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Two deacons ordained to serve in Athabasca diocese



Assisted by Blessing Shambare, left, Bishop David Greenwood presents a Bible to Peter Clarke during his ordination to the diaconate on November 30, 2022. Photo: Sharon Krushel



Again assisted by Blessing Shambare, Bishop David Greenwood officiates Kevin Pederson's ordination to the diaconate November 19, 2022. Photo: Peter Clarke

MESSENGER Staff

Members of the Athabasca diocese travelled from near and far to the ordinations of two deacons in November. Bishop David Greenwood ordained Kevin Pederson at St. Andrew's in Lac La

Biche on November 19, the Reign of Christ.

Canon Peter Clarke was ordained by Bishop Greenwood at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River on November 30. People joined in celebration and thanksgiving with the Pedersons, Kevin and Kathryn;

and the Clarkes, Peter and Jeannette.

"Let us thank God for empowering these two great servants through the infilling, companionship and strengthening of His Holy Spirit," said Bishop Greenwood. "Let us pray for them and their families, and for the people whom

they serve. May they truly be signposts for us of walking in the Kingdom of God, and may we, their people, be truly blessed by their ministries. All glory be to God!"

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Lay evangelists and lay readers commissioning service

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

Lay evangelists and lay readers were commissioned for ministry in the Edmonton diocese by Bishop Stephen London during Choral Evensong at All Saints' Cathedral on November 6.

Bishop Steve expressed his great thanks for people who are willing to be vulnerable and take public leadership.

"Tonight, we are commissioning you to exercise your spiritual gifts for the building up of the church. As the first reading (Sirach 44:1-15) reminds us, some people exercise their spiritual gifts in a very public way, and some exercise their spiritual gifts in private ways that are not well known or often mentioned. But, of course, God recognises and remembers them all. For those of you taking on this calling of lay evangelist and lay reader, this is a public ministry. To be up front is to be vulnerable. My friends, please be vulnerable. Take the risk that things may not go as planned, that you may receive criticism. We need you so much. You are doing an invaluable ministry essential for the life of the church."

The Rev. Tim Chesterton, warden for lay evangelists and rector of St. Margaret's, Edmonton, assisted Bishop London in presenting new licenses to Doreen Abbott and Mary-Lou Cleveland of All Saints' Cathedral, Edmonton.

Alison Hurlburt (also a lay reader), Corinna Kubos and Jenny Stuart, the first cohort of lay evangelists ever to be licensed in the diocese, had their licenses renewed.

The Rev. Nick Trussell, chaplain for lay readers and rector of St. Luke's, Edmonton, assisted Bishop London in presenting licenses to more than 50 lay readers from parishes throughout the diocese. Winter weather prevented some of the lay readers, especially those serving rural parishes, from attending the service.

Bishop London reminded the lay evangelists and lay readers in attendance of their essential and invaluable role in "creating holy spaces for people to meet our loving God and to know God's grace; sacred spaces where people can come and be safe and hear a word from God spoken to their hearts. And where we will welcome them and show them that they are loved. The spiritual practice

of connecting people to God and to one another is what we are about.

"Whatever you offer, God will use," he said. "So, thank you friends, for your courage and your willingness to exercise the spiritual gifts that God has given you."



Pictured clockwise from top: Bishop Stephen London applauds lay readers and lay evangelists commissioned on November 6, 2022; Mary-Lou Cleveland, lay evangelist at All Saints' Cathedral, reads the first reading; Doreen Abbott is commissioned as lay evangelist for All Saints' with the support of Tim Chesterton, warden for lay evangelists; the Bishop commissions Sheila MacKay of St. Luke's as lay reader, assisted by chaplain for lay readers, Nick Trussell.



Parishes unite to serve Camrose and Ponoka communities

The Rev. Deacon SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

Bishop Stephen London is pleased to appoint the Rev. Trina Holmberg as rector of the combined ministries of St. Mary's Anglican Church in Ponoka and St. Andrew's in Camrose.

Holmberg sees the hand of God in her journey to this new arrangement.

"Once upon a time," Holmberg says, "I interviewed at two Anglican churches that were willing to consider having a Moravian ordained minister serve them. I began serving St. Andrew's in Camrose in January 2021. In January 2023, I will begin serving St. Mary's in Ponoka, the other church I had met with. I can see God smiling back knowing that someday I would be serving both."

"People at both churches have been excited about this idea, while also concerned for their pastor.

There is a 55-minute drive between parishes. Fortunately, the highways that connect are major roads and so there may be times when last minute changes may be needed, but everyone is prepared. We are hoping to attend each other's special events and have some specific activities to bring the two parishes together. We know there will be bumps down the road but through flexibility and mutual respect they will be graciously worked out."

The vestries of St. Mary's and St. Andrew's met on Saturday, November 26 to discuss the new arrangement. The Ven. Rachael Parker, Archdeacon for Rural Ministry, was there to guide the discussions, which Holmberg says was very helpful. "What a blessing and an easing for the Camrose folks (who have not shared a minister before). It was especially helpful that she (Parker) could share the



The vestries of St. Mary's, Ponoka and St. Andrew's, Camrose with their rector Trina Holmberg. Photo: Rachael Parker

learnings and experience from her own team ministry."

Holmberg notes that on the occasions the two parishes have been able to meet "they have intermingled their seating spots, and the laughter and sharing are a sign of hope for a long union of sharing."

"Both parishes have a lot to offer each other, and I am looking forward to how God might grow us in each town."

The shared ministry of these two rural parishes officially began on January 1, 2023.

God's light and love shine on in the darkness

Sometimes, it seems, everything goes wrong: the truck breaks down, the freezer stops working, you get sick and can't think straight let alone the fact that you feel terrible. Sometimes our world is turned upside down by the death of a loved one, a fire, a flood, natural disaster – we recently had an earthquake, thankfully, no one was hurt – or serious illness. Sometimes, our lives are impacted by 'wars, and rumours of wars' – far off, perhaps, yet through our media seemingly very close and looming.

Sometimes, you may just want to scream in frustration or grief.

God intruded into this world, this very real world of problems and troubles, with the birth of His son Jesus 2,000 years ago. And the writer Matthew quoted the prophet Isaiah to declare, 'the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, and on those who sit in the region and shadow of death a light has dawned.' As Paul recounted in his



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

second letter to the Corinthians, 'For God, who said, Let light shine out of darkness, is the one who shined in our hearts to give us the light of the glorious knowledge of God in the face of Christ.'

The world can seem a very dark place, especially to people who are at the end of their rope. It was into this world that God came to walk with us, to teach us His ways, to heal us, to save us. He came to reassure us that just as our heavenly Father cares

for the birds and flowers, even more He cares for us. He came to encourage us to pursue God's kingdom and righteousness; came to remind us that the ways of God are not the ways of the world. As N.T. Wright said, 'When God wants to fight a battle, He does not send in the tanks! No! When God wants to fight a battle, He sends in the poor who have His spirit. He sends in those who mourn, and the meek. He sends in those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. He sends in the merciful,

the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted. He sends in those who proclaim Christ crucified and risen and are persecuted for it – for these are the people of His kingdom.'

Sometimes, everything goes wrong. Sometimes, the world can seem a very dark place. But this world we live in is also the world which God declared 'good.' It is the same world into which He came to proclaim His kingdom is near. It is your world, your life, that He wants to walk in, because, most of all, He wants to love you and see you walk in love. And He wants this for everyone who will accept Him.

'And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.' Nor will it ever. All glory be to God, and Merry Christmas to you. May you have a blessed 2023, one of walking in the love of God.

+ David

Caricature of Bishop Greenwood created by Alex Blasius and used at the Bishop's request.

Rhythm of Christian life includes slowing down to just *be*

I have picked up again one of my favourite Christian spiritual books called *The Cloister Walk*, by Kathleen Norris. It is her story of becoming an oblate in the Benedictine Order. Even when I am not actively reading the book, I often open it up to the opening meditation on Holy Wisdom. Norris reflects on the transformation that has happened to her over several years. It has been so subtle; she doesn't actually notice the transformation until much later.

She writes, 'In the Orthodox tradition, the icon of Wisdom depicts a woman sitting on a throne. Her skin and her clothing are red, to symbolize the dawn emerging against the deep, starry blue of night.'

'For years, early morning was a time I dreaded. In the process of waking up, my mind would run with panic. All the worries of the previous day would still be with me, spinning around with old regrets as well as fears for the future. I don't know how or when the change came, but now when I emerge from the night, it is with more hope than



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

fear. I try to get outside as early as possible so that I can look for signs of first light, the faint, muddy red of dawn.'

I turn to this in the new year, because I normally take the space between Christmas and Epiphany to look back over the last year. This is usually a quiet two-week time in the year in which the world seems to slow down and give us a chance to reflect. The reason I keep coming back to this quote from Norris is

it reminds me that part of my walk with Christ means I don't have to live my life in anxiety and hurry. There is an important rhythm to the Christian life. There is much to do in life and in the church. This is what the church has traditionally called the *Via Activa*, or the active life. The active life is about being a blessing in the world. Not only is it important to earn a living, but the Christian faith calls us to be an active force for good in the world. Historically, Christians have gone out to proclaim the gospel, to create hospitals, help

refugees, feed the poor, help their neighbours.

But the church also tells us that there is the *Via Contemplativa*, or what we might call 'slow spirituality.' The contemplative life is about slowing down, turning off the noise and distractions that can easily overwhelm our lives, and turning to God. God is always present at every moment, of course, but we don't always know it. We can be spiritually blind. To see again, we have to slow down our hearts, our minds, our souls, our thinking, and just *be*. The church has always taught that both ways of life are essential to the well-formed soul.

There is no doubt that life is stressful. The gift of Christian spirituality is learning how to live a stressful life rooted in Christ. In so doing, we find that, like Norris, we emerge from the night with more hope than fear.

Blessings,

+ Steve

<p>We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 1 MB, 200 dpi).</p> <p>Submissions are due one month prior to the issue for which they are intended, for example: JANUARY 3 for FEBRUARY, 2023.</p>	<p>Send to: Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) anglicanmessenger@gmail.com Peter Clarke (Athabasca) seens@telus.net</p> <p>MESSENGER TEAM</p> <p>EDITORS Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) Peter Clarke (Athabasca)</p>	<p>LAYOUT & DESIGN Margaret Glidden Shelly King</p> <p>REPORTING Peter Clarke Margaret Glidden Shelly King</p> <p>PROOF READING John Gee</p>	<p>A \$15 annual donation is suggested. Please send donations to the Dioceses of Athabasca or Edmonton, c/o The Messenger.</p> <p><i>The Messenger</i> is published under the authority of the Dioceses of Athabasca and Edmonton. Opinions expressed in <i>The Messenger</i> are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher.</p> <p><i>The Messenger</i> is a section of the <i>Anglican Journal</i>, printed 10 times a year (no issues July and August) by Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON.</p>
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Ordination marks sacred moment in memorable journey

The Rev. Deacon Canon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

When Bishop Greenwood told me that he was going to ordain me to the diaconate on Wednesday, November 30 in St. James' Cathedral, Peace River, I realised the significance of the date. On that memorable date 42 years ago, I had arrived in Canada to live. I stepped out of the Edmonton International Airport loaded down with luggage into a blizzard at -32C. That evening I drove on icy roads for the first time. Welcome to Canada.

The forecast of a blizzard and bad roads this November 30 meant some people did not attend the ordination and understandably so. Still, more than 40 people ventured out to the Cathedral for the evening. Many had come from across the diocese. Two had come from Edmonton and another friend flew in from Florida, where he left his jacket in the airport!

When we started the procession down the aisle to the hymn "The Summons," all were in good voice. The prayers that followed enhanced the solemnity of the occasion. My fellow warden at St. Mark's in High Prairie Colleen Greer read from Deuteronomy 30:11-14: 'This commandment I am giving you today is not too difficult for you...', which set the tone for the evening. Sharon Cox, one of the people in my parish



His sponsors celebrate the evening with Peter Clarke. Pictured from left: Lesley Hand, Peter Clarke, Jeannette Clarke, Bob Thrall, Blessing Shambare, and Michelle Keshen. Photo: Benita Greenwood

discernment group at St. Mark's, led Psalm 19:1-6.

The second reading from Romans 10: 8b-18, spoken by my wife Jeannette Clarke, was followed by one of my favourite hymns, "Be Thou My Vision." Our Regional Dean, the Rev. Deacon Danielle McKenzie, read the Gospel: Matthew 4:18-22, which spoke of Jesus calling Simon (called Peter) and Andrew, his brother, to follow Him. A little later, James and John would also follow Jesus.

In his sermon, Bishop David Greenwood invited people to come beside me with their support in this journey. I am blessed to have worshipped with so many friends in various churches in the land,

including the Roman Catholic Church and the Victory Church, over the years. One of my joys was that there were people present from various churches including Fr. Lawrence, the local Roman Catholic priest.

One of my sponsors, the Rev. Lesley Hand, is a long-time friend who used to be a priest in the Athabasca diocese. Now she leads On Eagle's Wings, an ecumenical ministry to people in the far North of Canada. Another friend, the Rev. Blessing Shambare is the priest at the Slave Lake Ecumenical Church. We met soon after his arrival in Canada from Zimbabwe. Bob Thrall, another good friend, is a member of St. Paul's church in McLennan, an old Anglican church

which these days is supported by people like Bob who regularly attend other churches in the community. Bob is very involved in the United Church. Another long-time friend Michelle Keshen is the treasurer at St. Mark's in High Prairie. Finally, but not least my wife of almost 42 years Jeannette Clarke was my most treasured sponsor. God provided good friends to us both.

Following the examination, the Rev. Deacon Karen Kovacs led us in the Ordination Litany. Bishop Greenwood and priests laid hands on me during the Consecration. I was vested with a red stole, a gift from the current deacons of the diocese. Bishop Greenwood then presented me with a NET Bible, whereupon I was presented to the congregation at the Peace. The offertory hymn "O Jesus I Have Promised" is another favourite. I had the honour of helping set the table for the Thanksgiving and Communion.

After I gave the final blessing, we sang "This is The Day," a fitting conclusion to a lovely service and a new beginning for me.

Then it was time for pictures before heading down the stairs to a wonderful repast set out by Sue Bowling and the ladies of St. James' Cathedral.

Thanks be to God.

Kevin Pederson ordained a deacon in Lac La Biche

The Rev. Deacon Canon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

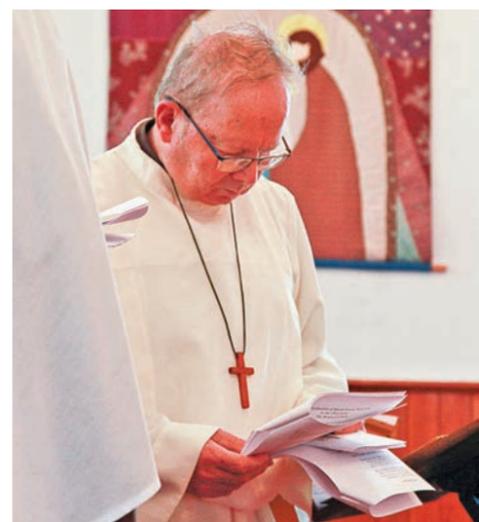
Kevin Erwin Pederson was ordained a deacon in the Diocese of Athabasca on Saturday, November 19, The Reign of Christ, at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Lac La Biche.

Forty people came to join Pederson in this glorious ceremony held at St. Andrew's church, which is situated on the lake, with steep steps to the front door.

The Processional Hymn, "The Love of Jesus Calls Us," saw the small aisle in the church filled with clergy in their white and red vestments.

Mel Kutrowsky read Jeremiah 23 1-6; followed by Canon Peter Clarke with the Psalm, Canticle 19a (Luke 1: 68-79); and Amanda Oldale with Colossians 1: 11-20.

The Gradual Hymn for this day was "O Jesus I Have Promised," and



Above: Kevin Pederson reflects; pictured from left, front row: Rose Howell, Danielle McKenzie, Karen Kovacs, Peter Clarke; back row: Terry Francis, Blessing Shambare, Bill Creaser, Bishop David Greenwood, Kevin Pederson, Chianna Pedersen, Leon Cadsap. Photos: Peter Clarke

the small church was filled with song.

The Rev. Deacon Bill Creaser proclaimed the Gospel from Luke 23: 33-43.

In his sermon, Bishop David Greenwood noted that Pederson will help guide people in the parishes of Lac La Biche, Wandering River and Plamondon.

Pederson was presented to

Bishop Greenwood by the Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambare and Gladys Harrison. There being no objections made, the Examination and Consecration of the Deacon continued. The Ordination Litany was presented by the Rev. Deacon Karen Kovacs. The Offertory Hymn was "Be Thou My Vision."

Following the Communion and

the Recessional Hymn "Lord You Give the Great Commission," the new deacon gave the final blessing.

After pictures, we all adjourned to the hall next door for some wonderful food and a time of fellowship. Many people had travelled a great distance (as much as 400+ kms) to be at the ordination service. Thanks be to God!

ACW celebrates Feast of St. Andrew at cathedral

The Rev. SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

December 1, the Anglican Church Women of Edmonton diocese joined the regular Thursday noon eucharist at All Saints' Cathedral, taking what is becoming an annual opportunity to worship and fellowship together. It was a small crowd. 10 ladies braved the roads following a snow storm the previous night. Diocesan President Elaine Dickie was not disheartened by the numbers, however, saying that at events like these the important thing is the relationships that are built in one-to-one conversation.

Willa Gorman of Emmanuel parish in Gibbons read the first reading: Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Tracey Fodchuk of St. Columba in Beaumont read the second reading: Romans 10:8-18.

Bishop Stephen London preached from the Gospel for the feast day of St. Andrew, who is the patron saint of the ACW. The reading from Matthew 4:18-22 tells the story of Andrew's decision to lay down his fishing nets and follow Jesus. The Bishop focused on the word "follow" and how it holds two meanings: to walk with and to imitate. He



Pictured above: Bishop Stephen London chats with ACW members before the noon eucharist at the cathedral. Pictured below: the ladies join in a hymn. Photos: Shelly King



pointed out that Andrew would have literally walked with Jesus, probably several times over, the distance from Capernaum to Jerusalem via Jericho. That's roughly the same distance as from Viking to Edmonton, a three-day journey according to Google Maps.

"Walking that far with Jesus and being in conversation that whole time means that Andrew got to know Jesus very, very well. In fact, this

idea of walking together is a central metaphor for being in relationship together."

Then, Andrew and the other disciples imitated Jesus. Why?

"Because Jesus brought something profound. When Jesus met people, they felt that they were seen and loved, not judged. They heard Jesus tell them how much God loved them and that they were of great value... They found they had a

spot at God's table. This is a teaching that was going to change the world; the coming of what Jesus called the kingdom of God."

Bishop Steve said the heart of the Gospel is relationship, and that is what the ACW has been so good at. He also acknowledged all that the ACW brings to the diocese.

"Your presence in so many of our parishes across our diocese is an essential witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. Your fellowship and friendship that crosses parish boundaries is a wonderful example of the kinds of bridges we need to keep and build broader across the diocese. Your faithfulness to your parishes through your ministry and fundraising keeps many of our parishes operational. Your commitment to the wider church far outside our diocese gives you a broad perspective. The ACW is unique amongst our ministries in the diocese in having a local presence, a regional presence, a national and an international presence. This is profoundly unique among the ministries in our diocese."

After the service, the ladies enjoyed tea, sweets, and fellowship in the cathedral hall, before braving the cold and snowy streets again.

All Saints' parish in Drayton Valley celebrates 85th anniversary

MIRIAM ROBERTS
All Saints', Drayton Valley

A blizzard could not keep people from gathering for a delicious turkey dinner at Cobblestones Café in celebration of the 85th Anniversary of the Parish of All Saints', Drayton Valley. A trivia contest about the history of All Saints' Anglican Church, which began in 1936 as a mission house in Drayton Valley, prompted much laughter and visiting. The mission house was a space for nurses to administer first aid and pastoral care for what was then a remote, isolated community 130 kms from Edmonton.

As a congregation, we began planning the event for All Saints' Day to remember the saints who have gone before us. We also hoped to rekindle a fire in the congregation, which dwindled to fewer than 20 people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The planning committee invited present and past members of the congregation and clergy, as well as dignitaries. The general public was invited by way of the local press and the *Synod Scene*. The weekend



Rector's warden Miriam Roberts (left) and people's warden Garth Blades (right) receive honours from Drayton Valley-Devon MLA Mark Smith. MP Gerald Soroka also presented a plaque.

program included an opportunity to visit the recently restored, original church, now located at the museum.

Parish wardens Garth Blades and Miriam Roberts received certificates commemorating the 85th Anniversary of All Saints', Drayton Valley from Gerald Soroka, MP for the Yellowhead Riding, and Mark Smith, MLA for the Devon/Drayton Valley Constituency.

After dinner the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, Bishop of Edmonton, spoke about the future of the Church. He began by saying the Kingdom of

God moves forward. He asked us to imagine our church in the next 85 years. While we can't predict what church will be like, it is possible a second reformation and social change will shape it. The goodness of Jesus and God are at the center of a humbler, future church as people continue to follow a poor carpenter. Illuminated by gospel light, the Church will be a place of grace with forgiveness.

Bishop Stephen presided at a celebration of Holy Eucharist on Sunday, November 5. In

remembrance of the saints who went before us, the favourite hymns of church members were played throughout the service, including "When the Saints Go Marching in." The hymn "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" was requested by a 98-year-old parishioner residing in a retirement community.

All Saints' lay readers Rita Stagman, Terry Drader and Larry Redford were commissioned by Bishop Stephen to carry on ministry in the parish.

In his sermon, Bishop Stephen said we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. Since we don't know where the church is headed, it is vital we know our purpose. As disciples, we should keep to the basics structured around the gospel. In Ephesians, a kingdom is a new way with Jesus, the Son of God. When we give our lives to Christ whose grace never fails, we are disciples or saints.

Our celebration finished with a light lunch and cake in the meeting hall of our church. Fellowship was enjoyed at tables covered in fabric tablecloths of gold tones and decorated with candles.

Diocesan prayer day: God's grace abounds in deepest water

ROBYN THOMPSON and
LEAH MARSHALL
Diocesan Discipleship Group

The sight of people hauling pails upon pails of water into a church and, inside, setting up a gurgling teacup fountain, and a canvas tent to enclose the sound of thunder and waves, must have led to wonderings about what was going on at St. Thomas' Anglican Church in Sherwood Park on November 12th.

The diocesan prayer event: God's Grace Abounds in Deepest Water, was an opportunity for anyone to drop in and pray for our world and community, seek prayer from others, break bread together, or sit and be still in the presence of the Holy Spirit. The sanctuary was filled with prayer stations centered on the biblical theme of water.

The stations were all creative or interactive. At one station we were invited to write our sins on special paper and cast them into a beautiful bowl of water where they dissolved into nothing. At another, we were invited to pray before a fountain made with a teacup while contemplating Psalm 23, "my cup overflows." At the front of the church was a burbling well surrounded by stones of thankfulness personalized by members of the diocesan synod in October. We read about the healing at the water stirred up and the woman at the well. There were prayers for creation and water



All prayer stations reflected the theme of water. Above: a well surrounded by prayer stones of thankfulness; below: a teacup fountain and prayers for water justice.



justice, a walk through the prayers of other traditions, and an opportunity to write a psalm-type prayer together. You could even enter a tent to listen to a dramatic reading of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 4:35-41).

Midway through the day we



ate a fabulous chili lunch together. Padi Eric J. Kregel, pastor of the Filipino congregation at St. Matthias, Edmonton, and his team led family prayers with the help of some wise and funny puppets. After lunch, Bishop Steve led the group in a

pop-up eucharist.

Sometimes we want to pray, but it's hard to find the words or even know where to start. The prayer stations were designed to inspire different ways to help us connect with God. Prayer is the act of showing up (wherever you are) with the expectation that God is there and excited to meet with you.

This event was inspired by similar prayer days hosted over the last two years at St. John the Evangelist parish. They have put on several themed prayer days in addition to an entire week of 24-7 around-the-clock prayer. These events are modeled after the creative 24-7 prayer rooms that have been starting up in churches all over the world over the last decade.

The past few years have been turbulent for all of us as we navigated the challenges of pandemic times. While planning this prayer day the organising team felt led specifically to the biblical theme of water; to remember God's power in the midst of our chaos. Whether we feel like we are floating, sinking, or fighting against the current, we are not alone. Christ goes before us.

Thank you to all those who shared their time, prayers, and skills to prepare this event and especially to Padi Eric, and those from St. Thomas's parish who helped with hosting the luncheon. And thank you to those who came. We hope it was a time of blessing for you.

Missional disciples of Jesus need never go back to the shadows

Happy New Year! We continue where we left off last time, with Paul articulating for us, so well, in his marvellous epistle to the Colossians, that Christ is sufficient and supreme, and is all we need.

False teachers have come in, causing that young church family to doubt themselves. For Paul, these false teachers – far from being wise and blessed with a secret knowledge from Jesus – were actually disconnected from Him because they were saying that the Christians in Colossae weren't proper Christians; that Jesus wasn't actually enough, and the answers these teachers proposed to address this alleged deficiency were not life-giving, not loving, and actually



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

no real help whatsoever.

I find the phrase in chapter 2, verse 17 interesting: 'These (the false teachers' teachings) are a shadow of the things that are to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.'

I remember a scene from *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship*

of the Ring. Gandalf engages in what will become a life-or-death battle with the Balrog, and he tells it to 'go back to the shadows.' He stomps his staff into the ground and the Balrog tumbles to the depths.

For me, that phrase, 'go back to the shadows,' links with chapter 1, verse 13: 'For he has rescued us

from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.'

Please allow me my overactive imagination, but I think we could summarise Paul as saying to them: 'Having been brought into the kingdom of light, why dwell in or go back to the shadows...'

I wonder what are our equivalents of the festivals, new moons, and sabbath days the false teachers were saying were so important? Anthony Thisleton, in his superb commentary on Colossians, asks this question: 'Can we lose sight of the ultimate purpose of rituals and ceremonies in such a way that the outward form dominates the inner meaning?'

I can also imagine those false teachers in Colossae berating those early Christians: 'You *should* be attending the new moon festival, and this is what you *should* be

eating when you're doing that. And you *should* be paying a lot more attention to angels, like we are.'

I don't know what your *shoulds* are. Some of them might be valid. But what are the *shoulds* you have attached to faith? To the Church? How strong is their pull? How does it affect your expectations of other people? I encourage you to observe yourself; the language you use. See what *shoulds* pop up for you and examine them. Question whether they represent only a shadow. And remember, whatever they are, the reality is only found in Christ himself. It is only Christ who is sufficient; it is only Christ who redeems and transfers us to the kingdom of light.

You already have all you need. With every blessing,

Richard

Annual fundraiser provides medical care in Buyé

MESSENGER STAFF

An annual fundraiser to help women, children, and seniors access medical care in our companion Diocese of Buyé raised more than \$4,600 last fall.

The majority of the proceeds were raised during parish coffee-hours. The money is then wire transferred by the Rev. John Gee, diocesan treasurer, to Buyé diocese where it is used to purchase \$5 medical cards. With a medical card, a person's medical expenses are covered by up to 80 per cent. Access to healthcare is otherwise out of

reach for most people living in Burundi.

Buyé diocese receives 100 per cent of the donations collected by Diocese of Edmonton parishes. There are no administrative fees.

The "\$5-5 Ways" medical card fundraiser was started in 2018 by the Rev. Rebecca Harris and the Rev. Danielle Key.



Clotilde Muhimpunda and the Buyé Mothers Union distribute medical cards to people in the parishes of St. Emmanuel, Ruyenzi and St. Stephen, Kobero in October, 2022.

Nativity Festival Raises \$700 and Food Donations for Vegreville Food Bank

The Rev. LAURETA BLONDIN
Rector, St. Mary's, Vegreville

The congregations of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and Vegreville United Church co-sponsored their first Annual Nativity Festival at the United Church. There were more than 300 nativities on display during the festival, which was held on November 25 and 26. Visitors also

enjoyed child-friendly nativities, live music by church members, and a surprise visit from Mrs. Claus who assured the children that her husband was very busy working with his elves at the North Pole. The churches provided complimentary hot dogs, freshly baked cookies, and refreshments.

Admission to the event was free, but donations for the local Vegreville Food Bank were joyfully accepted.

In turn, the event successfully raised about \$700 cash and collected 123 lbs. of food. Lisa Topilko of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church and Pat Beuhler of the Vegreville United Church delivered the donations to the food bank on Tuesday, November 29.

Discussions are already underway to expand and improve the event for next year!



Pictured from left: Joanna Karczmarek, Vegreville Food Bank Coordinator; Pat Beuhler, Vegreville United Church; Lisa Topilko, St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church.

Book review: beavers contribute to health of ecosystem

Well, to my great surprise, I find myself again writing about a book about our natural world. I did not notice this trend until I began writing these reviews. Yet, these books have stayed with me and are influencing my thinking.

I highly recommend *The Beaver Manifesto* by Glynnis Hood. I am pleased to say this book is written by an Albertan who, at the time of writing, was a professor at Augustana University.

This is a small read; you could have your Sunday worship and finish this small book over tea on a snowy winter afternoon.

I like beavers. They have been fun to watch through my childhood and into adulthood. But I now have a better understanding and respect for them as a keystone species of North America. The ecology of North America is shaped by beavers. Yet these marvelous creatures were trapped, nearly to extinction, 100 years ago.

At one time there were 60 to 400 million beavers in North America; by the 1800s many areas of North America had no beavers. The



MARION BULMER
St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

Europeans came to Canada to harvest beavers, using the felt below the fur for fashionable hats in Europe. These hats made a huge profit. When Europeans arrived in North America, the beaver was not a particularly important animal to the Indigenous community, but in trade they could obtain European staples.

The beavers' dependency on water and their lodges made them easy to find and hunt. They have been further threatened by the drainage of ponds in areas used for cropland. Over 75 per cent of wetlands have been lost in large parts of the Prairies, Ontario and coastal wetlands.

What we did not fully realise was that a world without beavers



is a world without water. Beaver dams hold water, providing water for all kinds of animals and plant life. Many animals and plants rely on the beaver. During droughts, these ponds hold water the longest, allowing many species to survive. And, in fact, providing water for livestock. Hood argues that beavers are the blood and veins of our landscape, because they manage water.

Hood views beavers and humans as control freaks; each wanting to control water. Many of us are fond of beavers until they interfere with our homes, roads, trees. Then we want to be rid of the rodent pests. We spend

millions to blow up dams and wage war on the beaver when they damage expensive infrastructure like paved roads.

Taking the natural habitat of beavers into account when we build homes and roads is both good for the environment and less expensive to manage. Hood receives just as many calls from landowners who recognise the merit of beavers and want them on their property, as she does from people who want them removed. She jokes about setting up a dating service for those who want beavers and those who do not.

This world was created for us all and we are all here for a reason. There is evidence that some of the effects of climate change, specifically drought, can be mitigated by beavers. Beavers put water back on the land.

Two beaver pairs were returned to Elk Island National Park in 1940. Now their descendents flourish in the areas east of Edmonton. This tenacious rodent now numbers back in the millions.

May we give thanks to God for the beaver, and make space for them to live fully as part of our world.

Keeping Faith: first-person stories from Edmonton diocese

KAREN SIMONS
Diocese of Edmonton

In this series, Karen Simons shares her work of gathering, editing and presenting stories of faith commissioned to mark the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Diocese of Edmonton. If you missed last month's introduction, you can now find it on the diocesan website, along with the first installment, Jeremy Spurgeon's "Time, Faith, and Music."

Installment #2: Kathy Bowman's "New Frontiers"

In 2016, I found myself casting about for another person to interview. I had not conducted one since November 2012. The intervening years had been difficult. My sister had died of a very aggressive brain cancer (10 weeks from diagnosis to death) at Christmas 2012. Soon after that, my oldest brother broke his back, and for a time his ranch in the backwoods of BC, where all my family live, hung by a thread. While he was in the hospital having steel rods inserted to support his spine, my mother was diagnosed with colon cancer. She died in February 2015, while my husband Joe and I were driving through the mountains in the hope of seeing her one last time. During those years of grief and worry, Caroline Howarth and I produced *Things Donne & unDonne* for the diocesan centennial, I transcribed the interviews that I'd already recorded and struggled to create a form for them, and I plunged into past Synod Proceedings and other sources to gain more understanding of Anglicans and this diocese.



Pictured left: Kathy Bowman with Kathy Turner and Mary Rendell, right, on their ordination to the priesthood by Edmonton Bishop Kent Clarke on March 17, 1985.



Kathy Bowman is celebrated by more than 150 parishioners, family members and friends at St. Patrick's church in Mill Woods, Edmonton on the occasion of her retirement in 2013.

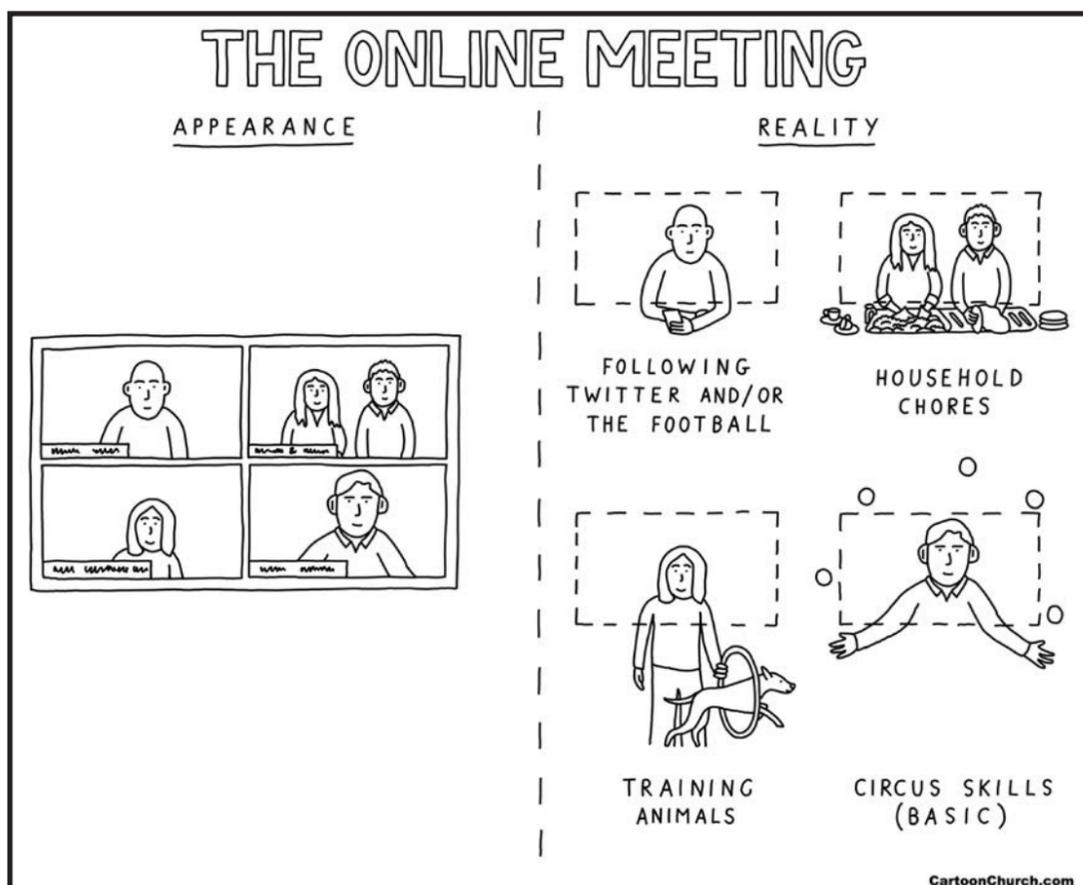
But now the time had come to gather more stories. So, when Bishop Jane mentioned that Kathy Bowman was one of the first women to be ordained to the priesthood in our diocese, I pounced. Kathy swiftly responded to my email request, and we met in the Synod Office boardroom a day or two later. Complete strangers, we sat on the same side of the big oval(ish) table with our chairs quite close and at an angle, facing each other. Strangers we might have been, but Kathy shared her memories of those earlier times with a forthrightness I hadn't anticipated, and I soon realised that she would consider probing questions carefully and answer them fully and searchingly. I'd come to the interview feeling bruised and tentative, wondering what it might mean to be a person of faith within the Anglican tradition. Kathy's willingness to reflect on the questions that perplexed me proved a balm to my troubled soul. Here is an excerpt from her story:

As I look back, it's hard to remember what my faith was when I began. I found that God was always bigger than I figured, and I think that is continuous, and I think that's probably a common thing. When you start out, you're trying to get a handle on it: 'Well, God is like this or is like that.' But you realise from a lot of experience that God is always more. I find God in very unexpected places, or in unexpected people. So, faith becomes much broader. For example, if you're keen on church, you always put God in the church, and you figure everyone outside the church isn't much of a Christian, or they're just a token Christian. But after a while, you get to

know a person or two, and you realise there are people who are very, very active Christians who have no connection with the church. And you think, 'Okay, there's a broader picture here than I know.'

Look for a link to Kathy's full story in the third *Synod Scene* of January, 2023.

Karen Simons holds a PhD in English from the University of Waterloo and has taught at the University of Alberta and MacEwan University. She has published in journals like the Queen's Quarterly and Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics. She wrote and, in 2013 with Caroline Howarth, co-produced Things Donne & unDonne for the Diocesan Centennial. She has been a parishioner at All Saints' Cathedral since 2007.



Bishop Recognised for Promoting Ecumenism



Bishop Stephen London was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal at Government House in Edmonton on November 15, 2022. A member since 2012, and past chair of the Strathcona County Ecumenical Mission Committee, Bishop Steve was recognised by Her Honour, the Honourable Salma Lakhani, Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, for his commitment to ecumenical dialogue.

Photo: Lynn Streeter