

EX CATHEDRA

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA

CHRISTMAS 2022

CHURCHMICE FORECASTING JOY FOR 2023

The Cathedral churchmice gathered on the kneelers of the Good Shepherd Chapel, wondering if the Dean would come to hear their stories. Last year they had waited...and waited...and waited... but she did not visit until the New Year was long past, so they were both anxious and excited.

Finally, they heard the Dean's unmistakable laugh and footsteps. The Dean entered the Chapel, beamed at the churchmice and kept on going. What was happening? This was not what they were expecting! They exchanged glances, eyebrows raised in surprise, then tumbled off the kneelers in a heap and ran to try and catch up. There she was, seated on the top of the chancel steps, laughing, as the churchmice

skittered to a stop beside her.

"Why are we here?" said Ms. Bishopmouse, peering down her nose. "We always gather in the Good Shepherd Chapel—not here."

Mr. Lecternmouse piped up quickly, almost cutting her off, "Oh, I don't know about that, I seem to remember a time when we met somewhere else. It was exciting and new!"

"No. We did not and it was not," Ms. Bishopmouse retorted.

"Well, it is always good to have a fresh perspective," contributed Mr. Deanmouse, "who knows, perhaps we will see things in a different light."

Miss Pulpitmouse had been quiet during this exchange. She cared for all of their feelings,

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FINDING THEIR VOICES WITH ALBERT DUMONT

Albert Dumont, our Algonquin spiritual teacher in residence, normally shares his wisdom through poetry, other writing and painting, using all three to describe the strength and healing he finds in nature.

Now, Albert is encouraging others to write poetry for themselves. His latest book, to be launched December 18 at the Cathedral, is *I Am a Human Being*, written by people who entered a contest Albert held to promote poetry. He describes it as “an anthology of poetic perspectives on the topics of love, death, support, honour and other emotions contained in the human heart,” according to his website, and expects it to be a major legacy of his time as English Poet Laureate for the City of Ottawa.

All proceeds generated from sales of this book will go towards promoting poetry as medicine, bringing healing to those finding themselves in emotional distress.

The launch was to be held Sunday, December 18 at 3 p.m. in the Great Hall.

The Smile

by Albert Dumont

I offer the smile
Of a human being
To you, o Creator
As an acknowledgement
Of my love for all
You bless me with each day.

The freshness and purity
Of a mountain wind
The perfection of the song
Sung by orange-breasted little birds.

The energy and innocence
Of a happy child
The waters of a mighty river
Washing over ancient rocks
These things, bring forth
The smile
Of a humble human being.



A CHILDREN'S TALE WITH A BRIGHT MESSAGE

By Canon Doug Richards

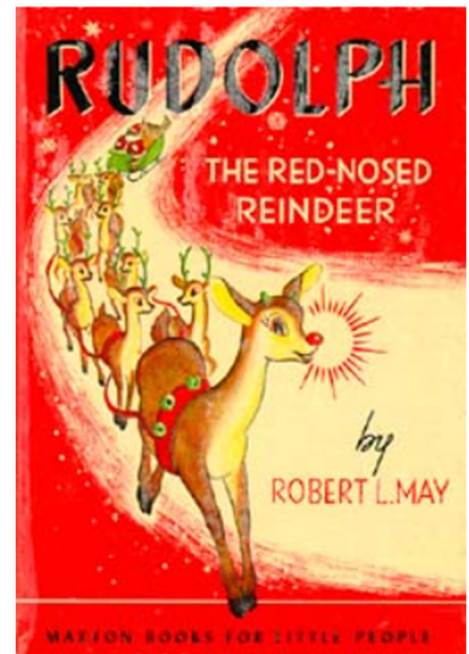
Redemption is a major theme of the Christmas season. From Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, to the Grinch in Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, there are countless examples of how the message of Christmas changes people's hearts.

One of my favourites is "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Rudolph is a fictional reindeer created by Robert L. May in 1939 when he was asked by his employer, Montgomery-Ward, a large retailer based in Chicago, to create a colouring book to be given out to children visiting their stores at Christmas. The inspiration for the story came as May stared out his office window in downtown Chicago as a thick fog rolled in over Lake Michigan and blocked his view. He suddenly had an idea: a reindeer's nose that was bright red would shine through the fog like a spotlight!

Rudolph is usually depicted as the ninth and youngest of Santa Claus' reindeer, using his luminous red nose to guide Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve; however, that is not where the story started. When Rudolph was a young buck he was ridiculed and excluded from the games that the other young reindeer played.

The well-known version of the story comes from a 1964 TV special. Without the original colouring book to guide them, the writers of the TV version created a story filled with misfits. Rudolf and his companion Hermey, an elf who wants to be a dentist, journey together and discover an island filled with odd toys that have been rejected by their owners.

Eventually Rudolph returns to the North Pole to discover that Santa is about to cancel the Christmas sleigh ride. There is a very bad snow storm, and Santa and the reindeer can not see to travel through the night. But when he sees how bright



Rudolph's nose is, Santa changes his mind. Not only does Rudolph save Christmas, he tells Santa about the misfit toys and they are delivered during Santa's Christmas run.

Redemption comes in the other reindeer celebrating Rudolph's difference, in the misfit toys finding a home and in Hermey being accepted as a dentist instead of a toymaker. One author describes the story of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer as a fantasy story made-to-order for all children: each child has a need to express and receive

BRIGHT FLOWERS FOR A SAD REMEMBRANCE

By J.B.Coutts

Fortunately, the cliff that crumbled away beneath me wasn't very big; more of a sandy bank, and the road I tumbled onto was small, deep in rural Quebec and deserted: no car appeared to run over my sprawled arms and legs. All



Maples for Her Majesty

that mattered was the branches of brilliant red maple leaves I was gathering for the Queen's memorial service at the Cathedral were unharmed. It occurred to me I *might* be going overboard.

That was September 14, six days after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II died, and four days before the cathedral had to be ready to host Canada's national tribute. Although officials from Canadian Heritage and Rideau Hall had been visiting the Cathedral every six months for years to review the Queen's funeral plans, putting them into action was an awe-inspiring logistical exercise. Our cathedral flower arrangers were just one cog in a very big machine. But a *busy* cog.

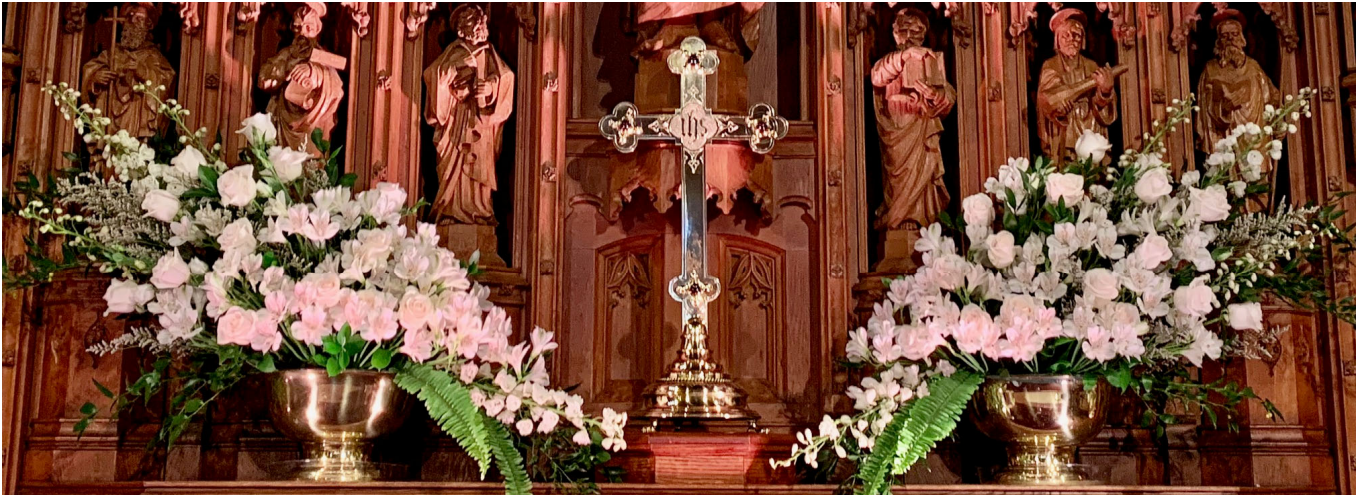
We have four regular flower arrangers just now at the Cathedral: Sally Hutchison, Peggy Morgan, Katherine Spencer-Ross and me, while the excellent Gwynneth Evans oversees everything we do. Her Majesty's flowers were to arrive on Friday, and it was all hands on deck to open them up, make fresh cuts in the stems and count them into buckets labelled for where they were to be used. But the

arranging had to be done on Saturday, to allow for church Sunday morning and rehearsals Sunday afternoon. Doable—except Peggy and Sally couldn't be there Saturday. *Oh dear.*

I'd learned from the Duke of Edinburgh's service that finding flowers is about 90 per cent of the stress and Her Majesty's memorial was no different. The colours they wanted us to use kept changing—from royal blue and gold to white to autumnal then, finally, back again to white. Which was a good



Sally, Jane, Peggy and Katherine in a quiet moment.



CBC's beautiful lighting highlights the altar arrangements for the Queen's memorial service.

thing, because my deadline for getting the order in was four hours before the official decision was made—*so by then I had already ordered 500 white flowers.*

I can't begin to guess how many people worked in the Cathedral over those eight days, among them a small regiment from CBC/Radio Canada, bringing giant crates of equipment and what seemed like several kilometres of cable to string it together. Now consider the design of our cathedral at the Queen Street end: there's one quite modest double door into the Cathedral that immediately channels you right to the chapel, or left to the small space by the pulpit where a grand piano was

parked. Run a bundle of cable the size of a tree trunk through it and put stacks of equipment at either end. Throw in at least 50 people on the move at all times. Now, try to wheel in big buckets of flowers. *and mind the piano.*

Katherine had a brilliant idea for the tables where guests would sign the books of condolence: arrangements representing the United Kingdom with roses for England, thistles for Scotland, Bells of Ireland and leeks for Wales, highlighted with maple leaves.

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A bank of flowers with two of the Queen's favourites, orchids and carnations.

A NEW FLOCK SINGS SWEETLY: THE BOYS ARE BACK

By Andrew McAnerney

It's a magical scene: 16 boys in red robes, aged six to 13, take their place at the foot of the chancel steps and sing a perfect Silent Night...

A year ago, the idea didn't seem magical so much as impossible. In my report to Cathedral Vestry in February, I said COVID and singing restrictions had left the boys choir facing "several existential challenges." With only three choristers left, and one of them already experiencing vocal changes, the future looked bleak.

However, I was determined the boys treble line must not fail and everybody I talked to felt the same. The singing tradition at Christ Church is a unique institution in the diocese, the city, the province and the country. In May I convened a committee of lay clerks, former choristers, former and current chorister parents and discussed what we could do to bring the boys choir back.

Throughout the summer, and with renewed vigour in August and September, we contacted schools and music

teachers across the city. We arranged parties, with singing, ping pong and pizza, to give the boys a sense of what then might expect. Our recruitment drive was featured on the CBC with eloquent interviews from current choristers, while former choristers and their parents spread the news and members of the Cathedral community spoke to children and grandchildren about joining. I attended extracurricular music events for kids to let everybody I could know we were recruiting.

Thanks to these efforts, with the solid support of the Cathedral staff and congregation, we now have 16 boys eager to learn.



While it will take a while to build up the repertoire and teach the skills choristers need, we have a very precious thing: an excellent group of boys who love singing, whose parents and family networks can commit the time and support necessary to developing the children's talents. Thank you to everybody who has contributed to the reinvigoration of the choir.



A new group of boys begins their choral training at the cathedral with an enthusiastic performance at the annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols.

THE GIRLS CHOIR VISITS MONTREAL TO SOUND FORTH THE WORD OF THE LORD

By Madeline Cole

I am a new member of the Christ Church Girls Choir and excited to share what we did on our trip to Montreal in November. As a brand-new member of the choir, I was assuming I would be nervous heading out on an adventure with James and the girls because I had never done anything like it before. I was away from home in a different city with girls I have just met. But something felt strangely familiar with the atmosphere of the girls choir and I was not nervous at all.



We all took the train together and checked into our hotel. The rooms were huge! We visited the art gallery and ate a delicious dinner. To end the first day, we

all went for a swim in the hotel pool.

The next morning we sang the first of two services at Christ Church Cathedral Montreal. The first was a choral Eucharist with the Cathedral's adult choir and the second was Evensong, both featuring music for All Saints Day.

The trip was a very nice bonding experience for all the girls and an experience we will never forget. It changed my view of the girls choir—I no longer view us just as singers, but as family members. And so should you!



Our girls choir gather on the steps of Christ Church Cathedral Montreal.

A TEMPORARY PHOENIX RISES ON BRN SON

It will be a while before St. Luke's Church can rise from the ashes of a fire that heavily damaged the building on October 11. However, St. Luke's Table, the day program we at the Cathedral have supported since 2015, has found a temporary home in the Bronson Centre.

While the diocese's other day programs—Centre 454 and The Well, plus partner agencies—stepped up to provide what support they could, they're not in St. Luke's neighbourhood. The Bronson Centre is just four blocks away, preserving the sense of belonging and community it has always of-

fered, although participants must still visit Centre 454 and other agencies for showers and laundry.

As the diocesan Community Ministries acknowledged in their Christmas newsletter, "This is a semi-permanent space and it's semi-perfect."

Without knowing how long it will be before the church will be ready to host St. Luke's Table again, the Bronson Centre space has been leased for one year with an option to renew.

Perhaps most important from the Cathedral's point of view, however, the Bronson Centre is able to provide the meals that are



Firefighters work to stop the blaze

so important to the St. Luke's community, meals for which we at the Cathedral have pledged to provide \$2,500 a month. If you have been wondering whether St. Luke's still needs that help, the answer (especially as inflation leads to soaring demand on the food bank) is yes, more than ever.



The Bronson Centre will house St. Luke's until its home is repaired after a fire.

St Luke's Table
Nourishing Hope

FACING CHANGE FROM A PLACE OF STRENGTH AND HOPE

The world, our lives in it and inevitably, our church and diocese, are being swept by change. As Bishop Shane Parker sees it, there are two options: be swept away — or take control of it, adapt and thrive.

The 142nd Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa (held in person in October for the first time since 2019) made it clear that while there are two options, there is only one choice. We must, Bishop Shane Parker said “... step away from being

changed to guiding change, so we can share the Gospel of God’s love and healing power from a place of strength and hope.”

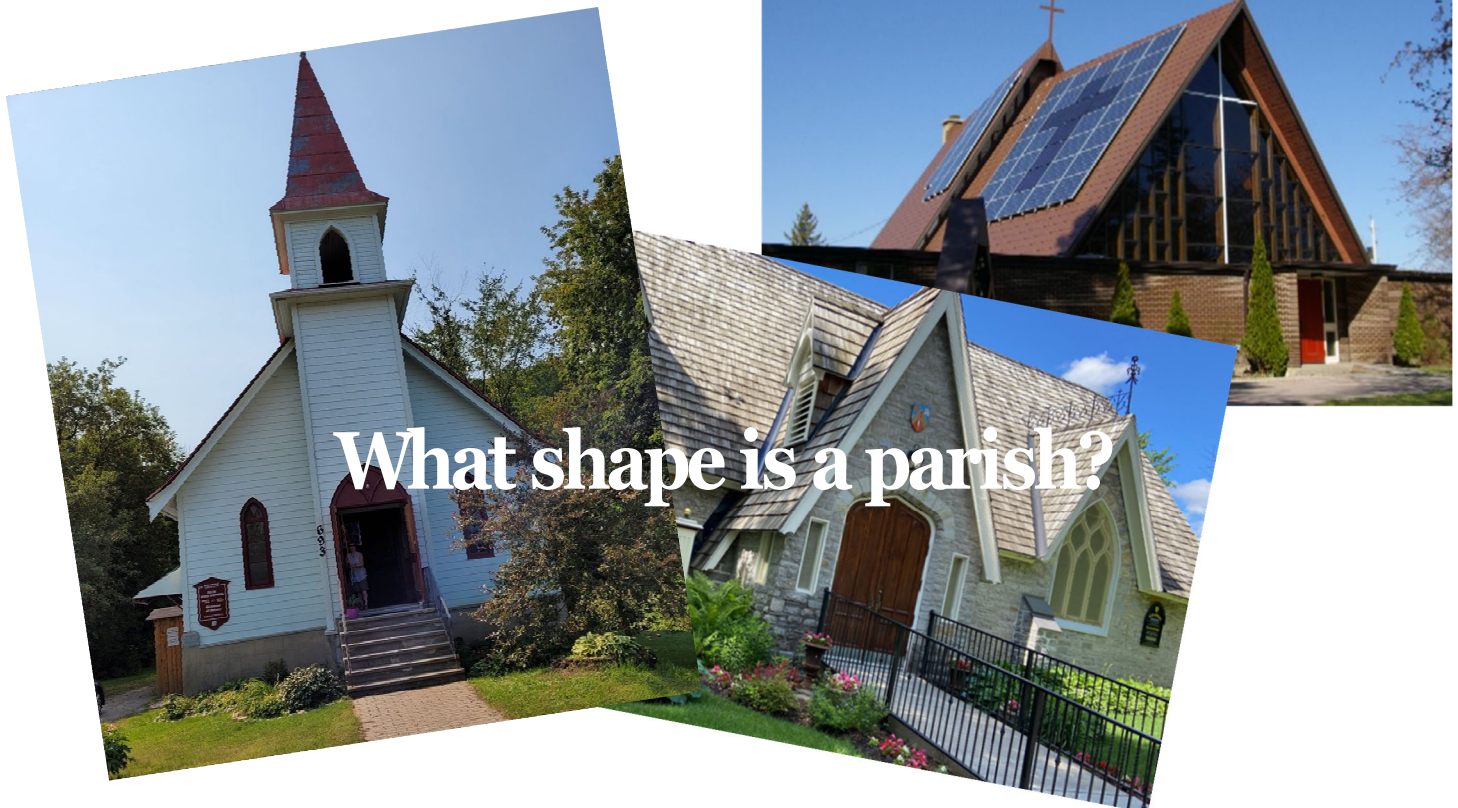
The process to do that is The Shape of Parish Ministry, a renewal project to guide us through our challenges: shrinking congregations, shifting rural-urban population and a disconnect with our communities.

After months of research and consultation, the Shape

project dominated most of the two-day Synod meeting. Participants discussed and voted on motions covering three areas:

- Updating diocesan operations to accommodate new models of parishes and consolidate administration to relieve its burden on parishes;
- Helping clergy, volunteers and staff to build skills to

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HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT ROB?

Canon Rob Heard can't say what his duties as an honorary assistant priest will be; he hasn't been told. Ever since he gave up classical singing to study theology, however, he's seen it as part of his job to lend a helping hand, jumping in when required. That's what he's anticipating will happen here.



Rob Heard is here to help

You can read more about his 43 years of service to the Diocese of Ottawa by going to the Cathedral Clergy tab on the website (or clicking [here https://www.ottawacathedral.ca/users/rob-heard](https://www.ottawacathedral.ca/users/rob-heard)

if you're reading this online).

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By Saturday, the maple leaves from my trip to Quebec were shrivelling. Katherine and I snuck through dinnertime rain to raid a lawn in the Glebe where we'd been told there was a bright red maple. *Thank you, homeowners, for your contribution.*

Sunday, as Katherine and I finished the arrangements, Sally and Peggy made up exquisite bouquets to go to people on our parish visiting list. Each was a small, sweet tribute to the only Queen most of us have ever known.



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manage parishes; and diocese-wide resources to support them; and

- Finding new models of worship and better ways to connect to our communities.



Bishop Shane speaks at Synod 2022

It was that last topic that sparked most of the discussion at the meeting. Excited speakers from churches large and small called for urged creativity and risk taking, although others urged honouring our traditions. Pilot projects will be developed, tried, assessed and reported on to Synod 2023.

MICE

from page 1

and didn't want their different memories and varying expectations to take over this wonderful time of reconnecting. So she decided to change the topic.

"I know we usually reminisce about the past year, or in this case two, but perhaps we could focus on what we find joyful this year?"

"Excellent idea, Miss Pulpitmouse," Mr. Deanmouse affirmed. "I am so very happy to see our diocesan family gathering once again, especially when the Cathedral canons all sit in their stalls beside me. What fun it will be to celebrate New Year's Day together!"

"Yes, well, I have appreciated the return of all the servers and chalice bearers, and all the people coming up to the altar rail for communion again. It does warm my heart and gladden my soul," Ms. Bishopmouse admitted.

Mr. Lecternmouse excitedly hopped on his hind legs and exclaimed, "The Cathedral Women made pies!!! I sampled a few crumbs and they

were delicious. And I can't wait to see all those young boys in the choir—their antics may well get up your nose, Ms. Bishopmouse!"

Ms. Bishopmouse huffed and was about to speak but the sweet voice of Miss Pulpitmouse chimed in: "There are just so many reasons to be joyful! One of the girls in the choir told me all about their trip to Montreal and all the fun things they did. And the intergenerational gatherings are picking up steam too!"

"And let's not forget that the Vicar's Pints and Parables offers such a great opportunity to share our lives with one another. We are in good heart indeed," said Mr. Deanmouse.

The conversation carried on for some time, and even Ms. Bishopmouse agreed that whatever happened last year didn't matter so much anymore—they all just rejoiced in the renewed life of the Cathedral. And they even enjoyed looking out over the expanse of the pews from the chancel steps, as indeed their perspective had shifted.

VICAR

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approval for their individual and unique qualities.

Rudolph's story does just that. Although Jesus' birth is never mentioned in either the song or the TV special, the Christmas message is there. Jesus came into the world as a small child to remind us of God's infinite love for all people.

May we all be reminded this Christmas season, that God love came into the World to remind us that we are all unique and we are all loved by God.



Merry Christmas from Rudolph!



CHRISTMAS AT THE CATHEDRAL

Friday, December 23rd
9 pm Compline

Christmas Eve, December 24th
7 pm Choral Eucharist
10 pm Festal Eucharist

Christmas Day, December 25th
8:30 am Holy Eucharist (BCP)
10:30 am Choral Eucharist with children's homily

New Year's Day, January 1st
Noon Eucharist and Reception
with the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

Ex Cathedra

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