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# THE MESSENGER

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## Advent arrival: Christ Church welcomes Syrian family

MARGARET GLIDDEN  
Edmonton Editor

In the Christian faith tradition Advent is a time of heightened anticipation as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus.

For the Anglican Parish of Christ Church in the Edmonton diocese, the start of Advent brought the long-anticipated arrival of a family from war-torn Syria who arrived at their new home in Edmonton between the Sunday bringing the light of hope and the Sunday bringing the light of peace.

"I'm so excited I'm vibrating," said the Rev. Sheila Moorey, awaiting the arrival of Areej, Shamil and their five children: Sara, Lima, Hamza, Alice, Sam (ranging in age from 20 to 5), en route from Istanbul, Turkey (where they were quarantined for three days and tested for COVID-19) via Toronto.

It has been nearly six years since the family and Christ Church began the process of sponsorship in the summer of 2016. Joining Moorey at the arrival gate at the Edmonton International Airport was newly retired diocesan refugee sponsorship coordinator Gail Millard and Anwar Abdi who has been assisting with



From left: Gail Millard, retired diocesan refugee sponsorship program coordinator, Anwar Abdi, Helen Ward, Greg Heaton and Sheila Moorey of Christ Church, Edmonton anxiously await the arrival of Areej, Shamil and their five children.

sponsorship applications, as well as Greg Heaton and Helen Ward, members of the parish welcoming committee.

As the original chair of the committee, Moorey has kept in touch with Areej by email, developing "a close friendship," while Christ

Church has prayed regularly for the family's wellbeing.

Upon learning that the family would be arriving on December 2, the committee was quickly reconvened under the leadership of new chair Willie King. "Remarkably," all founding members

of the committee, including Heaton and Ward, were keen to stay on in their roles, said King.

"Honestly, it was so long ago, it took me a minute to remember what I'd volunteered for," said Ward.

Having raised the funds to sustain the family for a year, committee members were divided into five teams to coordinate and provide support in the areas of finance and budget, housing, welcoming, orientation, education and health. They were able to look to St. Mary's and St. George's in Jasper for guidance. The parish had previously sponsored Areej's retired parents Hassan Al Azem and Omayea El Marraw and sister Reham Al Azem, a lawyer.

"Gail (Millard), committee member Anne Smith and Catholic Social Services were also tremendous resources for us," said Moorey.

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From left: Helen Ward and Sheila Moorey, of Christ Church, Edmonton, welcome Areej, Shamil and their five children to Edmonton; Sheila and Areej embrace at the arrivals' gate. The two women developed a close friendship in the six years the family waited to come to Canada.



**Confirmation p. 7**



**Fond Farewell p. 10**



**New Memory Care Unit p.12**



# Diocese of Edmonton among top grant recipients in 2021

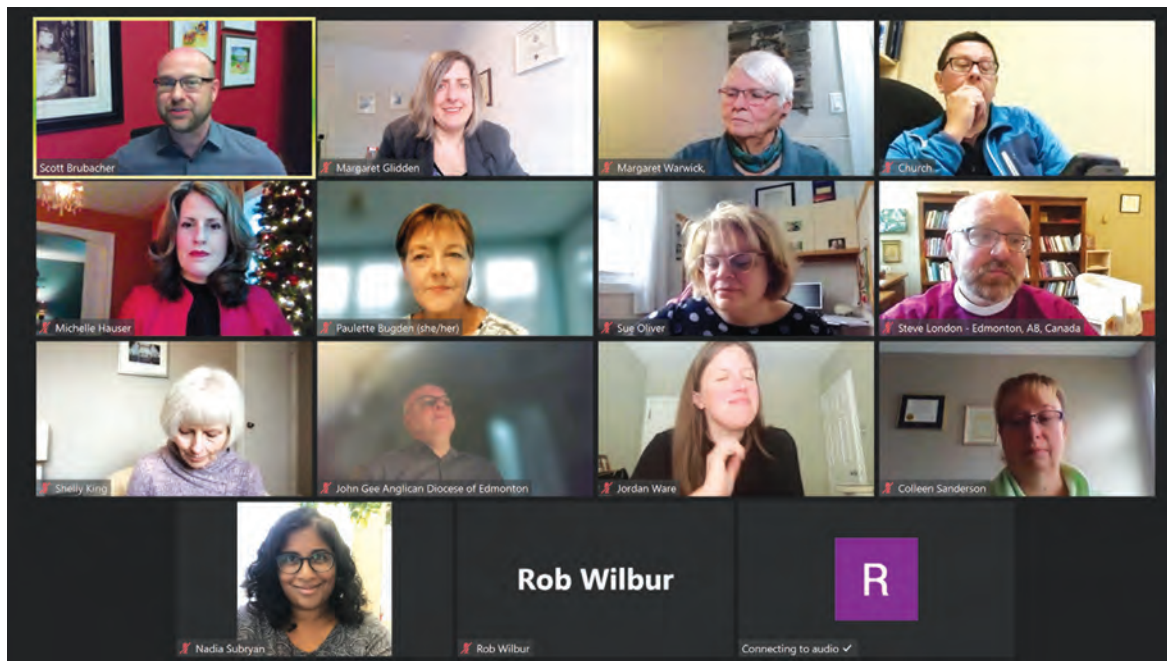
The Rev. SHELLY KING  
Messenger Staff

Five parishes and youth in the Diocese of Edmonton got an early Christmas present last year. On a Thursday afternoon in late November, representatives of the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) met by Zoom with members of Edmonton diocese to celebrate \$32,500 in new grants awarded to the parishes of Christ Church, Good Shepherd, St. Michael and All Angels, St. Faith's and St. Paul's. Each grant, funded by AFC's 2021 Say Yes! to Kids campaign, will support an initiative to encourage children and youth in Edmonton churches and communities.

Newly appointed AFC Executive Director, Scott Brubacher, says the grant applications "were full of innovation, creativity and a genuine care for children in youth ministry and seeing to the next generation of Canadian Anglicans."

Jennifer Stewart, long-time volunteer at PrayerWorks, wrote St. Faith's proposal for a project called Gathering Strength: Youth Sharing and Learning.

"As a parent talking with other parents, I have encountered so many stories of teens experiencing increasing levels of anxiety and other mental health



Representatives of the Anglican Foundation of Canada meeting virtually on November 25, 2021, with members of Edmonton diocese, including grant recipients.

concerns through (the pandemic). I really wanted to address this through a group that would enable teens to meet safely to share their experiences and to find their strengths in all the dimensions of their lives – physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual – as they look to the future."

The \$5,000 AFC grant for Gathering Strength will support a youth group that will meet on Saturdays, each session beginning with smudge ceremony and opening prayer and each week having a different activity, some including Indigenous teaching with Elder Russell Auger. These gatherings will culminate with a "day on the land" in June 2022. Stewart hopes

this day will help the youth, mainly from inner-city Edmonton, "to connect to the land, ceremony, and ways of healing..

St. Paul's in Edmonton received \$3,000 toward Anglican Youth Retreat: Connection and \$5,000 toward St. Paul's Kid's Club. Youth worker, Abigail Harding, says St. Paul's "feels blessed and thankful."

"Being able to go away on retreat is an experience that youth have not been able to benefit from for the past two years due to COVID-19. For youth, opportunities to build community in a dedicated and isolated setting is highly beneficial. The experience is often one they look back on fondly for the rest of their

lives.

"The topic "Connection" has been chosen to acknowledge the effect the pandemic has had on youth's connections to each other, their community and their church. Despite the best efforts of youth leaders throughout this year, hosting online events and creating opportunities where possible, connections of youth have still been affected. The fact that our group at St. Paul's has been able to stay together speaks to the need and desire for churches committed to providing a safe, nourishing space for youth to ask questions and grow spiritually, as well as personally. Retreats are an extension and an important

part in that growth for youth."

Good Shepherd Anglican Church will use a \$5,000 grant to establish the We Belong Together Youth Drop-in Centre. The proposal describes plans to renovate an upstairs space in the church, where youth ages 12 to 17 will be welcomed each week and supported in "building solidarity with one another, connecting to their wider community, and integrating into a place where they truly belong."

The parish is especially concerned for the needs of youth who are new to Canada and those who experience racism or other forms of discrimination.

Good Shepherd rector and Archdeacon for Social Justice and Community Outreach, the Ven. Jordan Haynie Ware, is thankful for the initiative of the parish children's minister, Raelynn Ramage-Muir, who got the idea for the project while researching opportunities for youth in the community. "I have seen the need in Castle Downs for a drop-in center for all youth no matter their background," she says. "I am excited to see the impact this has on the community."

In the parish of Christ Church, the hope is to reach and support youth through music.

**Continued on page 12.**

## ACW Takes Lead in National Fundraising Campaign for Kids

Messenger Staff

When the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) shared, via Zoom, the news of \$32,000 in grant funding for Edmonton diocese, AFC Communications and Development Officer Michelle Hauser gave special thanks to the Anglican Church Women (ACW) across Canada. When the Say Yes! to Kids campaign first launched and donors seemed slow to get on board, Hauser says it was the ACW that got the ball rolling. They were "first onto the dance



floor, bravely," she said, "encouraging others to join in the giving."

Joining the Zoom call was Margaret Warwick, ACW National President and a parishioner at Good Shepherd Anglican Church in Edmonton.

"If I recall correctly," she says, "the first groups to comment on their support for the Say Yes! to Kids' project were the Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI ACW boards. Additionally, we saw various other diocesan newsletters that mentioned the project and urged support."

The national ACW holds an annual conference for presidents of local

boards from across Canada, where the AFC Executive Director traditionally makes a presentation on current AFC projects, and on the use of the Anglican Church Women of Canada Trust Fund, monies that are invested with the AFC.

The women had to forego the conference in 2020. However, a virtual conference was arranged in 2021 and AFC Executive Director Scott Brubacher was invited, as usual, to speak. Brubacher presented the Say Yes! to Kids project and acknowledged the wonderful support of the

ACW.

"While I know a variety of donations were made," says Warwick, "I understand that, as a result of the presentation by Brubacher and Hauser, there were a significant number of additional donations made to the Say Yes! to Kids campaign. We are pleased to support such a worthy cause."

Warwick notes that the Council of the North and the Anglican Healing Fund also received contributions from individual ACW members and diocesan boards at the conference.



# More than *the facts*, listen and pray to understand

Merry Christmas! May you have a full experience of the incarnate Son of God breaking into your life, even and, in spite of, ‘living in COVID-land.’ Jesus was born into a world full of turmoil; where murder and state executions were common, rebellion was in the air, disease and death were commonplace. And His mission was to proclaim life.

A conversation I had with a couple of wise clergy members from our diocese changed the way I approached a situation that left me feeling hurt and angry. As a result, I was much more empathic and conciliatory.

‘Get your facts straight’ can be heard frequently in arguments about the COVID vaccine. For example, someone posted an illustration of the effectiveness of vaccines in preventing deaths, by comparing vaccination rates against death rates from COVID across a range of countries. The person urged people to get vaccinated, as I do. In



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

response to the post, was a wide range of comments and counter-comments from people who viewed *the facts* as weapons of argument.

Jesus didn’t argue against the efficacy of crucifixion as a crime deterrent. He didn’t establish *the facts* on the evils of slavery. He didn’t address, really, any of the social and medical ills of the society of that time. And, as He was God Incarnate, who was better positioned than Him to change these things?

Instead, he said: ‘The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed... The kingdom of God is like a field of wheat... The kingdom of God is like a sower who spreads seed...’ He talked about the kingdom of God. He challenged people to change their ways, yes, but to change their ways individually. He challenged us to choose love over everything. His condemnation was for those who did not. His joy was for those who turned away from forging weapons of power to forging weapons of love. His

love was for the wounded and injured. His mission was to proclaim life – even to His own death.

The kingdom of God is like a people who once bickered and argued, angry and resentful over *the facts*, holding grudges and keeping long memories. Then one day, no one knows how, they started to listen to each other and, instead of speaking to understand, they started to say things like ‘that must have really hurt. I realise that now.’ Things like ‘I don’t understand – can you share what that felt like?’ Things like ‘I never thought it would be taken that way – that’s not what I was trying to say.’ Things like ‘I’m sorry.’ Things like ‘may we pray together?’ Even amongst the boldest of them, things like ‘I love you.’ The funny thing was, their actions started to mimic their words. They did things which built each other up, helped each other, cared for each other. And no one worried about *the facts* – for they weren’t quite so important anymore.

Merry Christmas. May you have a full experience of Christ breaking into your life.

*With love in Christ, +David*

# Future hope that we too may come through other side

Dear Friends,  
It is hard to believe that we are already in the year 2022! When we come to a new year, many of us like to look back on the past year to take stock and see where we are. For myself, as the new bishop, I thought about looking back over the last century to 1922 as a different way to take stock. In the synod office we have the proceedings of the past meetings of the synod of the Diocese of Edmonton, and they are interesting to read. In 1922, the bishop was the first bishop of Edmonton: the Rt. Rev. H. Allen Gray.

The early 1920s was a challenging time for the diocese. In his charge in 1920, the bishop reflected on the experience of just coming out of World War One. He said,



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON  
Diocese of Edmonton

‘out of the war we have come with a changed view of life. Sorrow and sadness remain deep-seated in our midst, and force themselves upon our notice, in spite of the whirl of pleasure into which we seem to have been drawn. But we have gained a freedom, the extent and character of which we do not as yet understand or appreciate. We are thankful that the war cloud has dispersed.’ Bishop Gray also reflected on the loss of

the parish church of All Saints’. He commented, ‘by its destruction are swept away the associations of many years, and the spot rendered dear to me as the scene of nearly all my ministerial life, is but a blackened ruin.’

In between the 1920 synod and the 1922 synod obviously much has changed. It seemed physically as well as symbolically the pro-cathedral of All Saints’

had been rebuilt. Bishop Gray reflected on this in 1922 by saying, ‘after much waiting, All Saints’ pro-cathedral has begun to rise from the ashes of its former self, and we meet today in a building that promises to be worthy as well as capable of fulfilling the position it occupies as the Mother Church of the diocese.’

As I look back on this history, 10 bishops later, as well as a whole other All Saints’ building, I note with much interest how much the diocese struggled and, yet, came through the other side. For all of Bishop Gray’s concerns about the future of the diocese, I also note with satisfaction that we are still here.

This is a hard time to be church coming through this COVID pandemic that has now stretched on for so long. But the proceedings of the synod of Edmonton from 1922 give me hope. They were faithful. They kept worshipping, praying, serving and dealing with the problems as they arose. And here we are 100 years later. We are in a different context to be sure, but I believe we have the same call. Despite the toll of this pandemic, I enter this new year with great hope.

Come Holy Spirit and guide your church.

*+Stephen*



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# Self-control: fruit of God's Spirit and act of the will

Welcome back to our ongoing discussion of the fruit of the Spirit and how this is a key part of what it means to be missional disciples. We have been keeping these words of Jesus in mind throughout:

*'You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...' (John 15:16 NRSV)*

And we have used Galatians 5 to know what this lasting fruit might look like:

*...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23 NRSV)*

Today we look at self-control.

This is the last in our series and it is singularly unique compared to all



The Ven. RICHARD KING  
Archdeacon for  
Mission and Discipleship  
Diocese of Edmonton

the others. Every one of the characteristics listed in these two verses from Paul to the Galatians are also descriptions of God's nature. This one is different. Now, I am not saying for a moment that God does not have self-control! But I believe Paul adds self-control to this list because if anything describes human nature without God, it is the

potential to be out of control. We are prone to give way to our worst excesses. Indeed, in the verses immediately before these, Paul describes the potential of this self-destructive, sinful nature.

*When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21 NLT)*

Unlike God, who does not need to exercise self-control in the same way, for God is never tempted and in God there is no sin or darkness (1 John 1:5), we do

need to learn this!

It is especially interesting that Peter also includes self-control in a description he gives of the road to growth into maturity in Christ.

*For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8 NRSV)*

So, self-control is a fruit of the Spirit of God within us, as well as something in which "we must make every

effort."

We sometimes wonder how being followers of Jesus makes us stand out in the world. Well, don't underestimate the importance of self-control. Here is one way in which the fruit of the Spirit, showing through our lives, makes our discipleship truly missional in this day and age. Of course, the reverse is true. Nothing can be more guaranteed to drive people away from the good news of Christ if we cannot control ourselves; our temper, our appetites; our attitudes towards others and our tongues. Are we in control of those things? By our God's gracious Spirit, we will be granted help as we rest and rely on him.

With prayers for every blessing as you seek to follow Jesus,

Richard

## Prayer as our proclamation of the Kingdom Good News

Prayer has always been problematic for me. I wasn't raised with prayer. I had to be taught to pray by exposure through the seminary. But I don't think I ever really caught on to it. I understand worship and liturgy. Prayer, not so much. It certainly doesn't fill my soul or refresh me. It is more like an obligation that produces few tangible results. In contemporary language, prayer doesn't do much for me.

I certainly can't enter into any prayer that is simply a laundry list of people in need: 'God bless Tom, Dick and Harry. Lord, heal Bertha, Betty and Bessie. Be with all refugees.'

I really do think prayer should address the specifics of people's characters, not their circumstances. "God, guide Tom as he makes his choice about his career. Give Dick strength to face the death of his son by opioid poisoning. Lord, pour out your Spirit on Harry, who is struggling with



The Ven. TERRY LEER  
Executive Archdeacon  
Diocese of Athabasca

homelessness.'

Prayer must be about our souls, not about our contexts. If you're going to pray for refugees, ask God to encourage them and then ask God to use his Church to respond to their needs. Prayer is not a list of intentions. Prayer is a pile driver into the hearts of humankind.

And I'm beginning to think that prayer could be an effective means of our proclamation.

So, we all know that we have to 'go, therefore, and make disciples of all

nations...' We all know that we have to love God with all that we are and love others in the same way. I'm beginning to wonder if prayer is not a good way to fulfill the Great Commission and the Two Great Commandments all at once.

We meet someone, and quickly find an opportunity to ask, 'would it be okay if I were to pray with you right now?' If they seem embarrassed and say, 'um, no, that's okay,' then say (with the same energy and commitment to follow

through), 'well, then, I'll pray for you when I get home.' And then you move on to continue to build the relationship to the point where prayer is possible.

But when you ask, 'may I pray with you right now?' then you pray specifically and with intention. 'Lord, be with Terry whose prayer life isn't what he wants it to be. Uphold and strengthen him so that he may find the insight to continue to serve you. Lord, please take over his concerns this night so that he may sleep in your

peace.'

Through such prayer we communicate not only our compassion and concern, but those of God as well. Through such prayer we proclaim God as loving and as longing to be involved in our daily lives. We share our relationship with God with the person for whom we are praying. It seems that prayer to God aimed at our souls might be a means of the needed proclamation.

As long as prayer is more than a shopping list that we deliver to God.

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# Farewell to All Saints', Halcourt: a beloved spiritual home

Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

Bishop David Greenwood and Benita Greenwood had the great pleasure of celebrating the eucharist with the people of St. Luke's, Beaverlodge on Sunday November 14, 2021. Following the service, many parishioners journeyed with the Greenwoods to the museum site just north of Beaverlodge, for the deconsecration of All Saints', Halcourt.

During the deconsecration ceremony, Louise Frame shared her heartfelt memories of the church, its significance in her life and in the life of the



Pictured from left: a picturesque All Saints', Halcourt; Pam Berry, Bishop David Greenwood, Louise Frame, Stan Berry at the deconsecration.

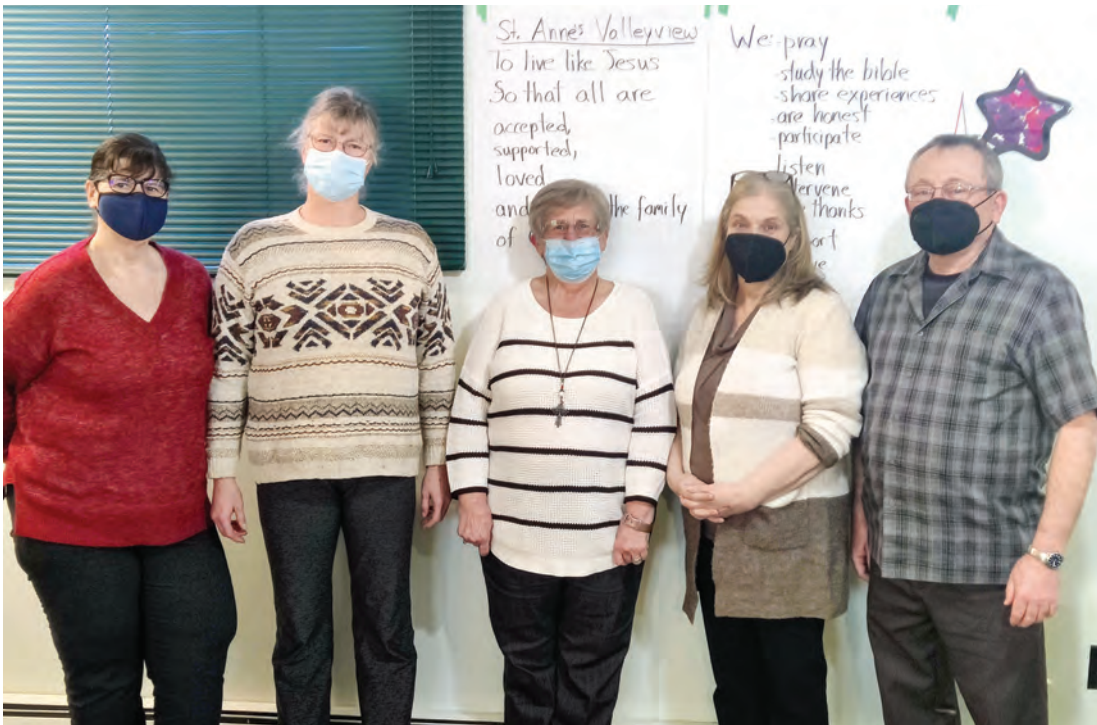
# Bishop gives thanks with Grande Prairie and Valleyview parishes

Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

Bishop David Greenwood and Benita Greenwood were pleased to worship with the people of Christ Church, Grande Prairie on November 7, 2021. More than 40 people joined together in worship and praise, sharing a COVID-aware eucharist.

The following day, the Greenwoods, along with the Rev. Fariborz Khandani and his wife Shirin, visited with Archbishop Gerry Petipas of the Roman Catholic church. It was a 'supportive and mutually beneficial' meeting.

The Greenwoods travelled to Valleyview on November 28, to celebrate with the parish of St. Anne's and facilitate a workshop designed to help the parish discern its *why* (purpose).



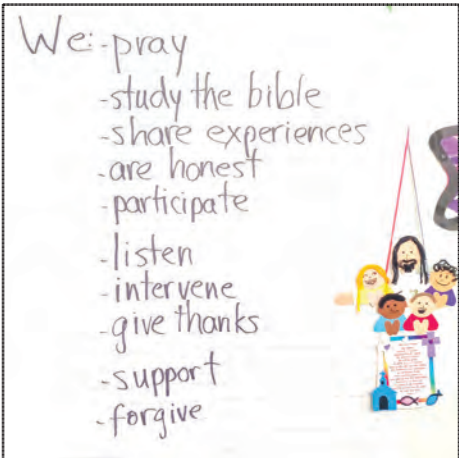
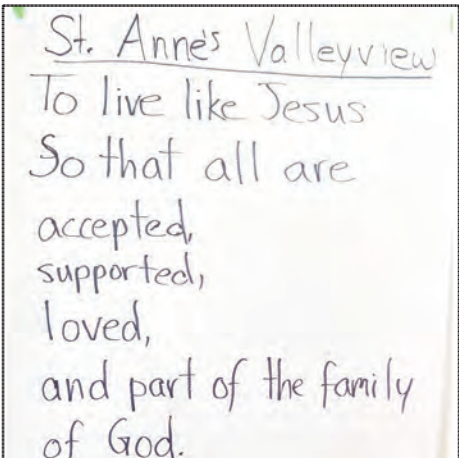
Pictured above from left: Benita Greenwood, Anke Jadatz, Liz Gordon, Sherry Wilson, and Lewis Wilson of St. Anne's in Valleyview. Pictured right: the 'why' and the 'we' of St. Anne's, Valleyview.

As with St. Thomas' in Fort McMurray the previous week, the workshop started with a focus on the bigger *why* questions: Why are we here? What is God's *why*?

Why did God Incarnate come in the form of Jesus? Discussion then narrowed to the local application: Why are we here as a diocese? Why are

we here as a parish? The exercise was received with much positive feedback. Let us pray for the people of St. Anne's, as they follow the

calling which Christ has given them!





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<https://tithe.ly.app.link/anglican-diocese-of-athabasca>

## Athabasca Diocese Virtual Worship Resources and Opportunities

For access to online services, both mid-week and on Sunday, please visit the diocesan website at [www.athdio.ca](http://www.athdio.ca) or one of the following parish websites:

- [www.stjamespr.org](http://www.stjamespr.org)
- [www.christchurchanglicangp.org](http://www.christchurchanglicangp.org)
- [www.sttom.ca](http://www.sttom.ca)
- [www.allsaintsanglican.ca](http://www.allsaintsanglican.ca)
- [www.parishnorthernlights.org](http://www.parishnorthernlights.org)



Or, search Facebook.com for:

- The Diocese of Athabasca
- St. James Cathedral
- St. Mark's High Prairie
- St. Thomas Fort McMurray
- Christ Church Grande Prairie
- St. Anne's Church Valleyview
- All Saints Church Fort McMurray
- St. Peters Church Slave Lake
- Anglican Church of Athabasca
- St. Helen's Anglican Church
- St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church



# Good Shepherd delivers food security in north Edmonton

MARGUERITE LEFEUVRE  
Good Shepherd, Edmonton

**T**he Dinner2Door food security program for our northeast Edmonton community is off to a great start!

Good Shepherd, in Castle Downs, has partnered with the Mustard Seed (whose volunteers prepare, freeze and package meals) to deliver 75 frozen dinners weekly to 25 individuals. Our list of participants is full and in one month our volunteers distributed 450 frozen dinners to 15 families - with many more meals to come.

We have been blessed to hear families' stories of gratitude and grace. One mom shared with us that she works evenings and is relieved to know her three children can still have a hot meal when she isn't home to prepare it for them.



Debbie and John Harpin pick up prepared dinners from the Mosaic Centre; Judi and Paul Bouchard leave Good Shepherd to deliver the dinners.

Another recipient from the Oliver neighbourhood recently welcomed a niece to her family. She is thankful for the meals she receives which help with food costs. Other recipients have included seniors living on fixed incomes.

"Paul and I have been delivering meals for the Dinner2Door program for a month and I have to say we are totally enjoying it," said Judi Bouchard.

"We pick up the meals on Thursday afternoons at the church

and deliver. It's a pleasure to see smiling faces, exchange a few words and hear grateful thanks."

We look forward to sharing more good news on food security for our community soon.



## PWRDF gifts keep giving: every season, all year round

LEAH MARSHALL  
PWRDF Youth Representative  
Diocese of Edmonton

**I**n this past year, I think we've all been shaken by how quickly change can come. From burning heat waves to floods and, of course, the pandemic, I find myself treasuring the gift of things that I used to take for granted as normal.

The holidays have always been a time of preparation in my church community, and a joyful time of buying presents for friends and family to share on Christmas day. When I was a young girl, my idea of a great present might have included a brand-new toboggan, or a knitted hat from grandma, or possibly the candy in the bottom of my stocking.

These days, I view gifts not only as objects, but also as acts: sharing fellowship and food, visiting with loved ones, and blessing others with small acts of kindness as we all endure hardship and change.

The PWRDF World of Gifts catalogue is a chance to give a gift to our neighbours all over the world by giving a goat, chickens, a water well, or donating to disaster response.

As a Sunday school student, I used to gather my pocket change to pool with my classmates and teacher for a gift from the catalogue. As a youth representative for PWRDF, I had a chance to see firsthand how these gifts make a difference in people's lives when I visited farms in rural Tanzania and Indigenous communities in Ontario. I also listened to my mother's experience of the food security operations in India. To me, these gifts certainly are more than meets the eye.

In the Diocese of Masasi, I met families who had received a goat through World of Gifts. The nutrition provided by that goat's milk enabled them to effectively take their HIV/AIDS medication. Selling the excess milk to neighbours provided the

family with enough income to send their children to school. What may seem like a simple gift to give can have a community-wide impact. Gifts of essential seeds for local agriculture; sustainable, community access to fresh water; or assistance to families caught in natural disasters, such as those experiencing flooding in BC; are but a few examples.

No matter the time of year, if you have a friend or family member who is particularly hard to buy for, consider the lasting and far-reaching gift of blessing someone in need.

Give the gift of hope. I think we could all use a little more of that these days.

To find out more about the World of Gifts or about the PWRDF response to the flooding in BC, check out [pwrdf.org](http://pwrdf.org).



Leah Marshall and Joyce Matuka offer a dish of cassava during Marshall's visit to Tanzania as a PWRDF youth representative.



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# Edmonton parish hosts Indigenous Christian confirmation

The Rev. SHELLY KING  
Messenger Staff

On Sunday, November 21, Bishop Stephen London conducted a service of confirmation and renewal of baptismal vows at St. Luke's Anglican Church in Edmonton. It was London's first confirmation service as bishop, and special in its own right in the way it blended Anglican and Indigenous tradition.

The service was the culmination of a four-session confirmation course that included all the usual elements of Anglican teaching, but also elements of Indigenous teaching and culture. The idea arose out of discussion between the Rev. Nick Trussell, rector of St. Luke's, and Eliza Hilliar, a friend to Trussell, an Indigenous follower of Jesus, and someone who is respected in her culture as a mature, wise and caring adult. That description is summed up by the Cree word for grandmother, which is Kokum. Thus, the two landed on a title for the course: Confirmation with Kokum.

Trussell tells the story of how it all came about:

*"As I thought about confirmation preparation at St. Luke's, I wanted to include the traditions of the First Peoples of this land, that have been a blessing to my own faith and relationships, and to engage them in the faith formation of youth in the church. Eliza and I met at a Healing of Memories workshop in September 2019. We have stayed in touch and worked together this past summer on the Revive Reclaim Restore youth camp. I offered her protocol and asked if she would teach the youth with me for confirmation. (In Cree culture, 'protocol' refers to a respectful way to enter a prayerful covenant together when asking someone for help.) Eliza agreed and we planned the sessions together.*

*Confirmation with Kokum was an act of reconciliation and decolonisation. It was an opportunity to receive in faith and humility the insights of the spiritual connection of the Nêhiyaw (Cree) people between Creator and this land, which has existed since time immemorial, as blessings for our way together.*

*"We were so blessed to have Eliza share with us her knowledge and faith that has sustained her and given her such hope and strength. Eliza has had a long connection with St. Luke's. As part of her healing journey as a residential school survivor from the Anglican-run Gordon's Residential School in*



Pictured above: Bishop Stephen London, Nick Trussell and Eliza Hilliar smudge at the beginning of the confirmation service, November 21, 2021; below: the bishop prays for and then presents parishioner Harriet Campell as she renews her baptismal vows and a young confirmand who did not wish his name to be published. Photos: Karen MacDonald



Saskatchewan, Eliza reclaimed her culture and language through an Indigenous Studies Degree at the University of Alberta. During her studies she felt that a reconciled relationship with the church was another step she would need to take for her healing. She formed a positive relationship with the Rev. Dan Van Alstine (a previous rector at St. Luke's) and all her adult children were baptised at St. Luke's. Eliza was baptised and confirmed at the residential school, though the life-giving faith she holds was a gift from Creator through the traditions of this land.

*"The three youth and one adult who took part in the teaching circle with Eliza were able to begin to receive from her some of those gifts that had been taken from her by our church as a child. It is our hope that teachings of the smudge, the medicine wheel, and the seven grandfather teachings, which were part of the confirmation classes alongside teachings from scripture, will inspire and strengthen them as they grow and mature in their own faith, a journey marked in ceremony through their confirmation.*

*"In the Apology for Spiritual Harm offered in 2019 by then*

*Primate Fred Hiltz on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, there is a prayer for 'the whole Church to learn from the spiritual wisdom of the elders and to listen with a heart to the spiritual hopes of Indigenous youth; and restoring spiritual teachings and ceremonies that were lost and celebrating them as a vital part of a gospel-based life.'*

*"It was essential to me that the confirmation preparation happen in this way; to live out the direction set by the apologies of our church and honour the spiritual gifts of our relations. I pray this small group of Indigenous and Settler people, gathered to learn and practice our faith together, is one small part of that work of healing and reconciliation.*

*"For St. Luke's it was a joy to create an opportunity for reconciliation, to understand our shared faith and the traditions of this land in a new way and to host youth from different parishes."*

Bishop Steve was grateful for what he calls the "providential gift" of a ribbon shirt, to wear for the confirmation service. These shirts are traditional regalia for ceremony in Cree and other First Nations cultures and Fred Matthews, lay-reader-in-charge of the Church of the Nativity at Frog Lake, just happened to have a purple one in his closet!

Bishop Steve says the service, with its blended traditions, was a real blessing to him.

"I love the fact that it was an organic experiment in reconciliation," he says. "Nick and Eliza found a way to teach the faith in the normal fashion through creed and scripture, but to also learn and meditate on the wisdom of this land. It was for me a good example of the kind of respectful listening and learning that we have been talking about."

Trussell also says it was not an accident that the confirmation ceremony was held on Christ the King Sunday.

"It was as intentional as the teaching circle itself. That day reminds us of the kind of king Christ is, one who brings resurrection and healing to our suffering and divisions, whose Kingdom is beyond the divisions and conflicts of our earthly kingdoms. Baptism and confirmation are commitments into Christ's kingdom life within us, one that unites across nations, breaks down dividing walls and reconciles us to one another in Christ."



# Diocesan ACW celebrates St. Andrew's Day eucharist

MARGARET GLIDDEN  
Edmonton Editor

**R**epresentatives of several Anglican Church Women (ACW) parish branches, including Beaumont, Camrose, Drayton Valley, Edmonton, Gibbons and Onoway, came together for a Mid-Day Eucharist in celebration of their patronal feast with the Very Rev. Alex Meek, Dean of Edmonton and Rector of All Saints' Cathedral; and ACW Patron the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, Bishop of Edmonton.

The first in-person worship gathering of the diocesan ACW since the start of the COVID pandemic two years ago took place on November 30, St. Andrew's Day, also the 45th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the Anglican Church of Canada. Musical accompaniment was provided by Elaine Johnston MacMillan, a member of St. Andrew's, Camrose.

While the livestream feed was being connected for people to participate in the service from home, Bishop London took the opportunity to get to know the congregation gathered at All Saints' Cathedral. (The service is available on the Cathedral YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y59THfsNRWE>)

Bishop London offered



Pictured above: Bishop Stephen London addresses ACW at St. Andrew's Day Eucharist; below: Elaine Dickie (center) is installed as Edmonton ACW President; top right: all attendees received festive takeaway boxes; bottom right: Rob and Elaine MacMillan provide music.



his personal experience of the kindness of the ACW. He recalled how he had been an honorary ACW member in the parish of St. Michael and All Angels in Edmonton, where the ACW was known for making butter tarts. In fact, the parish liked to say the new church was built on the sale of butter tarts, "which was largely true. It was quite amazing." In 2005, Steve and Stephanie had just spent two days

making butter tarts, when their first child Claire was born a day later. The family still jokes "it was the butter tarts that did it." In the days following Claire's birth, "people came to our house and they brought food and cards and goodness. People, and especially the ACW, were so kind to us at a crazy time when we were trying to figure out what it meant to be new parents."

Today, "the impact of the



ministry of thousands, upon thousands, upon thousands of faithful Christian women on the Anglican Church of Canada has been tremendous," said London.

"As discipleship groups at the heart of parishes across this country, the ACW raises funds for the mission of the church and puts so much in place. ACW groups pray together, study scripture together, laugh with one another, support each other and their parishes; they're deeply involved in the charitable activities of their local communities. It is impossible to measure that kind of spiritual impact.

"Thank you on behalf of the Edmonton diocese for your ministry and outreach; for your care and concern in the name of Jesus Christ for

the communities in which you live, for proclaiming the Gospel in both word and deed, for persevering through these hard times of COVID when so much has been disrupted and we've had to learn new ways to be together."

Bishop London offered a message of renewal and encouragement, inviting ACW members to "recommit yourselves one more time to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Because we do have Good News to share. That is why we are here. That is why we exist. We believe in a God who gives life and builds people up..."

Assisted by ACW National President Margaret Warwick, a member of Good Shepherd, Edmonton, Bishop London installed several members of the Diocesan ACW Executive, including President Elaine Dickie, a member of St. John the Divine in Onoway.

Dean Alex Meek presided over the eucharist. Following the service, members of the congregation were invited to take home a bookmark imprinted with the ACW Member's Prayer. COVID safety regulations prevented the congregation from gathering for lunch, however, care packages filled with homemade shortbread cookies, tea and Christmas oranges were given to take home.

## Diocese of Edmonton among top grant recipients, continued

Continued from page 2.

The Ven. Susan Oliver, rector of Christ Church and Archdeacon for Youth, Children, and Family Ministry says the idea for a choir has been brewing for a while.

"My music director (Dr. Joy Berg) and I had been talking about a children's choir (at Christ Church) for a long time," says Oliver. "We contacted Laura Hawley, who has run children's choirs before in the Ottawa diocese. Then, as we thought and prayed about the idea,

we envisioned a free choir for the whole diocese. Parents are often looking for ways to involve their children in music, which can be expensive.

This choir is for everyone – no audition is required; no payment is requested.

"We're really excited to get started."

The grant to Christ Church totals \$10,000, which includes a sizeable contribution from Fulford Trust for sacred music.

"Fulford Trust has supported youth choirs in

the dioceses of Toronto and Fredericton," said Brubacher. "The thought of having a new youth choir forming in the western part of the country is very exciting."

St. Michael and All Angels' vibrant Sunday school and Vacation Bible School programs have been popular for years, but the church had little in the way of IT infrastructure to help it pivot to online during the pandemic. An AFC grant of \$4,500 will help the parish upgrade its technology and increase wi-fi capacity,

so it can offer children's programming online as well as in-person and online hybrid options.

Rector, the Rev. Colleen Sanderson, says St. Michael and All Angels' Family Ministry Coordinator, Catherine McPherson, "saw the grant and came up with the idea to boost our technology at the church. Instead of doing children's programming from home online, which is what we've been doing throughout the pandemic, we're now going to be able to offer it at church both upstairs and

downstairs in our building. What a difference it will make in the kids' lives in our parish and in the neighbourhood."

The Diocese of Edmonton was one of 10 dioceses to receive the bulk of AFC funding in what is called the 'fall grant cycle.' Brubacher believes each of these efforts will make a difference.

"The programs made possible through these funds will show, not through words, but deeds, that young people matter."



# Bishop reflects on vision of peace and well-being for all

MARGARET GLIDDEN  
Edmonton Editor

**H**oly Trinity Anglican Church and Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, neighbouring churches in Old Strathcona, Edmonton, were joined by the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton; members of the South Alberta Light Horse (SALH) Regiment, and federal, provincial, municipal government representatives for a Remembrance Day Prayer Service on November 11, 2021.

In his reflection, Bishop Steve honoured and remembered the soldiers who served their country, some of whom were wounded and killed, expressing his appreciation of all veterans and soldiers who serve today in the Armed Forces.

He reflected on the vision, the struggle, and the discipline of peace. “We know that peace does not happen just because the guns fall silent. Peace is a whole way of life for the dignity and flourishing of all people. It is a lifelong commitment to the way of Jesus,” he said.

“I believe the struggle to be a people of peace is the purpose and meaning of our lives. We see this in the scripture reading from Micah (4:1-5, read by Edmonton-Strathcona MP Heather McPherson).

It is a vision that people of faith have held onto for generations and centuries because the words are so poetic, and speak deeply to the human soul. It gives them a beautiful vision of shalom: a world where people are not afraid. And, of, course, peace in the Old Testament vision is not just the absence of war, it’s something richer and fuller. This idea of human-flourishing and not just for a few but spread out across many peoples. It’s important to remember this is our ideal. And as humans, we strive to live by our highest standards of whom we are and these people of shalom that exist. And even if somebody like myself, a person of faith, looks to God to achieve this ultimately, in what Jesus called the kingdom of God, I will still commit to walking in this way of peace. It is who we are.”

“Let us remember before God, and commend to God’s safekeeping, those who have died for their country in war; and all who have lived and died in the service of the peoples of the world,” said Lieutenant Lawrence (SALH Regiment), in The Prayers of Remembrance.

“Let us individually and together, commit ourselves to the cause of reconciliation and peace,” said the Rev. Danielle Key, rector of Holy Trinity Anglican Church and padre of SALH Regiment. “As we remember all who have fallen in war,



Pictured above: Bishop Steve addresses Remembrance Day Service; 2nd Lieutenant Lawrence offers Prayers of Remembrance; Heather McPherson, MP reads from Micah 4. Pictured below: SALH Regiment at Light Horse Park.



the innocents who have died, and those who cry out in grief, we remember humanity’s power to heal and save. Amen.”

Following the Blessing and Dismissal, the congregation walked across Gateway Boulevard to join the crowd assembled

in Light Horse Park for Remembrance Day ceremonies led by the SALH Regiment.

## Immanuel, Wetaskiwin holds service of reception for new members

FIONA BROWNLEE  
Immanuel, Wetaskiwin

**F**or the past year and a half, the Eisbrenner family has worshipped with and become core members of the parish of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin. On Sunday, November 14 the Eisbrenners were officially welcomed into the Anglican church by the parish and Bishop Stephen London.

Jason, Christa and their daughters started attending Immanuel in the midst of

the pandemic. They had left their previous faith community for a number of reasons and wanted to attend a church with “a liturgical life and broader understanding of the Holy Scriptures.” They quickly became active members by reading for Sunday worship.

When church reopened in fall 2021, Jason took on the role of technical operator of our livestream of Sunday worship. Christa became a member of the vestry and took on leadership with the

Sunday School Team.

The Rev. Hugh Matheson, rector, and Shirley Fordice, people’s warden, presented Jason and Christa to Bishop Steve for reception into the Anglican Communion. (In the section of the *Book of Alternative Services* pertaining to baptism and confirmation, there is an option allowing people who have come from another church background

“to be received into this communion.”)

The parish of Immanuel,

Wetaskiwin is grateful to have the Eisbrenner family as members.



Pictured from left: Hugh Matheson, Bishop Steve London, and Christa and Jason Eisbrenner, on their reception into the Anglican communion, November 14, 2021.



## Adult Baptism Worth the Wait



Archdeacon Jordan Ware officiates with the support of acolyte Stefan Knibbe at the baptism of Paul Bouchard, accompanied by his sponsor, Judi Bouchard.

The Ven. Jordan Haynie Ware officiated at the baptism of an adult parishioner on November 1. Taking time to think before making this step of faith was important to Paul Bouchard, who began worshipping the Anglican Parish of Good Shepherd last summer and was baptised on All Saints' Day.

"He wanted to count the cost of discipleship and make sure he was ready to live into a lifelong commitment to follow Jesus," said Ware, rector of Good Shepherd in northeast Edmonton.

"It was with great joy that we marked him as Christ's own forever. I got emotional handing him the Body of Christ in the eucharist, after months of offering a distanced blessing. Something about facilitating that holy connection between Saviour and saved was truly powerful."

## St. Faith's to Offer Collective Kitchen

Starting this month, St. Faith's Anglican Church will be home to a Collective Kitchen community every second Tuesday, from 1:00 to 3:30 pm. Enjoy cooking with a small, friendly group. Help make three ready-to-eat meals and muffins to take home for \$4. Enter from the parking lot on 92 Street between 117 and 118 Avenue, Edmonton and remember to bring containers to take your meals home.

Please call Trish at 780-464-5444 to reserve your spot.



## Holy Trinity Riverbend Digs Deep for Inner City Pastoral Ministry

MESSENGER STAFF

Members of Holy Trinity Riverbend, Edmonton held their Annual Winter Warmth Clothing Drive at in the fall. During a month-long campaign, they collected several bags of warm clothing, boots and winter accessories, as well as monetary donations for the Inner City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM).

"I was overwhelmed by the generosity of our members as we gave ICPM Pastor Quinn Strikwerda more than a dozen bags of warm clothing, jackets, and boots," said Holy Trinity Riverbend Priest-in-Charge the Rev. Rebecca Harris.

In 2021, Anglican parishes in Edmonton raised more than \$3,000 for ICPM. An additional \$1,500 and warm clothing was collected for Christmas gifts.

Furthermore, "we could not serve our community

without help each week from volunteers who bring and serve the lunch and worship as part of our community (Emmanuel)," said Colleen Smith on behalf of the Inner City Pastoral Ministry Board. "We are so thankful for their presence."

To assist ICPM (donations can include winter gloves, black or grey toques, new women's and men's long underwear, new warm socks), email Pastor Quinn at [icpmpastor@gmail.com](mailto:icpmpastor@gmail.com). All monetary donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax receipt.



Rebecca Harris presents Quinn Strikwerda with a car full of donations from Holy Trinity Riverbend.

## St. Saviour's Bids Fond Farewell to Retiring Priest

The Parish of St. Saviour's, Vermilion celebrated the faithful ministry of the Rev. Elizabeth Metcalfe on Sunday, November 21.

"We created many wonderful memories together during the past five years," read a post on the parish Facebook page.

During her time at St. Saviour's, Metcalfe who is an avid kayaker and outdoor enthusiast, helped the parish make the most of its beautiful surroundings by introducing creative worship opportunities such as Wild Church; an invitation for people to experience the presence of God in the natural world.





# Holy Trinity Riverbend finds temporary home for worship

MESSENGER STAFF

After nearly 15 months, members of the Parish of Holy Trinity Riverbend (HTR) were able to reunite in person on the second Sunday of Advent.

HTR has overcome many obstacles through the pandemic, not the least of which was having to sell its church building which was deconsecrated in June.

“As a small parish, we could not afford the costly repairs needed to bring our church building back to health. So, with heavy hearts, it was determined the best path forward was to sell the building and land,” said the Rev. Rebecca Harris at the time.

The parish, which has been worshipping together virtually, began looking for a temporary space to gather in person, and after touring Providence Renewal Centre (PRC) with Bishop Stephen



Holy Trinity Riverbend's temporary home at Providence Renewal Centre provides a comfortable space for worship, a changin' space for the priest and a separate room for Sunday school.



London in November, Harris announced that PRC had offered the use of its small chapel on the second floor.

Twenty-six people

“ventured through minus-16 temperatures to gather” on December 5 for the first Sunday service at PRC.

“It was like a family



reunion,” said Harris, priest-in-charge of HTR, in her weekly e-newsletter.

“From the looks on everyone’s faces, the chapel

was just what we needed: a cozy place to gather, filled with warmth and chatter, and very comfortable chairs (with armrests)! One of the special moments was seeing how much the children had grown, and hearing their very insightful answers during the children’s talk. And everyone was grinning as the kids returned to their old, familiar ways – dancing to the music in their hearts.”

At the time of publication, the parish was looking forward to welcoming an even larger congregation for its Christmas Eve Service in the PRC auditorium.

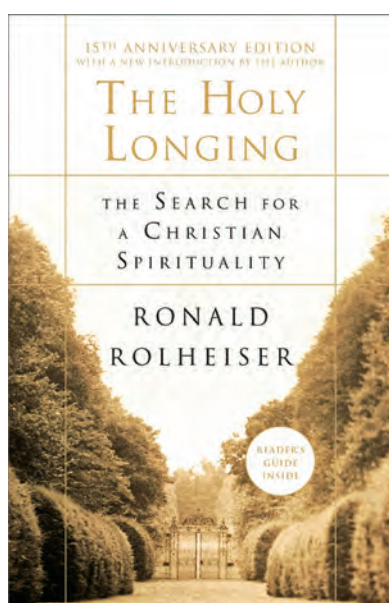
“Having this temporary home gives us some breathing room,” said Harris. “We dream of one day building a new church in south Edmonton, where we can open our doors and hearts to the neighbourhood. Thank you for all your prayers on this journey.”

## The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirituality

MARION BULMER  
St. Thomas', Sherwood Park

For me, author Ronald Rolheiser’s background is important. I have attended several retreats with him at Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert. He is a respected scholar and writer, who taught for many years at Newman College and is currently the president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. Rarely, have I encountered a person more well read. Rolheiser reads theology, novels, memoirs, classical theology, other faiths, and is aware of popular culture, like movies. Being in his presence feels comfortable and familiar. His personal style and relaxed manner resonate with me. He was born in Saskatchewan, raised in a farming family, and keeps in touch with family and friends in Canada.

I read this book some years ago and, in preparation for writing this review, re-read it. Once again, it felt



like an important book for understanding spirituality and seeking balance in our lives. According to Rolheiser, soul is linked to our energy, and spirituality is what we do with that energy. Spirituality shapes all our actions (p.7).

Spirituality is what we do with our life and what we don’t do. And what we do in different periods of our life. When life is hard, for example, I might read Jane Austen. I land in her books for what I call comfort reading. After reading

Rolheiser again, I picked up *Persuasion* and shall review it next. When Rolheiser needs to feel energised, he might read a different author.

Furthermore, Rolheiser says spirituality is not simply personal, but communal, and it has had no golden age (p. 21). A fault of our time, he says, quoting Thomas Merton, is that our time for spiritual growth is limited because we are too busy with work and too busy amusing ourselves.

Four pillars of spirituality which Rolheiser views as non-negotiable are: private prayer and private morality, social justice, mellowness of heart and spirit, and community where one worships (p. 53). It can be a challenge to keep those pillars in balance, but if one is out of balance, our whole life it out of balance. We need this balance in order to be the physical presence of God on earth, the hands and the feet. For this he quotes the words of Theresa of Avila.

Rolheiser devotes at least a couple of chapters to the importance of prayerful worship and committing to a church community. Even though aspects of church can be difficult (people think differently, worship does not always resonate, there are differing approaches to social justice which can be offensive) it is important to stay with a church community. Church is *not* about our personal pleasure or desires. It is about a communal spirituality, about challenging our personal likes and dislikes and expanding our theological thinking. In this community, we are built up and our egos are taken down (p. 118). There are a variety of God’s people in church, and spirituality is as much about relating to other people as it is about relating to God. He is dismissive of our tendency to jump from church to church. or leave church when something or someone in the pews offends us.

He speaks of paschal mysteries and the cycle of rebirth (p. 146). For each of us, our personal paschal challenges will be naming our deaths, claiming our births, grieving losses and adjusting to new realities; not clinging to the old, but letting the old ascend, leaving its blessings behind, accepting the spirit of life you are now living (p. 148).

Central to all will be prayer, both communal and private. Solitude for private prayer is a keystone for the spiritual life. When training to be a Catholic priest, he witnessed an ununified group of men come together in spirit in silent prayer.

What I was also reminded of reading *The Holy Longing: the Search for a Christian Spirituality* a second time, is that culture no longer carries our faith; we must be prepared to stand outside the dominant consciousness (p. 246). And we must practice disciplines that enhance our spirituality.



# New memory care facility for seniors a leap of faith

CATHERINE BANGEL  
Canterbury Foundation

The colours are bright and bold and there is a sense of peace as you walk through the doors of the brand-new Memory Care Unit at Canterbury Foundation, a seniors' assisted-living residence in Edmonton.

Two years ago Canterbury embarked on a \$42-million expansion and renovation project that turned a 47-year-old building into an innovative seniors' care centre, consisting of 53 new memory care spaces. The centre comes alive with vivid imagery and muraled walls, and an outdoor garden space and walking loop, all designed to provide memory support to seniors with dementia by helping them establish a sense of place and belonging.

"We have been able to accomplish something that is unique to Edmonton, unique to Canada," says Scott Belamiska, former chair of the Canterbury Foundation and a board member for 10 years. "It gives you goosebumps."

Belamiska says he will always remember June 2019, the day Canterbury Foundation officially broke ground on the project. Bishop Jane Alexander and clergy of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton took part in the sod-turning ceremony.

"When I was treasurer at Christ Church, one of our past chairs used to say, 'we have to have faith that the numbers will come together.' After the sod-turning event we signed the contract for the expansion. There was a whole lot that could have



Jo-Ann Sherlock and Scott Belamiska in Canterbury's new memory care centre. Vivid images help to create a sense of place and belonging for seniors living with dementia.

gone wrong, but we have a strong board, a strong executive leadership team and so we made that leap of faith. And look at what we've now accomplished. It's incredible," he says.

Jo-Ann Sherlock laughs as she listens to Scott describe that day. For her it was an even bigger leap of faith.

"We had the vote to go ahead with the expansion and renovation, which was, obviously, a very large amount of money, at my very first board meeting," she says. "But I had to have faith that the people who had been on the board had done all the background work. It did sound like such a great project, and I wished it had been available to my mother when she needed it."

Sherlock says her mother loved living at Canterbury for 6 years. However, in time her care needs grew and she was forced to move to long-term care.

"She never wanted to leave Canterbury. So a lot of these forward moves with the new build, end-of-life and enhanced care, the memory care wing, were all things I could see would have really benefited my mother. Part of my interest in being a member of the Canterbury board was to give back, because my mother loved living here."

The Canterbury Foundation Board of Directors is made up of Anglican clergy and lay members. The work of the board continues to evolve to meet the city's changing needs. Canterbury has created a

nomination committee to actively recruit board and foundation members to help lead Canterbury into the future.

"We've engaged the Bishop and Executive Council to help identify and recruit volunteers, donors, and residents," says Belamiska. "We're looking at what we need in terms of board member skill set, but also ensuring we are more diverse and inclusive in membership. We are looking for diversity in thought, culture, experience and background to ensure that Canterbury reflects our staff, our residents and our city. We believe our ability to be diverse and inclusive will ensure our robustness as an organisation into the future," he says.

Belamiska and Sherlock hope this project will inspire Anglican church members to continue to promote the wellbeing of seniors through Canterbury Foundation by rolling up their sleeves and leaning into the big projects on the horizon.

"Personally, I am excited to help build the Canterbury outreach program and the enhanced end-of-life care at Canterbury," says Sherlock. "We are all aging, and we will all need a place like Canterbury. You can be part of building that for the future."

"Take a leap of faith and ask yourself, 'how can I add value?'" says Belamiska. "The more you give, the more you get back."

For more information on Canterbury Foundation and how to get involved, please visit [www.canterburyfoundation.com](http://www.canterburyfoundation.com).

## Advent Arrival: Christ Church welcomes Syrian family continued

Continued from Front Page

While Areej and Shamil prepared their family to come to Canada, King immediately began looking for a house that would accommodate a family of seven and was close to schools, grocery stores, healthcare facilities and public transportation.

A neighbourhood search located a four-bedroom-house, owned by Canadian immigrants, for rent in Westmount. The committee made any necessary repairs to the home which included a finished basement and a two-car garage, then cleaned, furnished and stocked it with linens and housewares all donated by members of the parish. Moorey's friend and colleague, a Muslim, prepared a grocery list to ensure the family arrived home to a fridge and pantry stocked with familiar



From left: Connor Phillips, Abbey Marschall, Willie King load a couch; James Guthrie, Renita Olson assemble a bed in the Westmount home.

ingredients. After exchanging hugs and tears of joy, and collecting 14 large suitcases and carry-on luggage, the welcoming committee and family travelled by van to Westmount. There the family was met with a hot meal and reunited with Hassan and Omayea whom they last saw

eight years ago. It would be the grandparents first time meeting the two youngest children. King also stopped by to meet the family and help familiarise them with their new surroundings.

The Christ Church community looks forward to walking alongside Areej, an artist, and Shamil, who

was an executive in the hospitality industry before the family was forced to flee Syria, as they help their family build a new life in Edmonton.

"They'd like to come to Christ Church for Christmas, and we couldn't be happier to have them join us," said Moorey. "Their safe arrival is the best Christmas present."

