-pound weaking on the other. I have way more experience, insight and tools than most ordained people when it comes to the foibles of parish life, including dealing with conflict. At the same time, I’m still a baby priest when it comes to presiding, pastoral care, and preaching every week. And I know that it’s going to be different, moving from a diocesan staff role, working with a parish for a limited time, to walking with a faith community week by week. I’m looking forward to it.

Q. How did you come to faith and when (and why) did you realize that you were being called to ordination?

A. I’m a cradle Anglican and church has always been an important part of my life, at first because that’s where I found friends. I attended the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) in the early 1990s, having completed a BA with no discernable skills. At that time, I toyed with the idea of ordination, but I did not see myself in any of the other students. For one thing, I was very young. I was also temperamentally very different. I eventually landed the position at the Synod Office, which brought me into contact with many clergy. Seeing the range of people in this vocation caused me to question my conviction that I was not appropriate for the priesthood. By that time, I’d acquired a fair bit of life experience, so was no longer quite the callow youth I had been. But what really changed things was going to the College for Congregational Development in 2009, and meeting Melissa Skelton. Here was a priest who was doing the kind of work that made my heart sing. Maybe I could be that too? I also got to work with the Rev. Marnie Peterson (gathering priest at St. Brigid’s) for several years, and I learned a lot from her insight and patience, particularly her patience with me. Here was another priest who showed me what ordained leadership could look like. Maybe I could learn to be like that?

Q. Your journey to ordination was a fairly lengthy one, not the longest on record but certainly up there. Knowing what you know now, would you have done it differently?

A. What a great question! I’m afraid that I needed that much time to be shaped and ready. Had I known that it was going to be such a long road and that the destination would be the one that I hoped for, I might have been more patient and less judgmental. On the other hand, that was a big part of my learning, so I wouldn’t want to give that up.

Q. How did your seminary education and the discernment process shape you for your vocation?

A. My wonderful discernment committees—the first didn’t give me a green light. They rightly saw that I needed to develop a greater awareness of the divine at work in my life. I carried that “not yet” like a monkey on my back. At the same time, I wouldn’t be here now if they had not cared enough to press pause on my process. Boy was I mad, but at least I had enough sense to take them seriously. My second committee was extraordinary. Such wise and kind people, including the late Rev. Dr. Bill Crockett. The conversation always circled back to priestly being and doing. They taught me the importance of being, and that I had that within me just as much as the doing.

Q. I hope I’m not “telling tales out of school” but you framed your remarks at your farewell lunch within the context of the Diocesan School for Parish Development’s *Gather—Transform—Send*, which is axiomatic to the school’s pedagogy and well-known to those who have experience with that program. How did the “School” shape you for ministry as a lay leader and now as an ordained leader?

A. It is hard to exaggerate the impact that the School for Parish Development has had on me. I learned to use models to reflect on different issues that crop up in church organizations; not everyone thinks this way, but I certainly



“...I learned that gathering as faith communities in this particular Anglican way is faithful, beautiful, unique and worth the effort—and I might just be called to be a gatherer of those communities as pastor, teacher, and priest.”

do and it transformed my work. Teaching in the program for several years allowed me to become comfortable with a wide range of material. Now, when I encounter a dynamic that puzzles or frustrates me, I’m more likely to wonder what’s going on “under the iceberg.”

The School was also where I learned that my commitment to helping churches get stronger is not about rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*. Rather, I learned that gathering as faith communities in this particular Anglican way is faithful, beautiful, unique and worth the effort—and I might just be called to be a gatherer of those communities as pastor, teacher, and priest.

Q. Having completed your curacy and now about to begin an incumbency as vicar, is ordained leadership what you thought it would be like when you were on the “other side?”

A. Yes it is, except that it’s even more rewarding than I had hoped.

Q. St. Mary Magdalene is a small parish which functions very well and it is also the product of the merging of St. Mark’s, Kitsilano and St. George’s, Vancouver. The liturgy there is innovative and lively. How is the parish making the adjustment to online worship? What is the public worship schedule currently and are their plans to expand that?

A. I talked with Pam Martin, ODNW, St. Mary Magdalene’s liturgist, to hear her thoughts on moving worship online. Worship at St. Mary Magdalene’s has been enriched with changing images, fabric hangings, candles and more. People worshipped in the round, making for greater connection, one with another. Singing, often unaccompanied, was woven through the liturgy. These elements are difficult

to recreate online, but Zoom has allowed a surprising amount to be maintained. PowerPoint slides mean that we can use pictures of familiar elements such as backdrops, art, and windows. Importantly, it’s still possible to sing in the same unaccompanied style, particularly call and response songs. St. Mary Magdalene’s has used Zoom from the beginning, and Pam was quick to express her thanks for Synod staff assistance in that area. Another important element of St. Mary Magdalene’s worship is the sermon response time and participatory intercessions, both of which work well on Zoom. Check us out at 10:30am on Sundays (but maybe give me a few weeks to get my bearing first).

Plans to expand include offering hybrid worship once we can gather on-site in greater numbers and restoring the Wednesday evening contemplative eucharist.

The space is remarkably flexible and the people creative—I’m looking forward to seeing what else we will come up with together.

Q. Urban Aboriginal Ministry (UAM) led by gathering priest, the Rev. Vivian Seegers calls St. Mary Magdalene home base. Is there a strategy or a plan to ensure that two ministries in the same space can coexist and each thrive?

A. I’m looking forward to working with Vivian and learning how St. Mary Magdalene supports UAM. It seems that the relationship between the two has developed organically. I don’t know whether we need a “plan” as such—small organizations often work better with less formal structures. There will be principles and values that guide our relationship, and I’m looking forward to learning what they are and making sure our commitment is strong and clear. I believe that each of us is more likely to thrive together than apart. ✠

Parishes Across Diocese Respond to Calls for Anti-Racism

JESSICA SCHAAP
Missioner for Christian Formation

The summer protests inspired by *Black Lives Matter* and the alarming rise in anti-Asian racism have galvanized parishes across the diocese to create opportunities to learn about systemic racism. These are just a few of the responses from parishes and diocesan leadership. They are efforts to learn how to live more deeply into the vows of our baptismal covenant:

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

A pilot project began in January with two cohorts of clergy leaders examining, discussing, and building skills “to support equity and diversity initiatives within organizations.” The project is led by Natasha Aruliah, a coach and educator in the areas of social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and organizational change. Clergy meet once a month to learn and discuss new topics such as intersectionality, white saviorism, and solidarity. In between sessions they read and journal about what they have learned.

St. Catherine’s, Capilano developed a series called *Deep Diversity* with instructor Dr. Jessica Motherwell McFarlane from the Justice Institute of BC. Together, she and the Rev. Dr. Sharon Smith designed an online course using the book *Deep Diversity: Overcoming Us vs. Them* by Shakil Choud-



PHOTO wildpixel (iStock ID: 1248096685)

hury. The course looks at the deep emotional and spiritual work needed to reprogram often unconscious biases and prejudices in order to foster deep fairness and inclusion.

St. Faith’s and St. Hildegard’s Sanctuary also sought expert facilitation with an anti-racism circle facilitated by Dr. Andrea Montgomery di Marco. She had previously facilitated circles for local neighbourhood organizations. A parish group began in Advent 2020 and another is continuing through Lent 2021. The group worked their way through the book *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* by Layla Saad.

Several parishes including St. Paul’s, Vancouver and St. John’s, Squamish formed book studies of *Dear White Church: A Love Letter to the Whitest Denomination in the US*. Along with his powerful personal story, author and Lutheran pastor Rev. Lenny Duncan examines the link between diversity and church vitality.

Last fall, Christ Church Cathedral’s Communications Director, Alicia Ambrosio shared the unexpected impacts that a book study of Robin diAngelo’s *White Fragility* had on the group’s members. Even the formation of the group revealed assumptions about who the study was for and complexified what seemed to be just another book club. Rev. Helen Dunn came away with a year-long commitment to study and quote authors who were not white and male, and co-chair Donna Wong-Juliani began to view government anti-racism initiatives more critically. The whole story is available online at thecathedral.ca/blog/exploring-white-fragility-as-a-parish-community. ✚

A Very Subdued Affair

CLIFF CAPRANI
Communications Consultant, Videographer, Photographer, diocese of New Westminster; Parishioner at All Saints, Ladner

“Well, so, how are you managing?” asked the Bishop. “This pandemic carries on, rather, doesn’t it?” he continued. These were the opening remarks from Bishop John Stephens, made at the first parish visit of his episcopacy. This has to have been the quietest opening night of any bishop’s career.

A plague will do that. Less than a dozen were in attendance: to be exact, four singers, three readers, an intercessor, a camera operator and a parish priest and they were masked and socially distanced prior to worship and physically distanced during. Not the kind of standing-room-only welcome that All Saints, Ladner usually gives to a newly-minted bishop on their first visit. No well-rehearsed anthem or long communion line. No sumptuous after church buffet in the parish hall.

The morning of Sunday, February 7—the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany—it was a subdued affair. As it should be in these extraordinary times.

Bishop John arrived an hour before we were due to livestream, parked in a designated spot—a nice touch by Rev. Robin Ruder-Celiz given how few cars were expected—and spent some time familiarizing himself with the worship space. He had been here before, of course, at Fr. Robin’s installation 16 months earlier. That evening, he was a parish priest at St. John’s, Shaughnessy on February 7 he is still in preparation to become the Tenth Bishop of



The reserved parking space. ALL PHOTOS Cliff Caprani

the diocese of New Westminster.

I had a few minutes before the service started to chat with Bishop John. In the old days—read *pre-pandemic*—Irish people would always talk about the weather. Nowadays, we exchange news about COVID-19. I asked after his mother, now living in Ireland. He laughed. “She’s living on a farm in County Cavan, which was a quiet place even before the pandemic. She is doing well. And your family? All healthy?” I assured him that they were, thank God.

We chatted about the service. I would be filming his homily for posting on the diocesan website. I mentioned that I would also be snapping a few stills. He put me at my ease, telling me that he was comfortable with me moving about the sanctuary, as necessary, while he spoke.

Beginning his homily, Bishop John commented on the fact that many congregations, though not able to meet in-person, had seen a noticeable improvement in online attendance. He then keyed in on the phrase, “Everyone is searching for you,” taken from Mark’s gospel (*Mark 1:37*). He pointed to a similar theme in the old testament reading, *Isaiah 40:21*. “Have you not seen; have not heard? ... it is God who sits above the earth?” We search, we seek, we desire to know God. He concluded by asking, “What are you searching for?”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Bishop John at the altar before the liturgy.



Bishop and Rector prepare the altar prior to worship.



Sacred Covering | Bearing Witness

Red & White Caplet of Gratitude & Joy for Archbishop Melissa Skelton marking her retirement as Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon

RIKKI KOOY SLEX'LEX TCETS'NUW ENX'SPIRIT ELK WOMAN
Contributing Artist, St. Hildegard's Sanctuary

In our Indigenous culture, *Hand of Friendship* bears witness to the *Open Hand*—no harm. The raised hands are a particular *Mark of Respect* and agreement—*Of Gratitude*. The Hummingbird is a portent, a *Messenger of Joy* and *Mystery Traveller*—*Sacred Joy*.

I identify as a Faith Believer who also walks on the Indigenous path of family and understanding, and part of the *Feather Dance* Reconciliation project with the gathering priest, the Rev. Melanie Calabrigo of St. Hildegard's Sanctuary at St. Faith's in Vancouver. In my understanding through consultation with the Ven. Clara Plamondon, Prolocutor of the Ecclesiastical Province, this is a "gift of respect" from the six dioceses (British Columbia, Caledonia, Kootenay, New Westminster, Territory of the People, Yukon) whose people have been encouraged, and lifted up

by the leadership of Archbishop Melissa. A bringing together—it is my joy to partner with the six dioceses to bring a gift to acknowledge their gratitude for her grace and leadership. Thank you! The reference points for me are the reconciliation of Settler and Indigenous, and that Love and Purpose are at the centre of Reconciliation, between all people. These are

central in relationship.
In my understanding of liturgical robe colours:
• Red — *High and Holy*
• White — *Celebration*
In the *Feather Dance* liturgical robes:
• Red — *Healing Transformation*
• White — *Journey*

On the occasion of Archbishop Melissa Skelton's retirement, the Gratitude and Joy of the six dioceses is fully reflected:
• A Journey of Healing Transformation
• The Six Pairs of Hands of Friendship
• The Hummingbird — Messenger of Joy
• The Two Gold Crosses to honour our Lord and Creator. ✠



A Very Subdued Affair

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Following the Peace, four members of the choir sang three verses of Marty Haugen's *All Are Welcome*. Choir director Rod Asher reminded the singers about the need to annunciate. They were a little out of practise. This quartet had last sung together in November, when they

recorded music for Advent and Christmas. On this occasion, Haugen's hymn carried a kind of plaintive hope for the future—*All Are Welcome* morphed into *All Will Soon Be Welcomed*. Following the service, Bishop Stephens tuned in to the

All Saints Zoom Coffee Hour, where he fielded questions from the 30 or so people in attendance. We look forward to a Sunday when we can give Bishop John a worthy reception. Believe me, that day cannot come soon enough. ✠



Bishop John processes in.



Preaching.



Bishop and Rector smiling with their eyes.

Consolidated Trust Fund Meeting Via Zoom

A Look at Diocesan and Parish Investments in the Year of COVID-19 — 2020

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

For many years, invitations have gone out in the fall via email to clergy, wardens and treasurers of the parishes and ministry organizations of the diocese of New Westminster, inviting that group to attend the annual Consolidated Trust Fund (CTF) information session. Not to be confused with an official Annual Report, the information session accompanied by a detailed booklet and PowerPoint presentation is an opportunity to find out how the diocesan and parish investments have fared in the previous year. Philips, Hagar and North (PH&N) is the investment firm that handles the CTF, and that firm has been guiding the diocesan and parish investments since 1991. PH&N is currently the Canadian institutional asset management division of the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)

For much of the past decade, St. Stephen's, West Vancouver hosted the event on the first Saturday of December. In 2019, the venue changed to St. Christopher's, West Vancouver and did indeed take place on December 7 of that year. For close to seven years the two Institutional Portfolio Managers presenting the report to the diocese have been and continue to be Paul Martin and Graeme Baker. Diocesan Treasurer, Bob Hardy, ODNW and Chief Financial Officer of the diocese of New Westminster, Shailene Caparas are present and organize the event. In so many ways 2020 was a very different year. Gathering in a church meeting room was not possible due to COVID-19 safety protocols, so the informal report was scheduled for the evening of Thursday, January 28, 2021 via Zoom.

Paul Martin was unavailable for the reporting session but PH&N were well represented by Graeme Baker. Holding the session nearly two months later than usual worked well as it allowed for a more detailed presentation and more complete assessment of the entire year of 2020.

The Zoom meeting was well-attended with at least three times as many participants as the average for the in-person Saturday morning meetings of years previous. Not having to drive to the meeting was certainly a plus factor, however it is more than likely that parish treasurers, wardens and priests-in-charge had an increased interest in their investments given the uncertainty due to COVID-19. There were approximately 60 in attendance, with the addition of five Synod staff members, Treasurer Bob Hardy and the presenter Graeme Baker. Over the last decade the onsite attendance for this report has been approximately fifteen. Folks from the Sunshine Coast and the eastern Fraser Valley were particularly pleased with the online arrangements as many of them had never attended the CTF report session due to distance.

And the good news is that, overall, investments did well. For long term investors like the diocese, holding the course through the dip in the market at the outset of the pandemic in March and April paid off with excellent numbers later in the year.

The bounce back in investments is in part due to some effective interventions from governments. The Federal Government of Canada stepped up, but according to Graeme Baker, "The worrying news is that we have some large debt to GDP levels that will be hanging around." Some components of the diocesan portfolio have improved to pre-pandemic levels, particularly in the retail sector. The economy recovered steadily and the prediction at the time of this meeting in late January 2021, was that more relief from governments in the wake of the second wave would have a positive effect.

Bond markets came down sharply toward the middle and end of 2020 and into 2021. The fixed income part of the portfolio according to Baker is "quite muted" however, bonds remained steadfast through the volatility of early in the pandemic which aided in the recovery and ultimate strong increase in the portfolio's earnings. The diocese of New Westminster's portfolio continues with the strategy of balanced equities and bonds. PH&N continues to favour equities. During the volatility, PH&N sold bonds and focused on equity buying, particularly the global equity markets which performed at 30%. This part of the portfolio is largely responsible for the overall success of the diocesan and parish investments currently valued at 88 million (diocese, 52 million; parishes, 36 million) a 14% increase over 2019 (which was also a very good year). However, the plan is to continue to own Bonds moving forward as they are a good way to protect against future equity fund volatility. Looking forward, Baker said that this past year of performance by the Bond market was a good one because of the drop in interests rates, but cautioned that the Bond market coming up will likely not do much



Graeme Baker via Zoom

more than 1%. Going forward they are looking at moving into more investment in other instruments.

When it comes to Global Equity Funds, overall PH&N

is selecting stocks from the global fund outside of the US, although that country represents 60% of the investment potential. Graeme Baker cited some risk factors, stating that although equity markets have started strong, there had been up to that point (January 28, 2021) problems vaccinating the population and the resistance of the new variants which would continue to affect the recovery of the US economy. The markets will improve with everybody getting vaccinated, and the faster that happens the better.

A newer piece in the portfolio is the real estate fund that invests in corporate real estate properties across Canada. In partnership is British Columbia Investment Management Corporation (BCI), a provincial asset manager. RBC has also partnered with Quadrille Capital and started their own real estate investment fund. Graeme is optimistic and enthusiastic that this fund will be successful.

Graeme was very open to answering questions throughout the presentation and the Q&A benefited from the Zoom meeting format, with participants typing in their questions uses the "chat" feature.

A question came in about the risk of commercial real estate with people working from home. Graeme responded that the commercial real estate market will continue to change drastically in how it looks, enclosed malls with fashion retail, lower end office facilities are in for a rough ride, but real estate is always a good long range strategy.

Throughout the 90-minute presentation and Q&A a great deal of information was covered about specific stocks that have performed well, for example: *Shopify*, the Canadian online retail referral company; *Ørsted* the Danish green energy company; and *Neste* the largest global producers of renewable diesel fuel.

A question was asked about whether or not the diocese of New Westminster portfolio held any *Tesla* stock. Graeme responded that the CTF does not contain *Tesla* as its evaluation is larger than its global presence. *Tesla* needs to capture more of the global market in order to justify its evaluation. Of course, we, in one of the wealthiest places in the world see quite a few *Teslas* on the road and there are a number of government rebates and other financial advantages to owning electric vehicles beyond just the benefit to the environment. However, we are a very small portion of the planet which needs to be taken into account when investing on a global scale.

Every year of the ten years that I have attended the meeting, the question of socially and environmentally responsible investing has come up. At this meeting as in years previous, Graeme informed the participants about the PH&N policies in this regard which are among the best on the planet. Socially responsible investing has always been a priority of the diocese and of PH&N and that continues in earnest. In 2019, RBC Global Asset Management embarked on a program *Stewardship in Action* and the overview booklet was distributed at the 2019 information session and has remained available.

With this diocesan priority on the agenda, in 2020, diocesan leadership assembled an investment committee in order to better track diocesan investments, offer a missional perspective and pursue new markets and new possibilities, for example: more investment in mortgages, property development and emerging technologies.

The comments in the "chat" section of the Zoom meeting were very positive and those who attended learned a great deal not only about the diocesan and parish investments but they were also given an insider's look at what is happening with investment on a global scale.

Treasurer Bob Hardy, closed the meeting thanking Graeme and summarized the meeting saying, "Our investments continue to do very well."

Many thanks to Administrative Assistant to the Finance Department on Synod staff, Elias Neto for his excellent work hosting the Zoom meeting. ✨

A downloadable copy of *Stewardship in Action* is available online at us.rbcgam.com/resources/docs/pdf/HTML-files/web/100819-stewardship-in-action.pdf.

The RBC Global Asset Management (PH&N Institutional) for the Diocese of New Westminster PDF presented by Graeme Baker, Institutional Portfolio Manager is an important part of these information sessions and is available for downloading at <https://tinyurl.com/y8bmer7t>.

For more information about diocesan finances and the CTF please contact Shailene Caparas at scaparas@vancouver.anglican.ca.

All are encouraged
to submit letters, articles,
reports on parish activities,
opinion pieces, photos,
and more for consideration
to be published in Topic

**DEADLINE FOR
TOPIC SUBMISSIONS**

April 23
for the
Summer issue

Please email
Randy Murray at
rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca

All contributions
are appreciated
• EDITOR •

IN MEMORIAM

Janet Winifred Barclay (nee Lock), ODNW

February 22, 1920 – February 1, 2021



Janet Barclay immediately following her investiture into the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster on November 1, 2009. PHOTO Wayne Chose

Janet Barclay, ODNW passed into the presence of her Lord, who graciously granted her a long and satisfying life, on Monday, February 1 at Ridge Meadows Hospital, with family by her side.

Predeceased by husband George (d. 1980) and brothers Arthur (d. 2006) and John (d. 2012) Lock. Survived by her children David (Maureen d. 2014), Bill (Diane), Grace Fryer (Bruce), Marion (Grant Johnston; Donald W. MacKay d. 2011), and Bob (Tena), 12 grandchildren and 24 great grandchildren with another on the way.

Janet was born and raised in New Westminster to Ernest and Emily Lock, both from England and both schoolteachers. Janet was an enthusiastic Girl Guide and active in her church. She graduated from Duke of Connaught High School and from the University of Toronto with a Masters in Physiology in 1944, focusing on polio research. She returned west to a desperate shortage of teachers and taught Home Economics in Victoria, Creston and Maple Ridge while working on her teacher certification in her spare time.

In Creston she bought a car on the condition the salesman would teach her to drive it. Later she drove it to New Westminster to pick up her driver's license. Regulations were more flexible back then.

Her move to Maple Ridge in 1950 marked the beginning of 70 years of residency in the community. In 1952 she married fellow teacher George Barclay, a widower 22 years her senior, with two young sons. "I have a new mom and she makes lemon pie," the older boy enthused. Anticipating George's retirement well before all of the children were out of the home, Janet became well practiced in the art of extracting the maximum benefit and enjoyment for the lowest possible price!

Janet connected with people. She addressed the town council from time to time, drove seniors around when she

herself was their senior and befriended and assisted several people with chronic needs. She enjoyed the University Women's Club, and she was an active and faithful member of St. George's Anglican Church. Janet was invested into the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster in its inaugural year of 2009. Here is her Citation:

At St. George's, Maple Ridge Janet has offered her time and talents in many different ways to the parish including the Anglican Church Women (ACW), the Altar Guild, leading Bible Studies, and caring for the church gardens.

She was a model of ageing gracefully. She just slowed down. An avid gardener, she made a final tour of her vegetable garden six days before she passed away. Poor eyesight made using Skype and Zoom awkward, but that is how she learned to keep up with the business of her housing co-op and with her far-flung family. She survived an altercation with a car in a crosswalk and while she recovered in hospital mused: "Why God wants a half-blind 94-year-old to stick around I will have to find out." One thing is certain: for six more years, she continually enriched the lives of those who knew her with her gracious and patient attention.

Janet was able to live independently in her home thanks to many friends and helpers including the members of St. George's, residents of St. George's Village, Levern, caregivers from Fraser Health and Dr. Dugdale. The staff of 2West provided expert care and gracious accommodation of her family in her last week. Heartfelt thanks to all.

A virtual memorial service was held Monday, February 22, 2021.

In Janet's memory please consider a donation to St. George's or a charity of your choice.

Many thanks to Janet's family and her parish family for sharing this memorial with *Topic* readers. ☙

Laura Godwin, ODNW

1924 – February 2, 2021



Laura is invested into the ODNW and congratulated by Archbishop Skelton, November 3, 2018. PHOTO Wayne Chose

What can one say about the indomitably spirited Laura Godwin?

Laura being from a much simpler time, was born and raised in North Burnaby.

Not everyone had a car. Not everyone had a refrigerator. In fact, not everyone had electricity!

Can you imagine life without electricity?

Through her dad, Laura learned where the real power came from (she'd lost her mother to Scarlet Fever when she was very young). That power came from her father's faith and her father taught Laura early on that God was her true Father.

The family attended St. Nicholas' Anglican Church, built in 1912 on Triumph Street in the North Burnaby Heights. Laura and her siblings were baptized and raised at St. Nicholas. She had lost her sister, Ruth, when she was 7, but had her brother and best friend John as a loving companion. After her dad remarried, she added two brothers, David and Edmund (Teddy), to her family. She ended up living with her aunts for awhile after they came along.

Even though Laura was born in a simpler time, life wasn't always easy for folks living during the 1920s to 1950s. They faced a changing way of life with new technologies, poverty, troubling times like the Great Depression, and World War II (we can draw some parallels here). Her resilience and faith kept her pure of heart sustaining her through some very difficult times.

After the War, during which she'd served in the Air Force, she met Frank Godwin and they married and settled in Vancouver. Frank had been previously married with two lovely girls and a week after their marriage, the girls came to live with them. Laura instantly became a mother. Not having had a mother growing up, this didn't stop her from being the giving person and great mother figure she was to become, thus proving of who she really was deep down.

Eventually the girls went back to live with their mother. This left a great longing in Laura to have her own children as she missed Marge and Geri very much! Frank had said he didn't want to have any more kids, but a few years after they were married, Laura was happy to learn she was to be blessed with the arrival of their daughter, Jean. Three years after Jeannie was born, along came daughter number four, Sheila.

Life fell into routine and the family moved from Vancouver to Coquitlam. The years flew by, the children grew and went on to their own lives. Retirement was there before Frank and Laura knew it. Sadly, only a short time into retirement, Frank passed away. Laura suddenly found herself alone after 38 years of marriage.

Now what, she may have asked? She didn't have to wait long for the answer. Sheila and her husband Kevin invited Laura to come to live with them. A suitable house with a suite was not to be found so the idea was to make a bigger version of the old family home. And a home it was, and for next 28 years, and two grandchildren later, they all lived and loved together. Laura helped to raise all four of her grandchildren, Katie and Stephanie, Eliza and Ben. As the children grew, she filled her hours, staying busy until the age of 92 by bowling with friends, aquacizing, helping with the Altar Guild, the Food Bank and many other activities at Christ the King (the name of the parish prior to St. Timothy's) with her best friend Donnie. Those two ladies together or apart, Energizer bunnies! Her health didn't always cooperate with her tenacity and the last while, she was sidelined, but content to remain in her home until the age of 96.

Now, Kevin and Sheila, and all of us are left with a "Laura sized hole" in our hearts that will never be filled. Laura was a genuine and caring woman who loved others and gave of herself so generously and unselfishly.

Laura Godwin was invested into the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster on November 3, 2018. Her Citation reads as follows:

Laura followed her parents' footsteps into active ministry at St. Nicolas parish in Burnaby. Over the years, she has embraced many jobs in the parish: Treasurer, Altar Guild, sidesperson, collection counter, assisting with Home Communion, taking part in the parish Phone Tree, supplying the kitchen for Coffee Hour, and becoming a founding St. Timothy Host for the Food Bank. Her willingness to embrace new ideas and new ways of doing things make her an incredibly valuable member of the parish of St. Timothy.

Many thanks to Laura Godwin's youngest daughter Sheila for providing this memorial to share with *Topic* readers. ☙

AROUND THE DIOCESE



Snow Day at the Cathedral
Many thanks to photographer Jane Dittich of the Parish of Christ Church Cathedral (Jane is also a regular contributor to Diocesan Communications) for these photos from Saturday, February 13, 2021.
As much of North America was experiencing a nasty cold snap with record low temperatures, winds and snowfall, Vancouver had its first sampling of real winter weather halfway through February. The week of February 9–15, the Vancouver weather was extremely mild compared to most other locales; however, that Saturday when Jane snapped these shots was the snowiest February 13 in 72 years. One would need to go back to 1949 to find a day when more than 9 cm of snow had fallen. ☩



Drive-In Ashes in Gibson
Twelve parishioners and two clergy joined the St. Bart's Ash Wednesday "Drive-in" service on February 17. Two home deliveries of consecrated ashes/prayers were also made. St. Bart's and their neighbours down the road, St. Hilda's, Sechelt have continued a tradition of offering the distribution of ashes to their greater communities and that hasn't changed because of COVID-19. ☩

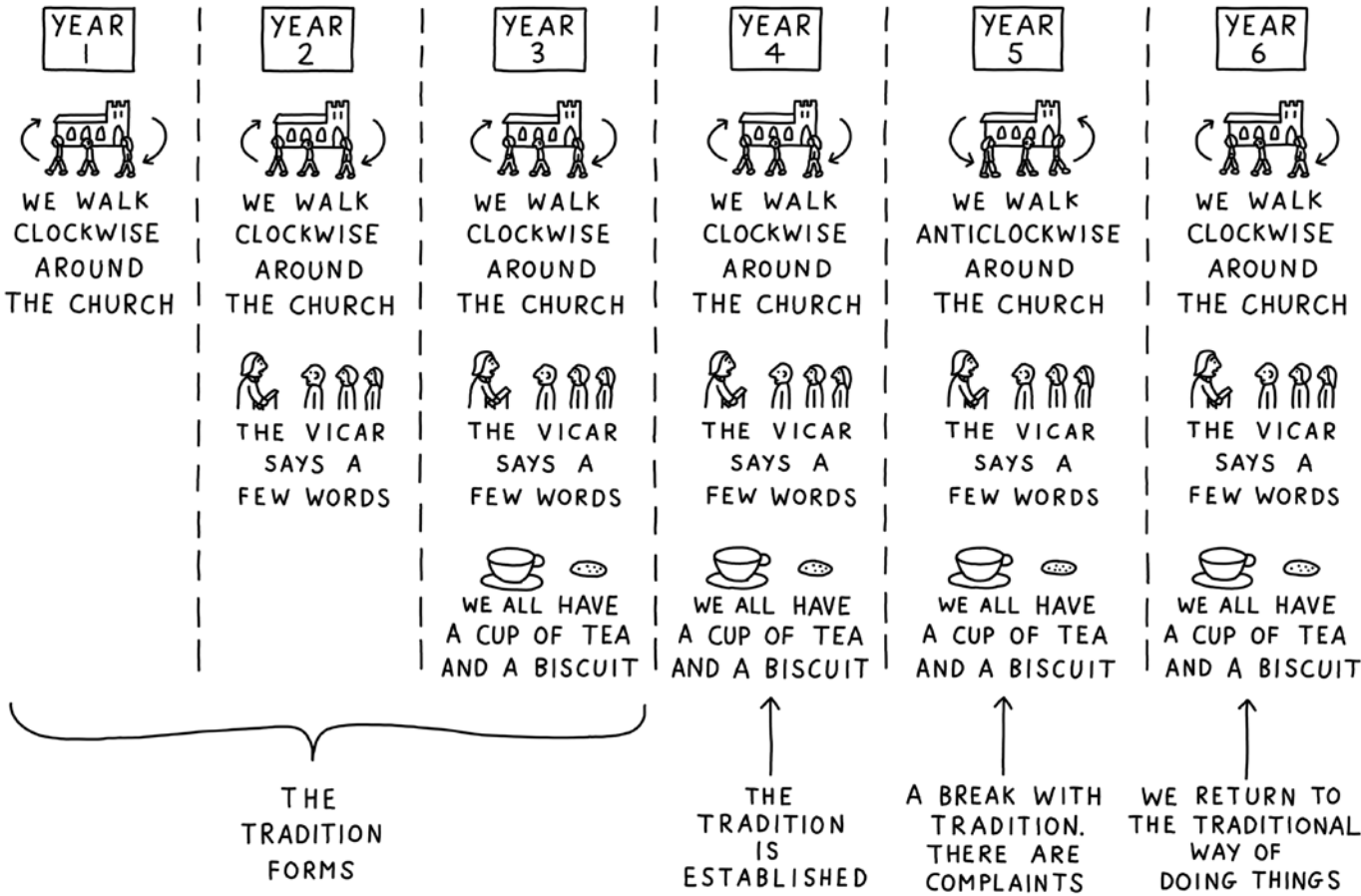


The Rev. Clarence Li and Deacon, the Rev. Steve Bailey.
PHOTO Pamela McElheran



Rev. Steve Bailey and a drive-in ashing.
PHOTO Pamela McElheran

TRADITION
HOW IT DEVELOPS



DIOCESAN SYNOD
Saturday, May 15
8:30am-1:30pm

Planning is well underway with the Agenda Committee and the Constitutions and Canons Committee working out an effective way by which the required business—budget and financial statements, appointment of auditors, elections for the various diocesan decision-making groups (i.e., Diocesan Council, General Synod, Provincial Synod, Bishop's Advisory Committee on Appointments etc.), the receipt of reports of Synod may be conducted. Once proposals are reached, Diocesan Council will be consulted. More details are available now on the diocesan website and will be included in the May issue of *Topic*.
At present the thought is that there would be a series of Regional/Archdiaconal pre-meetings of Synod Delegates with a Synod convened virtually on Saturday, May 15.
The Scriptural quotation on which Bishop John Stephens will build his address is: "Wonderful are your works; that I know very well (*Psalm 139:14b*)."

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Staff, Clergy & Parish Development News Around the Diocese

From the Desk of the Executive Archdeacon



The Reverends Liz Hamel and Lucy Price photographed at the March 9, 2020 installation of the Rev. Katherine Hough as Vicar of St. Augustine, Marpole. PHOTO Randy Murray

CONGRATULATIONS

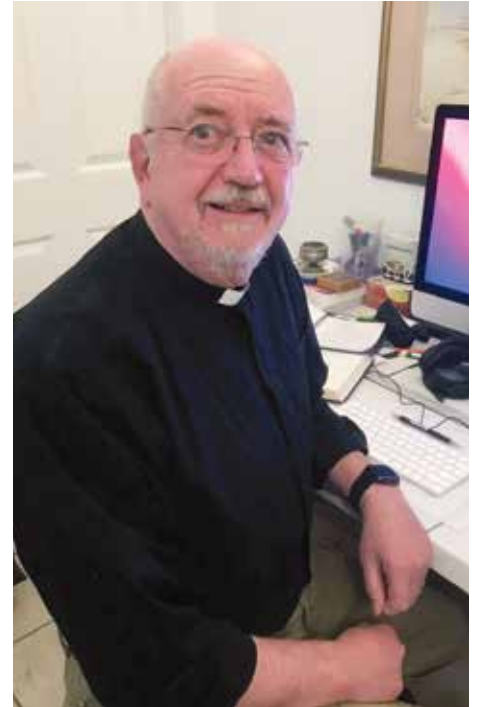
On Friday, February 12, Prashanthi Yadvalli, Accounting Assistant at the Synod Office, became a Canadian Citizen in an online Citizenship Court. We are delighted to welcome her. Congratulations, Shanthi!

APPOINTMENTS

The Bishops appointed the Rev. Philip Barker as Vicar of the Parish of All Saints' Agassiz (50% time) effective February 15, 2021. Philip succeeds the Rev. David Price who retired on December 31, 2020. Philip has lived in the diocese for about a decade and had Permission to Officiate but is now canonically resident here having transferred from his former diocese of Zululand in the Province of Southern Africa.

The Rev. Liz Hamel is appointed Interim Priest-in-Charge (50% time) to the Parish of St. Helen, Point Grey effective February 15, 2021. The appointment is for up to a year. The Rev. Scott Gould's appointment ended on December 31, 2020.

The Rev. Tasha Carrothers has been appointed Vicar (80%) of St. Mary Magdalene,



The Rev. Philip Barker. PHOTO Submitted

Vancouver beginning on March 1, 2021. She succeeds the Rev. John Marsh. Tasha has left her positions as Missioner for Parish Development in the Diocesan Office and Curate at Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Westminster. See the feature article on pages 12 and 13 of this issue of *Topic*.

RESIGNATIONS

The Rev. Stuart Hallam, Rector of St. Philip, Dunbar in Vancouver gave notice to the archbishop and announced to the parish on January 10 that he would be ending his appointment with his last Sunday being February 28. Archbishop Skelton regrettably accepted his resignation. Stuart and his family will return to the UK.

The Rev. Lucy Price, Vicar of Holy Cross, Vancouver gave her notice on February 21, that she will be leaving effective April 30 and does so with regret. Her family are relocating elsewhere in the diocese and for this reason she will end her appointment. The parish has asked the bishop for a direct appointment.

PARISH DEVELOPMENT

St. Catherine of Alexandria, Port Coquitlam will relocate their community to St. Laurence, Coquitlam in aid of strengthening their ministry. The first Sunday in their new home was February 28, 2021. The Rev. Pat Ratcliffe will continue her diaconal ministry with St. Catherine of Alexandria and the Rev. Eric Mason, Rector of St. Laurence's is Priest-in-Charge.

The Parish of St. Matthias and St. Luke is undergoing a change of name. The Oakridge parish will now be known as St. Titus. ✠



Deacon, the Rev. Patricia Ratcliffe. PHOTO Bayne Stanley



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Farewell to a Servant-Leader

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The following is a statement and a paraphrase of a prayer by St. Benedict that I prepared for my turn to “share my thoughts” at the Synod Office staff’s Farewell to Archbishop Melissa luncheon via Zoom on Wednesday, February 24. A couple of days later I thought that I would like to share it more broadly. I asked Her Grace, and she was enthusiastic about the idea. Here it is:

All of creation is hierarchical and there is always the top of the hierarchy, a leader. In human terms, people that seek leadership or are compelled to lead are a very interesting subset and what they do once they become leaders is a broad subject, open to interpretation, criticism etc. A bishop is a specific kind of leader, a servant-leader, chosen by the faithful who come to their choices through prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit. And for the last seven years we’ve been blessed with Melissa Skelton.

Archbishop Skelton was the right person at the right time. There was little doubt that the 9th Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster would be a woman, the time for greater gender equality in church leadership was way past due. Personally, I remain amazed at the fact the majority of religious people on the planet embrace faiths and denominations that practice gender apartheid.

Like Bishop John Stephens this past fall, Archbishop Melissa received a very healthy mandate November 30, 2013. Winning the election by a large majority on the third ballot and... don’t forget she was up against some very popular local candidates. The three other top candidates are now two bishops (the Right Reverends McNaughton and Stephens) and the Dean of a major British University (the Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark-King). And Bishop John your time would (and did) come, because the 9th bishop was always going to be a woman.

Archbishop Skelton healed us from our wounds from years of turmoil and schism, but she didn’t do it by kissing it and making it feel better; she did what she does best, she kept us busy, really busy! She championed and spearheaded the reimagining and redesigning of diocesan and parish protocols, processes and systems changing the environment from conflict to learning.

What makes her a brilliant teacher and



When covering diocesan liturgies always bring your own Hymn Book. PHOTO Bayne Stanley

a brilliant consultant is her ability to bring people out and get them to track through what they need to work on, guiding them to their strengths and building their confidence. The markers and newsprint flipcharts, often seen as the visible symbols of her teaching and leadership style are the physical manifestations of those things. Our diocese was depressed, it was suffering low self-esteem, PTSD. It wasn’t just

faith in God, it was faith in ourselves that she built up.

And leadership can be lonely, it’s lonely at the top and it’s even more lonely, when you are lonely. And for these past seven years Archbishop Melissa has much of the time been separated from her husband, her son, her grandchildren, her siblings, extended family, the Episcopal Church which she loves, her friends and her country. Her

gift of service to us has been huge and not without a price.

I can only imagine what Melissa’s career here has meant for women in the church. It’s beyond my ability to truly understand. I don’t think I’m betraying a confidence here, but last week Archbishop Melissa told me about a meeting on the Syn she had with the leaders of the diocesan Anglican Church Women (ACW). She was surprised and so moved that the ACW of the diocese had expressed such deep gratitude for her ministry and would miss her presence amongst them. They had truly seen her as one of their own. And why not, if the ACW was a high school cafeteria, anywhere that Archbishop Melissa sat would be the cool table.

Time is our most precious commodity. Our lives go by so fast. If Archbishop Melissa had not been elected Bishop in 2013, she would still have achieved great things in the past seven years, but she was elected, and we are so grateful that you shared such a big piece of your time with us.

THANK YOU

I know that Archbishop Melissa has a special place in her heart for St. Benedict, therefore I would like to close with the following prayer:

*Creator God, in Your goodness
grant us the intellect to comprehend You,
the perception to discern You,
and the reason to appreciate You.*

*In Your kindness
endow us with the diligence to look for You,
the wisdom, to discover You,
and the spirit to apprehend You.*

*In Your graciousness
bestow on us hearts to contemplate You,
ears to hear You,
eyes to see You,
and a tongue to speak of You.*

*In Your mercy to confer on us
a conversation pleasing to You,
the patience to wait for You,
and the perseverance to long for You.*

*Grant to us all a perfect end,
Your holy presence.
We ask this in the name of Your Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen. ✠*

Half Full

ART TURNBULL
Retired Priest of the diocese of Ontario; Priest with Permission to Officiate in the diocese of New Westminster

They sat on the bench beside the pond. The grandfather sighed as he inhaled the clean air, the granddaughter, a young adult, basked in the sun’s warmth. Both did what people do when sitting on a bench by the pond. They pondered.

Later they shared some thoughts. This couple revealed some insight about one another. They were pleased to be together on such a day. Lucy, using her vivid imagination, spoke of the scene she saw in the clouds that had floated by in the big blue sky. “I saw a castle, and the tower, and the damsel in distress, the fire eating dragon, and then the knights on valiant steeds coming to the rescue,” she said.

Grampa Charles smiled, saying, “All I saw was my bathtub ducky floating by.” (Apologies to Charles Schultz and *The Gospel According to Peanuts*)

They wandered deeper into thoughtful conversation. “Is the glass half empty or is it half full?” is what they pondered.

For philosophers the question is deep and time consuming. For the rest of us, it



PHOTO Lana2011 (iStock ID: 1197987042)

is a question of optimism or pessimism. Many people view their lives as only half full. They strive for more: more material items, more toys, more love, more time, more life. Others find satisfaction in the way their lives have unfolded, the great

opportunities they’ve experienced, and the good fortune that they’ve enjoyed.

For the vast number of people on planet Earth there is no possibility of pondering a half glass, a half life, full or empty.

They have no glass. They have no cup.

They have no vessel. They worry about today’s food. They live in overcrowded refugee camps, no hope of escape. They are too sick to contemplate that there is goodness in life as they lay dying.

It is my opinion that in God’s Creation, we human beings are not meant to debate whether we are a *half a container*.

We are, all of us, meant to be full, to be fulfilled and creative, to be sharing in the goodness of the resources of life, to be a part of the Creator’s wonderful work.

Chapter One in the *Book of Genesis*, God creates humankind. “In the image of God, God created them, male and female God created them.”

And God looked and saw that this was so good. “God don’t make no junk,” is an old saying that we humans ought not forget.

Isaiah 64:8, says of God, “Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are the potter.” As vessels of God’s making, we humans have been given life with a purpose. We have not been thrown away.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

OPINION

A Bible Study for Our Times

STEPHEN ROWE

Rector, the Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey

More than five years ago our Anglican Bible Study started meeting in the Media Room of Fleetwood Villa Retirement Residence in Surrey. Two long-time parishioners (then in their late 80s) had become residents there and so we moved our group for Wednesday afternoons to the Villa and a mix of residents and gathered.

We met at 2pm every Wednesday and Fleetwood gave us the Media Room to facilitate our meeting. Sometimes there were four or five residents and a similar number of members of the parish who arrived from their homes elsewhere in Surrey. We distributed photocopies of the readings prepared by one of our group. The Study was simple enough, the set readings for the coming Sunday which are used by many churches and everyone was welcome to join the group. Some members read passages (including residents in their 90s) and we would discuss their interpretation for our daily lives. At the end we would take a few moments for prayer where we remembered one another and others in our families or amongst our friends for whom we had concerns.

We met through the year but had a break in July and August and at Christmas. It was a good gathering supported by the then Director of Recreation.

Then March 2020 happened. Everyone in BC was at home apart from essential workers. The Bible Study started again by Zoom, and within a few weeks, Jeff Zeller (Director of Recreation) with his colleagues, enabled residents who wanted to attend, to sit (physically distanced) in the media room to join the study by Zoom. Fleetwood made sure people had copies of the readings having gathered the residents from all round the building. It took a while to get used to a large group (sometimes eight or more people) sitting six feet apart trying to hear and listen to another bunch of people on the large TV screen. It took a while to



PHOTO FatCamera (iStock ID #636345530)

get used to, but one of the residents now in his mid-90s still took a turn at reading week by week.

The Bible Study was always a joy but somehow kicked into a higher gear once the pandemic started. There was more energy as we supported one another as all our lives had been changed. The prayers at the close of the meeting now included the residents and staff of Fleetwood Villa, as well as prayer concerns from amongst those who were gathered. On any given week we might pray for family or friends, for the world facing COVID-19, or the concerns we

each have about being unable to do many of the things we took for granted before March 2020.

We were so grateful to Jeff and his team for taking the time to ensure that people were able to attend these weekly sessions. The extra work and time this must have consumed was very much appreciated by the residents, but also by the rest of us joining by Zoom from our homes.

The usual summer break was dispensed with as both residents and other participants wanted and needed the connection and the chance to “meet” other people

when we are isolated. A good portion of non-residents live alone and so our weekly Bible Study is a lifeline and connection for them every bit as much as it is for those who live at Fleetwood.

In the later part of 2020, as the case loads of COVID-19 increased, the media room was no longer available, but this did not mean the end of our Bible Study connection with Fleetwood. One resident and another non-resident joined by phone and three others attended regularly having been given access and assistance (by the staff) to use technology from their rooms.

This Bible Study group has been in existence for almost 20 years now and for years it met at the Church, but for the last five years and throughout a global pandemic we were continuing to meet when being together in one room was not possible. If we thought the group was worthwhile, how much more so in the challenging times in which we continue to live. We often managed a few laughs too and a general sense of camaraderie in a group of 12 meeting by phone or technology.

COVID-19 has been terrible for many around the world and even in our province. Loved ones have died, people have been hospitalized and healthcare workers have been stretched. So here is a good news story of a Retirement Living facility in Surrey whose staff went the extra mile and continue to do so week after week to bring some light, some joy and some spiritual sustenance to residents, parishioners and to the Anglican rector in the middle of each week. ✠

Half Full

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

We are alive.

The Psalmist tells us in *Psalms* 23, “You prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.” Can we not appreciate the abundant goodness of life, and share that goodness with all? There is enough for everyone. We do not need to keep half in reserve or any for that matter.

The Apostle Paul wrote about our human bodies being God’s temple, God’s vessel here in our earthly life. “Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?” (1 *Corinthians* 3:16)

Perhaps the prayer of Jesus in the Garden on that last night brings our good fortune, or our poor lot in life, into focus. “And going a little farther, Jesus threw himself on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want.” (*Mark* 14:35-36)

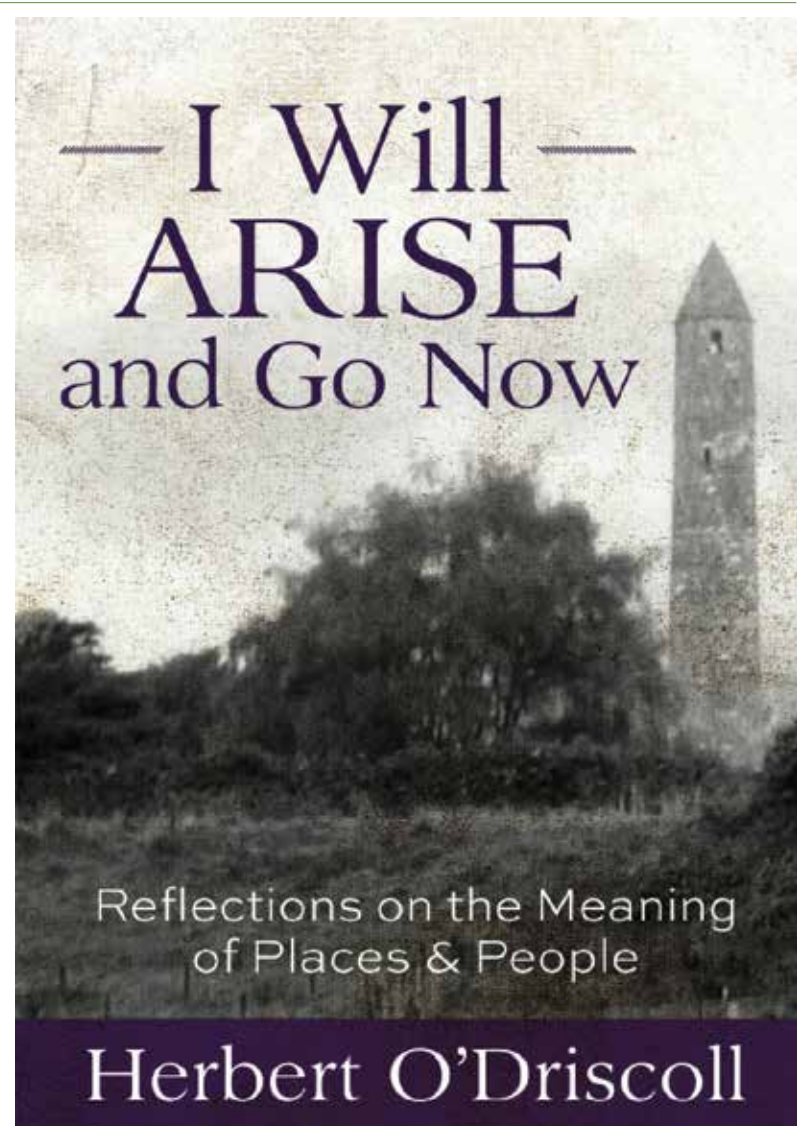
With that, the grandfather and the granddaughter finished pondering down by the pond. They went home to live each day fully.

In these pandemic days, with the excess time you now may have, when and what do you ponder? There is a pond and a bench for you to sit upon and use to contemplate the mysteries of life. ✠

A Note from Canon O’Driscoll’s Editor, Ian Alexander

Herbert O’Driscoll’s latest book—and perhaps his most eagerly anticipated after more than 50 previous volumes—is a collection of autobiographical reminiscences, entitled *I Will Arise and Go Now*. The subtitle is *Reflections on the Meaning of Places and People*. Altogether, there are almost a hundred short memory pieces, organized roughly chronologically, but ranging widely across both time and space. They cover his youth in Ireland, his student days at Trinity College Dublin, his four-decade ministry in Canada, his extensive experiences in the United States, and his later years of pilgrimage, especially in Holy and Celtic Lands.

The book was published February 17. The book (with a Canadian price of \$26.99) will be available in local bookshops and online. It’s published by Morehouse Publishing of New York, an imprint of Church Publishing Inc. If your preferred bookseller doesn’t have it in stock, encourage them to order it from the Canadian distributors, *Parasource* (www.parasource.com/catalog/category/view/s/books/id/15/). Online book launch events took place in March, the diocese of New Westminster version was scheduled for March 16. Coverage will be available on the diocesan website’s news pages. ✠



Birds, The Lindisfarne Gospels & The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Why This Anglican Does Not Participate in Zoom Worship

HANNAH MAIN – VAN DER KAMP
St. David & St. Paul, Powell River

Because it was so cold out, it took ten minutes to get on my outdoor gear: thermal underwear, double socks, double mitts, two sweaters, rain gear and my warmest toque. Gathering my equipment, taking a deep breath of resolve before leaving the house, I went to meet my friends down the road for a weekly early morning (now spaced six feet apart) birdwatching walk. We checked out the local heronry, the ten nests still empty (but male herons have been arriving in the locale in full breeding plumage). Down to the bay to check out the water birds (less every year), and look! A flock of flickers mixed with varied thrush. We ask ourselves questions about migration average dates and why this and how that. We were cold. Binoculars steamed over, fingertips frozen. We returned exhilarated.

But why bother? In less time, and much more comfort, we could have “connected” online, more birds, more plumages, more data. We could have had a Zoom bird-chat, made it a regular habit.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics states, “In all energy exchanges, if no energy enters or leaves the system, then potential energy of the state will always be less than that of the initial state.” Entropy: the natural tendency of an any isolated system is to degenerate.

When the COVID-19 social restrictions first came into our lives, I did not expect them to last long. Zoom started: Zoom yoga, Zoom choir, Zoom family gatherings, Zoom poetry readings, Zoom communal worship, Zoom book launches, Zoom Book Club, Zoom art workshops, Zoom Film Festival. Though I have, or easily could acquire, Zoom capability (I’d just need to change my low-speed modem to hi-speed, but I prefer low-speed everything. High speed is too seductive), I thought, maybe I’d do it later. Almost a year later and I’m still not Zooming. True, I have missed some very special events. But the severe winter weather, the pandemic and my relatively remote location, all combined, offered more time for other pursuits. My daily hours of screen time, a self-imposed restriction, are quickly used up. I missed some meetings (have never been keen) but found time to do research projects—the Lindisfarne Gospels among others. My lethargy and my distractibility have not increased.

With digital technology you can get a very close up look at Lindisfarne Gospels. With those pixels glowing like jewels, you will be stunned. I have once seen it in London’s British Library. No touching of course, no turning pages; they were displayed in a securely glassed case. Now, having seen those extraordinary “Carpet Pages” online, magnified and aglow on a screen, will I find the real thing a little dull if I see it again?

Mute, unmute. Do real life social skills and commitments decrease? Is Zoom redefining “normal?” Does it increase internet dependency? Does “screen creep” impact on engagement? Is it “better than nothing?”

One of my major concerns about Zoom culture is that it might be an incentive for large corporations, banks, government, institutions of learning to reduce or eliminate the costs of building maintenance, supervisory functions, and other overhead costs. Will actual classrooms cease to exist? That will save money but what will be the cost to the social skill development of children?

Not all remote workers need Zoom and some employees clearly enjoy working from home. How many are going into a new kind of entropy? Why get dressed in the morning

if you can work from your bed with a jacket and tie temporarily over your pajamas for Zoom time?

What do Anglican worshippers need? I am grateful to be in a household worship bubble. We sing the hymns, chant the Psalm, read the Lectionary, follow the BAS prayers and even have a homily. It’s not just the choir that I miss or the chat over coffee after the service. I miss my faith community. Christian worship is communal. Our penitence and our celebration are communal

Some Anglicans have created alternate

ways to worship together. A contemplative prayer group meets outside, spaced, hiking in silence. A Bible Study group has divided into duos for “two-metre coffee.” “Wild church” continues with small groups at locations that cannot, sadly, be, publicly disclosed. Choir members sing four-part hymns with each other on the phone. These innovations have sprung up spontaneously, because of need, without diocesan/parish clergy initiation or support.

There is a qualitative difference between real time/real place interactions and the in-

teractions in Zoom space. Yes, time and cost of travelling to sites is eliminated. But what else is gone? The psycho/spiritual dynamics of real place work or worship sites can be challenging while, concurrently, providing the interactions that allow humans to mature. That’s also true for family space. Those little communicative functions of facial expression, gesture, skin colouring, muscle tone, posture, breathing, eye movement communicate so much more than words spoken on a screen. Zoom time increases loneliness for many while real people/real time /real space tends to deflate narcissism and delusions.

I choose to be a “place-holder” for the skills and values of the pre-wired world. Hand-writing letters, cards and notes, listening to CDs (LPs even!), reading aloud from fat books, singing hymns by the piano, going “to church” when it resumes, birdwatching. Some skills, for instance the capacity to participate in extended conversation on a single topic, are “use it or lose it.” For now, I choose to turn down Zoom invitations. Instead, I will do yoga by myself, phone my parish friends to chat and practice gazing (those Lindisfarne Gospels!) without rushing.

Don’t get me wrong; the internet has been a gift during the COVID-19 era: family and professional emails, sending and receiving documents, research, an occasional Youtube, even the Cornell Ornithology Lab!

If it’s urgent and necessary that I do so, I might change my mind.

When the COVID-19 physical distancing requirements end, will Zoom atrophy? Might users have become so accustomed to its strange ease that they can’t do without it? Who would profit from that? Will elderly parishioners, who do not like to drive anyway, prefer not to get into their Sunday clothes? Will the parish continue to offer a Zoom service simultaneously with the communal service in the building? With two services going on at the same time, will that add to or deplete the energy?

Rest is restorative but too much ease leads to lethargy increase.

When worship in the lovely parish church building resumes, I will have tears: relief, joy, gratitude. Will we all be there? ✠



Plates from the Lindisfarne Gospels. PHOTOS Wikipedia (Public Domain)

OPINION

The Last Sunday | Jerusalem, April 1993

HEBERT O'DRISCOLL
Honorary Assistant, Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria; Retired Priest of the diocese of Calgary; former Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver & Deacon of the diocese of New Westminster

We had come to Jerusalem in January, knowing that we would be there for almost four months, an academic term in the life of St. George's College. My responsibility was to travel around the area with groups of clergy from many places in the Anglican communion, linking various places with the Gospel passages where they are mentioned, and suggesting ways in which their preaching might feature these places.

You can perhaps appreciate how and why I treasure those few fleeting months in my life. However, as with everything in life, the time came for it to end. It was a Sunday afternoon; all our things were packed, ready for an early departure the next morning. We had some free time before the evening meal. How would we spend our last few hours in this ancient city?

The decision was not difficult. We walked from the College down Nablus Road to the Damascus Gate. Entering the Old City, we found ourselves in the labyrinthine network of streets that forms the souq (open market) until we suddenly turned into the area that fronts the entrance to the huge Church of the Holy Sepulchre. We stood for a moment at the slab of stone where long tradition says that Joseph of Arimathea and others anointed Jesus' body for burial. Then we climbed a flight of stone steps to the place where we wished to spend our last afternoon in Jerusalem.

I had been in this place many times with clergy from the college. It had come to captivate my wife Paula and I more than any other place in our travels around the Holy Land. To explain why, I need to share with you something of the long story of this place, and to describe our surroundings.

Long before the towers of Canterbury stood above the fields of Kent, long before the Dome of the Vatican dominated the cityscape of Rome, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stood here as witness to the imperial instincts of Constantine and the piety of his mother Helena. In the 4th century, she had come with all the authority of her position and title to seek for the sites of the death and resurrection of Jesus. What she encountered was the local Christian community. They had preserved the memory of where the Lord had been crucified, and the location of the tomb from which he had been raised.

Actually, there had been an earlier visitor on the same quest. In the year 160 CE, a bishop named Melito had come from the city of Sardis to verify the places in the Gospels. He, too, had been led by the



Pilgrims in the Calvary Chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. PHOTO SergeYatunin (iStock ID: 657659550)

*Long before the towers of Canterbury stood above the fields of Kent,
long before the Dome of the Vatican dominated the cityscape of Rome,
the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stood here as witness
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local Christians. Two centuries later, when Helena in her turn was shown the venues sacred to Christian memory, she brought to bear the vast resources of her son's empire to build this massive shrine over them. Ever since, this huge church has been the focus of memory and pilgrimage for most of the Christian world.

We climb the flight of stone steps and find ourselves in a small, highly ornate, dimly lit chapel. The focus is the altar. Here, day after day, year after year, pilgrims come from far and near. On one wall of the chapel, there is a stone ledge that can serve as a seat. So, we sit and watch as people do the simple actions that we ourselves have done in this

place. We watch as people drop to one knee, making the sign of the cross. We watch as a mother lifts a child to kiss the icon near the altar and then kisses it in turn herself. We watch as pilgrim after pilgrim kneels on the floor before the altar, then moves forward underneath it and extends an arm down through a small opening to touch a rock beneath.

No ordinary rock, this is the top of an outcrop that rises from the floor of the stone quarry that lies far beneath this great basilica. Into its surface, the upright of our Lord's cross would have been embedded. Here the crosspiece that he had carried from the nearby city gate was fastened. Here our

Lord died.

This is where we wished to be on our last day in Jerusalem. When the last pilgrim of the day had passed through, we stood and moved to the altar to do again what we wished to retain as a lifelong memory. Taking turns, we knelt on the floor, stooped under the altar, leaned forward, and extended an arm into the small opening until we could feel the hard surface of the rock.

So much pours into the mind at such a moment that words cannot do justice to the experience. We get up, turn, cross the chapel to the stone steps and leave. Yet there is a sense in which we have never left this holiest of places. ✠

Princess & Seymour

SIMON JOHNSTON, ODNW
Church of the Holy Trinity, White Rock

He wore a polyfoam slab, cut and painted to resemble a gigantic slice of bread. His face poked through a hole in the centre and thin arms hung through slits on the sides. He had one glove on his right hand, like Michael Jackson. Frayed jeans ran down to a flip-flop on one foot and a blue Croc on the other.

A bus arrived and sighed to a halt. The folding doors opened.

"Ride to Seymour?" he asked.

The driver thought about it, then gave a slight nod.

"Thanks bud," he said, climbing aboard and walking to the rear.

Above his face, in block capitals, the words HOMELESS, DIABETES, SPARE CHANGE screamed like a tabloid headline.

He told his story in two words and called for action with another two. Not for him the little cardboard sign or the upturned hat, the pathetic squatting beside a heating vent. No sir, he was off to work. His goal was twelve dollar fifty by close of day. Ten for the hot, the rest for the cot.

He got off at Waterfront, wriggled out of the flip-flop and the Croc and braced himself for the commuters pouring out the train station onto the sidewalk, dispersing in every direction. He turned this way and that, pointing to the story above his head. Whenever a walk-by dropped coins into his footless Croc, he'd say: "God's blessing."

He was up a buck seventy-five when transit police told him to move along. He

headed for the Delta and stood across from the hotel. This was familiar territory. Once upon a lifetime ago it's where his office used to be. He used to wear a suit. Used to have a family. Now he danced to forget. He twirled, swayed and did the moonwalk. Then, out of breath, he slouched against the building and gripped his hip where a stitch shot through his side. He heard applause and the tink, tink, tinkle of coins dropping into his shoe. A voice said: "Michael." He felt something in his hand. A five-dollar bill. A woman, now twenty paces away, looked over her shoulder at him. Dark haired. Red jacket. Matching pumps. Tasha? He couldn't tell.

At 4pm, he counted his take—fourteen bucks. He had enough for a hot, a cot and

a box of fries in the morning. He slipped into his flip-flop and Croc and crossed the street. He needed to get to the Mission early. Line up before it filled up. Or it's behind a dumpster on Hamilton for the night. 'Cuz they don't let you kip in the park no more, and besides you don't want to get rolled by a zombie crackhead looking to score.

Soon, a bus arrived, and the door opened with a hiss.

"Ride to Princess?" he asked. The driver paused, then waved him on board.

Sitting at the back, he thought about Tasha.

Then, nodding with assurance, he let a smile crease his face: "Life is good," he mumbled. ✠



A view of the church building and grounds. The street is very close. ALL PHOTOS Courtesy of Allen Doerksen



The parish offices and rental space with the new fencing.

Protecting One of the Diocese's Oldest Churches

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

It is not unusual to hear the phrase "we would rather open a welcoming door than build a fence" when it comes to conversations around the security of church buildings and property. However, there are such instances when that is not possible and the difficult decision that faced the Parish of St. Thomas, Chilliwack was one of those times.

Without delving too deeply into the history, the central Fraser Valley has been experiencing a growing homeless and transient population ever since late 2009, and early 2010, when members of those populations were moved to Chilliwack and Abbotsford (primarily) to "clean up" the streets of Vancouver in anticipation of the crowds arriving for the 2010 Olympics. Both these communities have downtown cores where compassionate service agencies are located and in the case of St. Thomas' the 147-year-old Parish of the diocese of New Westminster that population is a significant component of their neighbourhood. Over the past decade, drug use, disrespect and threatening behaviour, the building of fires, violence, disruptive disturbances at all hours and vandalism practiced by people congregating on the grounds of St. Thomas' created a crisis in the neighbourhood. Although the church is in an urban area it is also in a residential area and the homes are located within yards of the church property.

After years of trying to bring different groups together (including the parish membership itself) and reach out to those who gather on the parish property, asking them to respect the need for peace and quiet and the sanctity of the parish grounds, representatives of the neighbourhood were stressed to the breaking point. The solution that they came up with was to install decorative but effective fencing around the parish buildings. For the parish this was not something they wanted to do. It was contrary to their missional instincts and would also severely tax the budget of the small parish. By the summer of 2020, something had to be done and the parish with the modest financial assistance of a neighbourhood group fenced the area surrounding the parish offices and rental revenue space at a cost of approximately \$9,000.

In the fall of 2020, the parish approached Diocesan Council with a request for a capital grant of \$15,000 to help underwrite the \$20,000 estimated cost of the fencing. Many Council members were skeptical and offered suggestions for alternative solutions and the Motion as an email poll did not pass. The Rev. Allen Doerksen, Vicar of St. Thomas' and Vicar of nearby St. Matthew's, Abbotsford had long held out against the idea of fencing the property,



The Rev. Allen Doerksen via Zoom at the January 20, 2021 Diocesan Council meeting.



A close-up of the gardens around the church building. The green space is just a few feet from the 147 year old wooden structure.

but he and the majority of parish membership had come to the sad conclusion that there was no other alternative and, they needed the financial help to complete the project. He again approached the leadership of the diocese and was invited to attend the January 20, 2021 Diocesan Council meeting and speak to the Capital Grant request.

The last Council meeting prior was October 28, 2020, and quite a lot had happened since then. One of those events was the January 11 arrival of the Rev. John Stephens as Coadjutor Bishop-elect on staff at the Synod Office. Then Bishop-elect (now Bishop as of January 23) Stephens was also in attendance via Zoom at Diocesan Council and led the Opening Worship. Although it was not known for sure at the time, this was Archbishop Skelton's final Dioc-

esan Council meeting as she retired on February 28, 2021. The agenda was full, and the Chilliwack Fencing grant was the first item of new business.

Rev. Doerksen spoke knowledgeably, sincerely and frankly about the need for this financial support. He stressed that everything had been done to avoid fencing the property and to live alongside all of the groups involved. Council members asked questions about the locations of services for the marginalized, transient population including safe injection sites which might mitigate the gathering on the St. Thomas' green space for drug use. Rev. Doerksen replied that there are services in the area, however having multiple services in close proximity leads to a momentum in numbers. The people locating on St. Thomas' property have been aggressive and disrespectful to those from the community. There is no problem with people hanging out in the yard during good weather, but it is the aggressive behaviour and the drug use as well as the fire risk that poses significant threat. He added that there is currently community policing in place and the officers have been pleasant and respectful to those who gather on the space, but that had not resulted in an improvement of relations between the various factions.

In closing, Rev. Doerksen again focused attention on the very real risk of fire and the potential conflagration that would destroy one of the diocese's oldest wooden buildings.

Some members of Diocesan Council who had previously opposed the motion now spoke in favour of it and thanked Rev. Doerksen for his attendance at the meeting and his compelling presentation of the issue and the parish's need for support.

The question was called, and the Motion was Carried.

Archbishop Skelton said that she was very "glad we'd done this" and that inviting in the ordained leader of the parish to discuss the issue and dramatically illustrate the situation was of great benefit to Council and very much aided the making of the decision.

After the meeting Rev. Doerksen was kind enough to offer the following words:

"The St. Thomas Parish Council is very grateful to the Archbishop, the Treasurer and the members of Diocesan Council for working with the parish in such a generous way. The fencing allows the parish to concentrate its energies on growing the parish and ministering to the needs of the community instead of simply trying to manage an ongoing crisis." ♦

ANGLICAN
FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

5:00 p.m. Eastern on Zoom

Please RSVP to foundation@anglicanfoundation.org
by May 17 in order to attend.

www.anglicanfoundation.org

