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A Reflection on the Legacy of the Very Reverend Peter Elliott, DD

ANNE FLETCHER

Christ Church Cathedral, Special to Topic

For about an hour and a half, late on a sunny summer afternoon, the threads of Peter Elliott's lifelong life in the Anglican church tied themselves up together in a remarkably tidy manner.

As a 17-year-old in 1971, he watched with his family in St. Thomas' Church in his hometown of St. Catharines, Ontario as an unknown bishop from the Kootenays named Ted Scott shouldered the job of 10th primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Now, at 65, in Christ Church Cathedral where he had been dean and rector for close on 25 years, and with his September 30 retirement heading towards him, Dean Elliott watched Linda Nicholls installed as the church's 14th primate.

It was the closing act of July's General Synod 2019, the first national Synod in Vancouver since 1965, and Dean Elliott's 8th, as either staff or delegate, including terms first as deputy and then as prolocutor.

Artwork created during Synod by his husband, textile artist Thomas Roach, covered the altar and ambo, and Christ Church Cathedral was looking and sounding its renovated best, long-time organist and director of music, Rupert Lang, at the 15-year-old custom-built organ and the custom-cast bells in the three-year-old bell tower pealing.

"For me, it was sort of the two big parts of my ministry coming together," Dean Elliott said, in an interview. "What warmed my heart was seeing General Synod fall in love with Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver."

"I was satisfied and moved in a lot of ways that Christ Church Cathedral could host (Synod delegates) and I could serve as dean."

As chair of the national task force on residential schools, Dean Elliott saw the 2003 settlement agreement signed in a Christ Church Cathedral meeting room. Now he had seen Synod delegates vote enthusiastically for a self-determining Indigenous church.

As a gay man who never tried to seem otherwise, he saw a same-sex amendment to the marriage canon founder in the House of Bishops. But a less celebratory, though perhaps more workable, local option was endorsed, likely ending the decades of rancorous debate over same-sex unions. "I don't think General Synod is going to talk about the place of gay and lesbian folk again," Dean Elliott said.

Twenty-five years ago, much was different. The rector's office at the Cathedral seemed fitted with a revolving door. Jenny Birtwell, a Christ Church Cathedral parishioner since the mid-1970s, was rector's warden, heading the Cathedral's second search for a rector in less than three years.

The late Jim Cruickshank, after nine years as rector, including a period off with serious illness, had been elected bishop of the Cariboo in 1992. Michael Ingham, fresh from a stint as the primate's principal secretary in Toronto, spent

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"Creator God, teach me to offer you a heart of thanksgiving and praise in all my daily experiences of life. Teach me to be joyful always, to pray continually and to give thanks in all my circumstances. I accept them as Your will for my life."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Harvest Thanksgiving October 13. PHOTO Lilboas (iStock photo ID 1030686556)



LEFT Promotional headshot from the late 1990s when Dean Elliott was on the board of the Vancouver Film Festival. PHOTO Courtesy diocese of New Westminster Communications RIGHT Dean Peter today. PHOTO Rose Murray



Don't Put a Carpet Down the Centre of the Church... Please, Don't

A Reflection on the Legacy of the Very Reverend Peter Elliott, DD

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

only one year in the job before his 1993 election as bishop of New Westminster.

"It was a very uncomfortable time," Mrs. Birtwell remembers. "That's what Peter came into. He came into an unstable parish which had seen too many changes in too

short a time."

On paper, Dean Elliott's fitness for the job looked iffy, at best. As a self-described teenage "church nerd," he had rooted, from a distance, for the ultimately unsuccessful plan of the early 1970s to replace an aging Christ Church

Cathedral building with an Arthur Erickson-designed church/office tower.

Once, out from Toronto on a consultation, he had even ducked out of a downstairs meeting at the Cathedral to view the red linoleum, grey carpet and duct-taped organ in the upstairs sanctuary.

But Dean Elliott had served a bare four years (1981–1985) in parish ministry as curate at Christ Church Cathedral, Hamilton. He moved into church bureaucracy, first for the diocese of Toronto and then in the national office, where he felt freer to live his private life as a gay man.

Bishop Ingham, now looking for a dean, had once met, and couldn't help but notice, Peter Elliott during those curacy days. In an interview Bishop Ingham said, "It was immediately obvious that Peter was a creative liturgist. He had the sort of strength of personality to create worship that was fun and solemn."

At Church House, where they dealt with dwindling revenues and drastic downsizing in the early 1990s, Bishop Ingham saw Dean Elliott's administrative and political skills at work, even when he was accused of shutting down the national women's unit because he was a man. "Peter dealt with that with grace and humour."

In his telling of it, Dean Elliott was somewhat gobsnacked when Bishop Ingham asked him to apply for the job.

"I recall saying, 'You must be mad.' I've never been a rector of a parish. I've never lived west of Burlington. I'm gay and I'm not called to celibacy."

Bishop Ingham's reply? "The position needs a chief executive, not a parish priest, there is life west of Burlington, and, as for being gay in a church that still had a very large closet, 'I will support you as far as I can.'"

Under church rules, the Cathedral parish chooses the rector and then the bishop appoints the dean of the diocese, almost always one and the same person. So, Dean Elliott threw his hat into the ring, and the canonical committee picked it up. "He just seemed the best fit for our parish," Mrs. Birtwell recalls. "He was just very engaging."

First and foremost, the building demanded attention. "When Peter came there was a sense that it was an impossible task," said Mrs. Birtwell's husband, Ian, who subsequently spent too-many-to-count years as associate warden overseeing, ultimately, \$25 million in renovations.

Dean Elliott drew on his love of Ontario's Stratford Festival in telling the canonical committee he saw his job as that of artistic director, shaping the seasons of the liturgical year.

"The liturgy expresses the deepest realities of life in ways we miss most of the time," Dean Elliott said. "For me, it's like entering the eternal now, the timeless moment."

Step-by-step, meeting after meeting, fundraising campaign after fundraising campaign, Christ Church Cathedral's 100-year-old bones were respected while its shabby clothing was stripped off to create an up-to-the-minute theatre space.

Chairs (moveable) replaced (most) the (immoveable) pews; the lectern and pulpit were fused into one ambo; the altar was made portable. The organ and choir (after much persuasive discussion) were shifted from front to back.

Stained glass windows were donated by generous parishioners and others, replacing coloured and plain glass. New lighting and sound systems sharpened the liturgical drama.

More prosaically, the three-year-old roof should be good for another 97 years. And the ten cubicles in the women's washroom, up from four, continue to be appreciated.

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Breaking the bread during the Eucharist with the late Rev. Marion Grove and liturgical assistant, the late Jane Donegani Short in 1994.

PHOTO Courtesy of Christ Church Cathedral Communications

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



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Thank you!

Peter & Rupert • Liturgists Extraordinary

See it and hear it—Peter Elliott and Rupert Lang, really just a pair of grown-up church kids, singing hymns to and with each other, the office door closed to keep the noise level down.

That went on regularly for 25 years, a mutual admiration society producing liturgy that has retired bishop Michael Ingham calling Christ Church Cathedral the best place in the country to worship.

Mr. Lang, Christ Church Cathedral music director since 1986, is the only one of the Cathedral's 25 full and part-time clergy and staff to pre-date Dean Elliott's August 1, 1994 arrival.

And he knows exactly why this particular working partnership of priest and organist, which can so frequently be frictional, did, in fact, work.

As the son of an Anglican priest, Mr. Lang grew up in a musical family whose idea of a good time was to sing hymns around the piano. Ditto for Dean Elliott, close in age and the son of a lay canon, who took both piano and voice lessons.

"That really hit it off with me because music is generational," Mr. Lang said. "Our tastes are pretty similar." Both cherished the Anglican heritage of liturgical music; both saw the Cathedral, because it's a cathedral, to be a keeper of that heritage; both wanted that heritage to shine.

Still, a priest with musical skill doesn't guarantee harmony. "Sometimes that can go in the opposite direction," Mr. Lang said. "They're opinionated about music, but they don't have a depth of knowledge. I hear about a lot of falling out. It's quite common actually."

But Dean Elliott "never flaunts his knowledge," Mr. Lang said. "It's more about his personal opinion."

Apart from choosing hymns together, "I can't say enough good things about that because hymns are so important," Mr. Lang said. Dean Elliott kept his hands off. "He rarely says anything about my choice of mass settings."

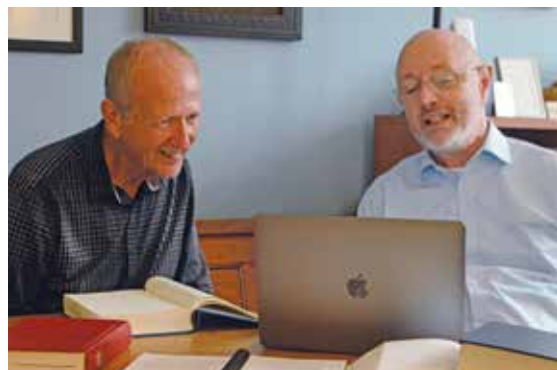
For his part, Dean Elliott knew who he was working with, in a position that the late bishop Jim Cruikshank saw as the Cathedral's "second dean." "Music connects us at a level below words," he said. "No one, in my experience... reads a room better than Rupert Lang. He has an uncanny ability to get the feeling right."

For years, Mr. Lang saw, up close and day after day,

his boss at work—building parish-leading teams; envisioning projects so appealing that people came on board with open pocketbooks; focusing firmly on the big picture in the face of daily aggravations; by-passing off-the-rack sermons to custom-tailor each

funeral and wedding homily; keeping office life light with his irrepressible sense of humour.

And the list could go on. "To have that many skills in one person is rare," Mr. Lang said. "He's the best CEO I've ever worked for." ♦



LEFT Rupert and Peter checking out hymns online and in many hymn books. RIGHT Peter says, "This hymn should work." PHOTOS Randy Murray



Having a larf! PHOTO Randy Murray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Mr. Lang's mass and psalm settings, anthems, hymns, and the *Kontakion*, now a funeral standard, are sung regularly. Mr. Roach's textile art, changing with the liturgical seasons, became a staple.

And there's no carpet anywhere to suck up sound. "Music is the vibration of air and wood picks up the vibration," Dean Elliott said, so congregational singing can actually seep into the floor beneath one's feet.

His one and only piece of advice for the next rector is this: Don't put a carpet down the centre of the church. Just don't. Please.

Underneath the scaffolding, parish life ticked along—in only one example, today's Maundy Project, serving several hundred meals a week from the new commercial-grade kitchen, started with one parishioner in the late 1990s, on her own initiative, bringing in homemade sandwiches.

Church staff grew from six full-timers and a couple of part-timers to today's contingent of 25. Mr. Birtwell, who laboured long as envelope secretary, sees that as a good thing. "It's given volunteers more time to get to the mission part of (church life), instead of dealing with the administration stuff," he said. "Otherwise, you burn out."

The membership is larger, at nearly 800, up from 714 in 1994. The growth of the parish list has been augmented by the 5:30pm Sunday St. Brigid's congregation, started in 2014, the first church plant in the diocese in 50 years. However, a more accurate measurement of parish health and growth is Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) and that number is arrived at by averaging Sunday attendance several times a year at different times in the liturgical calendar. ASA for Christ Church Cathedral in 1994 was 395 and for 2018 it was 492.

The 2019 budget tops \$2 million, compared to the

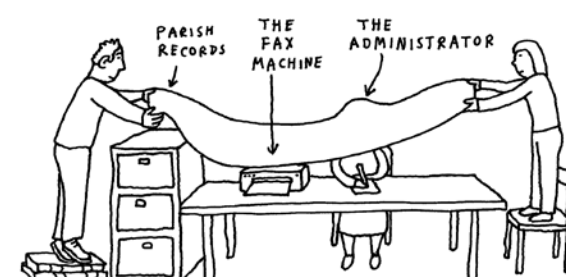
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DECORATING

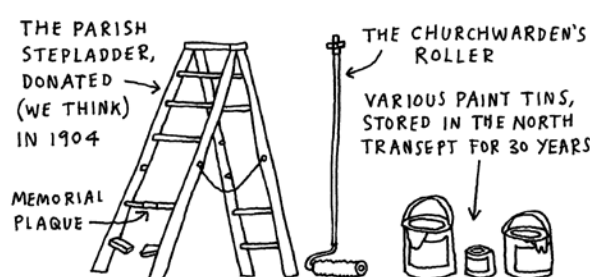
THE VESTRY



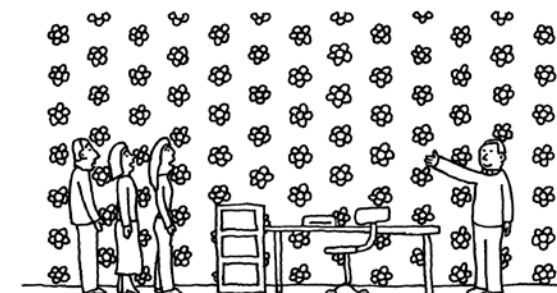
THE VESTRY-DECORATION SUBCOMMITTEE CONSIDERS PREFERRED SHADES AND PATTERNS



DUST SHEETS ARE PLACED OVER THE VALUABLES



EQUIPMENT IS GATHERED, AND THE WORK COMMENCES



A FEW WEEKS LATER: THE FINISHED RESULT IS REVEALED

CartoonChurch.com

Don't Put a Carpet Down the Centre of the Church... Please, Don't

A Reflection on the Legacy of the Very Reverend Peter Elliott, DD

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\$600,000–\$700,000 budgets of the mid-1990s. Maybe 100 parishioners—or a few more—have been along for the whole 25-year-ride, meaning that at least 85% of the three Sunday congregations (including 8am and 10:30am) have never known Christ Church Cathedral without Dean Elliott sitting in the rector's stall.

To some on the outside, the place can look pretty pleased with itself, an impression confirmed by a 2018 parish survey. Mrs. Birtwell recognizes the danger. "We're very happy with how we are, so where do we go from here?"

Dean Elliott, ever the realist, compared Christ Church Cathedral to a swan, gliding serenely, thanks only to vigorous underwater paddling. Some 75% of his job, he said, had always been about anticipating those interpersonal conflagrations, a fact of life in every parish, and trying to stamp out the first sparks.

At the same time, he was up to his elbows in national church work—in one memorable year, he sat on the Christ Church Cathedral Parish Council, Diocesan Council, the Council of General Synod and the international Anglican Consultative Council—routinely working 16-hour days as he stayed on top of parish business while in Toronto or England or New Zealand or wherever.

Bishop Ingham acknowledges that any assessment of Dean Elliott can easily veer into hagiography (the writing of the lives of saints/biography that idealizes its subject). Peter Wall, also with a September 30 retirement date, as dean of Christ Church Cathedral, Hamilton, and also a veteran of eight General Synods, makes his own contribution to that.

Dean Wall has watched Dean Elliott in action since the early 1990s, working with him nationally, and playing with him at the annual North American Deans' Conference. "He's such a larger-than-life character," Dean Wall said, in an interview. "If he's not a wild extrovert, he acts like one. People just love him."

"Peter is widely respected by deans from around North America for what he's done at the Cathedral here in Vancouver."

Dean Elliott plans three months off before teaching a "spirituality and leadership" course at the Vancouver School of Theology in January, and then watching to see "whatever God has in mind for me."

He's promising himself to take up the Chinese practice of Qigong seriously, penance perhaps for all those years he regarded his body as just something that carried his head around.

In his last years at the Cathedral, he found he liked little more than taking tea with older parishioners, simply

listening to their stories, and marveling at the irony of being lured in as a chief executive, and then working happily for a quarter century as a parish priest, weeping with those who wept and rejoicing with those who rejoiced.

As the altar party waited for Dean Elliott's installation service to begin on the evening of September 11, 1994,

People's Warden Penny Charlesworth, hoping for a stretch of calm water, asked the incoming 13th rector and 8th dean to stay for ten years.

"I think I said, 'Maybe I'll retire from here in 25 years' and everybody laughed," Dean Elliott recalled. "I was just being facetious." ✦

For those of you who don't know, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, DD retired after 25 years from his ministry as Rector of Christ Church Cathedral and Dean of the diocese of New Westminster on September 30, 2019. His last Sunday was September 22. A celebration was held on September 20. Diocesan communications and Topic made arrangements to cover these events. Photos and stories will be available on social media sites, websites and in upcoming issues of Topic.

In consultation with the canonical committee, Archbishop Melissa Skelton has appointed the Rev. Dr. Canon Richard LeSueur as priest-in-charge during the interim period. Canon LeSueur begins his ministry October 22, 2019. • Editor



Preaching at the ambo, 2006. PHOTO Bayne Stanley



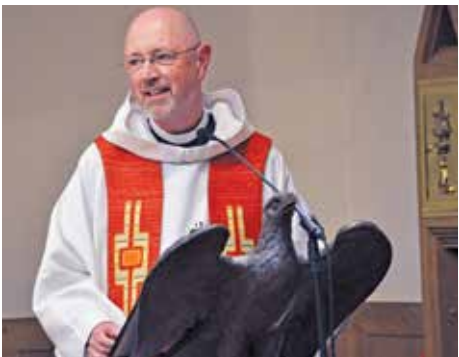
At the ambo greeting the congregation, April 2019. PHOTO Wayne Chose



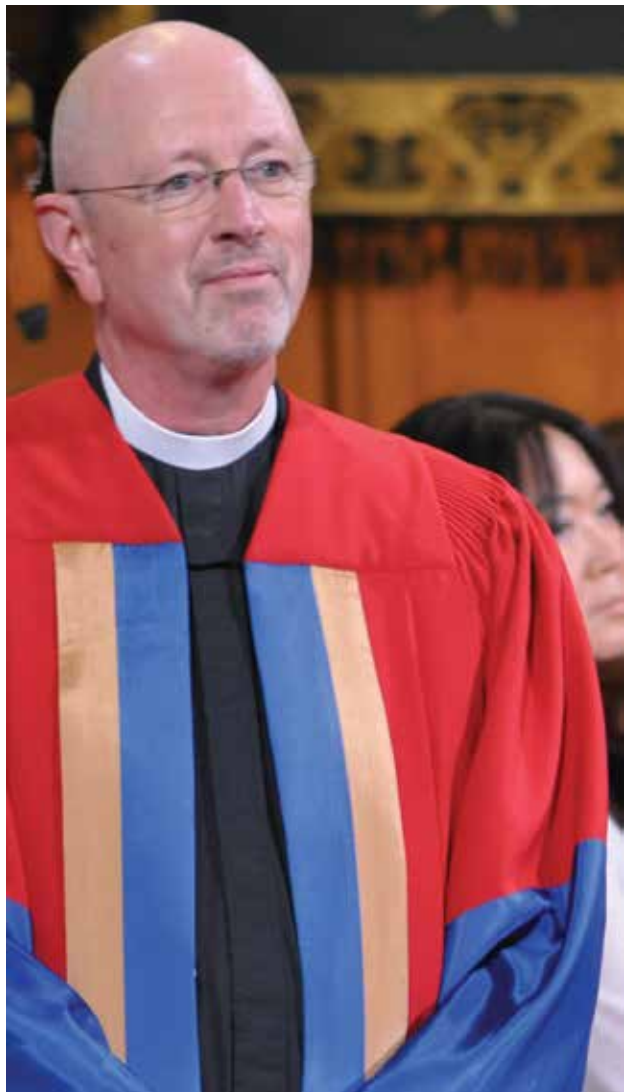
LEFT Cutting his 50th birthday cake, May 2004. PHOTO Courtesy diocese of New Westminster Communications



MIDDLE The senior clergy and lay staff of the diocese (archbishop, archdeacons and others) presented Dean Elliott and Thomas with a sampler of quality wines and some fine whiskey, August 18, 2019. PHOTO Randy Murray



RIGHT Preaching at the induction of one of a number of former curates, the Rev. Patrick Blaney in 2012. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Dean Peter Elliott in his Vancouver School of Theology robes at a Service of Reconciliation at St. Andrew's-Wesley in 2015. PHOTO Randy Murray

The Seven Things that Peter Elliott Taught Me

ARCHBISHOP MELISSA SKELTON

These are things taught to an American who arrived in Canada thinking she knew more than she did.

Learning #1

Welcome. Ms. America. Americans can be fascinating, colorful, even dazzling. But remember that Canada is a quiet, slow burn, not a fireworks display. And so, Ms. America, learn to wait, watch and listen.

Learning #2

In Canada, there are ways to express opinions that claim where you are but that are not frontal, combative, or polarizing. When you have an opinion, begin it with this phrase: "In my view."

"In my view we should let this idea go and pursue another."

"In my view, it would be a good idea to revamp all our liturgies."

"The diocese should take a stand on pipelines, in my view."

Learning #3

A learning not so much about Canada as a country and a culture but about the land of Dean Peter Elliott: sometimes gestures and expressions can say much more than words. (*the smile*)

Learning #4

Again, a learning from the land of Dean Peter Elliott: it's possible to chair a meeting in which a lot gets done, people have fun, and for you as Chair to walk out of that meeting with no next steps assigned to you.

Learning #5

Yet another learning from the land of Dean Peter Elliott: timeframes on bad ideas are a help. "Yes, Bishop, go ahead with collaborating with the Archdeacons on liturgical permissions... for a period of two years, after which you would evaluate how it's going."

Learning #6

A way to gauge if you are actually doing your job as Bishop is whether you can actually surprise Peter Elliott with information. He knows everyone and everything. If you find yourself as Bishop knowing someone or something he does not know, you are either generating new work on new ground or you are out there connecting in the way that you should have been all along.

Learning #7

Canadians can and do have more fun. ✦

Archbishop Skelton delivered this list in person at the Christ Church Cathedral Wardens and Treasurers Dinner held March 12, 2019 at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club amid much laughter. Many thanks to Her Grace for sharing this with Topic readers. • Editor

Confirmation at St. Jude's Anglican Care Home

CLARE MORGAN
Chaplain at St. Jude's

Anita sits up front and watches me studiously as I lead the congregation of St. Jude's Anglican Home in a Godly Play-style reflection on today's Gospel reading: the story of the woman bent over in the synagogue, who Jesus heals. "I wonder what part of this story is most important?" I ask.

Some furrow their brows, thinking. Some slip in and out of sleep. I don't mind. Surely this is common in other parishes!

I used to let the silence spin out, waiting for someone to speak, until I learned it was more helpful to invite people by name.

I do this now. "Anita, what do you think?"

"The part where he healed her," she says quietly.

Anita has often said she is self-conscious about her capacity to be understood. I don't have trouble understanding her, and neither did Archbishop Melissa when she came to confirm Anita on August 21. Talking to Anita and others who live with degenerative illnesses, disabilities, and conditions that can affect communication between people, it's become clear to me that the problem lies in how willing someone is to listen carefully.

Over the two years that I've known Anita, I've been privileged to witness a deep, steadfast, yet active faith. What impresses me most is her honesty. She is open about her struggles and frustrations, something so often discouraged in not only churches but society in general, *particularly* for people with disabilities. There is a drive to only hear inspirational stories, to "stay positive" and avoid people who "bring us down" with their "negative energy," even though Jesus never avoided the broken-hearted or downtrodden. Anita refuses easy answers, but also exhibits humility and a great sense of humour. To me, this shines through in her love of Harry Belafonte—I can't count the number of times we've sung (or laughed) our way through the *Banana Boat Song*. Whenever we get to the 'tarantula verse', her hands come up off her lap and her fingers wiggle.

It also shone through some time ago as we celebrated Communion in the living room instead of the chapel one day due to a flu quarantine. I set up with the parishioners in a semi-circle around the rolling table we had repurposed for an altar, and Anita was to my right, behind another table which always sits at that particular spot. I asked her to act as my liturgical assistant, and she did, passing me bread and wine and water. At the end of the service, I turned to her and said, "You're my deacon for the day—will you dismiss us?" She seemed shy, but finally held out her hands and said, "Go in peace and love God, everybody—okay?" I don't think I've heard a better dismissal yet.

When Archbishop Melissa came for the confirmation, I brought her to see Anita, who had asked to speak to her. She had questions about the rite of confirmation, about some of the things she would be called to say and do as a confirmand. The resulting meeting, for me, was powerful to witness. They talked for some time about the nature of God, about one's relationship with Jesus Christ, about the unknowable mystery of the Holy Spirit, and about the problem of evil.

When I talk to people about the work that I do, often the response is some positive statement about my character—"It's so good of you to do that work!" "How brave you must be!" I am sometimes seen as a dispenser of God's love, and the people among whom I minister are seen as grateful recipients. Sometimes I chuckle at the parallels between this ministry and children's ministry—the assumption that certain members of our church family are empty vessels to be filled. But this is not true at all. The people of St. Jude's may not serve Christ in the same way as a "standard" congregation, but we are still, twice a week, gathered, transformed, and sent by God, and we have within us deeply prayerful and curious people of faith like Anita who are walking a spiritual path like any other Christian.

Anita stated many times that she wanted to join the Anglican Church for two reasons. One was that she loved seeing women in positions of leadership. The other was, as she put it, "You haven't tried to shove religion down my throat. You listen to me, and you let me figure things out for myself." This, she told me earlier, had not been her experience in her childhood parish. She chuckled as she remembered her pastor sighing, "Anita... you have too many questions!"

I told her that the Anglican Church loves questions.

As the special moment arrived in the service, I stood behind Anita to present her as a confirmand. She carefully spoke the words of examination: "With God's grace I will follow Jesus as my Saviour and Lord."



LEFT A posed photo of the archbishop, the chaplain and the confirmand. RIGHT Rev. Morgan preaching. PHOTOS Randy Murray



LEFT Anita is presented for confirmation. MIDDLE LEFT Anita is confirmed. MIDDLE RIGHT Archbishop Skelton greets Anita. RIGHT Anita receives Holy Communion. PHOTOS Randy Murray

When Archbishop Melissa laid her hands on Anita's head, I heard Anita murmur, "OH my God."

Later, I asked Anita what had happened.

"I don't know," she said. "But it was something."

A week later, Anita arrived at my office door just before Morning Prayer with two beautiful silver vases. Inside them, packed in earth, were dainty pink roses for the chapel.

We read from the first letter of John. I asked the con-

gregation what love looked like.

All of the answers were beautiful: "Like the smiles on the faces of those who love us." "Like what Jesus did on the cross." "Like God."

"Like peace," Anita said.

"I think sometimes it looks like these too," I said, and tickled the pink petals of the roses.

Anita beamed. "Yeah—like those." ✦

Safe Church Training in the Diocese of New Westminster

PHIL COLVIN

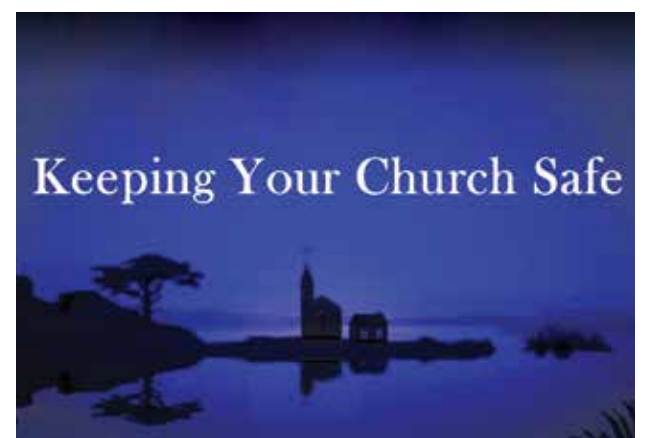
Screening in Faith Facilitator for the diocese of New Westminster & member of the Provincial Safe Church Working Group

Since the introduction of the diocesan *Screening in Faith* policy in 2010, and the subsequent revision of the *Sexual Misconduct* policy, the diocese of New Westminster has been committed to equipping clergy, lay persons and employees to be able to safeguard their parishes and to prevent misconduct in all its forms. The primary vehicle for that training was the *Sexual Misconduct Policy Workshop*, a resource adapted from work undertaken by the diocese of Toronto which made use of the video resource *Sexual Misconduct: Lean to Spot it, Learn to Stop it*.

Many members of our parishes have attended a sexual misconduct policy workshop, but as the time drew near to comprehensively renew its content it felt like there was an opportunity to perform a more substantial renewal of this important training. Many members of our diocese undertake similar training for other organizations which is delivered online and can be taken at any time. And there are many resources available to religious organizations which take the training beyond just preventing sexual misconduct and which incorporate the principles of safeguarding commonly known as *Safe Church*.

The Ecclesiastical Province of BC and Yukon has been working on this question for several years through the work of the Safe Church Working Group. That group concluded that if each of the five dioceses, the Territory of the People and Sorrento Centre pooled resources it would be feasible to adopt a more sophisticated Safe Church training system which could be used across the whole Ecclesiastical Province. The system the Working Group identified is called *Armatus Online: Learn to Protect* and it has been developed by a US company called *Praesidium*. Armatus is already used across the Episcopal Church in the United States and, more recently, it has been adapted for a Canadian context by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton.

Armatus courses are taken online by using a personal computer or tablet. The courses are interactive, engaging and contain quizzes to ensure that content has been under-



stood. Course content is tailored based on an individual's ministry position—those whose ministry involves children, youth and vulnerable persons are given additional training specific to these areas.

Following the recommendation of the Working Group, the Provincial Synod approved the adoption of the Armatus system at the end of 2018, and the system is now launching across the Ecclesiastical Province. At the time of writing, the diocese of New Westminster is working with Praesidium to implement the final piece of the system: a module which will allow our participants to review the diocesan sexual misconduct policy and to affirm their receipt, understanding and agreement of it. Once this component is completed, parishes will be receiving information of how to enroll parishioners in Safe Church training through the Screening in Faith Facilitator at the Diocesan Office.

This is an exciting development for safeguarding in the diocese of New Westminster and will enable us to continue on the course we set for ourselves when we implemented the Screening in Faith policy: creating safe, welcoming spaces in our parishes committed to the protection of all God's children. ✦

Open Church Summer at St. Paul's

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

August 16 was a muggy, overcast, late mid-summer's day in Vancouver's West End but there were sunny smiles and warm welcomes at St. Paul's, the Anglican Parish that has been located on Jervis Street near Davie for over 11 decades. As it was a summer Friday, the doors had been opened at noon by a team of four parish ambassadors to welcome visitors as part of the parish's Summer Open Church program.

The four folks present to welcome visitors were: Dorothy Barnes, David Facey-Crowther, Gail Evans and Leslie Buck. The four were happy to take some time, pose for photos and supply some information about the program.

David and Dorothy confessed that the Open Church initiative for 2019 got off to a slow start and they are wondering if the change in open times from the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of 2018 to the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of 2019 had worked the way they had hoped. As there are church services on Thursday and of course on Sunday, the plan was to spread out the opportunities for folks to visit the "little red church" on Jervis Street over the seven days of the week.

The Open Church team also staffed the August 4 Pride Sunday Iced Tea event both inside and on the grassy areas in front of the church's main entrance. The team reported that the Pride event was the best attended with hundreds of visitors dropping by for refreshments and information at the booth outside the church (there was also a St. Paul's booth located on the beach at English Bay) with many of them coming inside to take a look at the beautiful building.

The team reported greeting an average of four to five people per session with many of the visitors taking the opportunity to experience the early 20th century Gothic Revival architecture and construction and of course those who were looking for some time to seek the presence of the divine in a safe place. Dorothy said that she has heard the words "thanks for being open, I needed this today" a number of times throughout the summer.

David shared the story of a couple visiting from Holland who were moved by the many memorials in the church listing the names of those members of the parish who made the supreme sacrifice primarily in the two World Wars of the 20th century.

David said that he remembers one visitor reacting to the surroundings, saying that they were struck by the "Englishness" of the interior. A favourite anecdote for 2019, was the appearance at an Open Church session of a man who was looking around with uncommon interest. David approached him and gave him information about the parish, specifically worship times, however the visitor said that he would likely be busy as he is the priest at the neighbouring Roman Catholic church.

Dorothy said that although there are visitors from all over the world her sense is that many of the visitors are looking for a place to worship and that there are some current parishioners who have come into the parish through the Open Church program.

Both David and Leslie stressed that the most significant effect of this ministry is the fellowship and connection that has grown between the 26 members of the Open Church welcoming team. Leslie said, "The real value of this is people talking to each other, getting to know one another, making strong connections within the St. Paul's community."

Open Church at St. Paul's took place from July 3 to September 6, 2019. ✦



Lola the St. Paul's doggie, joined the parish through the Open Church program.



The four-parish ambassador/greeters — David Facey-Crowther, Dorothy Barnes, Gail Evans and Leslie Buck — at the votive candle/ikon station at the chancel entrance.

DOTAC 2019 Conference Held in Vancouver

MARGARET COLE & KATHERINE YEO

Deacons of the diocese of New Westminster



DOTAC 2019 Participants. PHOTO Ann Blane, Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC), an international and ecumenical group of deacons, diaconal ministers and deaconesses, gathered from August 14 to 20, at the University of British Columbia (UBC) on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples. The 160 in attendance came from Australia, Brazil, the Caribbean, the United States and Canada. A colourful family of Musqueam dancers welcomed us to their territory.

The theme *Respecting Covenant—Risking the Journey toward Reconciliation* was portrayed by our speakers through three lenses.

1. **Indigeneity** • Carmen Lansdown, member of the Heiltsuk First Nation, Executive Director of First United Church, Vancouver; Melanie Delva, Anglican Church of Canada, Reconciliation Animator
2. **Eco-Justice** • Albert Bicol, engineer and advocate for the environment; Laurel Dykstra, an Anglican priest, activist and scholar in the Salal + Cedar watershed discipleship community/church plant in Vancouver
3. **Global Migration** • Dan Hiebert, UBC professor, international scholar in the area of global migration; Jennifer Mpungu, Migration, Resettlement and Newcomers Program at Mennonite Central Committee in BC, who had immigrated to Canada 16 years ago from Kenya

Archdeacon John Struthers (retired) was one of two delegates to attend and subsequently invite the assembly to gather in Vancouver during the meeting in Brazil four years ago.

At the Vancouver conference, Portuguese was the second language spoken and worship services were bilingual. Most participants were met at the Vancouver airport by volunteers wearing blue baseball caps with the DOTAC logo and on departure day the group departed over a span of 12 hours. During the conference we were guided to the various events with big smiles of encouragement. On Thursday we wore black clothing and the *Thursdays in Black: Toward a World without Rape and Violence* button.

The tightly packed schedule included the aforementioned theme speakers, two workshop slots with many choices, three Bible studies, the Blanket Exercise led by Indigenous Elders, three entertaining business meetings and two sets of site visits (the



Hold Fast to What is Good (1 Thessalonians 5: 21).

PHOTO Caryn Douglas

morning on campus and afternoon off-site available by public transit). There were also opportunities on some mornings prior to breakfast to engage in spiritual exercises. We had a *Spiritual Room* and three chaplains. At most meals we ate together cafeteria style. This gave us time to mix and mingle with others, and to communicate more deeply about our areas of service outside the 20 table groups in our main meeting room.

On the Sabbath day we were invited to visit churches and tour Vancouver. This was capped off in the evening by an amazing cultural event back in our main meeting room with dancing, drumming and a vocal performance.

Archbishop Skelton brought greetings, as did the leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Rev. Paul Gehrs, Assistant to the Bishop; and the United Church of Canada represented by the Rev. Dr. Richard Bott, Moderator.

Our last day of official programming concluded with closing worship led by the Methodist Deaconesses from the Caribbean and a choir leading the singing and a soloist performing a spiritual. Worship was followed by a reception where we began our goodbyes.

Delegates from the Caribbean invited us to the 2023 event which they will be hosting.

For more information about the DOTAC please visit their website at <http://dotac.diakonia-world.org>. ✦

Fatemeh's Story

WILNA PARRY, ODNW
St. Clement's, Lynn Valley

When I first heard her story, it overwhelmed me. As time wore on, the retelling of it created a bond of determination, love, and care amongst a community of very different people, all determined to make a difference and bring about something good out of terrible circumstances.

Fatemeh grew up in a small village in Afghanistan. Her father, a mullah, believed in education and more radically, education for all, including his and his community's daughters. To his peril, he ignored repeated warnings from the Taliban and continued preaching inclusion. For this he was eventually killed and his wife and their four unmarried children (all living at home), fled Kabul for safety. By this time, Fatemeh was married and living in Vancouver, and this was the family's ultimate destination of choice. They formed a plan to escape to Turkey, via Iran and apply for refugee status.

With legal visas to Iran, Fatemeh's mother, sister and three brothers left Kabul and travelled to Iran, all the time keeping in contact with Fatemeh in Vancouver. One night in early March came a message to say they had made contact with a smuggler and were waiting in his house before escaping across the mountains into Turkey.

"Don't worry about us," they told her. "He is a good man, he is feeding us well. Soon we will be leaving his house. It is only a three hour walk across—we will easily make it." This was the final message Fatemeh had from her family. Later that night, they were part of a large group dropped off in the mountains and told to start walking. Instructions were to travel light, taking no unnecessary clothing or food for the short journey. In actual fact, the journey was to be 12–18 hours of walking through the mountains, during which, a fierce, late spring snowstorm hit.

Near the border with Turkey Nasrullah lost consciousness and was picked up by the Turkish border control. He awoke in a small clinic and was immediately taken by police to the nearby morgue to see if he could identify the bodies of some illegal migrants. To his horror, he found his mother, sister and his two brothers among the dead. Of his family, he was the only survivor. They had all died of exposure, dehydration and fatigue.

In the meantime, Fatemeh had spent a sleepless night and repeatedly tried to contact her family to see how they were getting on. When she managed to contact her brother, it was to hear the worst possible news. She flew to Turkey to be with him, managed to find him somewhere to stay and went on to Afghanistan to bury her family. She later returned to Vancouver, determined to find a way to sponsor him so they can be together.

Fatemeh displayed great courage in telling her story, over and over, in the hopes of finding someone who was in a position to help, and eventually it happened. Through a web of interconnected people, the Diocesan Refugee Unit (Sponsorship Agreement Holder) became involved. Members of St. Clement's Anglican Church in Lynn Valley agreed to act as the constituent group providing funding for the required one year of sponsorship. Providentially, Christ Church Cathedral had surplus funds after closing out their refugee account and was willing to transfer it to St. Clement's to sponsor Nasrullah.

With expert help from the Diocesan Refugee Unit, the application was made and submitted to Canadian Immigration Services at the end of 2018. My husband Dave and I accompanied Fatemeh to our MP Jonathan Wilkinson's office in an attempt to speed up the application.¹ A letter of support was written by Jonathan and attached to the file. Nasrullah was told not to get his hopes up as it may take two years or more to be approved.

Barely seven months after the application was made, we received word that Nasrullah was booked on a flight and expected to arrive in Vancouver on July 19. It was hard to believe that this could actually be true, but it was.

On a lovely summer afternoon, Fatemeh, her uncle and his family, Chris, Dave, and I gathered at YVR arrivals to await Nasrullah's arrival. When the slight young man finally walked into his sister's arms, I experienced many conflicting emotions: pain, sorrow, grief, immense relief that this young man was finally safe, and also great hope.

Woven into a tapestry of God's love and mercy for each one of us, know that we are all held together by a common humanity. Therefore, we as a community hope and pray for a new beginning, a fresh start and that these words ring true for this young man and his family:

In the dark times
Will there also be singing?
Yes, there will also be singing
About the dark times. • Bertold Brecht

Our grateful thanks for all who in these troubling times show compassion and inclusivity and above all, open-hearted and a loving welcome to all who flee unimaginable tragedy. Please pray for Fatemeh and Nasrullah as they em-

bark, together, on a path towards healing and a better future.

At the time of this writing Fatemeh's surviving sister and family remain in grave danger in Kabul. We are trying to find a way of bringing them to safety. ✠

¹ Jonathan Wilkinson PC MP was elected to represent the riding of North Vancouver in the House of Commons of Canada in the 2015 federal election. He is the current Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard.



Nasrullah and Fatemeh. PHOTO Submitted



Family Group and North Vancouver support folks. PHOTO Submitted

Celebrating Our Connections with Indigenous Peoples

SHEILA BARKER

On behalf of the Truth & Reconciliation Group at All Saints' Mission

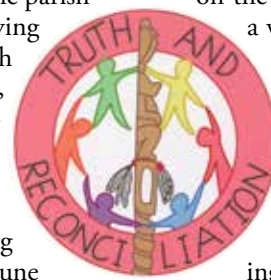
In February this year I was excited to attend my first meeting with the Truth and Reconciliation Group at All Saints' Mission. I knew everyone, but really only by name. As small nuggets of personal information dropped into the discussion, I realized that everyone had a special reason for belonging to the group. I asked if we could share those reasons. What emerged were moving accounts of diverse personal connections with Indigenous people. Our group included an adoptive parent of a Cree baby, a foster mother to Indigenous children, one who grew up with an adopted Cree sibling, and parents-in-law of First Nations and Métis men and women, and thereby grandparents to their children. Our two members who are First Nations and Métis elders were not present that day.

This experience of sharing made us think that perhaps more people at All Saints' probably have personal connections with Indigenous people and that finding a way to acknowledge these connections could be a helpful part of the Truth and Reconciliation process. The idea emerged for a *Tree of Connections*, where members of the parish could hang paper leaves and flowers displaying written information about relationships with Indigenous people through family, friendship, understanding or prayer. We felt it was important to have a real tree, but not to sacrifice a living one, and a beautifully shaped branch was found and "planted" in a pot and placed at the front of the church for several weeks ending on the National Indigenous Sunday of Prayer, June

21. Next to the tree was a small table with an explanation of the project, baskets of green and yellow leaves and pink "dogwood" flowers made of thin cardboard and strung with natural wool. The green leaves were for ongoing connections, the yellow for past connections and the flowers for prayers. All Saints' members were invited to write their connections and prayers. They were given the option to participate anonymously if they so wished.

For several weeks the project was explained in pew bulletins, and on the first four Sundays that the project was in process members of the Truth and Reconciliation group took turns speaking about their own connections with Indigenous people. Their stories were powerful and, in some cases, costly to share, but the congregation was enriched and challenged by these shared stories. Enthusiasm for the sharing on the tree grew steadily with the end result a beautiful reminder of how many connections members of All Saints' have with Indigenous people.

The tree occupied a special place of pride in our displays on the National Indigenous Sunday of Prayer. It was a way to express our love and our unity with the Indigenous members of our church and community. We pray that it will not just be a "paper exercise," but that the Spirit will show us how we as individuals and as the church can build on those connections in practical ways. We would like to encourage other congregations to consider similar projects as part of the ongoing healing process of Truth and Reconciliation. ✠



Note: The Truth and Reconciliation logo was recently designed and adopted by the group. It puts communication at the centre with a drawing of the talking stick presented to Jim Wilson, one of our members.



LEFT Some of the group members (left to right): Sheila Barker, Molly Hawkins, Jan Openshaw, Jim Wilson, and Susan Truman around the *Tree of Connections*. PHOTO Philip Barker RIGHT Elder Samantha Green and parishioner Marilyn Keeler adding their contributions to the tree. PHOTO Donna Kennedy





Course participants (guests) and staff do the actions to the song *Peace Before Us* at the Closing Eucharist. PHOTO Jane Dittrich



James and his great-grandfather enjoying s'mores and hot chocolate together at the beach campfire. PHOTO Jane Dittrich

Sorrento Centre Week Richly Represented by the Diocese of New Westminster

The Week of July 21 – 27

JANE DITTRICH

Diocesan Communications Correspondent, Christ Church Cathedral

The Rev. Canon Herbert O'Driscoll and the Rev. Canon Richard LeSueur led a course titled *Dawn: Bound for Emmaus – Contemporary signs of resurrection for a pilgrim church*. Both of these well-known theological scholars have led numerous Sorrento Centre summer courses together. They have also (both together and singularly) led international pilgrimages as well as serving together in parish ministry in the diocese of Calgary. During the week, it was announced that Canon LeSueur has been appointed interim priest-in-charge of Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral. The archbishop's appointment of Canon LeSueur will commence October 22, approximately a month following the retirement of the Cathedral's

Dean and Rector, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott. The Rev. Kelly Duncan, Rector of St. George's, Fort Langley and Regional Dean of Golden Ears deanery with the Rev. David Taylor, Rector of St. Dunstan's, Aldergrove served as worship leaders for the week. Worship included, morning chapel services, outdoor evening worship and the closing Eucharist. These two priests were assisted through the week by the Rev. Andrew Halladay, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Langley, and by deacon, the Rev. Karen Saunders of St. George's, Fort Langley. During the week, Rev. Taylor also co-led a course with his co-director at the St. Dunstan's Centre for Spiritual Formation, Lorie Martin titled *Celtic Treasures: Exploring Celtic Spirituality*.

There were over 170 people on site for the week, including a huge number of children who enthusiastically enjoyed the Centre's children's programming presented and facilitated by the summer staff. Weekly activities included: campfire/singalong, variety night, the water fight and the weekly dance, thus truly keeping Sorrento Centre

steadfast in its five+ decades history of "from generation to generation."

Sorrento Centre is located in BC's interior in the diocese of Kootenay on Shuswap Lake near the town of Chase, BC. Please visit the Centre's website for more information at sorrento-centre.bc.ca. ✚

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



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LEFT Canon Herbert O'Driscoll and Canon Richard LeSueur discuss their course material in the meeting room of Caritas (the main gathering place). RIGHT Staff and guests enjoying the dance in Kekuli, the Centre's outdoor covered amphitheatre. They are doing the actions to *Rock the Boat*. PHOTOS Jane Dittrich



Campfire night at the beach. Returning summer staff members Matthew Stephens (Matthew is the son of Rev. John Stephens of St. John's, Shaughnessy) and Sam Cruickshank (grandson of the late Bishop Jim Cruickshank) help to lead the sing-a-long. PHOTO Jane Dittrich



Meet Reverend Marnie Peterson, New Member of Council of General Synod

The Rev. Marnie Peterson, Pastor to the St. Brigid and Maundy Café communities at Christ Church Cathedral and member of General Synod for the diocese of New Westminster has now taken on a new responsibility as member of the Council of General Synod (CoGS). Rev. Peterson was elected to CoGS during General Synod 2019 (GS2019) held in Vancouver July 10 to 16, 2019. CoGS is the “Synod—Between Synods,” the governing body of the Anglican Church of Canada. In recent years CoGS members from our diocese have included: now-Bishop Lynne McNaughton, Melanie Delva and the Very Rev. Peter Elliott.

Many thanks to Marnie for taking the time to answer the following questions, helping folks in the diocese get to know her better and sharing some information about becoming a member of this extremely important ministry group in the Anglican Church of Canada. We hope that this will be the first of many connections that diocesan communications will make with Marnie and subsequently share in print and online with the diocese during her term.

Q. Please share with *Topic* readers a little bit about your background, your ministry experience and education

A. I graduated from the Vancouver School of Theology in 2003, and have been in the diocese of New Westminster for the whole of my ministry. I’ve had the privilege of working in a variety of roles in and around the diocese including: interim ministry, congregational consultant, Director of the Diocesan School for Parish Development and as a trainer in the program in the Episcopal Dioceses of Olympia and Northern California, Assistant to the Rector at Christ Church Cathedral and now as the priest to St. Brigid’s and pastor to the Maundy Café.

Q. Was this your first time as a General Synod Member?

A. Yes.

Q. In 100 words or less what was it like being a Member of General Synod (GS)?

A. Intense. I was excited to be there. I love process and organizational development stuff and I am a church geek. But it was hard work. The days at GS are long and mixed with information sharing and decision making. Being in a room filled with people who also care deeply about the church but who do not all agree, and then trying to work all that out is hard work.

Q. What surprised you most about the General Synod experience?

A. I’m not sure I was surprised by much. I loved meeting people from around our national church. I loved my Bible



The Rev. Marnie Peterson. PHOTO Jennifer Ewing

study group and was so grateful for them throughout the week.

Q. What do you think were the most substantial accomplishments of GS2019, and in your opinion what is the future of those accomplishments?

A. I think that all of the work and motions to support a self-determining Indigenous church were huge and I am really grateful that I was able to be in the room for that.

I think that the support for our church to be in conversation and relationship with the Muslim community was great, and the motion to replace the prayer for the conversion of Jews was excellent.

Of course, the failure to pass the amendment to the marriage canon was substantial, and frankly devastating. We have a lot of work to do to recover from that.

Q. How did you come to decide to run for election to CoGS?

A. Because I am a church geek. But also, because I am tired of the narrative that the church is dying. We are not what we used to be, for sure, but I also see hope and possibilities for our church. As someone who helped to plant

a brand-new congregation that is growing and made up of people who were not Anglicans before, I bring a unique perspective about what is possible for us. I want to be in on the conversations of what is possible.

Q. Prior to making the decision to run, what was your concept of CoGS?

A. That it is a lot of work. I’m pretty sure I’m right about that.

Q. Have you been given the meeting schedule for the next three years? Are most of the meetings in person or online?

A. I do have the schedule. I know that there is a plan to have meetings online, but I’m not sure which ones yet. It just makes sense though, what with the cost both economically and environmentally to reduce the amount of face to face meetings if we have the technology to support it.

Q. Have you thought about sub-committees or working groups that you may wish to join? What will you bring to this national decision-making body?

A. I have not figured that out yet. Because this is my first year, I think I should just pay attention and see where my skills can best be used.

Q. How do you see your ministry at Christ Church Cathedral connecting with your new role as a CoGS member?

It is my work with St. Brigid that has changed what I think is possible for us as a church and that work is directly supported by Christ Church Cathedral.

Q. Are you concerned about the time that a CoGS member must commit, given your busy family and ministry life?

A. Sure. It’s a lot. It helps that I’m 80% at the Cathedral, which leaves a bit of time and already forces me to pay attention to my calendar. We’ll see how it goes.

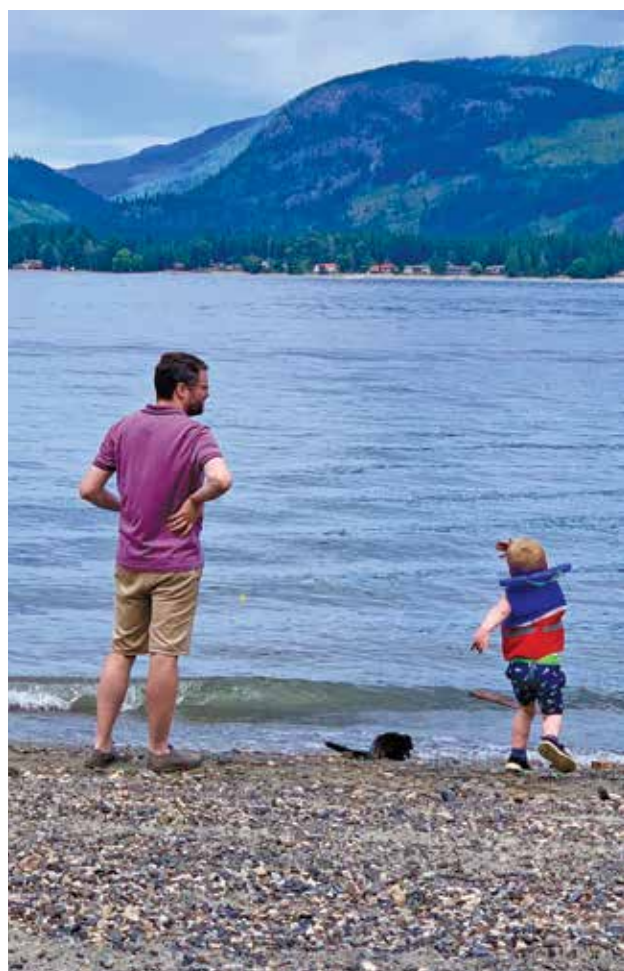
Q. Is there a piece of Scripture that comes to mind as you contemplate your new role as a member of CoGS?

A. I keep thinking about the story in Matthew, chapter 15 where Jesus interacts with the Canaanite woman—it’s not Jesus’ best moment at first. But he changes his mind in the end and he attends to her. I just keep thinking about what is possible and that we do not have to stay with how things have always been, all of the time.

I think we showed that in some ways with the movement at this General Synod, we definitely made some new decisions which is great, including the election of our first female primate and the other motions which I mentioned above. And we can do more. And it’s the church, so we probably won’t change our minds as quickly as Jesus did. ✠

Sorrento Centre Week Richly Represented by the Diocese of New Westminster

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8



LEFT Rev. David Taylor of St. Dunstan's, Aldergrove and his youngest son Logan enjoy skipping rocks at the Centre's beach.

MIDDLE TOP Sorrento Centre summer staff lifeguards — Santi and Miriam — keep a careful watch over the beach and all of the swimmers enjoying Shuswap Lake. Miriam Jang is the daughter of the Ven. Stephanie Shepard, priest-in-charge at St. Faith, Vancouver and Archdeacon of Granville, and Christ Church Cathedral chorister, Byron Jang.

RIGHT TOP Rev. Karen Saunders, Deacon of the Table, with Celebrant, Rev. Kelly Duncan during Closing Eucharist.

BOTTOM Course leaders of the week Rev. David Taylor, Canon Richard LeSueur and Canon Herbert O'Driscoll receive gifts of thanks from Sorrento Centre's Executive Director, Rev. Michael Shapcott.

PHOTOS Jane Dittrich



The LAC executive meeting in the Trendell Lounge at the Synod Office, March 9, 2019. PHOTO Randy Murray



Charlotte French, ODNW. PHOTO Randy Murray



Pat Bolton, Marge Lemire and Sharon Grove at the March 9 meeting. PHOTO Randy Murray



Susanne Stockdill, ODNW. PHOTO Randy Murray



Jane Osler, ODNW. PHOTO Randy Murray

General Synod Held in Vancouver for the First Time Since 1965

An Interview with General Synod 2019 Local Arrangement Committee Executive Members

A huge component of the success of General Synod 2019, *I Have Called You By Name* held at the Sheraton Wall Centre and Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver from July 10 to 16, involved the cheerful, helpful presence of the blue shirted volunteers assembled by the gs2019 Local Arrangements Committee (LAC). The LAC was co-chaired by Charlotte French, ODNW of St. Philip, Dunbar and Susanne Stockdill, ODNW of St. Catherine, Capilano with staff support from the Executive Archdeacon of the diocese (himself a gs2019 member), the Ven. Douglas Fenton.

Charlotte, Susanne and LAC Coordinator of Volunteers, Sharon Grove, Parish Administrator and parishioner at Holy Trinity, Vancouver (HTV) were good enough to answer a few questions in order to give *Topic* readers some more scope on this significant event held in our diocese.

Q. When was the LAC assembled and how much time was there between the organizing of the executive of the LAC and the first volunteers coming on board?

A. We began receiving emails expressing interest in volunteering in the summer of 2018. The lead volunteers for the different areas first met together on February 2, 2019, although planning had begun in the spring of 2018, for the closing banquet, opening reception, and local transportation.

Q. The LAC was divided up into sections, what were the sections and who were the principal organizers of each section?

A. The sections and organizers were: Local Arrangements Coordinators (Co-Chairs), Susanne Stockdill and Charlotte French; Transportation Coordinator, Greg Kennelly; Volunteer Coordinator, Sharon Grove; Opening Reception Coordinators, Thomas Roach and Jane Osler; Closing Banquet Coordinators, Sarah Burns and Marg Lemire (Sarah looked after most of the preparations but when she had a significant health issue a month before, Marg filled in during General Synod); Registration and Information Desk Coordinators, Andrea Gailus and Carol Cook; Parish Sunday Visit Program Coordinators, Terryn Nauman, Pamela McElheran, and Steve Bailey; Delegate Bag Contributions Coordinators, Marg Lemire and Pat Bolton; and Meal Coordinator, Rev. Lizz Lindsay.

Q. How many volunteers eventually enrolled, and what was the process? How did the majority of them signify their intent to be involved and ultimately participated in the LAC's ministry?

A. 63 general volunteers (not including the coordinators) plus the 15 on the executive. Most of the general volunteers contacted us through the forms on the LAC webpage located on the diocesan website or through the General Synod office (Toronto). Some contacted an area lead directly if they were aware of the specific ministry, and a few were asked because they had a specific skill or interest that was needed.

The majority of volunteers were from the lower mainland or Sunshine Coast, but we did have a volunteer who came all the way from Nova Scotia. There were folks from different parts of BC, including the Kootenays and Vancouver Island.

Q. Were there regularly scheduled shifts? Who did the scheduling?

A. There were regularly scheduled daily shifts for routine items like meals, plenary sessions, registration/information, etc. and there were special shifts for the special events such as the receptions and closing banquet—more than 260 shifts in total. The schedule and volunteer needs were developed in conjunction with the General Synod Office and the Chair of the LAC for the previous General Synod to understand their needs and experience.

Sharon Grove was tasked with matching the general

volunteers to the openings and various requirements for and of GS2019. This was a tricky and challenging job as it was necessary to consider individual requests, travel considerations and more while still meeting the needs of the event.

Q. Please give our readers a little bit of background on the airport pick-up and drop-off process?

A. The transportation team was led by Greg Kennelly, ODNW, a parishioner at Holy Trinity, New Westminster and a current member of Diocesan Council.

Airport transportation was done by using the transport services of a Vancouver event planning and production company, *JPdL*. They did a great job with having the needed transportation available to meet all the flights. LAC also had volunteers to greet the General Synod delegates as they arrived at the airport on July 9 and help direct them to the transportation company representatives and/or the next bus or van. We had wonderful feedback from delegates and guests about how helpful it was to have the volunteers in their blue shirts at the airport and see a friendly face from the moment they arrived. These volunteers were also instrumental when it came to other tasks like helping to track down a misplaced cell phone. The airport volunteers did a wonderful job of working with the transportation company and making sure that everyone was accounted for—no one missed a bus or van when they arrived.

There were a number of volunteers at the hotel on July 17 to see participants off again and wish them safe travels. Starting at 4am and continuing until 9pm, someone from LAC was there for the departing participants.

Q. What was the dynamic like between the LAC and the Synod Organizing Committee?

A. It was the first time in three General Synods (six years or nine years depending how you count) that the General Synod had been outside of Ontario. Since none of us on the LAC executive had attended a General Synod, we had a lot of questions. We really appreciated the support, experience, and wisdom of Laura Walton who chaired the LAC for the previous two General Synods. Her insights and understanding of the dynamics of General Synod and advice on what worked and didn't in the past was invaluable.

We also had great support from Shannon Cottrell at the General Synod Office and two event planning professionals, Heidi Wilkers and Angela Chorney. General Synod staff make most of the high-level arrangements such as picking the location, setting the agenda, daily meals, costs, etc. within which the LAC arrangements must fit.

LAC executive members were able to join the General Planning meetings by phone or Zoom (video conference software that enables a group of people to meet electronically and be visible to each other on digital devices) when they were in Toronto and in person during a meeting in Vancouver. The in-person meeting particularly helped to establish relationships and clarify some needs and expectations for both groups.

Although the three-hour time difference always creates a communication challenge, by the time we were two months out from the start of General Synod there was almost daily email and communication between General Synod staff and LAC Chairs. There was also frequent communication in the last month between the coordinators of the Parish Visit Program and the General Synod staff ensuring that all of the delegates and guests were matched to a parish for Sunday services.

Q. During the actually plenary meeting times at the Sheraton Wall Centre, how many volunteers were onsite, and perhaps share some typical requests and comments that volunteers heard from delegates?



LEFT At the Opening Eucharist, members of Kwhlil Gibaygum Nisga'a Dancers conclude the first of two songs with feathers. RIGHT At the Opening Eucharist blue shirted volunteers are on hand to assist before, during and after the liturgy. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Rev. Juanita Clark, deacon at St. John's, North Vancouver proclaims the Gospel at the 652019 Opening Eucharist. PHOTO Randy Murray



A. During each plenary session there were between eight and fifteen general volunteers plus Sharon coordinating volunteers and the volunteer lounge and at least one of Susanne and/or Charlotte on duty. This was made up of:

- Two to three people on the registration/information desk
- Two to three people as hosts in the displayers area and main foyer of the hotel
- One working to handout or take in translation headsets
- Three to six people on the doors of the plenary hall (six on the first day or two and three for most of the subsequent days except when we expected it to be busier with observers—for example the Friday night vote on the amendment to the Marriage Canon XXI)

There were also four to five volunteers at each mealtime checking lanyards, answering questions and helping with special diets.

We had an amazingly enthusiastic group of volunteers who were very interested in their role and very keen to be helpful.

Most of the questions at the plenary hall were related to public viewing. There was a public gallery but those attending had to register in order to enter the gallery. This could be done onsite at the Information Desk just outside the Plenary Hall. This issue became more challenging during the discussion of the Marriage Canon as we were concerned that there wouldn't be enough seats for everyone who wished to attend. Additional seats were added, and we were able to seat everyone.

Other questions related to translation services (there were a number of translators for the Indigenous delegates); and clarification about the schedule and location of upcoming events (such as the Primatial Election and Sunday worship); location of the Chapel and washrooms.

For the Registration/Information Desk

- A lot of questions about the location of meetings and committee rooms—especially after a hot water pipe burst in the south tower adjacent to the rooms originally allocated for the Chapel, Pensions Office, etc. The poor chaplains had a real challenge the day the hot water flooded in and they had to gather their kneelers, icons, candles, etc. in a great rush to get out of the room before anything was damaged
- Questions about parish visits—Sunday, July 14—in advance of the visits
- General questions about finding things at the hotel or in the neighbourhood



LEFT The preacher for the Opening Eucharist, Archbishop Mark MacDonald. RIGHT The Rt. Rev. Lynne McNaughton preaching at the Eucharist prior to the Primatial Election on July 13. PHOTO Randy Murray



Praying to one of the four directions during the Intercession at the Primatial Election Eucharist. PHOTO Randy Murray

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Professional staff (also in blue t-shirts) from Rolf Benson LLP were scrutineers at the Primatial Election. PHOTO Randy Murray



Archivist for the diocese of New Westminster and the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon, Marché Riley staffs the archives table at the Sheraton Wall Centre under the watchful eye of Anglican Church of Canada archivist, Laurel Parsons. PHOTO Randy Murray



Worthy of a reprint: Folks on July 14 during Parish Visit Sunday. Front row: Susanne Stockdill, ODNW; and Terryn Nauman. Back row: Charlotte French, ODNW; Rev. Steve Bailey; Sharon Grove; and Pamela McElheran. PHOTO Courtesy of Pamela McElheran



Delegates at worship (with red lanyards) at Holy Trinity, Vancouver (HTV) during the Parish Visit Sunday. PHOTO Karl Przywala

General Synod Held in Vancouver for the First Time Since 1965

An Interview with General Synod 2019 Local Arrangement Committee Executive Members

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

- *Inquiries about mealtimes, reception times, generally double checking the agenda*
- *Observer registration was a big function, especially in advance of the Marriage Cannon vote and Primatial Election. There were about 130 observers registered in the end—a lot more than expected*

Hosts/Greeters

Many of the same questions as the registration desk focused on where things were and how they could get something solved. Hosts really enjoyed getting to know some of the delegates, learning about where they were from and hearing their stories. For those who were there on multiple days they had the opportunity to get to know a few of the delegates. Charlotte met a gentleman from Nunavut and was able to hear some of the story of his family and leaving his village for school.

A couple of volunteers were very interested in meeting presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael Curry, and he happened to be in the hotel lobby when they arrived. They were able to get a selfie!

On the first day there was an alternate youth delegate who was informed just a couple of days before General Synod began that he would need to substitute for the original delegate who had become ill. He had challenges from the start with his flights not working out, his hotel room not being available when he arrived, his registration wasn't ready when he arrived so there was confusion about his meals. Many kudos to the volunteers who went about working with the General Synod staff to make sure that everything they could do for him was done and quickly got his registration sorted out and his meal vouchers in his hands.

Q. How was the food organized? Was it in concert with the Sheraton Food and Beverage staff? How did that work?

A. The General Synod Planning Committee was responsible for the food. The professional event planner made those arrangements with the Sheraton for all of the daily meals.

The LAC provided volunteers to monitor badges and vouchers for eligibility to participate in the daily meals and Lizz and Bette worked with anyone with dietary restrictions to ensure that they found their special meal or were able to identify foods on the buffet that were right for them.

The Sheraton did provide staff to help with special meal requirements but we were thanked again and again from the hotel staff and catering managers for having Lizz and Bette there to help as they quickly knew each of the individuals who needed adjusted diets and were able to help them immediately based on each days buffet.

Q. *Topic* printed a brief article about the Parish Visit Sunday in the September issue on page 3, is there anything you would like to add to that article?

A. The routine for the vehicle pickups was outstanding. The Parish Visit Team (Terryn, Steve and Pamela) coordinated departure times with delegates assigned prior to arrival (church and departure time was on the back of the delegates badges). Volunteers were assigned a parish; they gathered those delegates for the assigned departure time and escorted them to the pick-up zone where their transport was waiting. Holy Trinity Cathedral gathered a group to travel via Skytrain, Rev. Peter Smyth, the Senior Port Chaplain transported a group to Holy Trinity, Vancouver via the Mission to Seafarers van, St. Mary's, Kerrisdale hired a bus, groups walked to St. Paul's and Christ Church Cathedral. In all 26 parishes participated. Upon their return to the hotel, GS2019 delegates indicated that they were very impressed

with the transport, warm welcomes and wonderful food provided with smiles and enthusiasm at all the parishes.

Q. What were the greatest challenges at GS2019 and how were they overcome?

A. This was a very complicated event which included many events and some unexpected shifting of plans. In collaboration with the General Synod staff we found ways to solve problems so that the delegates were able to focus on the work that needed to be done. This included adding additional seats to the public gallery for the discussion on the Marriage Cannon as well as managing the line outside the Plenary Hall. Last minute changes to the Sunday visits all worked out well as everyone was very flexible.

There was a flood in the hotel on the first day that required moving some meeting rooms and the chapel, but the change went quite smoothly. The other event that comes to mind was the reception on the 34th floor of the South Tower. It is a beautiful space with a 360-degree view of Vancouver. Unfortunately, it has a maximum capacity of 175 but there were approximately 350 participants and guests. A number of volunteers including some LAC executive members kept a close count of those at the reception and held others in the lobby until space was available. It was a little bit hectic but, in the end, it seemed to have worked out as everyone was able to attend.

Q. The Opening Reception and the Closing Banquet are major events. Please share some reflections on these GS2019 highlights?

A. The Opening Reception and Closing Banquet both went very well. The Opening Reception was coordinated by Thomas Roach, ODNW and Jane Osler, ODNW of Christ Church Cathedral with the help of a team of volunteers from the Cathedral. There were some additional General Synod volunteers who coordinated the transportation back to the Sheraton after the reception.

There was a seamless transition from the opening worship to the reception which featured sparkling wine and sparkling water served in the sanctuary along with hors d'oeuvres while tea, coffee and fruit trays were available in the reception room downstairs.

The Closing Banquet was completely sold out. There was a waitlist until the very last day of people who wanted tickets to attend. It went very, well. The location at the Vancouver Convention Centre provided a wonderful view of the harbour and North Shore mountains. The weather was perfect for attendees to be able to take advantage of the outside deck area (which remained full after a week of being in plenary sessions in the hotel ballroom).

The table centre pieces continued the theme of the art project materials (see page 17 of this issue of *Topic* for Dawna Wall's reflection on the GS2019 art ministry) with paper weavings laid on the table and small potted cedar trees at the centre. One person at each table was able to take home the small cedar tree and we heard about people packing them in their suitcases to take them home and plant them.

The staff at the Vancouver Convention Centre were wonderful, even coordinating a child's meal at the very last moment for a guest. The food was excellent. We received many complements on the meals. *The Milleraires* big band played before, during and after dinner and brought along two pairs of swing dancers who not only provided demonstrations but also got participants up and dancing with them.

It was unfortunate that Archbishop Skelton was unable to attend. Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster and Synod Delegate, the Ven. Douglas



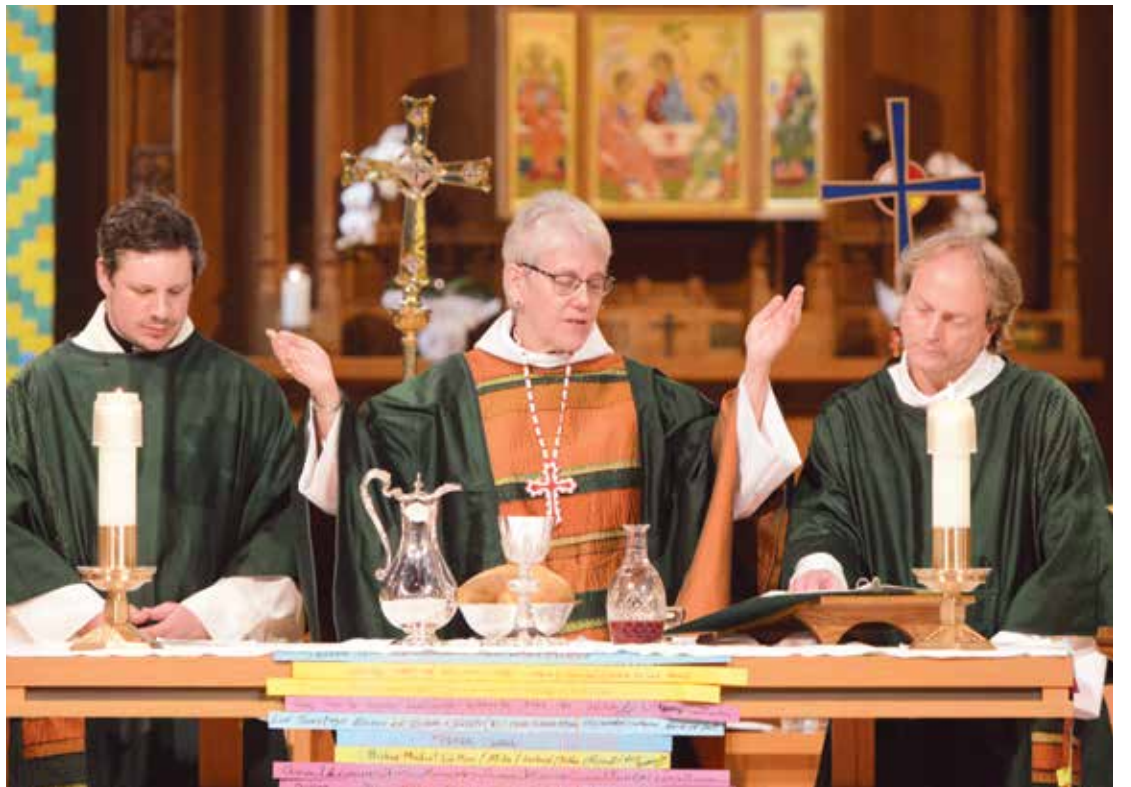
Assisting Canon Herbert O'Driscoll with his hearing aid amplifier during his book signing afternoon on July 11 at the Sheraton Wall Centre. PHOTO Randy Murray



The majority of volunteers (including LAC co-chairs and members of the executive) pose for a memorable photo on the Sheraton Wall Centre escalators. PHOTO Heidi Wilker



The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael Curry during the intercessory prayers at the Closing Eucharist, July 16. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls celebrates the Eucharist for the first time as Primate at Christ Church Cathedral, Closing Eucharist, July 16. PHOTO Randy Murray

Fenton gave a funny and heartfelt thank you. The General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Ven. Michael Thompson followed with a heartfelt thank you to Douglas and to the diocese of New Westminster for hosting the Synod.

There was a silent auction for three of the bright blue volunteer t-shirts with the Synod logo *I Have Called You By Name* that raised over \$100 for each of the three target fundraisers for General Synod—the Anglican Foundation, PWRDF, and the Anglican Healing Fund.

Q. What advice would you have for the next GS LAC?

A. The most important thing is good communication with the General Synod Office and with the event planner. Get to know everyone involved and be interested in all of the arrangements for General Synod. Even if the events or arrangements don't seem to involve the LAC, be assured that they will because local support is necessary for every component of General Synod. Get the budget sorted out and clarified early. Pray for a wonderful team of area leads like we had for GS2019.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to add and share with the readers about this experience?

A. According to Charlotte: "I didn't think that volunteering at General Synod would be such a moving and inspirational experience. But it was both.

Moving and inspiring from just watching how hard all of the delegates worked each day, how seriously they took the work but also how compassionate and respectful most everyone was with one another through some of the hardest conversations.

Meeting some wonderful people, both volunteers and attendees, and hearing their stories was also moving and inspirational. Or in seeing how individuals supported others through difficult moments. The night of the vote on Canon 21 (the Marriage Canon) there was a woman who came as an observer and brought her very calm but friendly young dog. When some of the delegates were very upset about the vote and left the Plenary Hall she came out and allowed the dog to be an emotional support pet for

them. The chaplains who were present for support at the same time, and throughout GS2019, were inspirational in their calm but present support, finding just the right way to approach each person needing their help.

And, of course, the volunteers. Coming from across the country to help out. They were amazing in their commitment and generosity of time and energy."

According to Susanne: "I would echo Charlotte's sentiments. It was more emotional than I thought it would be. I was proud to have been asked to play a role to support the work that took place. Sometimes it was difficult to remain neutral but our role was not to offer opinion but to provide support to all the delegates so they could focus on the future of our church and the part we, as Anglicans, have to play in our greater society."

According to Sharon: "The comment heard most by me was: 'Thank you, you volunteers are fabulous (wonderful, amazing), Thank you, thank you.' —I most definitely concur!" ✠

AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Summer 2019 Events at St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton •
SUBMISSION Arvin Amayag

Vacation Bible School & Urban Camping
Here are some photos submitted to diocesan communications by the Rev. Fr. Arvin Amayag of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton



LEFT An intergenerational group poses with the Pacific First Aid Instructor. RIGHT The 11 to 15 years old group proudly displays their babysitting credentials. PHOTO Submitted



The Young Aiders (some enjoying pizza) PHOTO Submitted



Lunch in the hall.

Pacific First Aid
On August 16 and 17, St. Mary's welcomed training professionals from Pacific First Aid a local company that provides First Aid training and supplies. Pacific First Aid are associated with the Red Cross. There were four specific training sessions held:

- 1. Emergency First Aid (13 years and above)
- 2. Young Aiders (6 – 8 years old)
- 3. Stay Safe (9 – 13 years old)
- 4. Babysitting (11 – 15 years old) ✦



LEFT Not everyone is playing chess on the blanket at the "campsite." RIGHT A welcoming fire in the grill lends some authenticity.



An urban campsite in the Sapperton neighbourhood.

• Celebration of a New Ministry in Squamish •
SUBMISSION Trevor Mills

The evening of July 23, 2019 marked another step in the story of St. John the Divine, Squamish with the Celebration of a New Ministry, the induction by Archbishop Melissa Skelton of the Rev. Cameron Gutjahr as rector. Archbishop Skelton presided at the Eucharist.

The liturgy began with a warm welcome and song from Tsawasyia Spukwus of the Squamish First Nation.

Guest preacher was the Rev. Dr. Canon Todd Townshend who is Dean of Theology at Huron University where Rev. Gutjahr studied.

During the Covenant in Ministry, Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster, the Ven. Douglas Fenton led the formal reading of oaths and subscriptions and the signing of official paperwork.

Next was the Presentation of the Symbols of Ministry. Rev. Gutjahr was presented with a Bible, prayer books, vessel of water, holy oil, bread and wine, copy of the Canons of the diocese, and the keys to the church. The symbols were presented by the church wardens and members of the congregation.

After the service, light refreshments and a cake were served in the church hall.

The members of St. John's would like to thank Archbishop Melissa Skelton for being in attendance and officiating at the liturgy so soon after her stay in hospital and for all the visiting clergy and deacons and members of other faith communities in Squamish contributing to the support of this new shared ministry.

Thanks to Ian Brown for assembling the choir and arranging rehearsals. And many thanks to those who did such a great job of providing and serving the refreshments after the service.

Many thanks to Trevor Mills for the photos. ✦





ANGELICAN
FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**2020 Request for Proposals to
address the Crisis of Climate Change**

20 grants up to \$2,500 each available.
Submission deadline is April 1, 2020.
anglicanfoundation.org/rfp

AROUND THE DIOCESE

• August Garage Sale •

Congratulations to the Parish of St. John the Apostle, Port Moody for organizing and executing a successful parish event in August, traditionally the month of the year when Anglicans take time off from church activities. The Garage Sale took place the morning of August 17 with the Port Moody parish welcoming a steady stream of bargain hunters who were warmly welcomed by the parish team under the leadership of Bob and Kristin Kuhn.

Among those parishioners joining Bob and Kristin on site was former warden Terry Walton, ODNW who explained that the Garage Sale is usually held in the late spring but due to a variety of factors, that wasn't possible... so the August date was chosen.

The St. John's Garage Sale is a comprehensive marketplace with a huge variety of items available for viewing in five different rooms in two separate neighbouring buildings on the parish site. Everything from fine linens to tools, luggage, patio furniture, clothing, glassware, appliances, lighting,



LEFT Signage at one of the entrances. MIDDLE Co-Chair Bob Kuhn prepares to price some items. RIGHT Maureen Simons, ODNW on the right sells some "new to you" clothing. PHOTOS Randy Murray

toys, games, bicycles, books, DVDs, CDs and original art were available. In fact, for the 2019 version of the Sale the use of the word "august" as an adjective would be quite appropriate.

And of course, it wouldn't be an Anglican parish event without refreshments, freshly made and at bargain prices. Long-time parishioner, Rosa Weisensel and current warden Ruby Ng prepared plates of ham & cheese and cucumber sandwiches for hungry shoppers. ✚



A bargain at \$5. PHOTO Randy Murray



Rosa and Ruby place the sandwiches. PHOTO Randy Murray

• A Chance Encounter in the Yukon •



PHOTO Nii K'an Kwsdins

August 22, 2019, the Missioner for Indigenous Ministries for the diocese of New Westminster, Jer Nii K'an Kwsdins (Jerry Adams) happens to be in the Yukon with his partner Linda Adams, ODNW and who do they meet? A bench of bishops.

Retiring Bishop of the diocese of Yukon, the Rt. Rev. Larry Robertson, the Bishop of the diocese of Caledonia, the Rt. Rev. David Lehmann, the Archbishop of the diocese of New Westminster and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon, the Most Rev. Melissa Skelton; with Deacon, the Rev. Eric Stroo and the aforementioned Linda Adams. The bishops were in Yukon for the Consecration and Installation of Co-adjutor Bishop-Elect Archdeacon Leslie Wheeler-Dame as Bishop of Yukon, at Christ Church Cathedral, Whitehorse on Saturday, August 24. August 23 there was a "meet and greet" party for Bishop Larry and Sheila Robertson which featured a farewell song with lyrics written by Deacon Stroo. This one is particularly good (with apologies to Paul Simon) so here it is (sung to the tune *Mrs. Robinson*):

Here's to You

And here's to you, Larry Robertson
Jesus loves your Sunday puppet show
Whoa, whoa, whoa
God bless you, please, Larry Robertson
You may leave but Wally Wolf must stay
Hey, hey, hey
Hey, hey, hey

We've come to know a little bit about
your future plans
We hear you plan to serve four different sites
What about re-tie-yer-ment do you
not understand?
Take a fishing trip or spend some time at home

And here's to you, Larry Robertson
Thirty-five years — fifty-three below
Lots of snow
Up to your knees, Larry Robertson
Come July, it mostly melts away
Hey, hey, hey
Hey, hey, hey

The provincial house thanks you more than
you'll ever know
We will miss your gentle heart and laughter
May we visit Boyle and see the
Robertson's abode

Most of all we want to always be your friends

Koo-koo-ka-choo, Larry Robertson
Jesus loves you and you know it's true
Sheila too
God bless your days, Larry Robertson
May God ever guide you on your way.
Hey, hey, hey
Hey, hey, hey ✚

Bishop Larry Robertson is well known for his puppet ministry and the puppet is Wally Wolf. • Editor

• Cycling for Seafarers 2019 •

The 2019 edition of Cycling for Seafarers took place August 24, 2019. Senior Port Chaplain, the Rev. Peter Smyth was delighted at the "larger than expected" turnout of riders tackling 15, 40 and 100 kilometre routes to raise money to help care for seafarers. For the first time the 15km ride went to the Kitsilano Coastguard Station.

As is traditional, the rides were followed by a BBQ presented by Mission staff and volunteers including the St. Michael's Multicultural congregation and their delicious contribution of Filipino lumpia.

As is also traditional, Jane Dittrich, parishioner at Christ Church Cathedral and a regular contributor to diocesan communications and *Topic* participated in the 40km ride and arranged for some great photo coverage of the event. As of this writing in late August, Jane's fundraising total is currently second overall at \$1,990. Congratulations Jane and thanks for the photos. ✚



Gwen Ingham (St. Mary's, Kerrisdale and St. Augustine's), Rev. Peter Smyth (MTS Senior Port Chaplain) and Jane Dittrich (Christ Church Cathedral) at the Mission before the start of the 40km ride. Jane was thrilled to raise \$1,990 for the Mission in bike ride pledges. PHOTO Courtesy of Jane Dittrich



LEFT 40km riders lining up at the start line. RIGHT Rev. Peter Smyth along with all of the wonderful Mission volunteers who generously prepared the lunch and snacks for the cyclists after the ride. Most of the volunteers in the photo are from St. Michael's Multicultural Church in Vancouver. PHOTOS Courtesy of Jane Dittrich



LEFT Riders at the second rest stop at Spanish Banks. RIGHT Riders enjoying time together, rest after the ride and a BBQ lunch at the Mission. PHOTOS Courtesy of Jane Dittrich



All are encouraged to submit letters, articles, reports on parish activities, opinion pieces, photos, and more for consideration as content for *Topic*.

Deadline for *Topic* Submissions
October 18 for the December issue

Please email Randy Murray at
rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca
All contributions are appreciated • Editor

• A SPOOKTACULAR Organ Recital •

SUBMISSION Michael Dirk

The annual (not-to-be-missed) Halloween Organ Recital will return for the 14th year, however for 2019 this great concert will take place at St. John's, Shaughnessy (SJS—1490 Nanton Avenue) and not at its usual location at St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church in downtown Vancouver. St. Andrew's-Wesley is undergoing substantial renovations and is not available this year. That is not a problem because SJS has recently completed an ambitious renovation and upgrade of their 4 manual Hallman organ. The Hallman was installed at SJS in 1968 and this upgrade 51 years later under the direction of Organist and Director of Music, Michael Dirk with the



LEFT Organist John Mitchell at the console at St. Andrew's-Wesley 2018. MIDDLE Organist Michael Dirk at the console at St. Andrew's-Wesley 2018. PHOTOS Submitted RIGHT Steve Miller poses beside the Hallman organ console at SJS following the installation of the new digital switching system on August 16, 2019. PHOTO Randy Murray



enthusiastic support of the rector, the Rev. John Stephens and the generosity and support of the parish has been a great success.

The primary organ technician responsible for the work is Steve Miller, who is based out of Calgary.

The recital will take place October 25, 2019 at 7:30pm and should wrap up about 9pm. Admission is by donation. ✠

Summer 2019 at St. Stephen's, West Vancouver

HILARY CLARK

St. Stephen's, West Vancouver

Music has always held an important place in the worship at St. Stephen's, West Vancouver, and this summer, it reached new heights with the attendance and superb dedicational service of choristers from Christ Church Cathedral leading the music in worship at Choral Evensong. Always well attended, this service on July 21 brought together the congregations of St. Stephen's, St. Francis-in-the-Wood, and St. Christopher's, and a number of people of other denominations. St. Stephen's Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch, not only coordinated the event with rector, Canon Jonathan Lloyd, but also accompanied the service on the organ. The compositions sung by the octet ranged from Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Herbert Whitton Sumsion, to Felix Mendelssohn.

The following homily had particular significance in that Canon Lloyd themed it on the 50th anniversary of the first humans on the moon. Here is a substantial piece of that homily.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." We know these famous words by astronaut Neil Armstrong, but did you know what astronaut Buzz Aldrin did before Neil Armstrong and later Aldrin himself stepped out on to the moon's surface?

Aldrin is a committed Christian. He had a silver chalice with him on the flight, and there was just enough gravity for him to be able to pour wine from a plastic container.

He wrote: "In the one-sixth gravity of the moon the wine curled slowly and gracefully up the side of the cup. It was interesting to think that the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the first food eaten there, were the elements of Holy Communion."

He also read from *John 15:5*: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit, for you can do nothing without me."

Before he took the bread and wine, he radioed back to NASA: "I would like to request a few moments of silence. I would like to invite each person listening in, wherever and whomever he or she may be, to contemplate for a moment the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own individual way." The crew of a previous mission—Apollo 8—had read the Creation story from Genesis during their orbit.

Three hundred microfilmed King James Versions of the Holy Bible were carried on the Apollo 14 mission, a hundred of which went down to the moon in the lunar module with astronaut Edgar Mitchell.

There's also a paper Bible still on the moon; it's on the dashboard of an abandoned lunar rover and was left there by Apollo 15 astronaut James Irwin.

In Other Summer News

At St. Stephen's, the congregation was honoured to have a re-cap of the work of the recent General Synod 2019 given by Sister Elisabeth SSJD on July 28. This was of particular relevance in that St. Stephen's congregation had welcomed several members of GS2019 to the July 14 main Sunday morning celebration of the Eucharist and to enjoy Margaret Rolfe's famous salmon lunch.

August 11 saw the afternoon presentation of a charming selection of chamber music initiated by Dr. Paetsch called *Love, Loss and Lullabies*, featuring Bess Lu on Celtic harp and Tegan Peemoeller, soprano. This was followed up on August 29 by an evening concert entitled *Love and Joy* that showcased Dr. Paetsch on piano with Tegan Peemoeller and added soprano Annika Tellenius. Composers included



Canon Lloyd, members of Cathedral Choir and Annabelle Paetsch. PHOTO John Ruddick



LEFT Canon Lloyd with Emma and Richard following the wedding in Sussex, England on August 10. It was at East Chiltington parish church, built in the early 12th Century. PHOTO Submitted RIGHT Annabelle Paetsch (piano), Tegan Peemoeller (soprano and harp), and Annika Tellenius (soprano). PHOTO John Ruddick



St. Stephens Evensong Cathedral Choir July 21 Moon Landing. PHOTO John Ruddick

Purcell, Salzedo, Colbran and Schumann. All proceeds went to support St. Stephen's.

On August 18, during rector Canon Jonathan Lloyd's absence in order to officiate at the wedding of his daughter in England, St. Stephen's was honoured to have as substitute clergy, the Rev. Canon Donald Lawton who is a member of St. John's, Squamish and also the rector at

the neighbouring parish of St. Francis-in-the-Wood, the Rev. Dr. Angus Stuart. History was made at this liturgy as both the officiating clergy and the tenor soloist are named Angus Stuart! Excellent cooperation occurred between the two, and subsequent conversation over coffee revealed that they are not related. The organist for the service was Barry Waterlow who accompanied tenor, Angus Stuart. ✠

Anglicans On Parade! Sunshine, Signs & Smiles

Vancouver Pride Parade 2019 Report

PEGGY TRENDELL-JENSEN

Deacon, St. Clement's, Lynn Valley

Christ Church Cathedral provided the springboard for local Anglicans to become involved in the Pride festival on Sunday, August 4 and get involved we did!

In tandem with then-Dean, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott and Cathedral parishioner Peter DeGroot organized this year's Anglican entry in the Pride Parade and made it known that marchers from other parishes were welcome to join in. Peter DeGroot was also the server and leader of prayers at the Cathedral's 8am Pride Service; the Feast of the Transfiguration (transferred) was celebrated, with Dean Elliott presiding and the Rev. Alisdair Smith preaching. The service began with the rainbow candelabra being lit on the altar as we offered prayers of thanks for all God's beloved children and lamentations for the harms experienced by people of diverse sexualities and gender identities.

The service was followed by an excellent breakfast supplied by Cathedral volunteers and a sign-making session in the Parish Hall, after which marchers found leisurely lunches in various places before gathering for the 1:30pm "call time" on Robson Street. Our contingent of roughly 40 people was near the very end of the parade, and thus it was all the more amazing to witness the energy and enthusiasm with which we were greeted by people who had already been standing in the hot sun for hours. As a marcher, it was remarkable to witness the variety of ages and ethnicities in the crowd—Vancouver is truly a vibrant, multi-cultural oasis.

Our Anglican contingent experienced countless moments of mutual affirmation with the parade watchers. It was powerful to witness so many faces light up when they saw us coming—when people read our signs announcing Anglican pride or Archbishop Melissa's open door to same-sex marriage, when they saw someone in a clerical collar waving at them with a smile on their face, or when they noticed one of our same-sex couples walking hand-in-

hand. Bystanders made a point of calling out greetings, clapping or waving madly in our direction, or even coming out of the crowd to offer a hug or high-five and say, "thank you."

With hate and division on display in so many headlines and in so many corners of the world, it was a welcome relief to spend a day celebrating love and acceptance. Any fatigue was well addressed by a stop at St. Paul's Open Church on the walk back to the

Cathedral, where priests and parishioners had lemonade and iced tea available to all on the boulevard.

Thank you to Peter DeGroot for organizing the parade entry, the Cathedral and its clergy who came out for the walk or supported Pride Weekend and the SpiritPride conference in many other ways, and to all who took time from their long weekend to make sure the message *Love Above All* was heard on the streets of Vancouver. ✠



The Big Group Photo. PHOTO Alecia Greenfield



LEFT The rainbow votive candle holder used for the "Service of Light" on the altar with the event button.



RIGHT Jane Dittrich and Peter DeGroot. PHOTOS Submitted



LEFT Three Deacons with their sign — (left to right) the Reverends Alecia Greenfield, Elizabeth Mathers and Peggy Trendell-Jensen (the author). RIGHT Christ Church Cathedral Clergy and their spouses. PHOTOS Submitted



OPINION

Memories of GS2019

DAWNA WALL

Priest of the diocese of BC; Coordinating Chaplain, GS 2019

The colours of the West Coast made up the logo for the *I Have Called You by Name* theme of the 2019 General Synod. Blue, green, purple, and gold paper ribbons were offered to registrants as General Synod 2019 arrived. Delegates and visitors were invited to write on a strip of coloured paper: *what you are called, how you were called, and who you are called to be*. These statements of individuality were then woven into a communal altar cloth for the Closing Eucharist.

Weaving projects were created by General Synod Artist in Residence, Thomas Roach, to help those gathered creatively, colourfully, and prayerfully engage with the



Thomas Roach, ODNW working on the loom during the Primatial Election day, July 13, 2019. PHOTO Randy Murray

theme and each other. During the various sessions, Roach quietly wove hangings and baskets, encouraging others to join the creative process as he sat between the plenary and observers, carefully threading colours together in reassuring motions.

My memories of General Synod 2019 are coloured in the shades of the artwork created. As Coordinating Chaplain, I had the opportunity to walk the plenary floor during reports, debates, votes and Bible study. My vantage point gave me the honour of seeing the beauty of God's people, arrayed in colours of wonder, sadness, courage, possibility, shame, despair, and determina-

tion. When threatened by torrential storm clouds, somehow these tender, faithful gifts of God managed to radiate light. Their witness included tears, healing laughter, wails of outrage and were imbued with the taste of the M & M's, licorice, apples and oranges with which they nourished one another.

As chaplains zigzagged the ballroom where General Synod met, it seemed that they were an extension of Roach's vision, helping weave together the people of God. Surely goodness and mercy were also plaited into a symphony of bitter sorrow and tender hope. ✠

In Our Own Languages

LESLIE BUCK

St. Paul's, Vancouver

We can look back at the General Synod in Vancouver, GS2019 with great satisfaction, varying to some degree on one's perspective. From the perspective of the number of persons impacted, its most striking outcome was the election of a new Primate, the leading bishop of our Church. For the first time, this bishop is a woman (and was chosen from two women, not a woman and a man). Starting from more than 70 years ago with the ordination of the first woman Anglican priest, we have finally removed the last barrier standing against the full inclusion of half of our members. The eventual election of a woman primate had become almost inevitable, but it should not on that account be passed unnoticed. We have passed a very significant landmark in the history of our Church.

From the perspective of the personal distress involved in reaching its achievement, its most striking outcome was the acceptance of same-sex marriage. This was not achieved in quite the way that many had sought, but in terms of what will now happen, this barrier, too, is removed. People whose sexuality and gender identity are other than hetero-normative are now fully included within the community of the faithful, just as they are, and not as others might wish them to be. A great deal remains to be done in order to heal wounds—wounds on both sides of the debate—but these differences will gradually be resolved, just as differences concerning divorce and remarriage have become resolved and to a very large extent forgotten. In due course the present disagreements, too, will go the same way.

Its third outcome, like the second, also seeks reconciliation with those who should be accepted for who they are, and not as others might wish them to be. The document *An Apology for Spiritual Harm* rejects colonial attitudes that confused cultural difference with spiritual error. Unhappily,

we find it far too easy to regard behaviour in others that differs from ours as being at best questionable, and at worst sinful. We try to exclude their ways of living, and thus exclude them, at least until such time as they may be willing and able to conform to our way. Imposing conformity was one of the principal aims of the residential school system. *An Apology for Spiritual Harm*, like the *Apology to Survivors of the Residential Schools* delivered by Michael Peers in 1993, gives us hope that our Church may overcome those exclusions.

Narrow-mindedness with regard to culture, something that leads to exclusion, is far too prevalent among Christians. We need to remind ourselves that our Christian Faith saw its birth in a culture that was quite unlike our contemporary Western culture. In this respect, we may be thankful that the ancient Christian communities

of the Middle East are now more evident and better known to us. They show, for example, that English, whether Elizabethan or contemporary, is not the only language of liturgy, and nor for that matter is Latin or Greek. Language is a fundamental component of culture, as our attempts to reconcile with Indigenous people makes clear, and we need to apply that realisation more widely.

Pursuing this point, we may find at some future General Synod, when our disagreements over woman bishops and same-sex marriage are a distant memory and our Indigenous sisters and brothers have taken their full places in the Church, that two other resolutions passed at the recent General Synod will have assumed their full significance. These are resolutions addressing the needs to welcome new immigrants to participate in the work and worship of the Church, and to support

churches which are pre-dominantly not English in expression.

The growth of Canadian parishes based on other languages reflects the fact that the Anglican Communion as a whole is no longer an English-speaking body, and we should welcome and nurture that growth. At the same time, we need to address a situation to which we remain shamefully blind—our disregard for francophones in Canada.

This disregard dates from before confederation when political considerations led Roman Catholics to be guaranteed French-language schools. In Québec, Catholic and Protestant schoolboards became, effectively, French and English school boards. The arrangement prevailed until 1998 when linguistic school boards were established, but the linguistic-confessional confusion still appears to determine the attitude of many Canadian Anglicans.

Meanwhile, French has become an official language of Canada and simultaneous translation is almost invariably offered at meetings of all national organisations and institutions—but not at General Synod. It seems accurate to say that not one word of French was spoken during public discourse at the recent meeting here in Vancouver.

Nevertheless, things are changing. Since 1977, we have had an official French name—l'Eglise Anglicane du Canada—and the diocese of Montréal and the diocese of Québec, if not the national Church, are members of le Réseau francophone de la Communion anglicane. More has happened at a local level. I remember in the 1970s, for example, la Paroisse St-Bernard-de-Clairvaux being established in the diocese of Ottawa. Unsurprisingly, there is no francophone parish in the diocese of New Westminster, and nor is a French-language Eucharist offered anywhere in our diocese. Is it time for that to change? ✠



The outgoing primate, the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz and the newly elected primate, the Most Rev. Linda Nicholls return from the bishop's enclave at the Sheraton Wall Centre to Christ Church Cathedral for the official result of the Primatial Election on July 13, 2019. PHOTO Randy Murray

The Dark Wood

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Retired Priest of the Diocese of Calgary, former Dean of the diocese of New Westminster & Rector of Christ Church Cathedral

It is late afternoon on a midsummer day in 1939. I am ten, my brother six. There is a younger brother, but he is not yet a year old and he is back at the farmhouse, my grandfather's farm in county Kilkenny. My brother and I are in the field where my grandfather and two uncles and the hired man John Brennan are making hay on this lovely summer afternoon. Such afternoons are precious in the infinitely changeable weather patterns of Ireland.

The field stretches along the side of a wide gentle valley. Up on the ridge of the valley there is a long dark stretch of woodland. From where we are in the field the wood is only about two more fields distant. My brother and I would like to go into the wood, but we are afraid.

About three o'clock my brother and I set off back to the farmhouse. Our aunt will already have prepared tea for the men. There will be a large black kettle full of strong tea. With it there will be a sweet-smelling apple pie. Taking these from our aunt we head back to the field, looking forward of course to a helping of pie as a reward for our labour.

As we gather up the mugs and the plates John comes to us. He knows that we want to go into the wood, and he knows why we can't bring ourselves to do it. He laughs warmly and says to us, "I'll take ye into the wood when we're finished the hay."

It is now early evening. Every hour has



PHOTO Xurzon (iStock photo ID 841364976)

been used in case the weather changes. John calls to us and we go with him. Together we climb over the five-barred gates between the fields. There will be three of them before we reach the edge of the wood. As we approach the trees my brother takes John's hand. Because I am ten, I resist the urge to do the same.

In through the first line of the trees we go, aware now of the shadows, aware of the growing silence. The further in we go the nearer we stay to John. There comes a point where I too take John's hand.

The wood around us darkens. We come to a small clearing. Gently John tells us to

turn around and to look back along the way we have come.

As we do so we find ourselves looking back along the golden beams of the evening sun. The woodland path, so dark and menacing from the distant field, is now bathed in light. For a few moments John lets us look in silence, then he says very quietly, "You see lads. The wood isn't a dark place at all."

I never forgot that moment. As you can well imagine it was a lifelong gift. Only in adulthood can we express what such a moment means. In childhood there is the all-important thing, the actual experience,

burning its way into early consciousness to last a lifetime.

Even now, a lifetime later, one gropes a little for words to name the gift one was given. I think my brother and I learned two truths about life that would serve us in many different circumstances over the years. So far as I can understand that long-ago moment, we had been taught that light is stronger than darkness, and companionship assuages fear.

I have found those simple truths, given to two brothers by the kindness of a decent and sensitive man, a lifelong source of strength and courage. ✠

OPINION

Spiritual Direction Referrals in the Diocese

JESSICA SCHAAP
Missioner for Christian Formation

Do you long for dedicated time to explore your interior life? Your experience of prayer? Your current stage of life and God’s presence in it? Spiritual direction, also known as spiritual companioning, or soul friending is a longstanding practice in the Anglican tradition. It is prayerful conversation where a director listens for the movement of the Holy Spirit in a directee’s life. A director doesn’t tell you what to do but listens for how God is meeting you in your daily experiences. A director can help with developing a rhythm of life that includes prayer, reflection, and activity that strengthens your relationship with Christ.

Meeting regularly with a spiritual director has nourished the lives of clergy, monastics, and lay people for centuries. Directees usually meet for one hour once a month to talk with a director. It can be a path to more soulful, self-aware living, and more importantly, to an awareness of the workings of the Holy Spirit in and around us. There’s nothing magical or esoteric about it; it’s just honest, searching, regular conversation with no distractions. It’s conversation with someone who deeply listens and is persevering to be a disciple of Jesus



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along with you. In today’s church, spiritual directors usually have training in spiritual direction through different programs, are in a peer supervision group to develop their gifts and maintain accountability and are in direction themselves. They often have a reputation for being people of prayer and of having qualities of careful observation and discernment. They are affirmed in their communities as having a charism or gift for this ministry. They may either be lay people or ordained. They may offer direction at no cost or on a sliding scale. In this diocese, there are several active spiritual directors who are available to meet

“For the relationship of direction is to be one in which the channels of grace are opened, and the Holy Spirit is able to move freely in the Christian person, drawing her to a closer union and a greater freedom as a child of God.”
Kenneth Leech

with potential directees. Word of mouth is how many people find a good spiritual director and asking one’s clergy leader is often a first step. The Rev. Jessica Schaap, Missioner for Christian Formation, also keeps a list of directors for referrals (call 604.684.6306 ext 225). People who are interested in finding a spiritual director can contact her and she can provide you with name and contact info as well as other details such as training, fees, location, and availability. It is up to potential directees to try out and discover who might be a good fit. Often directors will offer a discernment period of 3–4 sessions to see if the relationship is a fruitful one. Mature directors do

not expect that everyone will desire their companioning. Directors generally meet in person, but some are available by telephone or video conferencing such as by Zoom or Skype. If you would like to read more about the ministry and practice of spiritual direction, here are two recommended books by Anglican writers: Margaret Guenther *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992) Kenneth Leech *Soul Friend: Spiritual Direction in the Modern World* (Morrisburg, PA: Morehouse, 2001) ♦

The Eucharist in 1 Corinthians 11:23b-24 • Part 2 This is My Body

STEPHEN BLACK
Christ Church Cathedral

“...the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’”¹ 1 Corinthians 11:23b-24

“This is my body.” People have died and killed over this seemingly innocuous statement. Enough ink has been spilled on this issue to drown an army. What did Jesus mean? Or perhaps better, what did Paul think Jesus meant? Before I get to Paul, I think it bears saying that rites such as the Eucharist are not fully determined by their origin. This rite is rooted in the New Testament, yet rites like this take on a life of their own and grow beyond what they originally were. What the Eucharist means today is the result of thousands of years of reflection and practice, including that of the New Testament, but also moving beyond it. So, what does Paul think “This is my body” means? To answer this, I want to turn aside for a moment to consider a little basic grammar. Bear with me... “This” is a demonstrative pronoun. It refers to what is called an antecedent, which is something that has previously been referred to. In English the antecedent of “this” in “this is my body” is presumably the bread, which Jesus has taken in his hands, and broken. However, in Greek, things are more complicated. In Greek, unlike English (but like French), every noun has a gender—either masculine, feminine, or neuter. Furthermore, in Greek the gender of an antecedent of a demonstrative pronoun—that which the demonstrative pronoun refers to—always matches the gender of the demonstrative pronoun. “This” in English has no gender, so this is a little difficult to understand for those who only know English. If “this” refers to the bread, as it seems to in English, the gender of “this” will be the same as the gender of “bread.” And the thing is, it isn’t! “Bread” in Greek (*artos*) is masculine and “this” (*totuto*) is neuter. This means that, surprisingly, for Paul the bread is not the body of Jesus. The same thing is true in all the other places in the New Testament where “this is my body” occurs—see *Matthew 26:26*, *Mark 14:22*, and *Luke 22:19*.

This only pertains to Greek, which means this question may not go back to Jesus, who likely spoke Aramaic. Aramaic does not have the grammatical neuter—only masculine and feminine. So, figuring out what is going on with Paul, and the other New Testament writers who wrote in Greek, may or may not help us get any closer to what Jesus might have meant. So, what does “this” refer to in the statement “this is my body” if it does not refer to the bread. The problem is that there are no other antecedents at hand. None of the nouns in *1 Corinthians 11:23-24* are neuter. If the grammatical neuter “this” does not refer to anything, then what is it doing there? The key, as I see it, is exactly that it does not refer to any-thing. It refers not to a thing but an action. “This” is not the bread as a thing—rather it is the breaking of the bread as an act. I suggest that what is going on here is metaphorical. If this was a simile it would read “this is like my body”—which is to say, my body is broken just like this bread is broken. As a metaphor, the sentence simply removes the word “like.” A simile might have been a clearer but would have lacked the poetic punch. So, the saying has the form of a metaphor, which instead of saying “this is like that” say “this is that.” So, Jesus says, “this is my body” as he tears it apart. Imagine the theatrics—Jesus rips the bread apart while he says, “This is my body!” My body is going to be ripped apart like this!¹ In context, what Paul is describing is very similar to what is known as a prophetic sign act. These were things that prophets did what when understood correctly conveyed the word of God to the people without necessarily using words (for examples see *Isaiah 20*, *Ezekiel 4*, or *Hosea 1*). Jesus, then says that the broken bread is his body, and then invites those at the table to eat—that is participate in his brokenness. So, understood this way, the bread is not so much an invitation to merely participate



PHOTO iStock

in the risen Christ, but more specifically to participate in the brokenness of Jesus. Life involves suffering. This is something that adherents of many world religions might agree on, although they might respond differently. How do we react to suffering in ourselves and in others? One typical response is the understandable desire to avert our gaze and look elsewhere. In the pursuit of happiness, suffering is seen as an obstacle to overcome, or perhaps better, ignore. The broken bread invites us towards a counter-intuitive movement that embraces suffering, not in the pathological manner of the one who seeks out self-harm and victimization, but as one who sees what is always already present. Rather than divert our gaze away from our own and others suffering, the broken bread suggests that we turn our attention towards our mutual sorrow and pain. Paul continues, “Do this in remembrance of me.” “This” here refers to the act of breaking bread, just like the earlier “this” of the “this is my body” did. This act of breaking bread is to be an act of “remembrance.” If what I have argued is correct, what is to be remembered is not the simple fact of Jesus, but the breaking of Jesus’ body at the crucifixion. The type of remembrance involved is not the mere recall of facts. It

is to participate in the thing being brought to mind. The rite Paul describes is not a solitary one that is practiced in the solitude of one’s own home—it is a collective/communal remembering. It is not merely me or you that remembers, but us—we do it together. The broken bread is the body of Christ, and this rite make us the body of Christ. Paul writes, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread (*1 Corinthians 10:17*).” While Jesus always remains other than us, there is a certain blurring of the line between us and him. The broken bread, his broken body, our broken lives—just as the bread is absorbed in our system and becomes part of us, so too do we get absorbed into Christ and become part of him, and each other—because we all partake in the one bread. Brokenness becomes an occasion for community and connection. ♦
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Part III (The Cup), of Stephen’s series on 1 Corinthians will be published in the November issue of Topic.
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¹ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 378.
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First Notions

NII K'AN KWSDINS (AKA JERRY ADAMS)

Indigenous Justice Ministry Coordinator, diocese of New Westminster; Parishioner, St. James'

Reflection on Archbishop Fred Hiltz's Apology for Spiritual Harm

I must say that General Synod was a mixture of emotions for many Anglicans across Canada, including Indigenous and non-Indigenous friends of ours. General Synod was held here in Vancouver for the first time since 1965. History was in the making for the Indigenous people of Canada.

I was especially taken to heart with then-Primate Fred Hiltz's *Apology for Spiritual Harm* to the Indigenous community. It was a lot to take in, and to understand how it will affect our Indigenous community. The legacy of residential school still has a profound impact of our community from the Elders to our children. The apology was a very sincere one from the primate.¹

The apology was not about the residential schools but about how we, the Indigenous people, did not have the power to be in control of who we were as Spiritual people, and that the dominant society was not recognizing the values of the Indigenous people. He also talked about how we had the Creator and Spiritual faith prior to the European exploitation.

He confessed the sins of "demonizing Indigenous spiritualities," belittling traditional teachings, "dismissing Indigenous spiritualities and disciplines as incompatible with the gospel of Christ," declaring the teachings of the medicine wheel to be "pagan and primitive," and "robbing your children and youth of the opportunity to know their spiritual ancestry."

The power of his speech was his sincerity, and the heart-felt apology that he offered Indigenous people was real. Archbishop Hiltz's apology came with asking support from elders and asking the churches what is needed as next steps in Reconciliation. He included the younger generation and how they want to practice their spirituality.

To quote the archbishop: "I have heard a number of elders speak of how the children and youth of this generation, and the seven to come, are in great need of the opportunity to be grounded in a spirituality that is true to their Indigenous identity. Let us



Archbishop Fred Hiltz, then-Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada offers *An Apology for Spiritual Harm* on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada. PHOTO Anglican Church of Canada, Milos Tasic

stand with the elders in encouraging the youth to lay claim to that spirituality as their right, in their pursuit of health and happiness."

There was a lot of information and powerful words in his apology, and I would encourage you all to read his apology and also the *Elders' Response to the Primate's Apology*.²

To quote from the response from the Elders:

"This is an historic week in the life and future of our Church. We did it together! We are partners in change. It was our finest moment as a Church. As a fully recognized self-determining people within the Anglican Church of Canada, the Apology is timely in reinforcing that the Church is walking side-by-side with us as we continue our spiritual journey for healing

We thank you for your courage, for your eloquent Apology and for truly listening to the compassion of our Lord's heart to accept us as your brothers and sisters with love. In our Creator's love, and peace we welcome your words of Apology. Thank you. May our Creator/God be always with us."

This is a first step, and the archbishop and the Elders recognized that the reaction will be different for individuals and communities. We still have a long way to go but the initial steps are set. Archbishop Hiltz asked

all dioceses to support the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples.

"I call the whole Church to fully endorse the Anglican Council of Indigenous People's intention to move forward with their Plan for Ministry shaped by the teachings of the elders, Gospel-based discipleship and a commitment to 'Prophetic Pastoral Care' rooted in 'wholeness and healing in Indigenous community, freedom and joy.'"

As Indigenous people, we have always asked for equality and the ability to make our own decisions, not be guided by the restrictive laws of the Indian Act. The laws told us we could not practice our spirituality or our Potlaches. This was controlling, and we did not have a sense of equality with the different church denominations.

Individual churches, and individual people in churches have recognized our contribution to Canada and to the churches. But is the first time in history that a governing body is giving us our right to govern ourselves and is pledging to walk with us to be spiritually able to include our ancestral ways as Indigenous Peoples.

So, when he said that the Anglican Church of Canada wants to work with us and recognizes our spirituality, it made (and continues to make) us feel great to be

recognized as equals. Archbishop Hiltz said:

"I confess our sin in failing to acknowledge that as First Peoples living here for thousands of years, you had a spiritual relationship with the Creator and with the Land. We did not care enough to learn how your spirituality has always infused your governance, social structures and family life."

Now we will walk together and work together and learn from each other. As the archbishop said:

"Finally, I call us to renew our commitment to our baptismal covenant, especially our vow 'to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.' In living this vow in a good way, let us embrace the Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, truth, honesty, wisdom, courage, and humility."

Then-Primate Fred Hiltz and the Elders both see our relationship that way, and we will not be a separate Indigenous breakaway from the Anglican Church.

My grandparents had me baptised and confirmed in Old Aiyansh. They would be very proud of the day that Canon XII was passed at General Synod. Their belief in God was always there for them, and such was their conviction. My spouse Linda and I had tears in our eyes when we watched the announcement on live stream.

An Elder speaking in response said:

"First, I just wanted to crawl into bed and cry myself to sleep. I wanted to cry for those who have passed on who have not had the opportunity to hear the primate's beautiful words of Apology for Spiritual Harm. I wish that they had known that their pain was not in vain. Though they rest in peace and are in perpetual Light, I can't help but rejoice for them too."

*Lukw'il Luu-aamhl goodiy!
My heart is happy! ✠*

Links to documents referred to in the article:

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/y4orn7dn>

² <https://tinyurl.com/y2z94x4x>



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