



IN THIS ISSUE

**Pet Blessings
Photo Pages**

PAGES 12 – 14

Diana Butler Bass
Visit

PAGE 18

St. Cuthbert's
Induction

PAGES 6 & 7

A Very Sacred Moment

The unveiling of the new carving at St. David & St. Paul, Powell River

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Early on in his October 20, 2015 address to a crowd of over 150 gathered in the Sycamore Commons Permaculture Garden (which is also the grounds of St. David and St. Paul Anglican Church in Powell River, BC), *Heiltsuk*

First Nation artist (and long time Powell River resident) Ivan Rosypsky said, “a couple of months ago I got a call by this crazy guy about carving a stump.” That “crazy guy” was Ron Berezan, parishioner at St. David and St. Paul and

This wonderful photo taken by photographer Christopher Hefley showing the finished work and many of those who participated in the project was framed and presented to carver Ivan Rosypsky at the unveiling and dedication. The next morning Ivan installed the photo in a local art gallery called *Base Camp* which also serves as a coffee shop and gathering place. PHOTO Christopher Hefley



also co-leader of the Sycamore Commons Permaculture Garden project, a partnership initiative with the parish since 2012, and for the last two years a recipient of funding from the diocesan flow through funding program *care + share*. The stump in question is the remainder of a 40 foot high Cypress tree that was chopped down a few years ago after the trunk began to split and rot.

Ivan is forthright about his feelings regarding churches and the Anglican church in particular as his mother and his aunts (Ivan's Aunt Vivian was present at the ceremony) are survivors of St. Michael's, Alert Bay Residential School, which was devastating for his family. Imagine how he felt when Ron told him that the stump was beside a church? However, Ivan was willing to listen and a meeting was arranged for August 6, 2015, at the garden. Present at the meeting were Ivan, Ron, the Rev. Paula Sampson (an honorary assistant priest at St. David and St. Paul who is also an adopted member of the Nisga'a First Nation), and four project volunteers. Ron said, “I knew from that moment that this had the potential to be something special. Ivan shared his family story and connection to St. Michael's; some of his trepidation about carving at an Anglican Church, but he also shared his desire to engage with us. Over the days and weeks, trust continued to grow, Ivan was welcomed warmly by the parish and was in turn very honest and open with parishioners and community members.”

At that August 6 meeting, Ivan asked everyone present to talk a bit about their vision for the project, so that he could get a sense of what he would actually carve on the stump. The Sun on top made perfect sense as a symbol of life-giving warmth and energy, particularly as it would be looking over a garden. Ivan decided that the rest of the symbols would be animal spirits: the Eagle (sky); the Killer Whale (sea); the Bear (earth/forest); and he was thinking that he would like to carve a female image to symbolize how a garden feeds, nourishes and provides for us. However, it is difficult to know what the wood surface for carving is going to be like before the bark is removed and once he'd removed the bark it was obvious that the large number of knotholes and large gaps would make it impossible to include the one larger female image that he had envisioned. Instead, Ivan carved salmon to represent sustenance and provision and there are five represented on the pole, the number of salmon species in the Pacific waters. There is a strong sense of motion in the art that Ivan created, the five salmon almost come alive as they swim upward around the holes and gaps in the pole.

There is of course another element in the carving and that is the embedded brick from St. Michael's Residential School. Ivan took his family to witness the demolition of St. Michael's this past February and they took a brick from the rubble. It was wrapped in a blanket and kept at his sister's home in the Lower Mainland. About two thirds of the way through the work Ivan came up with the idea of including the brick into the carving and a friend suggested he embed it in the middle, a visual metaphor of “interruption”. The Residential Schools had “interrupted” the flow of First Nation's culture and community in Canada. This creative decision in Ron's words, “gave such an incredible additional meaning to the power of the work.” According to Ron, “Claudia Medina (Claudia is a documentary filmmaker commissioned to produce a film about the carving

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

This is what the Cypress stump looked like in August 2012. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The carving is covered with blankets, one of the two blankets had been used to wrap and store the brick from the rubble at St. Michael's Residential School, the brick that would be used in the piece. The other had been a gift to Ivan. The blanket that had stored the brick was gifted to Sycamore Commons Permaculture Garden co-leader Ron Berezan following the ceremony. RIGHT The swimming salmon. PHOTOS Randy Murray



A Very Sacred Moment

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

process and the effect that it had on the people in the neighbourhood) was going to be in Vancouver and Ivan asked her to pick up the brick from his sister."

Ivan had a lot of support during the time it took to complete the carving. He was attended by two assistant carvers, his close friend Phil Russell and Nansi Mckay. There was a great deal of support from the parish, and the folks on Sycamore Street became involved, witnessing the work and supporting Ivan, offering food and friendship during the two months of creative work (work that was quite difficult as this was the first vertical pole carving that Ivan had ever attempted. Because the stump is live it couldn't be removed and laid horizontally, which is the usual method for pole carving).

The unveiling ceremony on October 20, 2015, began at 5 pm. As previously mentioned, the Sycamore Commons Permaculture Garden was filled with more than 150 folks

from the parish, the community and the Tla'Amin First Nation. Tla'Amin traditional elder, John Louis who works for Tla'Amin Community Health as a men's support worker had risen at 5 am that day to source cedar boughs for the dedication and spiritual cleansing ceremony. The blankets were removed from the pole and Elder John brushed the pole as a song was offered to the accompaniment of drumming. No filming or photography took place during this sacred ceremony.

There were many words said and gifts exchanged during the one-hour ceremony of unveiling and dedication. Following Ron's opening remarks and acknowledgment that the ceremony was taking place on the traditional lands of the Sliammon Nation he called event MC, Cindy Pallin and Sliammon youth representative, Devon Piele forward to blanket them and pin some money to the blankets in gratitude for their role in the event, sharing words and songs. Cindy began by presenting some biographical information about Ivan and explaining about the carved images on the pole. When she got to the St. Michael's brick she said, "a red brick from St. Michael's residential school has been placed within the carving to honour all the residential school survivors. Ivan's mum, Alice, was one of eight children in her family who along with the majority of First Nations children in Canada and all across North America were forced to attend an institution far away from siblings, parents and community. By placing this brick within the carving, it would be a gateway to educating the general public about the horrific ordeal First Nations people suffered, many of whom were severely abused: sexually, mentally emotionally and physically. Today we are here to pay homage to our ancestors who have walked before us, and we are honoured to be able to maintain the teachings, the culture and the language."

Following Cindy's introduction, John Louis came forward and said a few words before conducting the unveiling and the sacred brushing. He said, "the carving represents one of our Elders who has been revitalized, been brought back... the transformation of this tree into the beautiful

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Ivan (left) and Ron (middle) during the opening song. PHOTO Randy Murray



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



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Thank you!

Ivan's mother and his aunts are survivors of the St. Michael's Residential School, which was located in Alert Bay. The school was demolished in February 2015 and this is a brick from that school. PHOTO Cliff Caprani



The blankets removed, and the ceremony of brushing with cedar boughs completed, the new art is displayed for all to see. PHOTO Randy Murray



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

work that Ivan has put forward so that all can see and learn, and understand that you must go forward in a good way. The brick that has been put in is to remind people that we don't ever want that to happen again."

After the unveiling and brushing, the experience of hearing Ivan share from his heart about the creation of this beautiful piece of art and what it meant to him was inspiring. There was an awareness and an understanding present at Sycamore Commons that Ivan had done so much more than create a work of art, he had created a very powerful symbol of reconciliation and healing. In his address, he described the collaborative process with the various different participants and contributors and the actual mechanics involved in creating this vertical work of carving. When he explained about the barriers involved in including a female image he stressed that it was essential that women had taken part in the carving. Women and specifically aboriginal women have not been honoured in

Canada and Ivan made reference to "the highway of tears" and the tragedy of missing and murdered women. Ivan completed his address by presenting his hat to Ron in gratitude and friendship.

During the sharing of words and gifts, the Rev. Paula Sampson pointed out the irony that a Cypress tree is not indigenous to the area. Speaking to the crowd gathered she added "and so are many of us." In her role as honorary assistant priest at St. David and St. Paul she thanked Ivan for this gift. She focused on the fact that the gift has been given by someone who has had great harm done to them by the institution she represents, which is a "sobering thought," but offers an opportunity for us to ensure that the harm done never happens again. Paula presented a definition of reconciliation that was shared with her by a friend who is of the Cherokee First Nation, "Reconciliation means never having to say you're sorry... twice."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Prior to the ceremony of unveiling and dedication Ron Berezan blanketed event MC Cindy Pallin. PHOTO Randy Murray



Elder John Louie performed the ritual of brushing the carving after the blankets were removed. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The Rev. Paula Sampson, an honorary assistant priest at St. David and St. Paul is an adopted member of the Nisga'a First Nation. Paula pointed out that the carving was made from the stump of a Cypress tree, a tree that is not indigenous to this land. RIGHT The Ven. Ian MacKenzie is also an honorary priest at St. David and St. Paul and is also an adopted member of the Nisga'a First Nation. PHOTOS Randy Murray

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

compiled by Anglican Archivist Melanie Delva

50 years • 1965 Church of the Redeemer, Cloverdale adds a "new twist" for their annual parish party. The "twist?" The Men's Club planned and did the work for it. Activities included darts and archery.

35 years • 1980 Archbishop David Somerville retires.

25 years • 1990 Diocese of New Westminster moves forward with partnership agreement with Diocese of Wellington, New Zealand.

The Rev. June Maffin launches her "Clowning Ministry."

10 years • 2005 Terry Buckle is elected Archbishop and Metropolitan.





A Very Sacred Moment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

As the light of day transformed to twilight, the formal part of the event concluded with every person present spreading out, holding hands and forming a huge circle around the Sycamore Commons Garden singing the song, *We Shall Lift Each Other Up, Higher! Higher*. Following the ceremony and chili dinner in the parish hall, the Ven.

Ian MacKenzie, also an honorary assistant priest at St. David and St. Paul and like his spouse Paula, an adopted member of the Nisga'a, said that to his knowledge and in his wide experience of events in the Anglican church regarding reconciliation, nothing like the pole carving in Sycamore Commons had ever happened before. What had

been experienced that "good day" in the church grounds of an Anglican church in Powell River was "a very sacred moment."

When asked, Ron Berezan had this to say about the financial assistance received from the diocese of New Westminster, "*care + share* made it possible to undertake many exciting initiatives in the Sycamore Commons Community Permaculture project—from planting more fruit trees, holding community workshops, creating a community composting facility, installing 1000 gallon rain barrels, to building a public labyrinth and most recently, of course, the carving of a 10 foot tree stump that was left behind when the old Cypress tree needed to be taken down. On the one hand, the funds have enabled us to honour Ivan Rosypsky's work and talents but perhaps more importantly, the funds were the catalyst for a whole new set of relationships that have been established between St. David and St. Paul and the surrounding community, including our geographical neighbours, our First Nation neighbours and the land and ecology in which we live. Ivan's great gift is another instance in which we are being called to identify as church in a broader, more inclusive and more compassionate way. We are impacting the community and the community is surely impacting us as well."

Well said Ron and many thanks to you Ivan for your wonderful gift of this incredibly powerful symbol of reconciliation and healing which invites learning and understanding, and offers hope. ✚

LEFT Carver Ivan Rosypskye tells the story of transforming a "stump" into a piece of art. RIGHT Ivan presented his hat to Ron as a gesture of friendship and gratitude. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The 150 who gathered, all joined hands and sang together under the setting autumn sun. PHOTO Randy Murray



This Holy Estate

Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, Released and Under Discussion

BISHOP MELISSA SKELTON & LYNNE MCNAUGHTON

Archdeacon of Capilano; Rector, St. Clements, Lynn Valley; Member of Council of General Synod (CoGS)

On September 22, 2015, the Commission created by the Council of General Synod to carry out the requirements of resolution C003 of General Synod 2013, released its report. Resolution C003 directed the Council of General Synod to draft a proposed amendment to the national Marriage Canon (Canon XXI) that would:

- Allow the marriage of same-sex couples in the same way as opposite-sex couples.
- Provide a conscience clause so that no member of the clergy, bishop, congregation or diocese should be constrained to participate in or authorize these marriages against the dictates of their conscience.

In addition, the resolution specified that the motion should include supporting documentation that demonstrated broad consultation, that explained how any motion does not contravene the Solemn Declaration, that confirmed immunity under civil law for those who do not choose to participate in or authorize marriages between same-sex couples based on their conscience and that provided a Biblical and theological rationale for this change in teaching about marriage.

The 58-page report (plus a number of pages of appendixes) is now available on the Anglican Church of Canada's website at www.anglican.ca/wpcontent/uploads/Marriage_Canon_REPORT_15Sept22.pdf.

Also on the website is a summary of the report in a question-and-answer format as well as a study guide to assist groups and individuals in engaging the report. Thus far, both the Council of General Synod and the House of



Bishops have had a chance to hear a presentation on the report, ask questions about, and explore and discuss the report. Both bodies will also have other opportunities in the first part of 2016, to continue their discussions.

And so what will this motion mean for our diocese and for others in the Anglican Communion? At this early date, we cannot know. What we do know is that:

- All Synod delegates from our diocese along with any interested others will be invited into conversations convened by Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton, a member of the Council of General Synod and Bishop Melissa Skelton, to explore and discuss the current marriage canon and the report in preparation for General Synod in Toronto on July 7 to 13, 2016. Information about the dates and times of these

sessions will be forthcoming by the end of the year.

- Any change in doctrine (and a change in the Marriage Canon has been judged to be a change in doctrine) must pass by a two-thirds majority in all orders (laity, clergy and bishops) at General Synod. In addition, if the resolution passes in 2016, the resolution must pass again by the same majorities in 2019, in order to take effect. Our canons also specify that should the resolution pass in 2016, between 2016 and 2019, when it would come before General Synod again, the resolution must be referred to dioceses and provinces for more comprehensive discussion.
- We cannot predict what will happen with the motion at 2016 General Synod. The motion could be amended, "referred" (that is, sent to a smaller body for more work or discussion), passed, defeated or something else none of us has as yet imagined.
- We invite you to read and study the current national marriage canon (Canon XXI) and the Commission's report as we work to solidify times, anyone interested can meet to listen to each other as we explore these issues. We fully expect that across our diocese we will have differing views on the materials, but we trust that by listening to each other we will all learn more about our own and others' assumptions, perspectives and circumstances.

We ask you to pray for all General Synod delegates as we enter a time of discernment about this resolution and about the broader issue of marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada. ✚

Bishop Melissa Skelton's Christmas Message



PHOTO Bayne Stanley

*“But the angel said to them,
‘Do not be afraid, for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people:
to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
who is the Messiah, the Lord.’”*

Luke 2: 10

Few of us will ever forget the image of the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi; the young Syrian who drowned after his family had attempted to flee their war-torn country by boat. When I first heard about the photo, I had to think long and hard before looking at it, so great was my fear of admitting yet one more unforgettable, heartbreaking image into my mental gallery of pictures. Few images express the vulnerability of the poor, the oppressed and those who are refugees more than this image does.

While the images we encounter in the Christmas story do not include any image that is the equal of this disturbing photo, the images of our Christmas story do speak of a reality akin to it. Joseph and the pregnant Mary out on the road to Bethlehem; no room available to them at “the inn” or in any guest room that might accommodate them; the humble birth in the manger; the shepherds living in the open fields—all these images reflect the lives of those who are vulnerable and subject to the vagaries of politics and economics, those who live exposed to the elements in ways that the rich and powerful are not and those who find themselves on the road for reasons not of their own making.

It is into these very circumstances—into all that is vulnerable, unpredictable and risky—that God is born in the Christmas story. At its heart, then, Christmas is not about an idealized view of the world or of the lives that many of the world's peoples live. Rather, at Christmas, we once again try to comprehend that God has entered these very conditions, embracing the lives that people actually live, bringing us all this Good News, news that must make a claim on all of us.

And what are these claims? A claim that God's presence and companionship extends to every human being and

every human experience—especially to those people and circumstances we would see as bereft of God's presence. A claim that God's presence with all human beings in all circumstances makes us relatives of one another. A claim that kinship comes with both a natural impulse and an obligation to act on behalf of those who are our relations.

In our diocese this last year we have seen parishes and people acting out of these claims. We have seen a resurgence of interest from parishes and other groups in sponsoring refugees to come to Canada; we have seen new and ongoing diocesan and parish initiatives that foster deeper relationships with indigenous peoples. And we continue to see parishes that not only serve the poor, the hungry and the needy but also welcome them into their common life as relatives, as kin.

My friend Sam Lloyd tells an 18th century rabbinic tale, in which a worshiper, Ben Ezra, on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is praying for a long time in the synagogue while his impatient rabbi wonders what's keeping him there so long. Finally the rabbi asks Ben Ezra why he is taking so much time in prayer.

“I will tell you what I have been saying,” Ben Ezra says.

“To the Master of the Universe I say, ‘These are my sins and I confess them: I argue with my wife. But you know my wife. I lost patience with my children. But what parent doesn't? I cheated a little in the shop. But just a little. Among friends. How small my sins are, Master of the Universe! Now consider your sins. You dry up the sky, and our crops wither. You let the rains come before the poor man has the roof repaired. You do not stop war, and young men die. You take away the light from the eyes of a child, and he is blind. You take away loved ones, and we are left alone until we die. These are your sins, Master of the Universe, and they are very great. But I will make you a proposition: You forgive me my little sins, and I will forgive you your great ones!’ That was my proposal, Rabbi, and I ask you, was that so wrong?”

The Rabbi did not answer for a long time. “No, Ben Ezra,” he said at last, “it was not wrong. But why did you drive so small a bargain? For sins like these you could have asked God to send the Messiah. You could have asked God to redeem the world.”

We, you and I, believe that God has sent the Messiah, that God has redeemed the world. Through the birth of Jesus to a poor, vulnerable, peasant young woman we believe that God has been born into all our lives, making us all each other's kin and calling us to acts of kinship in God's name.

May you have a blessed Christmas and may you be a blessing to all your relations during this holy season. ✠

*“The people who have walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who have lived
in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.”*

Isaiah 9: 2

Dear Topic Readers

You can help communicate the Good News of the arrival of the Light of the World by passing on to friends, family, and neighbours the web location of the diocese of New Westminster's Find-a-Church pages at www.vancouver.anglican.ca/find-a-church.

There are 67 easy to access parish pages grouped in 11 deanery sections with regional location information on the entry graphics and detailed location information for each parish. Many of the parish pages will also include specific listings for Advent and Christmas worship and events, inviting everyone to participate. All are welcome!

It is our privilege to produce Topic and we are extremely grateful for our readers and the wonderful support we receive from Around the Diocese.

To you and yours the merriest of Christmas's and many blessings for 2016!

Randy Murray, *Topic* Editor and
Jennifer Ewing, *Topic* Designer





LEFT The Procession forms in the narthex. RIGHT The Rev. Paul Woehrle checks his cell phone (probably putting it on "airplane" or "vibrate") as the Opening Hymn is sung and the procession begins in the narthex. PHOTO Neale Adams



When God Calls, We Should Go Where He Asks

NEALE ADAMS

Communications Officer & Topic Editor Emeritus; Christ Church Cathedral

St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church in Delta welcomed a well-known neighboring priest as their new pastor during a colourful ceremony on Monday night, October 5.

The Rev. Paul Woehrle, who for 13 years had been the incumbent of St. David's, Tsawwassen in South Delta, was presented the keys to his new posting at the Anglican parish in North Delta that serves that community and nearby central Surrey.

Bishop Melissa Skelton presided at the installation Eucharist. The church was filled with members of both Woehrle's recent and new parish. Three choirs sang—senior (in red), youth (in blue), and Praise Band (unrobed), and the ceremony had an ecumenical touch with ministers and pastors attending from other churches in the community.

Led by Crucifer Coby Asiedu, the procession included the choirs, banner carriers Ken Hahn and Lori Riel, acolytes Matthew Cheng and Kirsten Starr and server Beth Fortin. About 30 diocesan robed clergy, both deacons and priests, followed, including Woehrle's former boss, the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham.

With her chaplain for the evening, the Rev. Connie Wilks, deacon at the Church of the Epiphany in Surrey, Bishop Skelton came in at the end of the procession.

In line with the diversity that is the makeup and the liturgy at St. Cuthbert's, the processional hymns included both the more traditional sounding *In the Name of Christ We Gather* by Shirley Erena Murray and the lively *10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)* by Jonas Myrin and Matt Redman. Coleen Metcalf was organist and pianist. Tony Houghton led the Senior Choir, and Bab Buxton the Youth Choir and Praise Band.

The Hebrew Bible lesson was from the story of Jonah

and read by Paul Woehrle's spouse, Joanne: *Psalm 130* was led by Fay Pereira, and the Gospel, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, was read by the Rev. Karin Fulcher.

Fulcher, a former deacon at St. David's who had worked with Woehrle for several years, gave the sermon, and spoke about how reluctant was Jonah to the call of God. "Jonah would have liked call blocking," she joked, and he was trying to get as far away as possible from Nineveh, where God had ordered him to go.

Just as Jonah initially was reluctant to listen to God so can we be, said the preacher. "When God calls we should go where He asks," she said, but we can be intentionally deaf. "There are none so deaf as those who will not hear."

Deacon Fulcher drew the same lesson from the Good Samaritan story, in which several people passed by the injured man on the road before the Samaritan came to his

aid. "We might ask ourselves what would we do? What if we were on our way to a civic or religious event in our best clothes or vestments?"

She reminded the congregation of Jesus's statement that what we do for the poor and needy and those who need our help we do for him. "And anything we fail to do for another person, we also fail to do for him."

Having worked with Woehrle for many years, she knew that he would be constantly urging his parishioners to do God's work in the community. "Paul is a great encourager."

His only fault, she said, is a penchant for painful puns. Some are brilliant but most are awful. In any case they make people laugh. "He has a terrific sense of humour."

Following the sermon, before the Bishop and Archdeacon Stephen Rowe, Woehrle signed the covenant in ministry,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

LEFT Crucifer, Coby Asiedu leads the procession into the nave. PHOTO Barb Steele RIGHT A balcony view of the procession. PHOTO Neale Adams



LEFT The Rev. Connie Wilks and Bishop Skelton at the chancel entrance opening with "the grace." RIGHT The Rev. Karin Fulcher preaching. PHOTOS Barb Steele



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

pledging to obey his bishop and her successors, and was presented a license to become rector of St. Cuthbert's (actually he had begun work October 1). Bishop Skelton then formally installed him.

Then followed a number of representatives of the congregation, who presented their new rector with symbols of ministry. First came the Bible, presented by Alex Fortin and Helen Riel, who at age 91 is one of the few remaining original parishioners involved in founding St. Cuthbert in 1959, as a mission from St. Helen's, Surrey.

Other presenters of symbols were: Water, by Bexhell and Jegatha Rajkuman; Bread and Wine by Sharon Grove and Adrian De-Heer-Amissah; Oil by Allan Hains and Sarah Houghton; Books of Worship by Merv Thorne and Leslie Ward; Diocesan Canons by Al McDowall and Caitlyn Marsh; and the keys to the church by George Goater and Sandi LaCharité.

The Rev. Craig Tanksley of St. Mark's, Ocean Park, the Regional Dean for the area, formally welcomed the new rector. He said that he had often been on hikes with Woehrle at clergy retreats where he showed himself to be not only a leader but also among the most physically fit of priests in the diocese, and was happy he was joining the deanery.

Pastor Mark Johnston of the North Delta Evangelical Free Church, representing the Delta Ministerial—an ecumenical association of pastors, ministers, and priests who serve the community—presented a greeting and noted the diversity of St. Cuthbert's.

A standing ovation was given the Rev. Arthur Nash, who had served as interim priest at St. Cuthbert's for over a year following the departure of the Rev. Allan Carson, who left after 11 years in the parish to take up a new ministry at St. John the Baptist, Sardis, in September 2014. This was the fifth parish in which Nash has served as an interim since his retirement.

After Prayers of the People, led by Len Reimer and Samantha Jespersion, the Eucharist and the Episcopal Blessing, and the Recessional to the hymn, *Lift High the Cross*, the congregation adjourned to a crowded parish hall for a reception where the new rector cut and helped serve two cakes welcoming the Woehrles to the parish. ✠

The intercession is led by Len Reimer. PHOTO Barb Steele



The Prayer over the Gifts. PHOTO Barb Steele



Paul reads the oath. PHOTO Barb Steele



The Bible is presented during the Presentation of the Symbols of Ministry by Alex Fortin and Helen Riel, who at age 91 is one of the few remaining original parishioners involved in founding St. Cuthbert in 1959, as a mission from St. Helen's, Surrey. PHOTO Barb Steele



Co-intercessor, Samantha Jespersion. PHOTO Barb Steele



The Bishop's examination during the Covenant in Ministry. PHOTO Neale Adams



Warden, George Goater and Envelope Secretary and Parish Bookkeeper, Sandi LaCharité present Paul with the keys. PHOTO Barb Steele



The new rector has two knives and is ready to cut two cakes. PHOTO Barb Steele



Photographer Barb Steele has cake to distribute. On her left is the Rev. Arthur Nash who was the interim at St. Cuthbert's, and on the right the rector of Holy Trinity, White Rock, the Rev. Neil Gray. PHOTO Vim Vimalendiran



Willing To Say “Yes” To the Call of God

The 150th Anniversary Celebration at St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Bishop Skelton and the sanctuary party at the conclusion of the Opening Hymn, *Here in this Place New Light is Streaming*. PHOTO Randy Murray



Digby Turney reads *Galatians 4: 4–7*. PHOTO Randy Murray



*“Today in honouring the
150th anniversary of St. Mary’s Church,
we honour one of the
most powerful spokespersons for those tiny,
invisible forces, those forces that,
if you give them time,
will rend the hardest monument
of (human) pride.
Her name is Mary,
and she is the Mother of Jesus.”*

Bishop Skelton

Her Honour with the Honorary Aide-de-Camp presents the Old Testament reading, *Isaiah 61: 10–11*. PHOTO Randy Murray



On May 2, 2015, 150 years and one day since the May 1, 1865 consecration of the New Westminster church, St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton celebrated that anniversary with a successful weekend homecoming event. On Sunday, October 25, 2015, the parish’s patronal festival day, they celebrated the official 150th Anniversary Celebration consisting of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation at 10 am followed by a luncheon and programme.

On this, the Sunday when Mary, Mother of Jesus is celebrated in the Gospel reading, *Luke 1: 46–55*—aka *Magnificat*—it was fitting that two of the principal participants in the celebration were women, the Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton and the Lieutenant Governor of the Province of British Columbia, the Hon. Judith Guichon.

St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton is one of four churches in our diocese to celebrate a sesquicentennial in recent years. Built by members of the British Royal Engineers commonly referred to as *Sappers* (most of the construction was done by just two men) in the winter and early spring of 1865, the church was completed six weeks before the consecration in early March of that year. Soon after completion, the first telegraph line was connected to Sapperton and the first message received on April 15 announced the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. Keeping that fact in mind certainly provides context and perspective. This little church has existed for a long time and is an important part of New Westminster’s and British Columbia’s history.

Sunday, October 25, 2015, was Bishop Skelton’s first official visitation to her parish of St. Mary the Virgin and as has been the pattern throughout the first 18 months of her episcopacy, she preached, presided at the Eucharist and conferred the Apostolic Rites of Confirmation and Reaffirmation. This Sunday there were two confirmands, Karen Baron and Florence Erwin, and Linda Hale was reaffirmed.

October 25 was a very fine mid-fall day with mild temperatures and clear skies. The church sanctuary is quite small and comfortably holds 70 to 80 people. There were at least that many present for worship, including a good-sized choir and a number of special visitors.

Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon read *Isaiah 61: 10–11*, the choir sang the Marty Haugen setting of *Psalm 34*—aka *The Cry of the Poor*—and long time parishioner Digby Turney read the epistle, *Galatians 4: 4–7*.

Bishop Skelton chose the Gospel for her text, *1: 46–55*, *Magnificat*, the *Song of Mary*. In her homily, she focused on God’s raising up of Mary, a lowly peasant teenager and Mary’s joyful acceptance of this “great reversal.”

She began by saying: “Over 30 years ago, some teenagers found a quotation in a magazine and painted it on the side of folk singer Pete Seeger’s barn. The four-foot high letters said this, *I am done with big things and great things, great institutions and big success; and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular forces that creep from individual to individual like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monument of (human) pride.*”

Today in honouring the 150th anniversary of St. Mary’s Church, we honour one of the most powerful spokespersons for those tiny, invisible forces, those forces that, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monument of (human) pride. Her name is Mary, and she is the Mother of Jesus.”

Bishop Skelton expanded on the meaning of the words in the text where Mary sings, *He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty*. “Mary proclaims to her cousin Elizabeth and to us that in being chosen by God, all those invisible to the world—all the poor, all the hungry, all the powerless—have been lifted up. And right along with this, Mary proclaims that all who are big and great in the world—the wealthy, the well-fed and the powerful—have been cast down. ‘Our God is a God of reversal,’ she joyfully sings out for us all to hear, for our God is done ‘with big things and great things, great institutions and big success’ and is ‘for those tiny, invisible, molecular forces that creep from individual to individual like so many rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if you give them time, will rend the hardest monument of (human) pride.’”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Asperges begin in the chancel with the Bishop's Chaplain, Herman Klassen. PHOTO Randy Murray



Florence Irwin is confirmed. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Bishop Skelton greets the reaffirmed Linda Hale during the exchange of the Peace.

RIGHT The Rev. Steve Thompson, deacon of the Word and Table, Bishop Skelton and priest-in-charge, the Rev. Maggie Rose Muldoon during the Eucharistic Prayer. PHOTOS Randy Murray



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

The bishop spoke of the Parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton, the parish's "life for the future must be the willingness to, like Mary, be willing to sacrifice greatness for lowliness, to recognize the invisible... who are the humble, the lowly, the powerless that we have been called to raise up?"

Following the sermon, the congregation remained seated as tenor, Adrick Peppin sang Johann Sebastian Bach's *Ave Maria* in honour of the parish's naming day. This musical offering was followed by the Presentation and Examination of the candidates. Then Bishop Skelton said to the community gathered, "Let us join with those who commit themselves again to Christ and renew our own baptismal covenant" and led the people in the Affirmation of Faith, followed by the sprinkling of the congregation (asperges) with holy water as a reminder of baptism while everyone sang, *Springs of water, bless the Lord! Give him glory and praise for ever!* Parishioner Doreen McQueen led the litany and then there was the laying on of hands of Confirmation and Reaffirmation. The newly confirmed and reaffirmed led the exchange of the Peace, which was followed by the Eucharist.

As the community sang the Recessional Hymn, *Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee*, the former treasurer of the diocese, Ian Robertson, Order of the Diocese of New Westminster (ODNW), resplendent in a replica 1863 Royal Engineers uniform opened the main doors to allow access to the Parish Hall for the next component of the celebration.

Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor and Bishop Skelton met each other outside and positioned themselves so that they could greet and speak to everyone as they made the short walk from the sanctuary to the hall. There were of course many photo opportunities, some of which are included with this article.

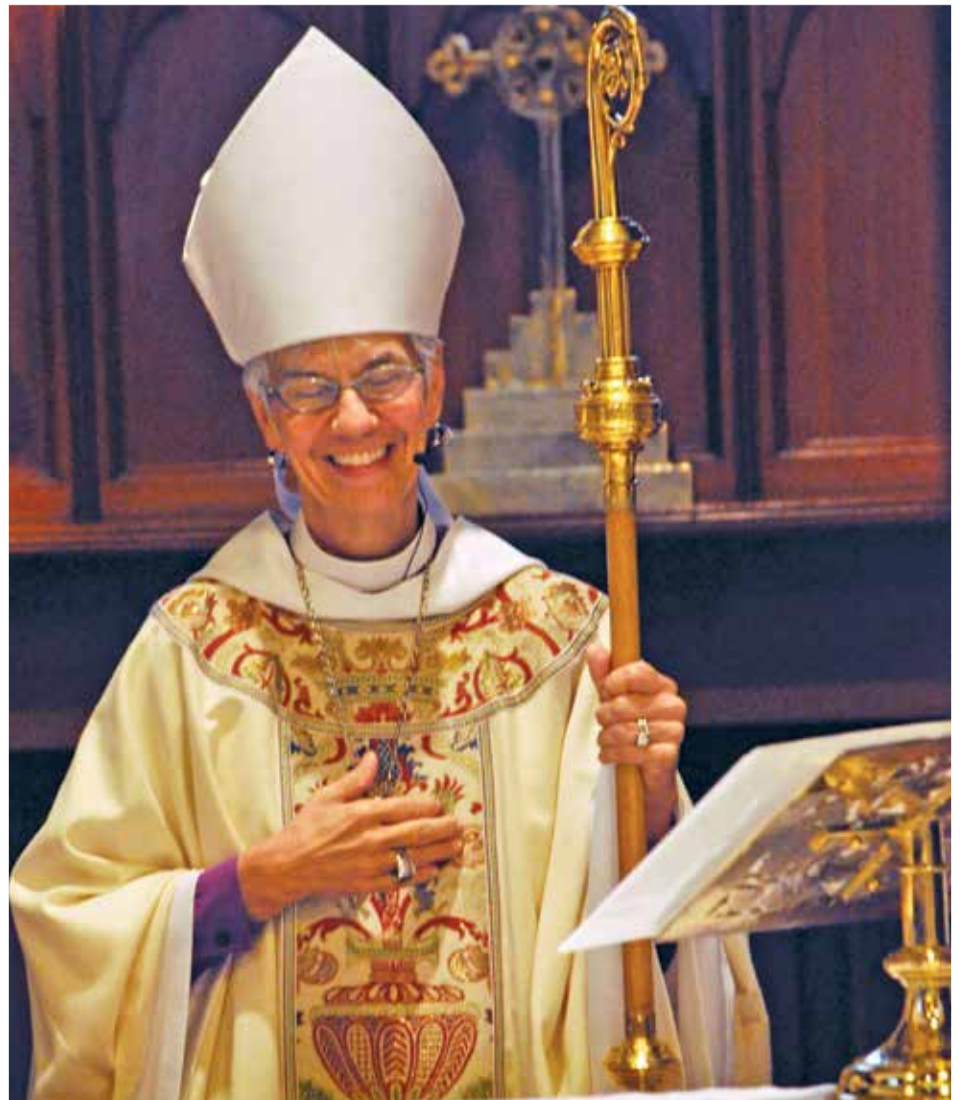
Seating in the newly renovated hall (the renovations on the hall had been completed in time for the May 1, 2015 Homecoming weekend) consisted of 15 tables, each seating 7 or 8, and there were perhaps another 12 sitting on benches located around the hall. Although the room was completely full it felt comfortable and welcoming, not crowded.

The Director of Ceremonies, Warren Ballard, opened the program and welcomed the special guests. In attendance were two former rectors of the parish, the Rev. Georgina Harris (2009–2014) and the Rev. Neville Crichlow (1999–2008). The priest-in-charge who had served between the two incumbencies, the Rev. Richard Stetson was also present. Rev. Crichlow now lives in Florida so he may very well have been the person who travelled furthest to be at the event.

Current priest-in-charge, the Rev. Maggie Rose Muldoon welcomed those gathered and introduced Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor. In a brief address the Hon. Judith Guichon as the representative of the Crown brought greetings and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Bishop Skelton smiles after the Episcopal Blessing. PHOTO Randy Murray



Willing To Say “Yes” To the Call of God

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

congratulations. She spoke of her late husband’s deep ties to British Columbia and the Royal City. She spoke about how Government House in Victoria also celebrated its 150th anniversary and she praised New Westminster for being a community that continues to evolve, to be an inclusive and supportive community for generations to come and that the Church is very much a foundation of that process.

The Rev. Muldoon blessed the meal, following Her Honour’s brief remarks. After lunch, the bishop and other dignitaries spoke and upon completion of the list of speakers, the Director of Ceremonies asked the guests to please rise for the departure of the Lieutenant Governor, Her Honour was escorted to her vehicle and said farewell.

A sesquicentennial celebration is a major undertaking for any organization, large or small. The faith community of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton met the challenges involved in such a project and did a fabulous job. As this chapter in the life of this church closes and the members discern where God is directing their future in ministry they may want to revisit the last part of Bishop Skelton’s message that morning, “And so today after 150 years, may this parish and its people still be like its namesake: the young woman Mary who cried out in joy about the new life within her, the young woman who saw her pregnancy as a testament to God’s reversing ways, the young woman Mary who was willing to say ‘yes’ to God. And may God magnify the souls of the three people deepening their commitments to God and to us all today... for the mighty One has done great things for us all, and Holy is his name.” ✠

Gerry on left with former rector, the Rev. Georgina Harris. PHOTO Randy Murray



Ian Robertson, ODNW with Her Honour and the Honorary Aide-de-Camp. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The Bishop leads the procession out of the narthex.
RIGHT Her Honour and the Bishop shake hands and exchange greetings before meeting the congregation. PHOTOS Randy Murray



LEFT The Hon. Judith Guichon and the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton prepare to greet the congregation following worship.
RIGHT Her Honour and the Bishop greet the congregation. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Director of Ceremonies, Warren Ballard. PHOTO Randy Murray



The priest-in-charge’s opening remarks. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The lunch guests listen to Rev. Maggie Rose Muldoon. RIGHT The Hon. Judith Guichon. PHOTOS Randy Murray



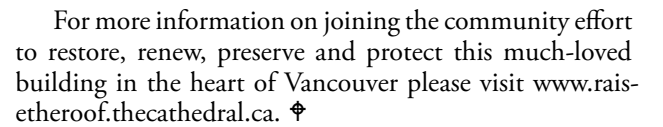
Director of Stewardship and Capital Development, Christ Church Cathedral

.....

Lower level, looking into Parish Hall. PHOTO Courtesy of MKnowles Photography



The fundraising goal for the Cathedral's capital campaign *Raise the Roof, Ring the Bells, Feed the Hungry* is now \$9 million. This has necessitated a new fundraising plan with an opportunity to refine our message and welcome new donors. And with each new conversation, I am reminded of the significance of this building. It represents





1.



2.



4.

Pet Blessings Around St. Francis of Assisi.

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi is October 4. The feast of St. Francis is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment. On the Sunday closest to October 4, his day is observed in many churches around the world for furry and feathered friends.

.....
2015, was a banner year for pet blessings in and around the diocese. The transference of the Feast of St. Francis seems to be getting broader. The earliest pet blessing reported to diocesan communications was September 27 at St. Philip, Dunbar during the main Celebration of the Eucharist at 10 am and the latest took place October 18 at St. Laurence, Coquitlam at a special service at 1 pm and at Salal and Cedar's worship at St. Anselm's on the University of BC

(UBC), to be a morning. At the blessing of the Eucharist, two dogs of all sizes



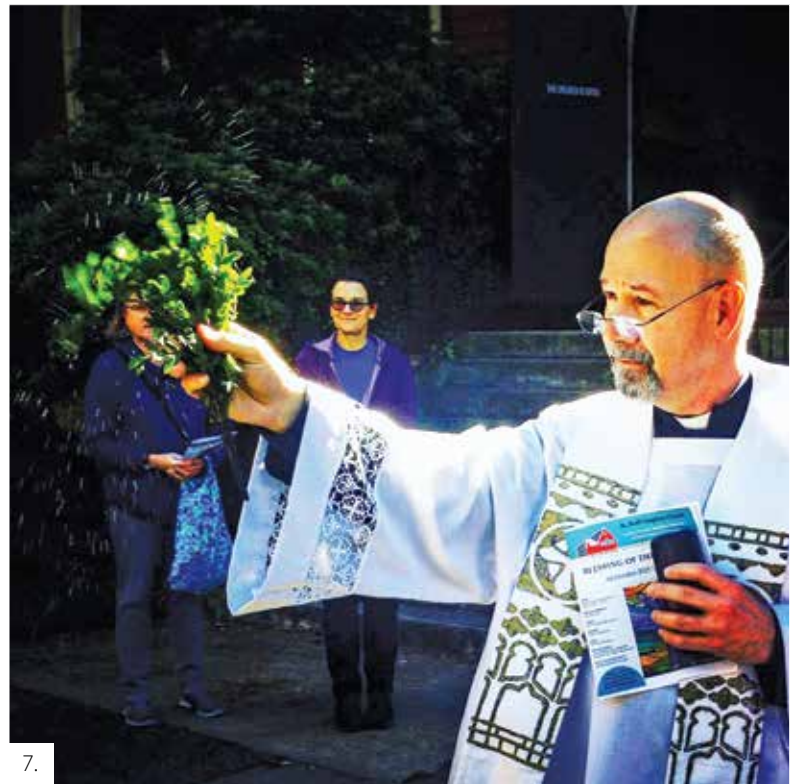
5.



6.



9.



*... the Diocese to Honour
... with an OWL!*

*ast commemorates the life of St. Francis who was born in the 12th century and is the
environment. He is of course also an Anglican saint and usually on the Saturday and
any churches around the diocese of New Westminster with liturgies that involve our*

) lands also that afternoon. However, there does seem to be an increase in pet blessings as part of the main Sunday Morning Celebration of the Eucharist.

St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver the animal took place as part of a special Celebration of the first the afternoon of Saturday, October 3, with about dozen people and one dozen pets consisting of dogs of es, a cat and a white mouse named Bubbles (*photos*

1–6 by Randy Murray).

Also on October 3, St. Paul's in the West End of Vancouver moved outside of their sanctuary and onto Jervis Street for a *back to the neighbourhood* style pet blessing. Honorary Assistant priests, the Reverend's Michael Forshaw and Alain-Michel Rocheleau officiated at the alfresco worship (photos 7–11 by Jayme Vander Hoeven).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14





Pet Blessings Around the Diocese to Honour St. Francis of Assisi... with an OWL!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

In 2015, the Feast of St. Francis didn't have to be transferred, as October 4 was a Sunday. That was the Sunday that Bishop Skelton visited her parish of All Saints', Mission. There were two Celebrations of the Eucharist Sunday morning, a parish luncheon, a meeting with parish leaders and then a pet blessing service at 2 pm, which featured a pretty fierce looking owl (photo 12 by Bishop Skelton, photos 13-16 by Margaret Peake, and photos 17-21 by Bob Friesen).

Many thanks to photographers: Margaret Peake, Bob Friesen, Jayme Vander Hoeven and Bishop Melissa Skelton for the owl face shot. ☙



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.



17.



18.



19.



20.



21.

A group of people, including children and adults, are gathered in a church for a religious service. A priest in white vestments is visible on the right, and a young boy in a blue shirt is in the center. The altar is decorated with flowers and candles.



RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

With the young of the parish and a good section of the community gathered at the Altar rail the Rev. Gray led the Collect. PHOTO Randy Murray



A priest in green vestments is performing a blessing in a church. He is holding a small object in his right hand and gesturing with his left. The background shows the altar with a large cross and candles, and several people seated in the pews.

The Rev. Neil Gray speaks to the young of the parish about hospitality. PHOTO Randy Murray





Julian of Norwich • 1342 – 1415

A pilgrimage

GILLI MCLAREN
All Saints, Mission

During a visit to England a few summers ago, my partner and I made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Julian of Norwich situated in Norwich, an ancient English city that was prominent and thriving when London was but a small village. In the city, apart from the magnificent Norwich Cathedral, there are lots of churches and even more pubs. It is said that there is a church for every week of the year, and a pub for every day of the year. So there is always redemption available for the “sins” of the previous week. Incidentally, we did imbibe some “spiritual” nourishment and a sumptuous meal at one of the oldest pubs in England, called *Adam and Eve*, with the earliest known reference to it made in 1249. The workmen who were building the cathedral nearby used the pub.

We had dreamt of this pilgrimage for the longest time. After we had settled in a B & B, we ventured out to look for the shrine. To our dismay no one seemed to know anything about her. We had thought that she would be well known, being one of the more famous of that city. Needless to say that the other famous son of the soil, Lord Nelson is much revered and adulated by all of England—they were even selling chocolates wrapped in portraits of Lord Nelson. My wife’s maiden name was Nelson, so she quickly bought chocolates for all her numerous relatives. But of Julian of Norwich, nobody had a clue.

Eventually, a taxi driver of the many that we enquired of gave us rough directions and we meandered to the small church, tucked away on a side road. The heavy wooden door on the chapel was closed and appeared to be locked, but when we gave it a push it creaked open and we went inside. It was dimly lit with a few candles burning on the altar, but there was a sense of holiness about the place. Two young women were kneeling in the front pew murmuring their prayers in deep devotion, and that set the tone for our own sensibilities of reverence and peace. We also sat in silence to absorb the overwhelming presence of God in that sacred place.

Julian was born in 1342, the same year as Chaucer, though I doubt they knew of each other. Little is known

about her life and even her real name is unknown. She probably came from a privileged background, and scholar’s debate whether she was a nun from a nearby convent or a laywoman. She is known as Julian because her cell as an anchorite was built onto the wall of the Church of St. Julian. The solitary vocation of an anchorite was not unusual in medieval times; she set herself apart for God and lived the rest of her life isolated in a cell, giving comfort to those who came to her window and sought her prayers.

There is a side room to the chapel where as an anchorite Julian was sealed in a cell according to the traditions and customs of that time by Bishop Henry le Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, the legendary “fighting bishop,” known for his role in suppressing the Peasant’s Revolt.

Julian wrote but one work, *A Book of Showings*, yet through this one work, with its subsequent revisions, she stands out as a brilliant writer, scholar, theologian, and spiritual guide. Please bear in mind that this was the end of the 14th century, when the majority of women could not read or write. She is cited as the first English women of letters, and the first theologian to write originally in English.

Thomas Merton wrote, “There is no doubt that Lady Julian is the greatest English mystic. Not only that, but she is one of the greatest English theologians in the ancient sense of the word.”

In *A Book of Showings*, Julian writes, “I saw full clearly that one God made us. He loved us, which love was never slackened, nor ever shall be. And in his love our life is everlasting.”

Julian holding a hazelnut in the palm of her hand, wondered at the smallness of that little seed, a trifling thing and to a superficial eye one of God’s modest creations, and said, “In this little thing, and yet, God made it, God loves it, and God keeps.” In this meditation, she is affirming that God is Creator, Lover and Keeper, and I almost hear an echo of Jesus’ parable of the small mustard seed.

Julian’s words: “God does not hate, God cannot hate, God will not hate, what he had made.”

The great cathedral of Norwich was completed in 1145.

The following is the prayer on the wall of the sanctuary:



*Most Holy Lord
The ground of our beseeching
Who through your servant
Julian
Revealed the wonder of your love
Grant that as we are
Created in your nature
And restored by your grace
Our wills may be made one with yours
That we may come to see you
Face to face
And gaze on you forever
Through Jesus Christ
Your Son our Lord
Who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit
One God forever and ever
Amen.*

Julian, born in 1342 would have worshipped at the cathedral in her time, but her presence today is symbolically represented in a life size statue, holding her book at the main entrance to the cathedral, flanked on the other side by a statue of St. Benedict (*see the photos below*).

Julian was a mystic, venerated in the Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran traditions. She did not believe in God as a chastiser or one who tests your faith or punishes you for your sins. Her God was a God of love, a God of compassion, a God of forgiveness and a God of suffering.

Her writings and spirituality has profoundly impacted generations of seekers through these many centuries, among the more famous being Teresa of Avila, Margery Kempe, Thomas Merton and T.S. Eliot.

In his poem *Four Quartets*, Eliot writes:

“...With the drawing of this Love and the
voice of this Calling

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

...And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well...”

Julian’s 14th century world was as marked by aggression, insecurity and change as is ours today. She lived through the seemingly endless Hundred Years’ War, between England and France; the Peasant’s Revolt, resulting from years of cruelty, injustice and unbearable taxation; the Great Schism, that sent the Catholic Church into total disarray and confusion; and the Black Death, a plague that ravaged and almost destroyed the structure of that society.

Her most famous words, born of intense personal suffering, “All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well,” are as needed and as true now as when she wrote them more than 600 years ago.

She said: “Go on your way rejoicing; live gladly and gently because of His love.” ✠



AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Bishop Skelton Visits L'Arche •

SUBMISSION Sig Stark

L'Arche is an international organization founded in 1964 by Jean Vanier, a Canadian Catholic theologian, philosopher and humanitarian, initially to aid, assist and include people with developmental disabilities and to support those who care for them. On October 7, Bishop Melissa Skelton visited the Greater Vancouver location of L'Arche, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating homes and day programs, in which people with and without developmental disabilities live, work and discover faith together.

Bishop Skelton led the Community Prayer Service with the Rev. Randolph Bruce, a friend of the L'Arche community who is the Leader—Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care at St. Michael's Centre. At the conclusion of the service representatives from the L'Arche community gave Bishop Melissa a blessing for all she carries and does in her role. ✚

Patrick Byron and Bishop Melissa hit it off immediately!
PHOTO Sig Stark



Melina Boote, Bishop Skelton, Mary Hillhouse, and the Community Leader and Executive Director of L'Arche, Denise Haskett.
PHOTO Sig Stark



• Ride for Refuge • PWRDF 2015 •

Jane Dittrich (*photo second on right*) of Christ Church Cathedral teamed up with Gwen Ingham of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale, Janet Hamilton of St. John's, Shaughnessy and Cameron Gutjahr of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale to ride through scenic Richmond, via farms, pumpkin patches and along the banks of the Fraser river as *Team 50km*, the 50 kilometre component of the diocesan Primate's World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF) participation in the October 3 *Ride for Refuge*. Jane was happy to raise some money (she raised almost \$1,200), as

she had only committed to the ride nine days before.

Diocesan PWRDF Unit Chair, Peter Goodwin said, "It was a tremendous event and we far surpassed the fundraising target of \$3,000. We had a total of 13 riders from 6 parishes riding distances of 10, 25 and 50 kilometres." The total raised by Team PWRDF Vancouver was in excess of \$6,500.

The January issue of *Topic* will include more details of this worthy Anglican initiative and more details about the riders who made up the 10 and 25 kilometre teams. ✚

The 50km Team. PHOTO Laurel Fahrni



• Gala on 12th •

The rector and the auctioneer. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi

Another very successful evening was held on October 3 at St. Agnes' in the Grand Boulevard neighbourhood of North Vancouver. The North Vancouver parish has a well-deserved reputation for offering first class hospitality as part of the parish's community engagement and usually that hospitality involves food. The annual gala, which consists of a delicious meal, a silent and live auction, and entertainment, has proven to be a great annual event both for the social life of the parish and as a source of funds for ministry.

This year \$9,000 was raised and will be split between the kitchen renovation project and the sabbatical fund.

Many thanks to Wendy Matsubuchi for these great photos. ✚



LEFT A happy serving team preps the first course. RIGHT A bird's eye view of the live auction. PHOTOS Wendy Matsubuchi



People wearing masks make it easier to write captions. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



Folks picking up their purchases & writing some cheques. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



Sometimes posed photos work really well. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Diana Butler Bass Preaches at Ecumenical Worship •

The two faith communities of Christ Church Cathedral (Anglican) and St. Andrew's-Wesley (United Church of Canada) gathered together on the Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost, Sunday, October 18, 2015, at St. Andrew's-Wesley for an ecumenical Celebration of the Eucharist. Since May 2015, the Christ Church Cathedral community has been on a pilgrimage away from their building located at the corner of Burrard and Georgia, as extensive renovations take place to the 120+ year-old church structure. St. Andrew's-Wesley has welcomed the Cathedral's 8 am Book of Common Prayer (BCP) congregation and the main 10:30 am Celebration of the Eucharist is regularly taking place in the Burrard Ballroom of the Century Plaza Hotel, located next door to St. Andrew's-Wesley.

There are a variety of good reasons for the two communities to worship together but this time the purpose was quite specific, and that was to create an opportunity where both congregations could gather and experience a homily, preached by well-known author/historian/theologian/sociologist, Diana Butler Bass. Butler Bass is a respected progressive Christian voice in North America and arguably one of the

keenest observers of the world of (primarily) mainstream Christian churches in our post-modern era.

She is currently touring to promote her latest book, *Grounded—Finding God in the World—A Spiritual Revolution*. The October 18 Sunday sermon was followed by a lecture and book promotion half day event facilitated by Butler Bass on the morning of Monday, October 19 at Vancouver School of Theology (VST). This event, titled *God in a Post-Religious Time* was sponsored by: VST, Christ Church Cathedral, St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, St. Andrew's Hall, and the diocese of New Westminster.

On Sunday, October 18, Diana Butler Bass chose the first reading, *Job 38: 1–7, 34–41* as her text. She began her address making reference to the Children's Talk that had occurred a few minutes previously where and when the Children and Youth Ministry coordinators of both communities gathered the younger members of the combined congregation at the chancel entrance and spoke about the previous Thanksgiving weekend. This, combined with all the election talk she had heard since her arrival in Canada a few days earlier had

her quite confused, as for her, an American, Thanksgiving and elections take place in November not October. She was worried that the touring was catching up with her.

She set the scene for her analysis of the chosen scripture by making reference to the past 15 years, which are the first 15 years of the new millennium. "The world that we live in is a world in travail." Many ask, "Where is God? ... God's power is found in the fact that God is the life-giving essence of everything."

Her sermon was eloquent, but presented in language and tone that would be accessible to a broad range of listeners, from first time churchgoer to divinity school graduate. Her preaching is refreshingly direct, the messages delivered with skill and sincerity. She compared the many tragedies that have taken place in our world in the past decade and a half to the terrible misfortunes that befell Job. When faced with a horrible event like the murder of 20 six-year-olds and six

of their teachers at Sandy Hook Elementary School like Job many of us ask, "Where is God?" But when God communicates with Job, God does not supply him with the solution to the existence of Evil, God does not provide an answer but directs him to look all around at the beauty of creation. Butler Bass describes this as "the meeting of prophetic grief and the meeting of prophetic beauty." In Job, God's response shows a divine intuition about where we are going now, which she describes as a "holy Möbius strip." Many who question their faith in our post-modern world look for and find the divine in the wonder and beauty of creation instead of giving up and saying "there is no God." This is a concept that has its roots in the Hebrew Bible.

For more information about Diana Butler Bass and how to obtain copies of her books and lectures please visit her website, www.dianabutlerbass.com. ✦

Diana Butler Bass in the pulpit at St. Andrew's-Wesley, October 18, 2015. PHOTO Randy Murray



• Refugee Unit Information Evening •

With a diocesan wide interest in refugee sponsorship that rivals the late 1970s "Boat People" and the 1980s displacement of people in the former Yugoslavia, the Diocesan Refugee Unit under the leadership of chair, the Rev. Michael McGee has been extremely busy this fall. In order to provide some information, answer questions and encourage groups who are currently involved in the process, an information session was held in the Trendell Lounge, a shared facility of St. John's, Shaughnessy the Synod Office on the evening of October 8.

Forty-five people from around the diocese, mostly affiliated with parishes or groups that are either in the process or in the early stages of applying, attended the two and a half hour information session and Q & A.

The information session PowerPoint presentation prepared and facilitated by Rev. McGee was titled, *Overview of the Current Crisis in Syria & the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program*. The presentation consisted of five agenda sections:

1. What is currently happening in Syria?
2. What is a Refugee?
3. SAHs (the Anglican diocese of New Westminster is a Sponsorship (Refugee)

Agreement Holder, one of 92 in Canada) and the Sponsorship Process

4. Settlement Responsibilities
5. Diocesan Networking Q & A

There was a lot of information communicated and many questions raised. The group that was gathered that night were heartened and encouraged by the photo of a reunited Iraqi family at Vancouver Airport taken in early September and displayed as part of Rev. McGee's power point, the results of much hard work by a parish group at St. David, Delta.

The group also listened with great interest to representatives of those participating in a refugee partnership that is growing between members of the Chaldean faith community of St. Mary the Virgin in Surrey and the Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany. The Chaldean congregation currently shares worship space with the Anglican host parish.

For more information about the Diocesan Refugee Unit please visit www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/unit-groups/pages/refugee-unit on the web.

The October 8 PowerPoint presentation is available for downloading as well as many other items of interest. ✦

The Rev. Michael McGee begins the presentation. PHOTO Randy Murray



• Trivia Night Builds Community •

SUBMISSION Tracy Dignum

On Saturday, October 24 St. Christopher's in West Vancouver held their first annual Family Trivia night. The evening was a huge success. More than 50 parishioners and guests of all ages enjoyed a soup dinner and some friendly competition over ten rounds of challenging trivia questions.

Many thanks to: Ruth Fisher for the idea, Lea Anne Sexton and Lorraine McNeight for organizing the event, and to the other committee members for their participation. Jo-Anne did an excellent job as caller and the prizes were enjoyed by all. ✦

Calling the Questions. PHOTO Tracy Dignum



AROUND THE DIOCESE

• St. George's, Fort Langley and World Food Day •

SUBMISSION Sheila Puls

World Food Day is a United Nations sponsored day of action against hunger. On October 16, people around the world gathered to declare their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime. We live in a world where 1 in 8 people don't have enough to eat—and when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number in the world is zero. This was the focus behind the campaign where the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz challenged us through the *Fred Says* program (please visit the website, www.fredsays.ca for more information)—the first ones being: *Have you eaten today; It's good to be full of beans; Let's Jam; and Some like it hot.* For 2015, *Fred Says: It's easy being green; Veg out; Rice is nice; and Kids rock.* With World Food Day this year just five days after Thanksgiving, when most of us

are overfilled with food, it is sad to think that there are some in our community who are hungry.

A visit from Bruce Strom, the director of Sources Food Bank in Langley, to the Anglican Church Women (ACW) meeting in early October brought attention to the need locally. In the year since that Food Bank opened, the requests have steadily increased, until currently they have over 650 Langley families who need help. This total consists of over 1,100 individuals, one third of whom are children and about 15%–20% are seniors on fixed incomes, which don't cover all their shelter costs.

The Outreach Committee of the Parish of St. George in Fort Langley decided to challenge the congregation to do their part and to accept the challenge from

our primate by holding a food drive on Thanksgiving Sunday (the Sunday before) and the Sunday after to mark World Food Day. News went out to the parish by Sunday announcements and by the regular parish email correspondence. And on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11 members of the Parish arrived at the church doors to find large bins waiting, attended by a young member of the parish who helped unpack shopping bags, stacked the goods into the bins, and thanked each parishioner for their donation. Some, of course, had forgotten, but promised to bring something the following week. Although it would have been good to bring these donations to the altar as part of the offertory, as the bins filled it became obvious that there wasn't enough room around the altar to do this—St. George's sanctuary is small and there was a lot of food, so a couple of baskets were filled and these were brought forward as a token of the gifts.

Sunday, October 18 saw a repeat of the previous Sunday; with more food arriving at the church doors, baskets again being brought forward with the offertory, more bins being filled. Arrangements were made with the Food Bank, and after the second gathering of food, the Outreach Committee loaded all the food into a truck and when the Food Bank Distribution Centre opened the following Tuesday the volunteers were there to happily help unload the Parish donation.

This was a most successful challenge—Parish members were generous in their food donations and St. George's ACW have committed to ongoing financial support for this Food Bank to help the most vulnerable in our local community. ✠

• Clergy News Around the Diocese •

The Rev. Margaret Marquardt at City Hall, spring of 2015.

PHOTO Randy Murray



The Rev. David Edgerton.



In early October the Rev. Margaret Marquardt informed Bishop Skelton that she has accepted a term position with First Lutheran Church as Lead Coordinator for *Friends InDeed*—deepening community engagement within and outside the congregation. She will do this new ministry alongside her work as Neighbourhood Outreach Worker, working with isolated families with pre-school aged children (many who have come as refugees to Canada) at Burnaby Neighbourhood House. Margaret will continue her ministry as Chair of the diocesan Eco-Justice Unit and member of the diocesan Primate's World Relief Development Fund (PWRDF) Unit.

Bishop Skelton has appointed the Rev. Katherine (Kathy) Yeo as deacon of St. Matthias—St. Luke. Kathy was in ministry at St. Chad's located in the Arbutus Basin neighbourhood and has recently been seen around the diocese, serving as deacon at diocesan events. There was a Celebration of A New Ministry for Kathy and the parish of St. Matthias—St. Luke at the main 10:30 am Eucharist, November 15.

On the recommendation of the Canonical Committee to the Bishop, the Rev. David Edgerton has been appointed rector of St. George, Maple Ridge effective January 15, 2016. David has served a four-year curacy in Knowle Parish Church, diocese of Birmingham in England. More information about this appointment including the date and time for the Celebration of a New Ministry Eucharist will be posted on the diocesan website as it becomes available. ✠

The children of the parish check out the donations. PHOTO Harold Martens



LEFT The truck gets loaded up on October 20. RIGHT A Sources Food Bank volunteer unloads the truck. PHOTOS Bob Dolphin



• KAT Talks •

The folks from Anglican Films, Lisa Barry and Becky Boucher made the trip from Toronto to Vancouver to film a new series of KAT Talks in the Parish Hall of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale on October 29. KAT is an acronym for *Keep Anglicans Talking* and the format consists of filmed presentations of Anglicans who are making a difference, speaking for a maximum of 10 minutes without notes on matters at the heart of Anglican identity. The first batch of KAT Talks filmed in 2014, had the general theme of stewardship. For 2015, there were two basic topics: *Choosing Christ* and *What Could We Be?* The Vancouver filming was the second and final film session for the

2015 season. The first session took place in Halifax.

A small but engaged audience gathered by 7 pm in the parish hall of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale to hear and support (*in the order that they appear in the photo*): Tasha Carrothers, the Rev. Alex Wilson, Melanie Delva, the Very Rev. Dr. Peter Elliott, Andrew Stephens Rennie, the Rev. Laurel Dykstra, and Kate Newman.

The films were posted online in mid-November on the General Synod website. Here is the KAT Talks landing page web address www.anglican.ca/resources/kat-talks. ✠

PHOTO Randy Murray



AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Kids & Pets at All Saints' Mission •

Bishop Melissa Skelton was very busy in the month of October 2015. One of her visitations that month was to the Parish of All Saints' in Mission and that took place on the Feast of St. Francis, October 4. As a new resident of the Lower Mainland, the bishop enjoyed the early morning drive east on the Lougheed Highway to that historic community north of the Fraser.

During the main 10 am Celebration of the Eucharist she performed the Apostolic sacrament of laying on of hands to bless four members of the parish who had decided to re-commit to their baptismal vows and be received into the Anglican Communion. There was a celebratory lunch and at 2 pm and an Animal Blessing liturgy, which is featured in photographs on pages 12 to 14 of this issue of *Topic*.

The main morning liturgy was really about the kids. The Gospel reading for the day was *Mark 10: 2-6*. After the Opening Hymn and the greeting, the youngsters of the parish gathered around Bishop Skelton at the chancel entrance. She asked, "Who am I?" Which created a bit of foot shuffling but eventually someone said "the bishop." Then she asked to the group, "What's a bishop?" Which provoked chuckles from the congregation and some confusion from the group of smaller parishioners at the front. Then she asked which *Episcopal accessory* they liked best, the crosier or the mitre?

The community were somewhat divided.

Holding the crosier, Bishop Skelton said, that it is shaped like a shepherd's crook, because like the shepherd who protects the flock, a bishop is charged to keep people safe. Then she held up her plain white mitre and pointed out how it looks a bit like a crown, but not a fancy crown, it is symbolic of the crown of thorns that Jesus was forced to wear at his crucifixion. It reminds bishops of the importance of Christ in their lives and leadership.

During the homily taking the Gospel reading for her text, the bishop shared three statements that she had discovered on the social media site *Pinterest*:

- While we teach our children about life, our children teach us what life is all about.
- Children are not things to be molded but people to be unfolded.
- There are no seven wonders in the eyes of a child. There are seven million.

She went on to say that these notions about children were not part of the ancient way, definitely not how children would be viewed in Roman times in Palestine. The bishop continued in her homily to examine how children were actually treated during Roman times and why for Jesus they were the ideal symbol for all those who are marginalized and powerless. "Children and their sense of wonder inhabit the Kingdom of God." ✠

• Creativity is Alive at St. Mary's •

SUBMISSION Bee Kapitan

I'm standing on a ladder taking pictures of small hands using metallic watercolor paints to create painted crosses for our stewardship packages. As the Communications Coordinator at St. Mary's, I feel privileged to be among the young hearts and minds of our Sunday School who are eager to contribute their time and talents.

During the coffee hour, I watch as the Sunday School creative activity, decorating the stewardship materials.

creativity continues at a table full of crayons and colouring sheets of original sketches of St. Mary's stained-glass windows, courtesy of Gilroy Stained Glass.

Another contributor of colouring pages for the children to download from the St. Mary's website, is the amazing artwork done by, J.D. Rosenthal. John is St. Mary's artist-in-residence, and has contributed many original projects that help youth explore their faith through story, and enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. He has created crosses that are puzzles six feet wide. He is also the author of *Monkeys Go Surfing*, a book that can be purchased on Amazon along with seven other books. John has expressed interest in sharing his time and talent with other churches.

Over this past year, I have experienced many parishioners, volunteers, staff and clergy sharing their love and gifts in a way that is enriching and engaging, making St. Mary's a unique place. Many prepare homemade food for each Seniors' Eucharist Tea, while others participate in the weekly community gathering, welcoming people to St. Mary's and offering a tasty warm meal. Some donate floral arrangements for the chancel guild to decorate the church creating beautiful ambience.

Please visit the St. Mary's website to download our monthly coloring page at www.stmaryskerrisdale.ca. ✠

LEFT Bishop Skelton with the crosier. RIGHT Bishop Skelton speaks to the children of the parish about her mitre. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Rev. Glen Nicholson, Bishop Skelton and All Saints' rector, the Rev. Paul Bowie call forward the four who are to be received and reaffirmed through the laying on of hands. PHOTO Randy Murray



Bishop Skelton examines the four candidates. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Pet Blessing Colouring Sheet. RIGHT Illustration of the Archangel Azrael stained-glass on the October Colouring Sheet.



• "Journey" Returns for 17th Year •

SUBMISSION Brian Walks

St. Mark's annual guided outdoor Christmas display returns on Sunday, December 13 with its nightly program of a walk through the woods, light refreshments and

live entertainment. Born out of a vision to put "Christ back into Christmas" in 1999, this event has brought in visitors from all across the diocese and beyond. Early in December, members of St. Mark's set the mannequins and theatre props in place, adjust the lighting, light up the path, install the sound system, place the welcoming façade at the entrance to the church and decorate the hall to get ready for all of our visitors. The *Journey of Christmas* is St. Mark's gift to our community so that we share the joy of the Christmas season with you.

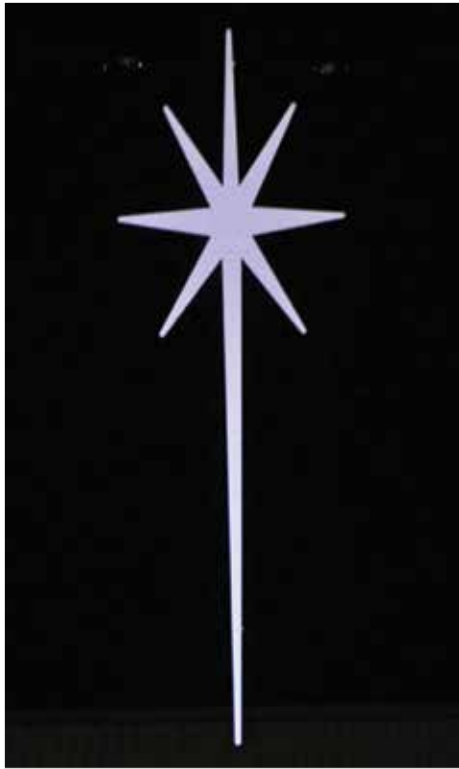
As of press time, the following entertainment has been booked:

- Monday, December 14 • *Domaren Consort*
- Thursday, December 17 • *St. Mark's Choir with the local Girl Guides and Brownies*
- Friday, December 18 • *Fraser Valley Wind Ensemble*
- Sunday, December 20 • *St. Cuthbert's choirs*

The Journey of Christmas is open from:

- December 13-23 from 6 pm-9 pm
- December 24 from 3:30 pm-9 pm

Follow the new Christmas star to 12953-20 Avenue, in beautiful South Surrey. ✠



The Ethics of Death

Physician Assisted Dying (PAD) Panel Discussion at St. Philip, Dunbar

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The organizing committee from the Parish of St. Philip, Dunbar did a fantastic job assembling the September 30 panel discussion, *The Ethics of Death: Physician Assisted Dying (PAD)*. The planning for this event began many months prior, and the time and care that went into developing the program produced an informative, insightful and provocative evening.

The discussion was held in the nave and chancel of the church building, which holds 225 to 250 people. Most of the pew spaces were occupied by an audience of 160 to 180, a huge turnout for a parish event, particularly on a Wednesday evening.

The Moderator was the 8th Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster, the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham who was introduced to the audience by St. Philip's rector and Arch-deacon of Vancouver, the Ven. John Stephens. Before turning things over to the five member panel, Bishop Ingham introduced the Chancellor of the Diocese, George Cadman, QC who in a 15 minute examination of the February 2015 Supreme Court decision clarified the legal language and also provided some historical context (Sue Rodriguez case in 1993) in order to set the stage for the panel discussion. Copies of the Supreme Court's decision with the relevant paragraphs highlighted were made available to those present. These included the following excerpt from the Supreme Court's response [63] in the case of *Carter v. Canada* (the paragraphs from the decision include reference to Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights: *Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice*).

"... We do not agree that the existential formulation of the right to life requires an absolute prohibition on assistance in dying, or that individuals cannot 'waive' their right to life. This would require a 'duty to live,' rather than a 'right to life,' and would call into question the legality of any consent to withdrawal or refusal of life-saving or life-sustaining treatment. The sanctity of life is one of our most fundamental societal values, Section 7 is rooted in a profound respect for the value of human life. But Section 7 also encompasses life, liberty and security of the person during the passage to death..."

Paragraph [67] of the same decision looks at the concept of "informed consent," which was a principal talking point for the panel discussion that evening:

"The law has long protected patient autonomy in medical decision-making... a majority of this Court... endorsed the 'tenacious relevance in our legal system of the principle that competent individuals are — and should be — free to make decisions about their bodily integrity'... This right to 'decide one's own fate' entitles adults to direct the course of their own medical care... it is this principle that underlies the concept of 'informed consent' and is protected by Section 7's guarantee of liberty and security of the person."

The Supreme Court suspended its decision for 12 months—from February 6, 2015—to give Parliament time to craft a new law that would allow for PAD under certain circumstances. Now, time is running out and opinions about PAD remain divided.

The panel consisted of:

- Dr. Philip Crowell who offered an ethical argument against Assisted Dying
- Dr. Judy Illes who provided an ethical argument supporting Assisted Dying
- Dr. Pippa Hawley who as the Division Head of Palliative Care in the Department of Medical Oncology at the BC Cancer Agency spoke from her perspective as a Palliative Care Physician
- Amy Schuster, a Social Worker who works with ALS patients commented from her perspective
- Elizabeth Beddard-Huber, a Palliative Care Nurse spoke about this issue from a nursing viewpoint.

Bishop Ingham gave each of the speakers a maximum of ten minutes to speak; two of the speakers communicated their message in much less than the time allotted.

Ethical arguments are a little more difficult to effectively communicate in a brief period of time than someone's expert reflection on their daily work, therefore the comments provided by Dr. Hawley, Ms. Schuster and Ms. Beddard-Huber seemed to impact the audience the most.

In his presentation, Dr. Crowell began by saying that he

Dr. Pippa Hawley answers a question during the audience Q & A, with Dr. Philip Crowell, Amy Schuster and Elizabeth Beddard-Huber. PHOTO Randy Murray



Amy Schuster and Elizabeth Beddard-Huber. PHOTO Randy Murray



Dr. Judy Illes. PHOTO Randy Murray



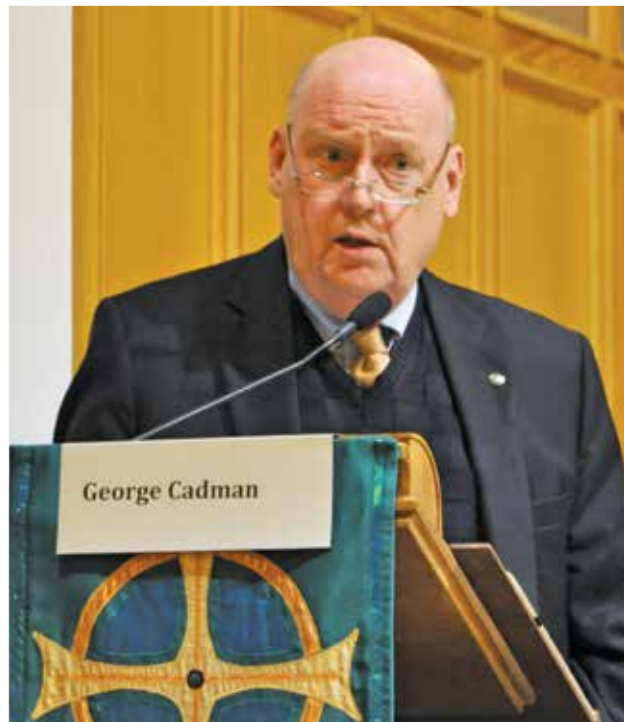
didn't really want to take on the Supreme Court of Canada but his thinking is that people in general don't understand palliative care. Also, the pro-PAD faction is not always in agreement, "Even true believers have their serious doubts." Dr. Crowell said that statistics recorded in other parts of the world with PAD show that there is a rising frequency in the number of unreported PAD interventions and that should raise concerns for Canadians.

As a pioneer and eminent scholar in the field of Neuroethics, Dr. Judy Illes spoke about how Neuroethics is very much at the root of how we make decisions and how we convey consent. She said there is nothing in ethics that is truly black and white. Statistics show that 40% to 50% of physicians are in favour of PAD but they don't want to do it themselves. She also pointed out that 81% of Canadians are for changes that favour PAD and that we need to remember

Dr. Philip Crowell and Dr. Pippa Hawley. PHOTO Randy Murray



George Cadman, QC. PHOTO Randy Murray



that protecting the right of the individual (their right to die) does not necessarily jeopardize the greater community. It is important to preserve our fundamental rights around how we make decisions.

Dr. Hawley made the point (supported later by Ms. Beddard-Huber) that there is a perception that PAD would become a part of Palliative Care medicine, and at the moment there are no systems in place for that to happen. Palliative Care physicians are excluded from participating in PAD; Palliative Care is not about hastening death. Palliative Care is still a young field and there is much more to learn about how medical professionals ease suffering at the end of life and help facilitate a natural death.

Amy Schuster reported that she has frequent conversations with patients who have recently received an ALS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

The Ethics of Death

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

diagnosis. Many believe that they will soon reach a time when they will not want to continue living, that they will be a burden to others, that they will not have value or contribute. This creates additional anxiety, anxiety that can be decreased by openly taking about what to expect. The desire for the patient with a catastrophic illness to immediately move toward PAD is about their maintaining control, and finding a “way out,” an end to the fear “that they will no longer contribute.” Ms. Schuster encourages patients to find meaning and purpose in their lives even in the shadow of their illness.

Ms. Beddard-Hubbard said that her work as a Palliative Care nurse is about “quality living until death,” and supporting dying as a natural process. A nurse’s moral responsibility is to alleviate suffering. Accessibility to care is of primary importance. She informed the audience that in Canada it is illegal for a nurse to participate in PAD.

After the experts spoke, Bishop Ingham thanked the panelists for their addresses and for “opening up the topic in its immense complexity.” He then invited the audience to participate. Those who wished to speak lined up at a microphone in the centre aisle. There were a number of physicians, including two oncologists; a pharmacist; a veterinarian; two nurses; and individuals with compelling personal stories about the deaths of loved ones. Those who spoke were on both sides of the issue but they all spoke with passion and knowledge and an understanding that not everyone is in agreement on PAD. There were also a number of questions that were answered by the panel and by Mr. Cadman.

The last person to speak was the incumbent MP for the riding, Joyce Murray who was asked to offer a response. Ms. Murray noted that she may or may not be in parliament

(she was running for re-election on October 19) when PAD is looked at in the legislature in early February 2016. She urged those in attendance to get involved in the process and make sure that all voices are heard as a mechanism is developed in the legislature regarding the implementation of PAD as the Supreme Court’s decision goes into effect.

As of this issue of *Topic* going to layout in late October

we know that Ms. Murray was successful in her bid to keep her seat. There have also been enquiries from other parishes about presenting PAD discussions in order to keep the Supreme Court’s suspended decision about PAD in front of the public and continue the conversation as February 6, 2016, is just around the corner. ✦

Folks line up at the mic for questions and comments. PHOTOS Randy Murray

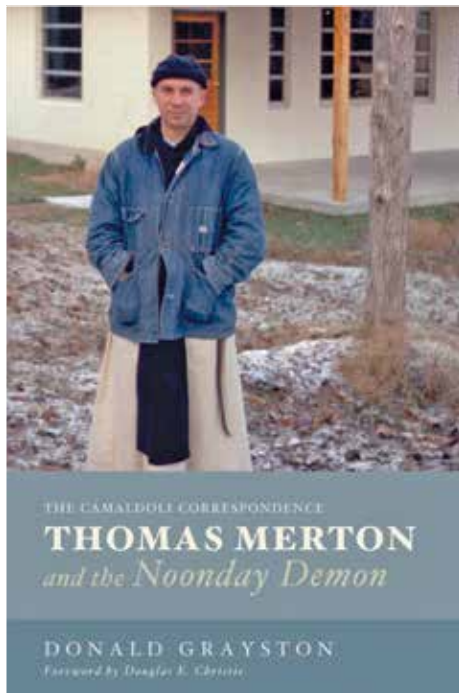


OPINION

Book Review

ANGUS STUART

Rector, St. Francis-in-the-Wood, Caulfeild



Thomas Merton and the Noonday Demon
The Camaldoli Correspondence

Written by Donald E. Grayston
Published by Cascade Books, Oregon 2015

Ostensibly this is a book that collects together and presents a hitherto unknown series of correspondence in the life of Thomas Merton, some of which has never been published before. That alone would make it of interest to diehard Thomas Merton readers, especially as the correspondence deals with a critical period in Merton’s life when he was wrestling with the question of whether to stay at his monastery in Kentucky or switch orders and join a hermit community in Italy. But the book is actually about a lot more than this, and in fact is of relevance to all of us who wrestle

with similar questions in our lives: should I stay, or should I go?

The book came about almost by accident when Donald Grayston, on retreat at the Camaldoli hermit community in Tuscany, was informed of a dossier there containing some letters from Thomas Merton from the early 1950s, and would he care to see them? Of course he did. Immediately it became apparent the extent to which Merton had been actively trying to move there. However, it was not as simple as that—he could not just up and leave—he would need the consent of the Abbot of his monastery as well as permission from the Church hierarchy. His Abbot was firmly of the opinion that it was not “the will of God” to make such a move and, in those days, his word *was* “the will of God.” Nevertheless Merton was determined to try, and so the intrigue begins.

How do we determine what “the will of God” is for us in our lives? What is our vocation, the calling of God in our lives? Where should we be, and what should we be doing? Questions that address all of us—implicitly or explicitly—in the journey of our lives. In the “interior forum,” Merton was firmly convinced that he had a call to greater solitude and a great attraction to what he perceived to be the life of a hermit. However, if this was to become a reality, it had to be confirmed in the “exterior forum” consisting of the views of others and specifically the question of permission, to which his Abbot in particular would have, at least, to assent. Did Merton really have a call to become a hermit at that time, and specifically at Camaldoli in Italy, or was this just his restless spirit that hungered for a change of scene?

Grayston uses the ancient paradigm of *acedia* as a way of interpreting what was going on in Merton’s heart at this criti-

cal time in his life. The various aspects of *acedia* are explored in the book, what it has meant in different periods of history from its personification as a demon in the time of the early Christian hermits in the desert (hence “the noonday demon”) through to how it might be interpreted from the point of view of contemporary psychology. The closest English equivalent to the Latin *acedia* is simply “restlessness,” though it is deeper and more nuanced than this ranging from a dis-ease that afflicts the soul through to a sin to which one may be tempted. Such aspects can be discerned in the correspondence, especially the letters written by Merton.

Indeed, in this correspondence we see Merton “warts and all,” and Grayston, to his credit in view of his great love of Merton, does not pull his punches when it comes to critiquing Merton’s methods and motives. Yet, paradoxically, Merton’s human fallibility (indeed, deviousness would not be too strong a word at times) does not diminish his appeal but makes the struggles that he goes through all the more identifiable with our own. As so often with Merton’s writings, especially his autobiographical writings including his journals and letters, a mirror is held up to our own lives, such that looking into the life of Merton, who was so open about his own struggles and challenges, we see a reflection of our own hearts. That is certainly my own experience and no doubt why I have been drawn to read him and continue to do so. I am sure many others would say the same.

Taking the initial clutch of letters he discovered at Camaldoli, Grayston has gone on to unearth much of the remaining correspondence relating to this complex tale (some letters are no longer extant though their content can be discerned from what

does remain), and from this he is able to unravel the complexity to create a clear and compelling narrative of what went down (and what didn’t). He uses *acedia* as an interpretive framework in which to contextualize the letters in the unfolding story of Merton’s life—or, as Grayston says, how Thomas Merton *became* Thomas Merton. This includes what happened before this period in Merton’s life (1952–1956) and, more importantly, what came after—in particular, another (unsuccessful) attempt Merton made later for a move elsewhere, and ultimately the move he made into greater solitude within the grounds of the monastery itself in the mid-1960s. The book culminates in the concluding chapter *Solitude and Love* in which Grayston penetrates to the depths of Merton’s very real call to deeper solitude and discovers in this the call to love. Merton’s call, certainly, no doubt Grayston’s as well, and definitely mine too.

Really, this is a great book. It is scholarly but not stuffy—a substantial contribution to Merton scholarship, but not just for seasoned aficionados of Merton; paradoxically it offers a very good introduction to Merton for those who have not read him before (especially given the brief guide to reading Merton at the beginning of the Bibliography at the end of the book). It is thorough and rigorous, and yet very accessible, full of insight and incisiveness, compassion and humour (there are “laugh out loud” moments), as well as some biting criticism of Merton. Above all, it is relevant: read this book, and I have no doubt you will find yourself addressed in its pages. I will be reading it again—especially that last chapter. ✦

OPINION

Christmas Reflections 2015

Last year, following the tragic murders of two Canadian military personnel, Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent and Corporal Nathan Cirillo, we sent out a request to a list of folks who had been regular contributors to Topic in the preceding year (plus a few months or years in some cases) and asked them to submit a brief reflection of 75 words answering the question, “What does Christmas mean to you now in 2014?” The idea was to offer them the chance to reflect on the Christmas message in the context of a world in travail. Predictably, a new year brought new challenges to the people on this planet among them the Syrian refugee crisis, which highlights the plight of all refugees, the overall environmental health of creation and many other issues that are of concern to followers of the Way. This year we asked the same question, “What does Christmas mean to you now in 2015?” • Editor

Here are some selected responses:



The Reverend Clare Morgan
St. Philip

Christmas reminds us that God did not choose to come among us as a vengeful warrior-king, but as a vulnerable infant. It calls us to remember both God’s promise of restoration and our commitment to nurturing the divine when it is found on the roadsides of our world.

Christmas is not sentimental. The Anointed One enters a world that smells of manure, is laid in a trough by his unmarried teenaged mother, and then whisked away as a refugee.

Madeleine L’Engle calls it the Glorious Impossible: that God chooses poverty, not wealth, to bridge the gap between humanity and divinity. ✦



Gilli McLaren
All Saints’ Mission

Christmas...

A time to remember the Christmases that have gone by and the joy that they brought, and the hope that the future will echo the happiness of the past.

A time of gratitude to be together with those you love, the preciousness of family and friends, and to miss those who have gone before us, wishing they were here.

A time to think about the homeless and the powerless, the hungry and the refugee, the cold and the comfortless; to pray for them and to ponder, if that is enough.

A time to reflect on the mystery of incarnation, of the meaning of the “Word made flesh,” and dwelling amongst us. ✦

Lyndon Grove
Christ Church Cathedral

January 1 is officially the start of a new year, but the true beginning, it has always seemed to me, comes at midnight December 24. There is a promise of new life and new possibilities — more, perhaps, than we can dream. So while I am enthusiastically in favor of December 31 bells and sirens and popping corks, it is Christmas that truly brings both reflection and anticipation. ✦

Leslie Buck
St. Paul’s

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ,” wrote St. John, expressing to us the profound significance of Christmas. St. Matthew introduced strangers from the east, and St. Luke shepherds in the field, to glorify a wonderful event. We too must see that God comes close to us: in the child fleeing war in Syria, the homeless man sleeping in the doorway of 7-eleven, the woman on a Pacific island watching the ocean creep every day closer to her home. God is seen also in you and I, and it is we, who by the grace that came through Jesus Christ can relieve these terrible situations. ✦

The Reverend Vivian Lam
St. Matthias—St. Luke

Christmas for me means finding “home.” Picture the Holy Family desperately seeking shelter in a strange town, settling into a place of “God-with-us” despite all odds. Christ born that night spoke hope into impossible circumstances, heralding God’s unmistakable presence in human lives. This Christmas message can still speak to us today who are feeling strangers and not quite “at home”—whether refugees fleeing a war-torn homeland, immigrants starting life in a new country, or those struggling with health, work, social, or other life challenges. Christmas invites us to find “home” in the miracle of God with us in any circumstance. ✦



People Look East

LESLIE BUCK
St. Paul’s

In the October 2015 issue of *Topic* Ruth Monette describes her reactions to celebrating the Eucharist with the priest facing eastward. As she observes, not so many people are accustomed nowadays to having the altar facing the wall. She also notes the difference that this made to her experience of encountering God. She concludes by urging us to be open to new experiences of this kind. No one will challenge that conclusion, but there is more to what she has to say than being receptive to new practices.

In times not too long past we always faced east, looking at the backs of the people in front of us and at the back of the priest. Occasionally, he (it was, of course, always a man) would turn to greet us with “The Lord be with you!” but otherwise we did not see much of his face. The reason was quite clear: God was up there somewhere beyond the east wall so we all had to look in that direction.

Change came when the altar was moved away from the wall and the priest suddenly appeared on the other side. This was not a mere moving of the furniture but was grounded in a profound change in theological perspective. The new perspective was expressed by, among others, John Robinson in his 1960s groundbreaking book *Honest to God*. God was not up there but down here: “Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us,” as the ancient Order of Compline puts it. The new vision was followed in due course

by more moving of the furniture, with the altar brought into the midst of the people.

With this regime change, the three-fold nature of the Eucharist became more apparent. A properly celebrated Eucharist requires three components: Scripture, Bread and Wine, and People. Reflecting on the history of the church, it seems to me that in Medieval times one component was emphasised too heavily, during the Reformation another, and only more recently have we come close to recovering what must have been the original balance.

The point came home to me, as is so often the case, with a real incident. Some 12 years ago a group of new immigrants to Canada, some dozen or so in number, arrived at our parish church. They had very little English between them but they wanted to contribute to our Eucharist, so the priest and music director arranged for them to sing a hymn in their own language as Communion was administered. Only they understood the words that they used but we all knew that God was being praised.

To me, everything seemed fine until an older parishioner complained that the singing disturbed her encounter with God as she received the Bread and Wine. As one, myself, of her generation, I knew exactly what she meant. Like so many of us, she had been taught that at that intense, and private moment no one should come between her and God. I understood her anguish, but I

“Other people are not a distraction—
they are an essential component of our encounter with God.”

realised that her reasoning was wrong.

Our churches fulfil two purposes: they provide us with shrines—locations where we can individually meet God at a particular time and place—and they are gathering places—locations where we can collectively meet God in each other. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between these two functions, but at Communion, when we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, “we, being many, are one body.” Other people are not a distraction—they are an essential component of our encounter with God. We are, in fact, praying to each other in order to pray to God; eye contact is needed (and bodily contact is helpful, too).

There are times when we need to be alone with God, and every church should have places marked by icons of one kind or another where that can happen (by icons I mean artefacts like a cross or image or even a bunch of flowers that focuses our attention). But in the Eucharist we are not alone, and neither should we be. There were at least 13 persons in the Upper Room (not counting the women who must have been present even though the Gospel writers

Leslie Buck. PHOTO Randy Murray



did not bother to mention them) and they were vigorously interacting with each other. In the Eucharist we should do the same. ✦

Leslie Buck can be reached by email at elbuck@axion.net



Diocesan Youth Movement

YOUTH CONNECTIONS

News & Events for Youth in the Diocese of New Westminster

youth groups •

For Parish Youth Groups go to <http://tinyurl.com/DNW-Youth>

contact • Caitlin Reilley Beck,
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Youth Work as Hospitality

LAUREN ODILE PINKNEY

Youth Worker, St. Albans Anglican Church, Burnaby

Meeting human need is a huge part of working with young people. Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* defines basic human need as being food, drink, shelter and safety. In our churches many of the young people come from economically stable homes, with plenty of food and parents who are able to meet the wide variety of needs of adolescents. Yet we cannot rely on this being true for all families. As we expand our work with young people, we are faced with the overwhelming and diverse needs of those in our communities. When I began working with young people, who came from a variety of backgrounds, I saw that it was necessary to meet these needs first in youth ministry. This issue has stayed with me through my education in youth work and theology. I believe that hospitality is sharing what we have to tend to another's most immediate needs; for me, this is an expression of love. As a Christian and a youth worker, I believe that it is my responsibility to reflect the outpouring of Christ's love by showing and teaching hospitality in the community.

Hospitality is a way that our calling to love others can manifest in our daily lives and in our ministry. But hospitality should not demand giving in return, it is free of

charge, no strings attached; Love. Hospitality is an invitation to accompany a person for a time, to make space for them, and this is at the heart of our work with young people; making space for them in our churches and lives as we empower them on their spiritual journey and sojourn through life.

This understanding manifested itself in my work through the provision of a meal, and a safe and sheltered environment of mutual respect for young people. As I began this work, I came to see the intricacy of the informal education that intertwines with human need in this process. Through the cooking and food preparation, the young people were enjoying themselves as they were learning cooking skills and healthy eating. Through the preparation of the table, they learnt to serve one another. They were learning the skills to build community and grow an understanding of love for one another, which is a transformative experience. In sharing a meal together, young people are experiencing something that Jesus and his disciples did together, this in turn deepens our understanding of the Eucharist and how it embraces the whole community. The preparation and sharing of a meal can cultivate young people's practical skills as well as their understanding of community and love, all through this practice of hospitality. This learning all happens in an informal way that opens it up to young people of various ages and abilities.

Informal education is education that happens outside of conventional educational contexts. Its purpose is to nurture communities and relationships and in this way to promote human flourishing. The simple act of sitting down at a meal and sharing food and conversation encourages us to meet the individual where they are in their journey, time and context.

Hospitality is more than making someone a meal and sharing it together, it is the meeting of human need. Not just the basic needs, but those that are met through our interactions with other human beings. As we extend hospitality to young people in youth work, many human needs are met: relationships, self-esteem, friendship, achievement, acceptance, creativity and morality. Meeting these needs can empower young people on their spiritual journey. Expressing creativity, exploring self-esteem, questioning and discovering morality, each of these can be part of a good youth ministry curriculum, because they are all important needs of young people and a natural part of adolescence. By making them a part of our ministry, we show hospitality and care for young people. Sallie McFague describes *kenosis* as an outpouring of love, encouraging others to love because we are loved, and to value the diversity and dignity of all people. This is my calling in hospitality, and I hope it is for others too.

There are so many opportunities to show hospitality in our daily lives, with our family, friends, the oppressed, those in need, and all those we work with in our ministry. Hospitality is both a challenge and an opportunity. It does not solve every problem, but it is an affirmation of our call to love our neighbor as ourselves, it is an offering of love, and this is our mandate for youth work. ✠



A Christmas Carol in Burnaby

The Diocesan Arts Ministry—aka *Sheep and Goats*—will present a musical adaptation of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* on Thursday, December 10 at 7 pm; Friday December 11 at 7 pm; and Saturday December 12, 2015 at 2 pm and 7 pm at St. Timothy (4550 Kitchener Street) in Burnaby. Proceeds will go towards local ministry at St. Timothy's and affordable housing initiatives.

An experienced cast of 10 youth from within the diocese who have performed together in various Diocesan Arts Ministry productions, including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat* (2013), and the most recent production of *Oliver!* this past spring, along with some newcomers as well. Half of the cast members performed in the first Diocesan Arts Ministry production of *A Christmas Carol* in 2013 at St. Augustine's Anglican Church in Marpole, and got the opportunity to try out new characters this time around. As our ghosts, Ben Hutchings will be performing Jacob Marley, Emma Jang will be the Ghost of Christmas Past, Christopher Mortenson and Adana Avon will be performing the Ghosts of Christmas Present, and Myriam Dykstra will be the Ghost of Christmas yet to come. Claudia Hill will be playing Cratchit, a hardworking single mother of a sickly, yet hopeful, Tiny Tim played by Margot Hutchings. Arwen Loh will be Fezziwig, Harriet Dykstra will be playing the always gleeful and optimistic Fred (Winifred), Scrooge's only living relative, and the curmudgeonly Scrooge will be performed by Anika Robertson.

Ms. Heather Robertson, producer, said, "A cast of primarily female performers generated interesting challenges in this year's production, since most of the characters were originally male. Having a female cast member portray Scrooge leads to an interesting dynamic in this modern

retelling of Dickens's classic story."

This is the third time the Diocesan Arts Ministry has produced *A Christmas Carol*, and each time brings new focus to the issue of affordable housing in the Lower Mainland in a modern retelling of Charles Dickens's classic novella. In this year's production Phil Colvin, who adapted the story, has highlighted issues of affordable housing in Burnaby and New Westminster. The production features an original score composed by the Rev. David Taylor.

For further information, contact Lizz Laurence at office@sainttimothy.ca or at 604.299.6816. ✠

Scrooge (Anika Robertson on left) being tormented by the minions of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come: Emma Jang, Harriet Dykstra, Claudia Hill, Ben Hutchings, and Margot Hutchings. PHOTO Randy Murray



Minions of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Back row: Christopher Mortenson, Margot Hutchings, Ben Hutchings, Harriet Dykstra, Emma Jang, Claudia Hill, and Adana Avon, tormenting Scrooge, Anika Robertson (centre). PHOTO Randy Murray



Here comes a Ghost! Harriet Dykstra, Emma Jang, and Claudia Hill at *A Christmas Carol* rehearsal. PHOTO Randy Murray

