



## IN THIS ISSUE



## Indigenous Justice Circle • First Meeting

PAGES 8 – 10



Welcome to Canada

PAGE 19



New Companion Diocese proposed

PAGES 12 – 15

## Welcome St. Mary Magdalene

PAM MARTIN

St. Mary Magdalene



LEFT The worshipping community of the Parish of St. Mary Magdalene, January 31, 2016. RIGHT TOP & RIGHT BOTTOM The members of St. Mary Magdalene relax after the group shoot. PHOTOS Randy Murray

Many of us who live in the temperate rainforest of the West Coast are familiar with *nurse logs*: fallen trunks of forest giants nourishing and sustaining a new generation of trees rooted in the life-giving richness of the old trees that are decaying and returning to the earth from which they grew. It's a rich illustration of the natural cycle of new and abundant life being nourished by the passing of former generations, and it is a metaphor from which the parishes of St. George's, Vancouver and St. Mark's, Kitsilano have found a vision for the future in the new Parish of St. Mary Magdalene, born from their merger.

The journey towards this new beginning began over 20 years ago, when St. George's, facing an aging facility and congregation made the courageous and visionary choice to tear down the church building and build St. George's Place, a building which included a worship space, and housing for people facing physical or economic disabilities. The facility included two transitional suites for people moving from rehabilitation into independent living from the nearby Vancouver General Hospital and GF Strong facilities.

While the project was underway, the congregation of St. George's joined with St. Mark's, and after they'd moved to their new facility, the two churches continued to share a priest. This partnership soon expanded to become the Jubilee Cluster, a five year project of shared ministry and resources which also included St. Michael's, located near the East Vancouver intersection of Broadway and Kingsway, and St. Chad's located in the Arbutus Basin. With the ending of the *Cluster* the two communities continued to share a priest, the Rev. John Marsh, as well as office support and outreach projects.

At the end of 2012, it became clear that the St. Mark's congregation would no longer be able to worship in their church building in Kitsilano. The St. George's community generously voted to invite them use their worship space. With all this shared history it would seem to be a natural step, but shared history is always complex, and includes (if

we are honest) mutual frustrations, suspicions and lingering resentments, alongside the shared joys and fellowship. So it took a leap of faith for St. George's to make the offer, and another for St. Mark's to accept and vote to relocate their worshipping community to 2950 Laurel Street, St. George's Place, as of March 1, 2013.

While the two churches were similar in theology, St. Mark's brought with them a different liturgical tradition — and the bells, altar, font, tabernacle, banners, icons, candles, etc. . . to support it. At first the St. Mark's folks loaded everything into a van after their service each week and took it back to St. Mark's church building to store, but St. George's successfully set about finding room in their limited storage space. And so began the hard work of weaving two beloved communities into a new creation: working at the basic details of living together, learning how to listen to each other, getting beyond assumptions and learning to appreciate and respect each other. John Marsh, who shepherded the two communities through the process as their priest-in-charge, quips that if either one had known what they were getting into, they might have had second thoughts. "It's been like a blended family learning to share one bathroom and one fridge," he observed.

After a year of parallel governance and meetings, both communities were discovering the benefits of their increasingly shared existence, as new ministries and midweek worship were initiated and new people were discovering the community. At the Annual Vestry meeting in 2014, they voted to begin the process of merging and elected a joint parish council. In June they decided to try a summer-long experiment of a single Sunday worship service, working their way through the potentially divisive, practical questions such as: *What time do we gather? What do we sing? And Eucharistic elements: bread or wafers, red or white?* By the end of the summer the liturgy had evolved into something that included traditions of both, but embodied something new, shaped by the physical space, the people gathering

for worship and the creative nudges of the Holy in their midst. It was obvious where the Spirit was leading—it was too much work to remain separate. With one bank account, one council and one Sunday liturgy much of the groundwork for a merger was complete.

While the official, institutional process of a formal merger was catching up with the lived reality of the community another question kept arising: *What are we to call ourselves? St. George/St. Mark? St. Mark/St. George? Or something new?* Many in the congregation had joined since the two churches had come together, and the name question was confusing. In addition to some combination of the names of the founding parishes, several other names were suggested, a significant majority of them of female saints or images of the Divine. After months of discussion and discernment, polling and prayer, a clear choice emerged: a new name for a new creation — *St. Mary Magdalene*.

Jade Martin Seedhouse, a young woman from the congregation, suggested the name because she believes that Mary Magdalene must have been an important member of the disciples of Jesus, so much so that generations of patriarchy could not erase her name. She was a model of courage and strength in the face of the hostile forces of the "powers that be," even to the foot of the cross, and she remained faithful in the face of apparent defeat in the death of Jesus.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett says, "In the Christian tradition Mary Magdalene holds a special place. She is often called the 'First Apostle' as the first person, female or male, to see the risen Christ and to be given a charge to proclaim that message to others. Her witness to the raising of Jesus from the dead forms the foundation of the church's primary message: life, not death, is God's last word to the creation."

With a new name chosen a new logo was created by Pam Martin and realized by Neil Seedhouse. It includes a stylized, intertwining cross derived from the motifs in the Ethiopian processional cross that graces the sanctuary of St.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



# Bishop Melissa Skelton's Easter Message 2016

On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened. • Luke 24: 1 – 12

My older sister, mother of twins, a boy and a girl, tells this story. One summer evening the family was talking about a trip they wanted to take to a local amusement park the next day. This was the kind of park with merry-go-rounds, bumper cars and Ferris wheels. As they were discussing their plans, the boy, the more cautious of the twins, began to twitch.

Seeing this, his mother asked him, "Son, what's wrong?" He answered: "I might be afraid to go on the merry-go-round. I might be afraid to go on the bumper cars. I might be afraid to go on the Ferris wheel."

My sister, his mother, well acquainted with her son's fears and capacities, put her arm around him and said, "Go ahead and feel the fear, my son. Feel the fear, and do it anyway."

I tell this story because of the four Gospel accounts of the resurrection, only one, the one in the Gospel of Luke, describes the women visiting the tomb as being so terrified when they discover the empty tomb and find two men in dazzling clothes standing beside them, that they collapse and bow their faces down to the ground.

They collapse and bow their faces down to the ground. And who wouldn't?

Who wouldn't collapse with terror upon discovering that what they had believed was true, what they had seen with their own eyes, was not true? Who wouldn't collapse with terror at the appearance of a shining new revelation right beside them, a revelation that would mean a complete reorientation of their lives? Who wouldn't collapse with fear when a quiet, well-intentioned trip to the tomb to tend to the body of their dead friend turned into an encounter with a new way of freedom and life?

And so Easter should first scare us silly, should first scare us into collapsing, before it takes us to another place. Easter is about disorientation before it is about reorientation. Easter is about getting in touch with our deepest fears before accessing the freedom from fear and newness of life that the resurrection is really all about.

And so I wonder this Easter: where are you encountering something or someone in your life or in the broader world that so challenges your assumptions, that so disrupts your quiet visit to the tomb that you want to collapse with fear? Similarly, where in your parish or in the broader church are your expectations of a peaceful "business-as-usual" life being so upended that you feel immobilized?

When I visit parishes in our diocese, this is what I hear people saying about what they find challenging, disruptive and fear-producing:

- Unexpected events in their family lives and work lives, things happening that they had not foreseen. Changes in their own health or the health of those they love.
- Living in a society and a culture that no longer assumes or supports church attendance, worry about the survival

- of their parishes.
- The ups and downs in the Anglican Church as it continues to work through difficult questions and issues; the upcoming General Synod and the decisions to be made there about a potential change in the marriage canon.

In all these things, it would be easy to respond as the women in Luke's Gospel do: in the face of our disrupted expectations, to find ourselves face-forward on the ground unable to move.

And so we need to know what got the women in Luke's Gospel back on their feet. We need to know what the two men in gleaming robes said to the women that raised them from being face-first on the ground and sent them on their way.

Did the men speak that ever-familiar Biblical phrase "Be not afraid" to them? Did the men tell the women to set aside their terror, the same way that in Luke's Gospel the angel Gabriel told Mary to lay aside her terror at the news that she would bear the holy child of God? Did the men tell the women not to be afraid the same way that in Luke's Gospel the heavenly hosts told the terrified shepherds not to be afraid when they heard the announcement of the birth of the Messiah?

The answer to these questions is "no." The men in gleaming robes do not tell the women not to be afraid. Rather they ask them a question: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" They also tell them to remember: "He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again?"

And so it's out of this confrontational question and out of this reminder of Jesus's own words that the women choose to act. They choose to get up and tell the others about what they have seen and what they now know to be true.

It would be easy to think that Easter is about our gaining freedom from death, for at the core of the Easter story is the story of the One who died and was not able to be contained by the tomb. But the story of the women who witness Jesus' death, the women who are so terrified by the empty tomb that they bow their faces down to the ground, is the story of those who, through the power of the resurrection, begin to enact a new freedom and a new life even while they may still be afraid.

"Freedom from fear, not freedom from death is the achievement of the resurrection," said the late renowned preacher Peter Gomes. "Freedom from fear, not freedom from death."

The problem that many of us have is not that we fear death; it's that we fear life. Being an Easter Christian means that we, by the grace of God, are able to live more boldly in the face of our fears. It means that we are able to live

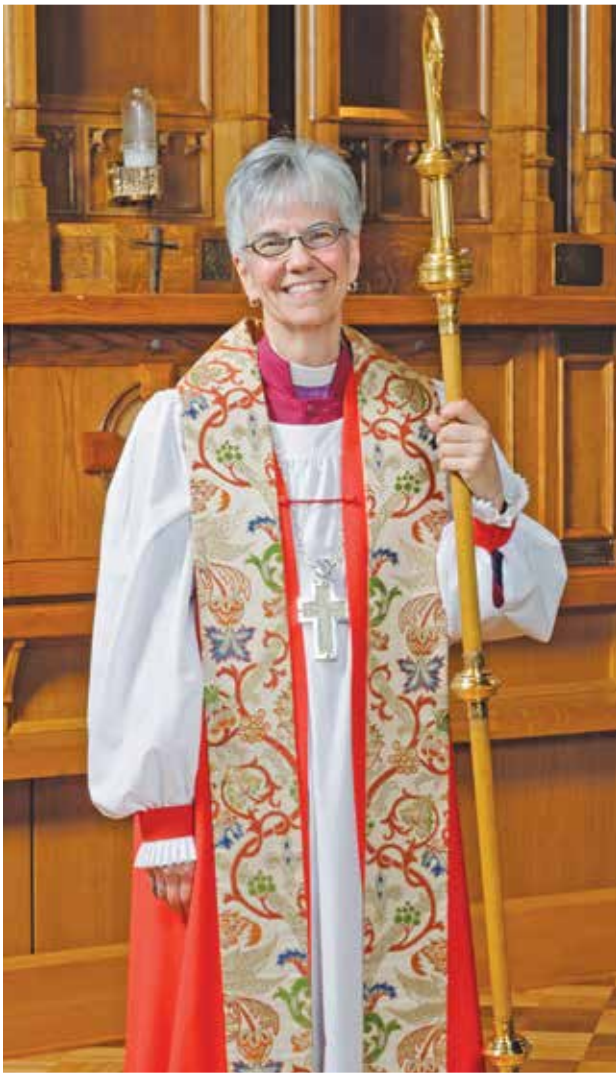


PHOTO Bayne Stanley

less of the time with our faces bowed down to the ground. It means that we are able to act, even while we may still be afraid.

Peter Gomes puts it this way: "Christ went to the cross; we need not fear the cross. Christ went to the grave; we need not fear the grave. Christ has gone into the future; we need not fear the future. Christ inhabits life; we need not fear life."

While I love and respect what Peter Gomes has said, I find that I gravitate to and am inspired by what my sister said to her son: "Go ahead and feel the fear, my son. Feel the fear, and do it anyway."

This Easter, my prayer for us all is *not* that we will no longer fear what is going on in our lives, in our world or in our churches. Instead, my prayer is that we will not allow ourselves to be bowed down and paralyzed by fear. For the One who has triumphed over death has opened for us the way of freedom and life. All we need to do is to remember what he said and to get up and follow him. ✠

*In Christ,  
+ Melissa*

Cited and drawn upon for some of the thought in this piece:

Peter Gomes, "Easter: When Life Begins" in *Sermons: Biblical Wisdom for Daily Living*.

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### The Bishop of New Westminster

The Rt. Rev. Melissa M. Skelton

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**Thank you!**





The New Logo designed by Pam Martin.



A computer generated sign to be actualized by a new sign in front of the worship space at 2950 Laurel Street. Neil Seedhouse created the image.



Ethiopian Cross. PHOTO Pam Martin

## Welcome St. Mary Magdalene

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Mary Magdalene's. As the two "Ms" interlock, supported by the cross, so the two founding churches have come together, supported by the cross, to become a new creation.

St. Mark's bright, modern church building at 1805 Larch Street will soon be renamed St. Mark's Place. It continues to operate under the stewardship of an appointed Board of Trustees chaired by the Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett, Regional Dean of Granville, and serves the neighbourhood of Kitsilano. Tenth Avenue Alliance Church uses the space as their worship and community ministry home in Kitsilano, and the Extreme Weather Shelter, a Montessori preschool, 12 Step groups, musical theatre classes, Scouting groups, Tai Chi, concerts and meditation groups continue

to find a welcome in this centre of Anglican ministry.

In the closing weeks of 2015, the Trustees of the corporations of St. Mark's and of St. George's approved the necessary resolutions to allow the creation of a new parish, named for the "First Apostle" and on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, Bishop Melissa Skelton declared the establishment of the Parish of St. Mary Magdalene, located at 2950 Laurel Street in Vancouver at St. George's Place.

A new community, a new creation, has sprung up, nourished and sustained by the ending of two historic parishes that nurtured the lives and faith of their communities for over a century. Rich soil indeed, and the promise of new life realized, if we have the courage to claim it. ✠



A Nurse Log. PHOTO Kristine Bougie



Dear Topic Readers

You can help communicate the **Good News of the Resurrection** by passing onto 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](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/find-a-church).

There are 66 easy to access parish pages grouped in 11 deanery sections with regional location information clearly indicated by the entry graphics and detailed location information for each parish. Many of the parish pages will also include specific listings for Lent/Holy Week/Easter Day worship and events.

From Palm Sunday, March 20 through to Easter Day, March 27 many people who live in, or are visiting the towns, villages and cities within the boundaries of the diocese of New Westminster will be looking to find a welcoming location for Easter worship.

Please help spread the word, inviting everyone to participate.

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**



### THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

*compiled by Anglican Archivist Melanie Delva*

- 25 years • 1991** Diocese endorses Whistler Interfaith Chapel with support from 15 other religious and community organizations.
- 30 years • 1986** Vancouver parishes help resettle Vietnamese, Afghani and Guatemalan refugees.
- 35 years • 1981** Primate Ted Scott takes his sabbatical in the diocese of New Westminster — spending time in the Vancouver School of Theology.





The Sanctuary Party, in place following the procession listens to Cathedral Choir sing verse four of *Christ is Made the Sure Foundation*. PHOTO Randy Murray

## Requiem Eucharist for The Right Reverend James (Jim) David Cruickshank

Saturday, January 16, 2016, at Christ Church Cathedral

The entire upper level of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver was filled to capacity by 3 pm, January 16, for Bishop Jim Cruickshank's Requiem Eucharist. Hundreds of people gathered to worship together in the church where Jim had been dean and rector, and more recently a parishioner and respected elder. In the words of Jim's colleague, friend and recent pastor, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott this congregation had gathered to "commend (to God) Jim, our beloved teacher, pastor, bishop and friend."

Many more gathered around their computer screens and mobile devices to participate in the liturgy via the live streaming online broadcast produced by Christ Church Cathedral staff and consultants. Thirty attended a live screening event at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale, a parish where Jim had in recent years served as Honorary Assistant and had made a lasting impact on a cohort of "college and careers" seekers who met weekly in his home.

The liturgy began with the procession, and the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster reciting the solemn words, "I am the resurrection and the life says the Lord..." as bells were rung gently beneath the sound of her voice. She was followed by the sanctuary party, the assembled bishops, the family, the casket and pallbearers.

Prior to the singing of the first hymn, *Christ is Made the Sure Foundation*, Bishop Skelton gathered the community with words of welcome. During the singing of the hymn, the congregation stopped singing as per the instruction in the order of service and Cathedral Choir sang verse four.

Here vouch-safe to all thy servants  
what they ask for they to gain,  
what they gain from the forever with the blessed to retain  
and hereafter in the glory  
evermore with thee to reign.

The readings that Bishop Jim chose were: *Genesis 28: 10–19; Ephesians 4: 1–16; and Mark 8: 27–9: 1*. The other hymns he chose were: *How Great Thou Art; Ubi Caritas* (during the Intercessions); *Alleluia Sing to Jesus; Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*; and following the Doxology members of Cathedral Choir led the singing of Rupert Lang's *Kontakion*. Bishop Jim was a great admirer of Rupert and of that composition in particular. All the music chosen invited congregational participation, not surprising considering that Bishop Jim was an outspoken and active champion of the ministry of the laity. The music was beautiful and the participation by the congregation was enthusiastic.

The homily offered by the Dean of the diocese and rector of Christ Church Cathedral, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott was a brief but poignant and moving look at this (in the words of an admirer posting her comments on social media) "good and faithful servant... this dear Christian man."

In the first paragraph of his sermon (available in its entirety on the following page of this issue of *Topic*), Dean Peter said, "In his clearly articulated directions for this funeral liturgy, Jim indicated 'no eulogy,' and requested that I preach. Of course I will respect his request but how can we not speak about him today. So I'm grateful to the many of you who responded and sent me a few words expressing

the Gospel according to Jim. I received over 50 emails with quotes and remembrances from so many of you describing how you heard the gospel from Jim: and it's been a very moving experience to read them all."

Dean Peter had sent out a request with the announcement of the details of the Requiem Eucharist asking people to send in a 25 word message sharing something that they had heard Jim say that had resonated with them or something that had stayed with them that they had learned from Jim. These reminiscences ranged from the report of when Jim was asked during an episcopal election what his

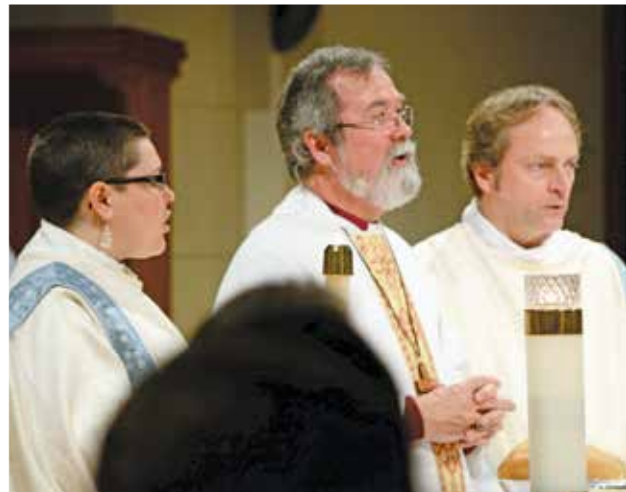
theology was, and he replied, "Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so," to the phrase he often used that defined how he viewed our covenant with God, "I am your God, you are my people, I will love you forever, I will never let you go."

The Prayers of the People were led by six individuals, all with a strong connection to Jim's ministry: the Rev. Louise Peters, current Executive Director of Sorrento Centre; the Rt. Rev. Gordon Light, retired Bishop Suffragan of the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior; the Rev. Helen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



Bishop Skelton gathers the community at Christ Church Cathedral. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The congregation sings the Offertory Hymn. RIGHT The deacon, the Rev. Clare Morgan; the celebrant, the Most Rev. John Privett; and the MC, Vincent Carey sing the Sanctus during the Eucharistic Prayer. PHOTO Randy Murray



# The Gospel According to Jim

Sermon Preached by the Very Reverend Peter Elliott, January 16, 2016

In his clearly articulated directions for this funeral liturgy, Jim indicated “no eulogy,” and requested that I preach. Of course I will respect his request but how can we not speak about him today. So I’m grateful to the many of you who responded and sent me a few words expressing the Gospel according to Jim. I received over 50 emails with quotes and remembrances from so many of you describing how you heard the gospel from Jim: and it’s been a very moving experience to read them all.

What’s been amazing to me, but shouldn’t be surprising, is the consistency of what Jim taught. His presentation of the gospel was rooted in scripture, verified by his own journey, and seasoned with experience. At its heart, the gospel according to Jim can be summed up by one phrase which was repeated over and over again by so many who responded: “I am your God, You are my People, I will never stop loving you, I will never let you go.” This simple but profound expression of covenant theology was the heart of the Gospel according to Jim. As Bill Crockett expressed it, “The centre of the Gospel for Jim was God’s gift of grace. God loves us and accepts us unconditionally as a free gift of grace in Jesus Christ.”

This is the good news, news that’s so good that people can’t believe it’s true but it is. As Jim said, there is nothing we can do to make God love us more, and nothing we can do to make God love us less: God doesn’t know what it means not to forgive. It’s why, in his prayers, he always addressed the holy one as “gracious God.”

This open and inclusive theology was undergirded with a characteristic self-deprecating humour, and his light heartedness shone through so many of the stories that people recounted. For example, in his materials submitted prior to election as Bishop of Cariboo, his response to the question “describe your theology,” Jim simply wrote, “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

Or how about this one: when he served as Dean here, one day standing outside the cathedral, Jim was approached by a young woman asking if he wanted company. When he turned and she saw his clergy collar, she quickly apologized. But he responded graciously: “Oh, do you work this corner too?”

And then there was this story: after an ordination, Jim greeted the newly ordained young man at the door of the church with the words, “You will now receive the traditional greeting for all clergy: “Got twenny bucks, Rev’nd?”

In his speaking and preaching Jim used very homely

examples. In an address on the passage from the letter to the Ephesians that was read earlier he was critical of what he referred to as the two swimming pool concept. This was the view held by some Christians that there is one swimming pool with clean and beautiful water and there’s another ugly old pool with dirty water and those of us “Christians” who are in the clean pool are fishing for Christ and so we pluck people out of the dirty pool and put them into the clean pool when they get saved and become our kind. This two pool theology did not appeal to Jim: he believed that there’s just one great big pool and God sent his only Son to come into that pool as incarnate God to redeem and save us all. But after expressing that, he said something even more radical: that because both the two pool and the one pool theologies exist in the church what we’re called to do is to love each other despite our differences. That’s inclusive theology. As Archbishop Douglas Hambidge put it, “Jim’s Gospel was all-embracing, all inclusive. There were no exceptions, and no outsiders, because for him this reflected God as Jim understood God.”

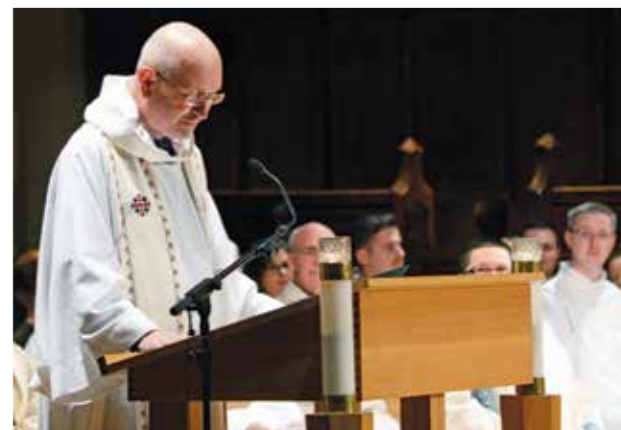
Jim loved questions. He thought questions were, in many ways, more important than answers because questions get us thinking, get us talking and he loved nothing more than a robust theological discussion. Amongst his favourite questions are:

- How generous are you prepared to allow God to be?
- How do you love someone with whom you profoundly disagree?
- What truth do you want to be during your one life on this earth?
- How are you going to live out the meaning of your baptism?

Good questions, searching question — questions you can ponder for a lifetime.

His view of baptism was orthodox yet radical. Baptism, he taught, is counter to the ways of the world. The world says that we are born, we live and we die. But the Christian way understands it another way: we are born, we die at our baptism — buried in the living water of Christ... to live freely now and with Christ forever. We are born, we die and we live into eternity and nothing can separate us from that love. So if you’re free to die, Jim taught, you’re free to live and to give yourself over to serve the world God loves.

Archbishop John Privett remembered a youth conference Jim addressed in 1978, with the theme *Choose Life*. Jim invited the young people there — and how he loved to



Dean Elliott prepares to deliver the homily at the Requiem Eucharist for his friend, the Rt. Rev. Jim Cruickshank, January 16, 2016. PHOTO Randy Murray

work with young people — to hear the call to choose the world, to choose Christ and to choose the church. His were words to shape a life by, wrote John, and how many lives were shaped by Jim’s powerful presentation of the gospel.

The gospel according to Jim: God gave him a dream, just as God gave Jacob a dream of seeing a connection between earth and heaven. God gave him a message to proclaim of the giftedness of all the beloved baptized. And God gave him, as the gospel reading Jim chose — not surprisingly from Mark’s gospel — an experience of suffering both in his faithful and attentive listening to the pain of Indigenous People in the residential schools, and in his struggles with his health in the last couple years of his life. In a profound way he knew in his experience, the meaning of Jesus words, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” That he did, faithfully because he believed, with all his heart and soul the words that we heard from him so often, “I am your God, You are my People, I will never stop loving you, I will never let you go.”

So it is to that God that today we commend Jim, our beloved teacher, pastor, bishop and friend. In his baptism he was marked as Christ’s own forever. And he would want us, this day, to be so strengthened by this Eucharist that each of us would be empowered to take our part in the healing of the world, to see in each person the image of Christ, and to know that we, like him, by God’s good grace are Christ’s own forever and ever and ever and ever and ever. Amen. ✠

## Requiem Eucharist for The Right Reverend James (Jim) David Cruickshank

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Hill, priest associate during his time as dean of the Cathedral; the Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, currently Principal of Vancouver School of Theology; Thomas Roach, close friend of Jim’s, program presenter at Sorrento Centre; the Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark-King, Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral; and the Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon, the Most Rev. John Privett. Archbishop Privett also celebrated the Eucharist.

After the singing of the *Kontakion* the bishops in attendance gathered around the casket and the Rt. Rev. Barbara Andrews, Bishop Suffragan of the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior (APCI — the parishes that were former members of the diocese of Cariboo) presided at the Commendation:

Gracious God nothing in death or life in the world as it is or the

world as it shall be nothing in all creation can separate us from your love.

We commend Jim into your loving care. Enfold him in the arms of your mercy. Bless him in his dying and in his rising again in you. Bless those whose hearts are filled with sadness that they too may know the hope of resurrection for the sake of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Go forth Jim on your journey from this world in the love of God the Father who created you in the mercy of Jesus the Redeemer who suffered for you in the power of the Holy Spirit who keeps you in life eternal.

May you dwell this day in peace and rest in the presence of God.

On Friday, February 12, which is just after this issue of *Topic* went to press, the Central Interior family and friends were scheduled to gather at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Kamloops to

give thanks to God for the extraordinary life and servant ministry of Bishop Jim. Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Archbishop John Privett and others from outside of the Central Interior were scheduled to attend. This date was selected, as it is the closest day to the anniversary date of his consecration as Bishop of Cariboo on February 9, 1992.

In honour of Bishop Jim’s legacy as Bishop of Cariboo and his ministry throughout the church, a *Legacy Fund in memory of Bishop Jim Cruickshank*, has been set up in the APCI Investment Fund. Donations can be made to the APCI office (360 Nicola Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 2P5), clearly marked with: *Memory of Bishop Jim*. For more information contact the APCI office at [apci@shaw.ca](mailto:apci@shaw.ca).

There are also plans for a Memorial Service to be held at Sorrento Centre in the summer of 2016. More details will be circulated as they become available. ✠



The Communion Administrators. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Commendation. PHOTO Randy Murray



# Clergy Day on Adult Christian Formation

RANDY MURRAY  
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Approximately 75 clergy of the diocese of New Westminster attended a Clergy Day hosted and facilitated by Bishop Melissa Skelton on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, in the main conference room of the Synod offices at 1410 Nanton Avenue.

The theme for the day was: *Our hearts are burning within us—Renewing adult Christian formation in the parish.*

After Morning Prayer and some gathering time, the Clergy Day got underway about 10:30 am. Bishop Skelton began by asking about what kinds of adult Christian formation are taking place in the faith communities represented by the clergy present. She also supplied some definitions about what constitutes Christian formation, formal and informal. For Bishop Skelton, adult Christian formation is a key element of parish development, parish health and subsequently parish growth. In the first handout distributed, Bishop Skelton wrote: “Christian formation is at the core of the purpose of a parish church/faith community. God is always the ultimate source of all formation. Our (clergy) role is to assist God in God’s work of the formation of God’s own people.”

The plenary then turned their chairs and broke up into small discussion groups to report back with some questions to be looked at about adult Christian formation.

The Rev. Ruth Monette, Director for Mission and Ministry Development and Ministry Resource Associate, Tasha Carrothers staffed the flipcharts in order to make a record of the ideas offered by the group. Following the enthusiastic submissions of ideas, Bishop Skelton looked out at the group and said, “We have all the resources we need in this room.” Bishop Skelton then went into more detail about adult Christian formation, referring to the content on the first few pages of two flipcharts. These flipcharts contained information and diagrams describing and illustrating adult Christian formation models, the parish as a *system* with the following “points to remember.”

- We are forming all the time
- The importance of *Intentionality*
- We work to supply access to learning experiences for our people in worshipping communities to *grow up in Christ* (maturity)

In her more detailed examination of parish systems, Bishop Skelton said that it is important to *nurture the core* of the worshipping community. Quiet Days, Contemplative Prayer and other kinds of spiritual growth programming are not for everyone, but those who wish to explore that path should be “fed” and their subsequent personal spiritual growth may very well strengthen the entire community.

Following this exercise, Ruth displayed a *Christian formation in parishes matrix* and offered some examples of adult Christian formation activities that produce holistic results; for example, the parish group working on a Food Bank initiative gathers together after doing that work for a theological reflection, asking the question, “Did we see the face of Christ in those we served today?” Or, that the Server team (Sanctuary Party members) spend some time in directed discussion about how learning more about the liturgy and being involved as an active participant in liturgy changes their relationship with God. She encouraged the clergy to consider the role of lay leaders in Christian formation and to consider asking lay leaders to lead in an adult Christian formation activity such as hosting a Christian education program or facilitating Bible study.

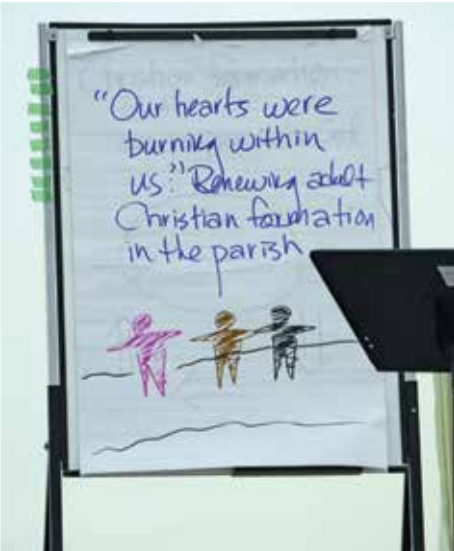
Bishop Skelton joined Ruth, and they asked the clergy to form groups of three or four to respond to two questions:

1. On a 1–5 scale what is your level of intentionality around adult Christian formation in your parish?
2. If you had one wish to strengthen adult formation in your parish, what would it be?

A feature of the morning session was a panel made up of four rectors and a vicar from around the diocese who are engaged in different ways of bringing adult Christian formation to their parishes. This sharing of information was a good way of continuing the discussion about strengthening adult Christian formation by sharing some current practices.

The panel consisted of: the Rev. Allen Doerksen, rector of St. Matthew’s; the Rev. Jessica Schaap, rector of St. Paul’s; the Rev. Faun Harriman, rector of St. Alban, Burnaby; the Rev. David Taylor, rector of St. Dunstan’s; and the Rev. Andrew Halladay, vicar of St. Augustine’s.

Allen said that their parish is focusing on classic Anglican values. They have an Anglican practice group that meets on Wednesdays and the energy from those sessions



LEFT The title page welcomes the clergy to the main conference room at the Synod offices. RIGHT Conversation prior to Bishop Skelton’s opening address. PHOTOS Randy Murray



In the opening session Bishop Skelton spoke about adult Christian formation and its core importance in parish development. PHOTO Randy Murray

has radiated out to encompass other groups including a growing and vibrant Anglican Church Women (ACW) chapter. Those who meet to discuss Anglican practice, pray and reflect are not in Allen’s words “an arrived group,” and it is not necessary for him to actually be there to lead each session. They are a group moving towards praying the daily office (morning, midday and evening prayer) as a foundation for their spiritual practice that also enhances and nurtures their commitment to compassionate service.

Jessica said that a recent discernment process undertaken by the Parish of St. Paul’s identified that the number one priority is Christian formation. They have introduced Quiet Days in various seasons of the liturgical year and all those days incorporate content on how the liturgy changes in the different seasons, as does the music and the art associated with those seasons. She stressed that gathering together for a meal on those days (and other days too) is important and creates community. At St. Paul’s, courses for newcomers have been developed. Jessica pointed out that newcomers engaged in a learning process helps develop a culture of spirituality for the parish, and in general the newcomers are “often on board faster.” St. Paul’s has been a parish with active participation in Education for Ministry (EfM), but the next step is training EfM graduates to become Christian education leaders. As part of the ministry at St. Paul’s there is street outreach and advocacy but these existing services are not engaged in by the majority of the parishioners, except through their financial support. Jessica envisions a time when through adult Christian formation and growing in their faith the parish will do this work themselves.

Faun Harriman had brought to the Clergy Day some materials from the Disciple course. Disciple I is for anyone—from those who are new to Christianity to those who are more mature in their faith—who want to learn more about the Bible in a safe, nurturing environment, in Faun’s words in a “very organic way.” After the first meeting the sessions continue for 35 weeks. The word disciple means learner. When Faun is putting together a Disciple cohort she likes to try and get 12 to commit and by the time that the 36 weeks are completed she said that there are usually about half or a little more than half of the cohort remaining. Faun admits that for the leader (and for the students) it is a lot work but very worthwhile in terms of strengthening the community.

David Taylor said that he actively engages the community during Sunday worship in order to facilitate their Christian formation. His sermons during the year have



Bishop Skelton welcomes the clergy and presents an overview of the agenda. PHOTO Randy Murray

a focus on the liturgical season. Each Sunday in Lent for instance there is a sermon that strengthens spiritual practice. The sermon has a theme (title) is connected to a reading, and there is a handout and some questions for contemplation and reflection that David calls “Sermon Wonders.” For example his schedule for the last two Sundays in Lent at St. Dunstan’s are:

- March 6th**  
**TITLE** Feasting and Fasting  
**READING** Luke 15: 1–3, 11b–32  
**HANDOUT** Home Prayers around a meal  
**SERMON WONDERS** I wonder what it is like to be hungry.  
I wonder what it is like to be full.  
I wonder what it is like to host.  
I wonder what it is like to be left out.

- March 13th**  
**TITLE** Giving  
**READING** John 12: 1–8  
**HANDOUT** A card to share with someone in need  
**SERMON WONDERS** I wonder if there is something you treasure in your home.  
I wonder where you keep the thing you treasure the most.  
I wonder why you treasure it.  
I wonder if you have told anyone about it.

Andrew Halladay began sharing by saying that St. Augustine’s has been in crisis for 20 years, and so is the Marpole neighbourhood where the church is situated. The Neighbourhood House closed for good over a year ago and the church took its place, therefore, “the church is full every day.” Andrew said he is teaching the people in his parish to





LEFT The Rev. Ruth Monette, director for ministry and mission development presents the *Christian formation in parishes matrix*.



RIGHT The Panel presentation: (left to right) the Reverend's Doerksen, Schaap, Harriman (presenting information about Disciple), Taylor and Halladay. PHOTOS Randy Murray



LEFT Clergy of the diocese in small group discussions. RIGHT The Q&A at the conclusion of the Panel presentation just before the lunch break. PHOTOS Randy Murray



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

have courage. Many of those who are accessing St. Augustine's are people in crisis and with that level of emotion there is a lot of potential for conflict. Andrew is creating opportunities in the parish to talk a lot about how Jesus would deal with conflict in the parish. Approaching conflict differently is the "formation aspect." There is learning taking place "to approach each other with curiosity and not anger... St. Augustine's wanted more people and this is what we got." People have been taught how to react to bullying and now instead of a negative response they pause to consider what has happened in the lives of those who bully that have led them to this behaviour. The transformation of the neighbourhood and the parish has been "amazing."

After Andrew finished speaking, Ruth asked the panel this question, "How did you know what to do?" The general response was that the paths taken were born out of experience and circumstances. In many cases, conflict, study, research and allowing for creativity were all components that led to the development of adult Christian formation programs and ideas. The panel section of the program concluded with questions and comments from the floor.

After lunch the focus went from theory, visioning and sharing concepts to more practical aspects. Again there was substantial time dedicated to small group discussion and to reporting back.

Tasha Carrothers joined with Bishop Skelton to present the section on how to work on adult formation priorities in parishes. The plenary were shown two flipchart sheets containing information to help direct clergy toward priorities by juxtaposing "Areas of Christian Life": worship, Bible, Anglican identity, stewardship, prayer, evangelism, compassionate service and the Sacraments with the people in their worshipping communities: age and stage of life, ethnicity, gender, newcomers, and longtimers. Then they were asked to *think about*, mentally construct roles on what they observe in their parish, and *on a felt level* come up with what content (knowledge and skills) the people in the parish would benefit from working on. Having done that internal process then they determine what priorities for adult Christian formation emerge.

The clergy were asked to reflect on these questions for a few minutes and then formed groups of three to discuss.

Following five minutes of animated discussion, Tasha brought the group back and asked three or four to share the priorities that emerged. Priorities included: theological reflection for servers/worship leaders; informing the parish about Anglican identity (Anglicanism 101); finding out

where do our people come from in their spiritual lives from Buddhism to the Salvation Army; and a number of other possibilities. Tasha advised the group to keep in mind the process they had just experienced and to respond to the emerging priorities they had identified.

The next part of the afternoon program consisted of Tasha Carrothers leading the group with a lecture style presentation, sharing some principles of adult learning, which included engaging the learner's "head" and "heart," and a brief introduction to Myers-Briggs Type. Determining Myers-Briggs Type helps to understand learning styles. On the flipside of the circulated handout Tasha had printed a lesson plan that would be sensitive to different varieties of learning styles.

Bishop Skelton continued with the next piece of the day's program. The bishop pointed out that the diversity of each community must be considered in the planning process for adult Christian formation. She asked what newcomers might fear when they come into a Bible study for example? Bishop Skelton then asked the clergy to turn to one or two others and talk about the assumptions that people are bringing with them when they come into a Christian formation learning environment?

After they reported back, Bishop Skelton asked the question: "How do we take a group of people through this and have them grow to be more responsible and take a share of the learning experience?" She reminded the clergy that although it is necessary to be aware of who your constituency is in or order to communicate priorities in adult Christian formation, "it's not about abandoning content but about creating engagement with the learners so that the content will be effectively absorbed."

In a program section that she titled, *If We Just Have the Right Curriculum*, Director of Mission and Ministry Development, the Rev. Ruth Monette finished up the focus on adult Christian formation by handing out a list of helpful resources, websites, blogs, DVD study sets, etc... and presenting some additional information about components of the resources list. There was also an opportunity for the clergy to offer suggestions about resources they had found useful.

As has become tradition, Bishop Skelton spent the last 20–30 minutes of the day answering questions about current events in the diocese and beyond.

The next Clergy Day is currently scheduled for May 3 and will focus on children and youth in our parish communities. ✠



Tasha Carrothers presents information about learning styles. PHOTO Randy Murray



The plenary broke up into triads to discuss the assumptions that their communities might bring with them to adult Christian formation programs. The Reverend's Kevin Hunt, Maggie Cole and Dale Yardy. PHOTO Randy Murray



Bishop Skelton listens during the discussion about events taking place in the diocese and beyond. Behind on the left is the Rev. Howie Adan and beside him is the Rev. Daebin Im. PHOTO Randy Murray



# To Be Committed, Connected & Aware

## The first Indigenous Justice Circle for the diocese of New Westminster

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor (with files from Brander Raven McDonald, Indigenous Justice Ministry Coordinator, diocese of New Westminster)

In his promo for the first Indigenous Justice Circle meeting of his incumbency as Indigenous Justice Ministry Coordinator for the diocese of New Westminster, Brander Raven McDonald laid out the following plan:

“At this first Circle, a principal component will be discussions regarding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations pertaining to the Church. All those participating will read the report in break-out groups to become familiar with the summary report of the TRC, particularly relating to reconciliation work with church groups. This material is available in the TRC Calls to Action.

In the Circle, calls to action in the categories of: education, awareness raising, relational development strategies and First Nations world view basics will be explored.”

Beginning about 9:30 am on Wednesday, January 13, an enthusiastic group of 60+ gathered in the Trendell Lounge, the bright and welcoming all-purpose room shared by the parish of St. John’s, Shaughnessy and the Synod Office of the diocese for coffee, pastries, fruit and conversation.

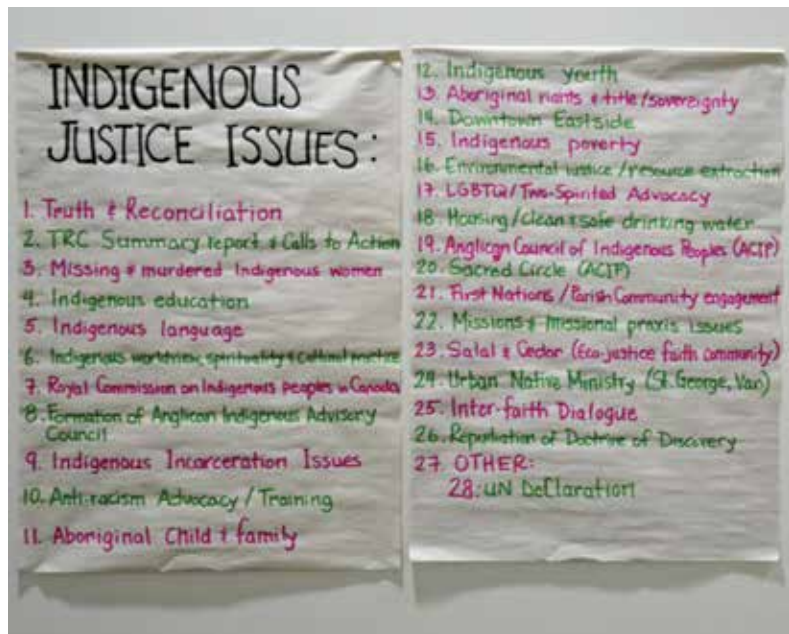
At 10:20 am, the attendees, elders, clergy, Synod staff and others entered the Conference Room at 1410 Nanton and chose their seats in a circle.

Brander welcomed the group saying that he had originally expected 14–15 but was delighted by the great turnout. He also clarified that although the group was gathered in a circle, it was not a traditional/spiritual healing circle, but a circle in shape only. His disclaimer did not of course diminish the need to observe the protocol of meeting in this way. Brander then thanked the three nations of the Coast Salish whose lands we are on: *Tsleil-Waututh*, *Musqueam* and *Squamish*. After the acknowledgement of the host nations there were some words and songs, beginning with Terry Aleck (*Coyote*) and others from Sechelt singing and drumming a family song. The Sunshine Coast contingent was followed by Elder Kelvin B, a survivor of St. Michael’s Residential School who spoke eloquently and emotionally about his experience, his mother, his journey, his anger and his healing. He offered a beautiful song called *The Song for Five Nations*, which was composed in 1967 and he is the last bearer of this song.

After the songs and words, Brander gave a brief overview of the history of his involvement with Indigenous Justice and Christian denominations and included some information about First Nations culture and protocol. He then moved into the focus for the day, a look at the challenge of continuing the journey begun by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the content of the report, specifically the *Calls to Action*. Brander said that it is time to engage more deeply, First Nations people are in all parts of society.

Brander then asked the group to study the TRC Calls to Action publication for 20 minutes and then break up into small groups of 8–10 for another 40 minutes. While in the groups he instructed those present to react to the TRC Calls to Action document with markers and paper and then return to the group and have a discussion based on the small group experiences. Brander asked that folks look at all the Calls to Action, not just the ones directed to churches. Brander reminded the group (as he must remind himself) that this is a collective Canadian issue. A worthy goal for the Circle and for seekers of reconciliation would be to find advocates in all strata of society in order to share the workload. Each group was directed to choose a scribe and a spokesperson.

Following the discussions, a spokesperson for each of the five groups summarized their lists of reactions to the



LEFT Welcome sign produced by Melanie Delva. RIGHT Indigenous Justice issues prepared by Melanie Delva. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Coffee, muffins, fruit, conversation in the Trendell Lounge prior to the beginning of the Circle. PHOTO Randy Murray

Calls to Action. There were literally dozens of reactions recorded but they did fall roughly into the following categories and although this list is prioritized based on the recorded responses, the order is certainly not etched in stone:

- Education of everyone in Canada (this is a collective Canadian issue)
- Education through direct connection (parish visits, Town Halls, Longhouse visits)
- Be prepared for a long haul — a major task — the journey

- toward reconciliation will be ongoing and evolving
- Relationships — going beyond knowledge
- There is a lot of passion among those who want to work toward reconciliation
- Healing, understanding, and being open about trauma suffered and identity loss
- Aboriginal children — their future, the foster care system and medical system
- Restitution/Redress, repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery
- Use of resources and media

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



LEFT Coffee, conversations, registrations and some studying of the TRC Calls to Action booklet prior to the beginning of the Circle. RIGHT At 10:25 am participants begin to file into the Conference Room. PHOTOS Randy Murray





The folks from Sechelt find their seats and prepare the drums for the opening song. PHOTO Randy Murray



The plenary quietly studies the TRC Calls to Action booklet. PHOTO Randy Murray



Brander welcomes the group to the Circle. PHOTO Randy Murray



Studying the Calls to Action. PHOTO Randy Murray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

- Sourcing advocates and developing leaders
- Create awareness that Aboriginal people are victimized by every strata of society
- Listening is a priority
- Government restructuring

This material will be carefully studied and considered as the Indigenous Justice Circle progresses. It will also be useful to present to a proposed Aboriginal Elders advisory that Brander hopes to gather later this year.

A First Nations table song, prayers and protocol concluded the morning session and everyone returned to the Trendell Lounge to enjoy a soup and sandwich lunch prepared by the unofficial official caterers of the diocese, Bette Geddes and the Rev. Lizz Lindsay.

In the afternoon, Brander shared an Indigenous Justice model which would be: equitable, accountable, connected and in relationships of healing, restoration to balance, harmony and respect. He also spoke about Indigenous Justice directional goals. Where are we going? Are we all on the same path of awareness and advocacy? We must make sure that our ongoing communications convey our directional goals with consistency.

A feature of the afternoon session involved asking the participants to chose an Indigenous Justice issue to explore as a connection point. Each issue had a designated number and the numbers printed on sticky notes were placed on the wall of the Conference Room. Participants stood by the corresponding number to the Indigenous Justice issue that was their first choice for exploration. Before the exercise began Brander asked if there were additional issues to add to the initial list of 28. The first added, which was of course #29, was the issue of Missing and Murdered Women and from there a number of suggestions were offered that grew the list to 33. During the exercise people moved around discussing the various points of connection. Brander carefully observed where people were standing and made notes about the level of interest shown for different issues. Although this is an estimate and not an exact count, Brander recorded the following list of issues in order of the support shown for them at the meeting:

Indigenous Justice Issues:

1. Truth & Reconciliation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



LEFT One of five small groups communicating their reactions to the TRC Calls to Action. Melanie Delva is the scribe. RIGHT Intense listening. PHOTOS Randy Murray



LEFT Getting to know people during the lunch break. RIGHT Bette Geddes made the world's best soup and sandwiches. The Rev. Lizz Lindsay is behind doing the washing up. PHOTOS Randy Murray





# INSPIRE! ASK! THANK!

## 2016 Diocesan Stewardship Conference

GLEN MITCHELL  
*Director of Stewardship & Planned Giving, diocese of New Westminster*

By concentrating on these three undertakings: *Inspire! Ask! Thank!* your stewardship team will build generosity and financial support for the mission of the church and help your parish members grow stewardship into a regular spiritual practice.

These core themes in stewardship parish work will inspire people by telling the story; ask people to join the story by offering their skills, time and money; and thank them for their gifts in support of God's Mission in the world. Develop your skills with these three core themes at *Stewardship: Inspire! Ask! Thank!* a conference designed by four stewardship mentors: Tony Sauder; the Rev. Stephen Muir; Janet Sutherland and Glen Mitchell.

*Stewardship: Inspire! Ask! Thank!* Conference is for parish stewardship teams including both lay and clergy, and will be held in the Conferene Room of the Synod offices on Saturday, April 16, 2016. Keynote speakers include Bishop Melissa Skelton, sharing her perspective on God's abundance and Dean Peter Elliott from Christ Church Cathedral, speaking about the stewardship focus of our three themes: *Inspire! Ask! Thank!*

Eight workshops are based on the three themes that will address a number of topics related to their theme concurrently.

*Inspiration* begins with diocesan Communications Officer Randy Murray who will offer a workshop on communications skills in stewardship; an Outreach and Ministry panel featuring The Rev. Liz Lindsay (food ministry), The Rev. Matthew Johnson (Street Outreach), The Rev. Michael McGee (refugees) and Glen Mitchell (St. Mary, Kerrisdale's El Salvador work) who will encourage you with their models of inspiration; and a workshop given by Paul Clark called *Being A Community* will focus on the inspiration that comes from drawing together as a community of faith.

*Asking for Gifts* begins with understanding the importance of relational databases in the work of stewardship, given by the Rev. Stephen Muir, Tamara Wojdylo and Glen Mitchell. This is followed by the Rev. Rob Waller's Gift-

raising Skills workshop that looks at direct mail, telephone contact, visits and the so important hospitality aspect of stewardship teaching. Lastly, the *Asking for Gifts* workshop, given by the Very Rev. Peter Elliott and Emily Pritchard will dispel your fears about asking for people to make tangible responses with their gifts of God-given resources.

Saying *Thank You!* is so important, both in person and in our worship. The Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett will lead a

workshop featuring a form of liturgical thanksgiving. Tony Sauder will offer participants his experience about offering a personal thank you for the response of those who have been inspired and asked in the final workshop of the day.

Lunch and break time refreshments are included in the cost of admission as is the newly revised stewardship resources manual. Registration is open now for parish teams online at <http://bit.ly/1QoAe1W>. ☙



Bishop Melissa Skelton. PHOTO Sarah Sovereign



The Very Rev. Peter Elliott. PHOTO Wayne Chose

## To Be Committed, Connected & Aware

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

2. TRC Summary Report & Calls to Action
3. Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women
4. Indigenous Education
5. Indigenous Language
6. Indigenous Worldview Spirituality & Culture Practices
7. Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples in Canada
8. Formation of Anglican Indigenous Advisory Council
9. Indigenous Incarceration Issues
10. Anti-Racism Advocacy/Training
11. Aboriginal Child & Family
12. Indigenous Youth
13. Aboriginal Rights & Title/Sovereignty
14. Downtown Eastside
15. Indigenous Poverty
16. Environmental Justice/Resource Extraction
17. LGBTQ/Two-Spirited Advocacy
18. Housing/Clean & Safe Drinking Water
19. Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)
20. Sacred Circle ACIP (National Church)
21. First Nations/Parish Community Engagement
22. Missions & Missional Praxis Issues
23. Salal & Cedar (Eco-Justice Faith Community)
24. Urban Native Ministries (St. Georges)
25. Interfaith Dialogue
26. Doctrine Of Discovery — ongoing Anglican repudiation 2010
27. United Nations Declaration on the Rights & Title of Indigenous Peoples
28. Missing/Deceased Indian Residential School (IRS) Children
29. Indigenous Health & Prevention Strategies
30. Education of Churches (re: Indigenous issues/world)
31. Commemoration (plaque, garden, foundation, in diocesan property)
32. The collection in the 1950s & 1960s of Indigenous Children by Social Services into Foster/Adoption
33. Inter-Denominational Truth & Reconciliation — Walking Together

With time running out, Brander encouraged the group to find partners, partners from diverse backgrounds and interests. Engagement is vital so it is important to look beyond the walls of parishes and organizations for advo-

cates and activists. It is important to stay committed, connected and aware. These Circles should be fertile grounds for networking and relationship building with local First Nations leadership.

Just after 3 pm, the diocesan Indigenous Justice Circle ended with protocol: thanking protocols, travelling songs and prayers. As the members of the Circle went around the Circle, greeting every person, Brander called Bishop Skelton who had been in attendance all day to join Jerry

and James and stand behind Elder Kelvin B as he shared powerfully from his heart a song of thanksgiving.

The next Indigenous Justice Circle is scheduled for May 25, 2016, in the same location. The Circle will gather from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm and work on strategies toward developing a network for the work of Indigenous Justice as it pertains to the diocesan mandate for Aboriginal engagement as well as worldview training and some additional education about protocol. ☙



People standing near the number on the wall that corresponds to the Indigenous Justice issue that is their first choice to explore. PHOTO Randy Murray



Brander adds up the numbers. PHOTO Randy Murray



Elder Kelvin leads the song of thanksgiving to end the Circle. PHOTO Randy Murray



# Coming Home Society's New *Wisdom of Elders* Program

LINDA ADAMS, ODNW

Coming Home Society President; St. James'

The Coming Home Society is excited to be working in partnership with Urban Native Youth Association in a new venture to serve Aboriginal youth. The *Wisdom of Elders* program will support at-risk young women and men aged 12 to 24 by connecting them with a core group of Aboriginal Elders who can offer spiritual care, cultural teachings and ceremonies, and individual one-to-one support.

Aboriginal young people in Vancouver's inner city are often distanced from their grandparents, and aunts and uncles who would be their traditional source of wisdom and guidance. They are isolated and adrift, with tenuous relationships to their culture and their community. Through the *Wisdom of Elders* program they have the chance to make connections. They participate in cultural and ceremonial activities that help them form positive identities as Aboriginal People. They find support from their Elders and their community. They discover that they belong.

The *Wisdom of Elders* program was developed in consultation with Urban Native Youth Association, and is one module of their new Native Youth Health and Wellness Centre located on East Hastings Street near Commercial Drive. The Centre offers the services of nurse practitioners, midwives, and counsellors. The Coming Home Society has added the presence of Elders and Traditional Knowledge



Keepers to make the Centre a place where spiritual and cultural healing can also be found.

In the words of a 14-year-old girl who wrote in support of this program: "In today's society youth sometimes don't have the privilege of learning from their Elders. As the Elders in our community are starting to pass on very quickly, we want to make sure that we honor our ancestors by taking the knowledge that our Elders carry with respect,

so that us, as youth, can carry on our culture and traditions and may teach our children our ways of life. For me, having an Elder present would be just the best experience, and I know I would benefit from it."

In 2015, the Anglican Foundation awarded five grants of \$10,000 to innovative "service or outreach projects that involve interfaith collaboration." The Coming Home Society is excited and grateful to have received one of the five grants for its *Wisdom of Elders* program.

As well as financially enabling the launch of this program, the award has added significance. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "Calls to Action" include calling upon churches and all faiths to respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right. In supporting the interfaith collaboration between the Coming Home Society and Indigenous Elders who carry the ceremonies of their culture, the Anglican Foundation is recognizing and honouring Aboriginal spirituality and its life-affirming role in healing a culture.

We hope you too will join us in honouring and supporting the work of the Elders, who have suffered greatly, yet have so much to offer, and the courage and resiliency of Aboriginal youth who are taking tentative steps to reach out to make life better for themselves and their children. ✚

## Compass Rose Society Annual Meeting 2015

JOHN STEPHENS

Rector, St. Philip, Dunbar; Archdeacon of Vancouver

On October 28 and 29 the Compass Rose Society held its annual meeting in London, England. Our diocese is a member of this Society and I was honoured to be asked to attend, and to visit the hallowed halls of Lambeth Palace. Also attending from the diocese of New Westminster were Bishop Michael Ingham and his wife, Nancy Southam. As part of the meeting during the afternoon of October 28 we met in the Guard Room at Lambeth Palace, a room filled with many of the portraits of past Archbishops of Canterbury. Our group received an address from the Most Rev. Justin Welby.

The Compass Rose Society (CRS) supports the programs and ministries of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), the organization that sets the goals and direction for the Communion. The CRS gathers for an annual meeting in England to consider the year previous and to examine the year forthcoming. It is a group of Anglicans from different parts of the globe concerned about supporting the work and mission of our church.

This year we were also fortunate to hear from the incoming Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, most recently from Nigeria. He described his role as being a bridge-builder within the Communion. He has a strong evangelical background but also is known as one who can build a culture of respect for differences and a strong desire for peace. In Nigeria he was determined to build connections and ties with the Muslim community and for this he was shunned and vilified, even receiving death threats. This background, however, seemed

to strengthen his resolve to build bridges within the Anglican Communion so that there is room for reconciliation.

Archbishop Josiah told of a few highlights within the Communion: there have been four new applications for new Anglican provinces in Africa and South America, the Primates' meeting in January focussed on reconciliation, that there is a growing desire to agree to disagree but that much more work is needed.

We also heard from Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of Southern Africa as he described the e-reader project that has been supported by funding from the CRS; a program where theological books and journals are made available to theological students via e-readers to spread greater theological and biblical teaching, greatly expanding the potential learning.

We heard too from Terrie Robinson, the Director for Women in Church and Society and her work promoting and enabling inclusion and gender justice. She spoke about her role in helping to reduce gender-based violence, referring us to a short video on *Anglicans and the 16 Days* (you will find it on *YouTube* and also more information on the Anglican Communion website). A video, which is aimed at creating 16 days of activism on gender issues, girls in education, forced marriage, men's attitudes to women, etc...

We heard about a number of the projects that are supported by the CRS, which include financially supporting the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, the Indaba process in the ACC, the Bishop Ackon Eye Clinic in Ghana, and the Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children in Jerusalem among others. The reach of the CRS is astounding quite

apart from being one of the major donors to the ACC itself.

At Lambeth Palace, Archbishop Justin Welby spoke to us about his three priorities for the Anglican Communion: Prayer, Reconciliation and Evangelism.

- All that we do must be grounded in prayer and faith in Jesus Christ. He has created the Community of St. Anselm for young people (aged 19 to 35) to come and live in prayerful and service-filled community at Lambeth Palace.
- Reconciliation for our Anglican Communion is key to the future for our international Church. Archbishop Welby has visited with every Primate in their own country and then invited each of them to come to Lambeth Palace in January to meet and to discuss reconciliation. We need to talk about how we can agree to disagree and how we live with each other. How do we seek peace amongst ourselves? The Archbishop of Canterbury is using Coventry Cathedral as the symbolic centre of this ministry of reconciliation as its' history is deeply grounded in the pursuit of peace.
- Evangelism is a must for the Church of every age as we must be about spreading and living the good news. He reminded us, that we need to be constantly aware of our mission and where God is already working amongst us. He told us "There is nothing human beings can do that God cannot outdo."

The Compass Rose Society is a far-reaching, faith-grounded, Anglican society based on supporting the work of our entire Anglican Communion. It was a great privilege for me to attend this meeting and experience some of the breadth and depth of our beloved Anglican Communion. ✚



John (middle) and Ruth (left) Stephens with Archbishop Justin Welby (right). PHOTO Bishop Michael Ingham

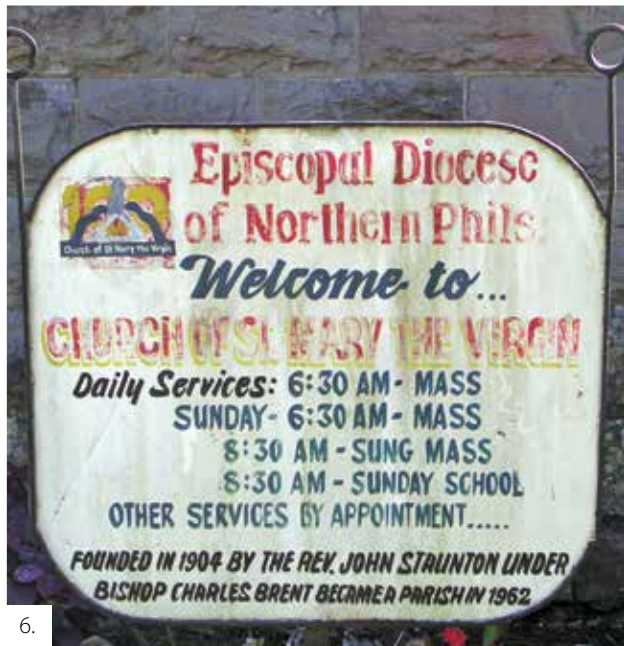


John Stephens (right) with Archbishop Thabo Makgoba (left). PHOTO Ruth Stephens





*“Our diocese has a long commitment of engaging with partners from around the Communion in our common witness to the gospel. A companion relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines would assist us in being attentive and open to other ways the church is responding with good news.”*



1. Episcopal Church of the Philippines National Church office, Quezon City.
2. Cathedral of the Resurrection (Episcopal Diocese of North Central Philippines), Baguio.
3. The Altar Party at the Episcopal Church of the Philippines National Cathedral, Quezon City.
4. Douglas with people at the National Cathedral.
5. Colourful Jeepneys on the street in Baguio City.
6. St. Mary the Virgin, Sagada sign.
7. Countryside near Besao.

PHOTOS Douglas Fenton

*More from Douglas Fenton's visit to the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines on page 14...*

## New Comp

RANDY MURRAY  
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

At Synod in May 2015, the diocese companion diocese relationship with was concluded. Shared prayer cycle seminarians were some of the active an environment where members of by the realization that the world wide vast and diverse faith community, but

Bishop Melissa Skelton, wanting developing relationships with the another diocese to be a companion a the project, the Ven. Douglas Fenton contacted colleagues, Dr. Andrea Ma Relations for the Anglican Church of Canon Peter Ng, Officer for Anglican ship Officer for Asia and Pacific at (TEC) in New York.

Both Dr. Mann and Canon Ng the diocese of New Westminster exp tionship with an Asian diocese and kept them informed about our dioc focus on diversity. Both Dr. Mann an positive about the diocese of New toward a companionship with a dioc and they suggested the Episcopal D Philippines (EDNP), a diocese that had a companion diocese relationship

During his years of ministry in Archdeacon Fenton had become acqu with Attorney Floyd Lawlet, the prov secretary (think General Secretary of General Synod) of the Episcopal C of the Philippines (ECP). Following consultations with Canon Ng and Attorney Lawlet a decision was made to further the companion relationship. In August the Attorney Lawlet and Bishop Br the bishop of EDNP, with their wives Michael's, Vancouver here in the dioc Westminster. The Vicar of St. Michael Wilmer Toyoken is from the EDNP parishioners are also originally from Province in the northern region of largest and most populous island in the

During Bishop Alawas's visit to New Westminster, Bishop Skelton v Archdeacon Fenton met and spent EDNP leaders. It was decided that of Archdeacon Fenton's extended stay October/November 2015 he would v specifically EDNP. See more on the E pines.shutterfly.com.

On November 8, Archdeacon Fe the next day he met the Attorney La staff members of the Episcopal Ch pines, which is situated within the dral precincts in Quezon City. Ther drive—first to Baguio, a city of 35 the province of Benguet in northern the See City of the Episcopal Dioces Philippines. After an overnight stop across the street from the Cathedra the journey continued the next day the mountains to Bontoc, the capit He was met by two members of the him to visit the Bontoc Museum a and culture of the region. The group from the story telling of a nun who v where the museum is housed. The n information on the various Indigenou the diocese of EDNP is situated.

Bishop Alawas and Mr. Victor Ar deacon Fenton's counterpart in ED always been engaged with issues of ment, justice, and social developmen region. The role of the Episcopal C in Mountain Province is to focus physical, spiritual and economic heal community. Prior to his election, the was the Economic Development Off the diocese. He has used this skill set his experience to improve healthcare and education; to create a healthy environment for mentoring and organic farming; and helped

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



# Companion Diocese Proposed

of New Westminster's 15 year in the Episcopal diocese of Taiwan, mutual visits, and hosting activities. This assisted in creating both dioceses were enriched the Anglican Communion is a that we are interdependent. g to continue to focus on church in Asia, sought and partner. Tasked with , Executive Archdeacon, nn, Director for Global of Canada (ACoC) and n Relations and Partner- The Episcopal Church

were enthusiastic about exploring a companion relationship. Archdeacon Fenton had these, and our intentional and Canon Ng were very Westminster working these in the Philippines Diocese of Northern has not yet

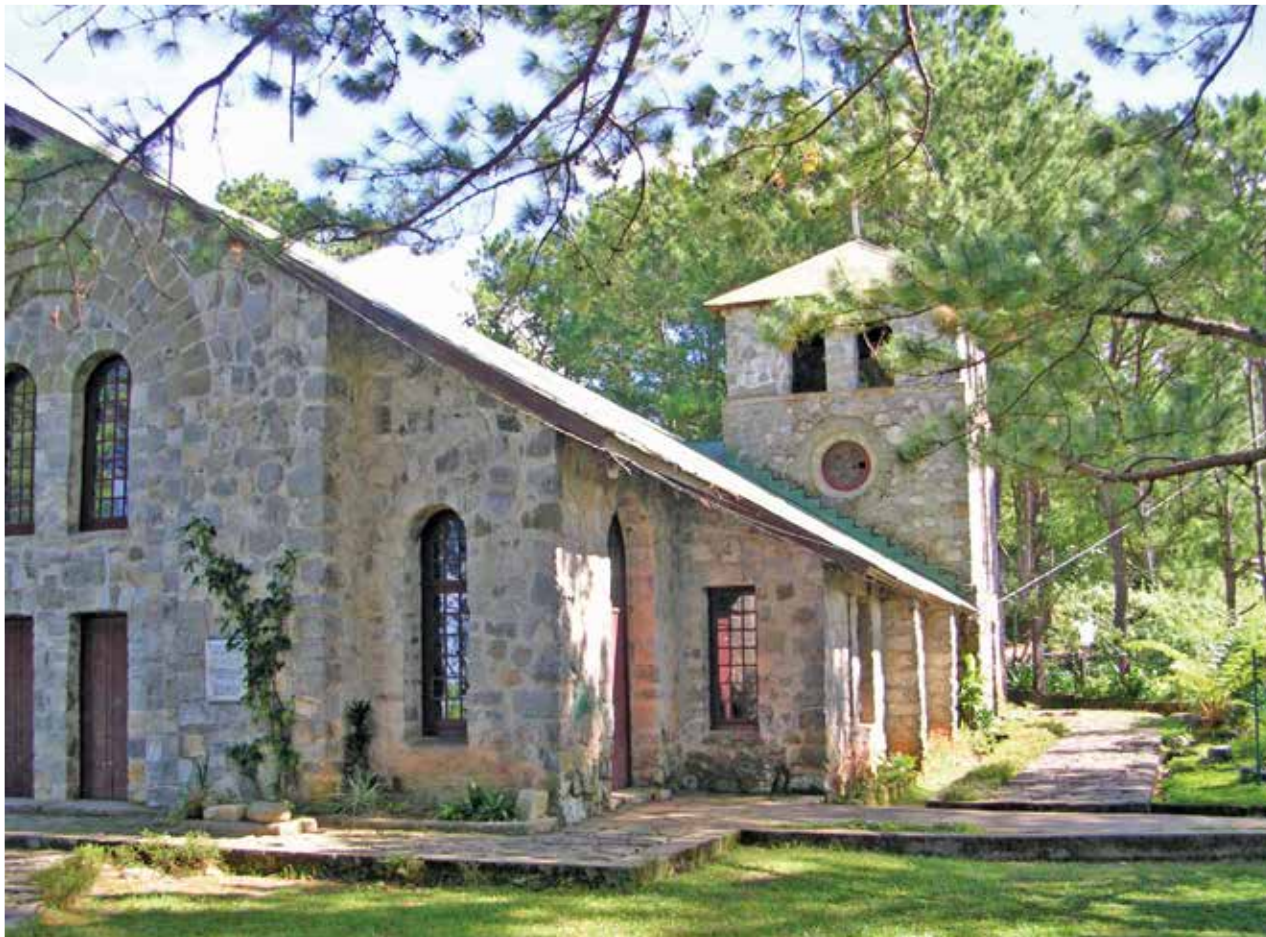
ip. n TEC, maintained provincial of our church further attorney explore August 2015, rent Alawas, es, visited St. cese of New el's, the Rev. P and many n Mountain F Luzon, the ne Philippines. the diocese of was on vacation, t time with the at the conclusion study leave in Asia in visit the Philippines and EDNP at [www.ednpphilip-](http://www.ednpphilip-)

nton flew to Manila and awlet, and Provincial urch of the Philip- National Cathe- n began the long 0,000 located in Luzon. Baguio is e of North Central over in a guesthouse l of the Resurrection driving further up into al of Mountain Province. diocese of EDNP who took s an introduction to history received a tour and benefited was part of the convent school museum's collection included us peoples of the region where

manayo (Arch- NP) have environ- t in the Church on the h of the e bishop icer for e and e







TOP LEFT The Cathedral compound, Bontoc. BOTTOM LEFT Douglas at the "highest point" sign on return from Bontoc to Quezon City. RIGHT St. Benedict's Church, Kin-iway, Besao. PHOTOS Douglas Fenton

## New Companion Diocese Proposed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

facilitate opportunities for micro-financing in order to launch new and sustainable initiatives.

The most revered TEC missionary in the region is the Rt. Rev. Charles Henry Brent, the Episcopal bishop who began his missionary work in the Philippines in 1901, following his appointment as the first Missionary Bishop of the Philippines. Episcopal missionary work in the Philippines had proved difficult prior to Bishop Brent's arrival. He was committed not to proselytize among the large Roman Catholic population and focused largely on the areas that had not been evangelized during the years of Spanish colonial occupation, particularly the North. There he founded permanent missions at Sagada and Bontoc, which became the centres of the Filipino Anglican church. There is a Canadian connection: Bishop Brent was Canadian. He was born in Ontario, graduated from Trinity College, was ordained to the diaconate in the diocese of Toronto but was told by the bishop of Toronto that there were no vacancies. Without a ministry position he looked south and found a curacy in the diocese of Buffalo, New York. That began his distinguished career in ministry in TEC.

Bishop Alawas and the leadership of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines have invited Bishop Skelton to preach at their diocesan convention. The bishop and

Archdeacon Fenton will be going to EDNP February 29–March 7, right around the time that this issue of *Topic* becomes available online, and in homes and parishes in hard copy. During this visit there will be further opportunities to explore the details of the proposed companion relationship. There is a mutual desire to develop clear

and articulated connections and to engage in a companion relationship that will be mutually beneficial. Bishop Alawas will be in Vancouver in May 2016, attending the diocese of New Westminster's first Mission Conference. Between Bishop Skelton's visit to the Mountain Province of the Philippines in early March and Bishop Alawas's

visit to Vancouver in May they will identify specific areas in which our dioceses will work together.

When people intentionally engage with one another, the Church and the Communion are strengthened, which in turn strengthens our local relationships, our mission, our witness, and our faith. ☩



Gangsa and dancing. PHOTO Douglas Fenton



Douglas is invited to dance. PHOTO Douglas Fenton



Traditional dancing at St. Anne's, Besao. PHOTO Douglas Fenton

Companion dioceses are quite common in the Anglican Communion. There is information about these kinds of relationships available on the Anglican Communion website, [www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org). The principal purpose of companion dioceses is to celebrate the interdependence of our ministry on a global scale. It is not about "have" and "have-nots"—the global north and the global south. We become better Christian citizens when we broaden our scope and our understanding of what it means to be Anglican, not just here on the West Coast of Canada but in places many thousands of kilometres distant.



# Fresh Start

FAUN HARRIMAN

Rector, St. Alban, Burnaby, Regional Dean of Royal City/Burnaby, Facilitator diocesan Fresh Start program

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor



LEFT The Rev. Patrick Blaney and the Rev. Faun Harriman. RIGHT The January 26, 2016 Fresh Start session. PHOTOS Randy Murray

*Fresh Start* (FS) is a program developed and designed to assist clergy and congregations with the work of transition in parish ministry. It is a resource intended to strengthen the leadership skills needed by the clergy and congregational lay leaders during the critical time of transition. It allows for peer learning in a group setting through the use of a variety of modules (currently 24) dealing with the dynamics of entering a new church system to planning effective ministry.

FS originated in the 1990s when The Episcopal Church began conversations focusing on transition ministry concepts. FS was picked up from a concept conceived by the diocese of Tennessee called the *Transition Project*. This led to the beginning of the program now known as FS in the diocese of New Hampshire under the leadership of the-then Rev. Canon Gene Robinson (now Bishop) it was launched as a national program in June 2000. Over the next five years, with the guidance and leadership of the collaborative partners, over 50 dioceses enrolled in and introduced the program providing transitional materials and resources to clergy and congregations throughout the United States and Canada.

In 2005, a comprehensive evaluation of FS was conducted using a quantitative survey instrument and extensive interviews. A major finding in this analysis was that the FS experience greatly strengthened the relationships among diocesan clergy in transition, diocesan staff and congregational leadership.

As of the end of 2013, almost 500 facilitators had been trained, most from The Episcopal Church but also some from the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Church of England, and the Anglican and United Churches in Canada. The concept of supporting clergy and congrega-

tions in times of clergy transitions, new when FS was first developed was now well-established and understood. Still there were dioceses that were unable to send people to the training or had too few clergy transitions at any one time to justify the costs. In July 2012, The Episcopal Church Foundation assumed full responsibility for FS and began to look for ways to make the material more available to clergy and lay leaders.

The Rev. Faun Harriman, rector of St. Alban, Burnaby and regional dean of Royal City/South Burnaby has been and continues to be one of the champions of FS here in the diocese of New Westminster. Faun had been a participant and progressed to be trained as an FS facilitator in Toronto. When she came to the diocese of New Westminster she brought her conviction that FS is an important ministry tool and eventually found some advocacy for FS from the members of the former diocesan standing committee, the *Ordained Ministry Division* (OMD), and they arranged for a pilot project in 2012.

The current group in our diocese is the third cohort that Faun has facilitated. They began the two year commitment to the program in September 2015, meeting once a month. Four or five of this cohort will graduate from the program in June. It is not an evaluative process. Participants evaluate the program and the feedback has been very positive. Faun's current co-facilitator is the Rev. Patrick Blaney, rector of St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver. The Rev. Ruth Monette and the Rev. Marnie Peterson are also Fresh Start facilitators and have been active in that role since 2012.

Currently, only parish priests participate in this program but Faun thinks that the program could definitely be of broader benefit. When asked about expansion to others

who are engaged or work in the church Faun answered, "I think everyone can benefit. Its flexibility allows it to be used in many different settings and by different people. Archdeacons and regional deans would find it useful with clergy in their areas that are in transition as they themselves are more sensitive to the ups and downs of change. Although parishes (parish leaders) are not involved yet, I think it would be great to have a team go into parishes in transition and do some of this work." Faun also believes that the program benefits social integration of the new priest, particularly when that priest is coming into a new diocese or province. "Fresh Start promotes greater awareness of the issues involved when leadership is new and an understanding of the leadership skills needed for a smooth transition. When used in facilitated discussions by groups of clergy new to their positions, the material also promotes collegial relationships within the diocese and among clergy, the bishop and his/her staff. Both the content and the design of the modules contribute to achievement of these purposes."

A Fresh Start session can be a time when there is opportunity to share information of an emotional, personal nature, Faun says, "there is this great Fresh Start expression 'you are to be a guide on the side not a sage on the stage.' This is not about fixing but deepening our skills of empathy and listening. We do not judge. One of the components of a session is a *Critical Incident Report* where a person shares an ongoing situation with which they are struggling. The members in the group listen and empathize but do not give solutions. It is an interesting process." In Faun's experience, a Fresh Start session may very well be the first time that a priest in transitional ministry makes a significant connection with other priests. ✠

## New Companion Diocese Proposed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14



LEFT Episcopal Church Women (ECW) singing — St. Anne's Church, Besao. PHOTO Douglas Fenton



Banana Plantings. PHOTO Douglas Fenton



Ancient rice terraces. PHOTO Douglas Fenton



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

## • Holy Home Encounter at St. Paul's, Vancouver Report •

SUBMISSION Craig Watson on behalf of his fellow committee members, Dorothy Barnes &amp; David Facey-Crowther

September 2015, marked the second Holy Home Encounter for many parishioners at St. Paul's. What it meant in practical terms was that the person sitting next to you in church on Sunday had probably met with another two or three parishioners in someone's home that month for coffee or tea, a prayer, and a conversation about what had brought them to the parish, or why they chose to stay.

The idea was hatched following some conversations with St. Paul's rector, the Rev. Jessica Schaap. The objective would be to build community, share faith, and increase support for one of the parish's pillars—*Hospitality*. Initially it was thought that a parish team might visit the homes of each parishioner, but for most parishioners this might be intrusive and possibly make individuals uncomfortable in the expectation of being asked to give money, or to get involved in a discussion about faith and theology. Instead, we turned it around to see if people would volunteer to open their doors to each other, and that seemed to work.

We asked for hosts: individuals willing to invite two or three parishioners into their home, serve coffee or tea, and follow a simple format including praying together (prayer cards were provided) as well as participating in conversation. We started with the Church Committee and then as we got closer to the launch of the Holy Home Encounter week we opened up the proposal to the parish with announcements made following the Eucharist and notices in the church bulletin.

We began announcing the Holy Home Encounter two weeks before it was to start. The project was to run for one week, from Sunday to Sunday. We used a list of names, drawn from the parish registry of 120–160 members. Not everyone on that list was currently attending regularly or active in the community. At the conclusion of a Sunday Eucharist we announced that we would be drawing up a list of hosts and of those who would like to be invited. In the end the list was significantly reduced to active parishioners, those who regularly attend the Sunday Eucharist.

We didn't know if it would work, but there turned out to be a reasonable balance between those willing to host and those wanting to be invited. When a match was made, we gave a card to the host with contact information and then let everyone make their own arrangements. There were the inevitable last minute glitches that had to be worked out, including a few late requests by individuals wanting to be hosted, but these were easily taken care of by committee members. We were happy with the results of the matching process and in the end a total of 80 were involved in the Holy Home Encounter.

The spiritual basis on which this parish initiative rested was the belief that one of the ways we encounter God is in relationships—relationships with God and with each other. In the Eucharist we encounter each other in prayer and fellowship. We



*"The spiritual basis on which this parish initiative rested was the belief that one of the ways we encounter God is in relationships—relationships with God and with each other."*

wanted to build on this and to create an encounter of another kind, one that was social, fun, and spiritual in a different setting and context.

We wanted to make the event inclusive. And that is why we asked for a very simple gathering, where all that was required was a cup of coffee, tea, a short prayer and a time for conversation that would lay the grounds for new friendships and new relationships within the parish community. This is why we asked people to share what had brought them (or kept them coming) to St. Paul's. We also asked that the get-together be kept short, not exceeding 45 minutes, so that the entertaining would not be a burden for the host. In point of fact, anecdotal reports after the various meetings were that most lasted much longer as everyone enjoyed the occasion so much. This, to the committee, was a very encouraging sign of the success of the Holy Home Encounter.

We asked people to give us feedback. In general, the outcome received very positive endorsement and so it will be continued in 2016.

The experience was in every respect a blessing, a happy occasion of sharing with others in a bit of fun, laughter and shared stories. It was an encounter not only with fellow parishioners but also with the Holy Spirit as a moving force in the lives of our community. ✠

## • We Raised 10 Grand on Indiegogo •

SUBMISSION Laurel Dykstra

Church-worlds are often small worlds. A young man who I know through the Student Christian Movement and my partner's former housemate are both Unitarian Universalist ministers who work with congregations in their denomination on *crowdsourcing campaigns*: online platforms where you can tell a story and reach out virtually to a diverse and geographically widespread group of potential funders.

While I don't agree that these sites are "democratic" ways of fundraising, my friends were so positive about the enthusiasm and excitement generated by these campaigns that I put the idea forward as a way for Salal & Cedar, a new kind of ministry, to raise funds. We chose our most appealing project—Sacred Earth Camp—a two week environmental leadership training for youth and young adults, set a goal of \$10,000 and brought together a little team with good social media networks representing several different demographics. With help from the diocesan communications office, coaching from my Unitarian friends, and voice talent from youth members of Salal & Cedar, we put together a video and description of our project that targeted the two groups we thought most likely to contribute: justice-oriented Anglicans and supporters of the wider watershed discipleship movement. Before the campaign began we secured endorsements from some "big names" in Christian environmental justice—Jennifer Henry of Kairos, Anglican Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald and watershed discipleship popularizer and spokesperson, Ched Myers, and made sure that we had 25% of our goal already committed.

The campaign ran for a little over a month from early December to early January, targeting both Christmas giving and New Year's resolutions, and while we were successful, raising \$10,400 online and more than \$500+ more from offline giving there were a number of surprises along the

way. Workload, travel and health issues significantly reduced several key individuals' ability to participate. Justice-Anglicans gave a great deal, Watershed discipleship not so much, and I was surprised by how much was given by friends and family of team members—like many kids I went to camp 35 years ago with my seminary Hebrew Bible professor. And there were completely unexpected donations: a few unknowns, a guy I met at a conference and a member of my kid's teacher's childcare co-op.

Two aspects of crowdsourcing that I knew about in advance were still jarring to experience. Most people give at the beginning and at the end of the campaign. We raised 25% of our total in the first week and 25% in the last 48 hours, so the final week was pretty tense. Crowdsourcing platforms take a percent of your total and charge a fee for credit card transactions so the take home amount is about 91% of your total.

Here is my advice if you are considering a crowdsourcing campaign for your church project. Read the directions offered by your platform and follow them, assemble a team, write for the net, tend your campaign regularly on social media and through email, know your audience, and if you are offering gifts or incentives remember that mailing can be costly and labour intensive. Crowdsourcing is not a goose that lays golden eggs; it is about real relationships with people who want to be part of something good. For the right project it can be a way to invite participation from people who you would otherwise never ask.

Here is a link to the video, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=S60LuJgr8wI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S60LuJgr8wI).

Links to the Unitarians sites in the USA can be found at [www.faithify.org](http://www.faithify.org) and for Canada at [www.northernlightsuu.ca](http://www.northernlightsuu.ca).

The link to the actual fundraising page can be found at [www.indiegogo.com/projects/salal-cedar-growing-climate-leaders/x/12916491#](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/salal-cedar-growing-climate-leaders/x/12916491#). ✠



Salal &amp; Cedar — Elements of the Eucharist. PHOTO Laurel Dykstra

Deadline for *Topic* Submissions

*March 25 for the May 2016 issue*

*April 29 for the June 2016 issue*



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Open Discussion On Proposed Changes to the Marriage Canon • Report •



Bishop Skelton welcomes the group. Seated are (left to right) Melanie Delva, the Rev. Patrick Blaney, Bishop Skelton and the Rev. Alex Wilson. PHOTO Randy Murray

On Wednesday evening, January 27, approximately 40 clergy and lay of the diocese gathered with seven of the diocese of New Westminster's delegates to General Synod 2016. They met in the Conference Room of the Synod offices for an open discussion on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada. Bishop Skelton and General Synod clergy delegate, (who is also an elected representative to the Council of General Synod) Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton facilitated the two-hour session.

The promotional material for the sessions (the other one took place February 11, 2016, at St. John's, Sardis) requested that those attending make themselves familiar with the Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada titled, *This Holy Estate* and the study guide that was prepared to accompany the report available on the General Synod website found at [www.anglican.ca/about/ccc/cogs/cmcc/submissions](http://www.anglican.ca/about/ccc/cogs/cmcc/submissions).

The purpose of the discussion was to clarify questions that people might have, and perhaps offer some answers. Also to

listen to one another's perspectives, keeping in mind that this discussion is not about convincing others of our own points of view, or of our predictions concerning the outcome at General Synod. Bishop Skelton stressed that, "we are here to listen to one another."

Archdeacon McNaughton presented an overview of the Respectful Communications Guidelines of:

- Taking responsibility
- Empathetic listening
- Sensitivity to differences
- Pondering before speaking
- Examining your assumptions
- Keeping confidentiality
- Trusting ambiguity

Currently at the National House of Bishops, Bishop Skelton takes a facilitation role when this topic is discussed. She informed the group that these are the same guidelines used there for this discussion.

The design of the session was very simple. It began with listing questions for clarification submitted by the group, and then splitting into two listening circles of



The Rev. Melanie Calabrigo, the Rev. Clare Morgan, the Rev. Barbara Blakely, Lynley Lewis and Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton listening as the questions are discussed. PHOTO Randy Murray



Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton presents the first question for the speaking and listening circle response. PHOTO Randy Murray

20+ to respond to three questions.

There were approximately ten questions for clarification submitted and they ranged from: "Whatever happened to same-sex blessings in the Anglican Church of Canada?" to "Marriage as a sacrament? Yes? No? If yes, Why?" to "What are the ecumenical consequences of changing the Marriage Canon to include the marriage of same sex couples?" The questions were discussed briefly in plenary with Bishop Skelton, Archdeacon McNaughton and others in attendance experienced in this issue offering answers.

Some mechanical information about the process of canonical change was discussed during the answer portion of this section of the session. For a canonical change to take place it must be approved by a two-thirds majority of each of the three houses (bishops, clergy and lay) at two consecutive Generals Synods.

Then the group split into two, with half remaining in the Conference Room and the other half forming a circle of chairs in another meeting space.

Each group would be asked to share their thoughts on three questions:

1. What do you value about the report, or what in the report resonates with you?
2. What are your concerns about the report and the future of the report?
3. What are your hopes for the outcome of the discussions at General Synod this summer?

The questions were asked one at a time and each person present was asked to respond briefly (if they wished to respond) to each



Bishop Skelton and Archdeacon McNaughton thank the group for their participation. PHOTO Randy Murray

of the questions going around the circle. Bishop Skelton and Archdeacon McNaughton listened very carefully, taking copious notes. This section of the evening took almost an hour and then the two groups gathered again in the Conference Room to briefly talk about, "What's next?" join hands and say, "The Grace."

The responses from both this meeting and the February 11 meeting will be studied and considered as Bishop Skelton and the General Synod delegates from our diocese gather to familiarize themselves with the content that will be discussed this summer at the meeting in Ontario. As Archdeacon McNaughton and Bishop Skelton were keen to point out about their role as members of General Synod and the responsibility that entails, "we don't go with our minds made up." ♦

# ART & SPIRIT

a speaker series  
**4 Wednesdays  
in March  
at 7:30 pm**  
free/donations welcome

## exploring the spirit of creativity

march 2



**Robert  
Bateman**

artist, photographer,  
and conservationist

march 9



**Bramwell  
Tovey**

Conductor and  
Music Director of the  
Vancouver Symphony  
Orchestra

march 16



**Hope  
in  
Shadows**

stories and photographs  
from Vancouver's  
Downtown Eastside

march 23



**Vikram  
Vij**

celebrity chef, author  
and TV personality



**St. Anselm's**  
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**5210 University Blvd, Vancouver**  
(across from UBC Golf Course)  
**604.224.1410**  
**info: [stanselms.ca/events](http://stanselms.ca/events)**



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • Clergy News Around the Diocese •

The Rev. David Edgerton was installed by Bishop Skelton as rector, St. George, Maple Ridge on the Feast of the Presentation, February 2nd. The preacher was the Rev. Kyle Norman, rector of Church of the Holy Cross, Calgary. As this issue of *Topic* was in the final stages of layout at that time, full coverage of the installation will be featured in the April issue.



The Rev. David Edgerton just prior to his installation as rector by Bishop Skelton, singing *Here I am Lord* between wardens, Gerry Kozol, ODNW and Nona Robinson.

The Rev. Denise Doerksen has left her ministry position as associate priest at St. Mark, Ocean Park. Effective February 16, she will become the full time interim priest-in-charge at St. David's, Delta.

The Rev. John Mash, currently chaplain to the retired clergy of the diocese has been appointed part time Assistant to the Rector at St. Mark's, Ocean Park effective

February 1

It was announced at both St. John's, Shaughnessy and St. Philip, Dunbar on Sunday morning, January 17 that the Ven. John Stephens, Archdeacon of Vancouver will be leaving his 14 year ministry as rector of St. Philip, Dunbar to become the incumbent at St. John's, Shaughnessy, effective April 16, 2016.

The Rev. Elizabeth Ruder-Celiz will continue halftime as interim priest-in-charge at St. John's, Shaughnessy until the new rector arrives. She will then begin her new role as Assistant to the Rector halftime at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale.

An announcement regarding the Ven. John Stephen's induction Eucharist—Celebration of New Ministry is available in the Events section of the diocesan website at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/events](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/events).

Some very optimistic news about the Rev. John Marsh's recovery was supplied by Pam Martin, Order of the diocese of New Westminster (ODNW) of the Parish of St. Mary Magdalene. As many of you know, on December 29, 2015, while on vacation in Ontario with his wife, the Rev. Paulina Lee (rector of St. Chad's, Vancouver), John suffered a stroke. Pam writes, "John and Paulina flew home on January 16. John walked off the plane, albeit slowly and with Paulina's support (only to discover that someone else had taken his luggage! Soon straightened out, however). On January 18 he was offered a bed in the in-patient stroke recovery program at GF Strong, which amounts to a fulltime job of intensive rehab. On Sunday, January 17, John walked into the church in time to receive communion and hear the reading of Bishop Melissa's letter declaring the establishment of the new parish of St. Mary Magdalene. He still has a lot of work to do in recovering, but he is in the best place to do that and progress he has already made is amazing. Thanks be to God!"

### • Soup & Bun Workshops at St. Paul's • Powers of Attorney, Joint Bank Accounts, Representation Agreements, & Advance Directives

DATE Thursday, March 10, 2016

TIME 12 noon – 2 pm

LOCATION St. Paul's Anglican Church

1130 Jervis Street, Vancouver

This workshop will be given by the BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support (BCCEAS), and presented by BCCEAS Workshop Coordinator Lin Chen.

For more information go to the St. Paul's website at [www.stpaulsanglican.bc.ca](http://www.stpaulsanglican.bc.ca) or phone 604.685.6832. ☩

### • Confirmation Prep Day 2016 •



### We Are God's Own

DATE Saturday, April 9

TIME 9:30 am – 3 pm

LOCATION Synod Office

1410 Nanton Avenue

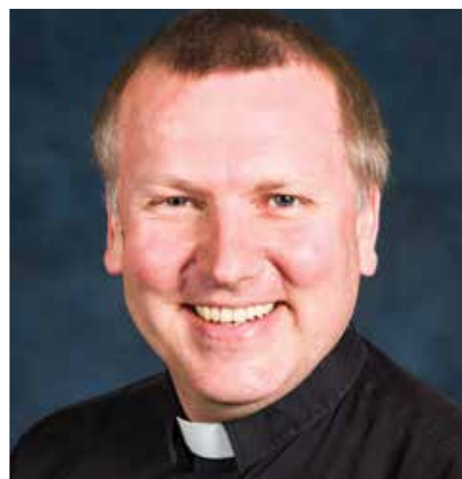
The diocese of New Westminster invites all those being confirmed, reaffirmed or received into the Anglican Church this year to join us for a day of teaching, discussion and worship. This day is designed to compliment whatever preparation candidates will be undertaking within their parishes. Please contact Caitlin Reilley Beck by email at [cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca) or phone at 604.684.6306, ext. 225.

*The Confirmation Eucharist will be celebrated at Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday, April 17 at 3 pm.*

*Please make a note of the start time. ☩*



The Rev. Denise Doerksen in 2012. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Bishop Skelton presents the ordained leader of the shared ministry of St. George's, Maple Ridge, the Rev. David Edgerton. RIGHT The Ven. John Stephens. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Bishop Skelton blesses the Rev. John Marsh during an episcopal visitation June 21, 2015. PHOTO Randy Murray

## WE ARE GOD'S OWN

2016 Diocesan Confirmation Day

**9:30AM - 3PM SATURDAY APRIL 9TH, 2016**

SYNOD OFFICE, 1410 NANTON AVE. (GRANVILLE AT NANTON)



*Come and meet Bishop Melissa and share a day of learning, worship and fellowship with others being confirmed, reaffirmed and received this year.*

If you have questions or need more information, contact Caitlin Reilley Beck at [cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca) or (604) 684-6306 ex 225.

Registration fee: \$15 (includes morning refreshments and lunch).

Register Online: <http://tinyurl.com/DNWconfirmation2016>



Diocese of New Westminster  
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA





25 members of REST excitedly await the arrival of Honada's Family. PHOTO Randy Murray



The family poses with the greeting party at YVR baggage claim. PHOTO Randy Murray

## Welcome to Canada • Refugee Family Arrives!

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The first family of refugees connected to the Syrian crisis—Honada's Family, surname Abdulhafiz—and sponsored by North Vancouver's Regional Ecumenical Support Team (REST—comprised of 10 churches and individuals), which is associated with the diocese of New Westminster through the diocese as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) arrived at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) at 4:45 pm on January 15, 2016.

The family departed Beirut, Lebanon at 4:30 pm our time on Wednesday, January 13 (4:30 am, Thursday morning local time) arriving in Amman, Jordan two hours later to change planes.

They left Amman at 2 am our time or noon local time on January 14 arriving in Paris nearly four hours later for a crew change. There is an hour time difference between Beirut and Paris.

They left Paris an hour later for Toronto. They landed in Toronto on January 14 at 8:15 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST). The trip took nearly 23 hours.

The family departed Toronto at 11:20 am, January 15 and landed at 4:36 pm, one minute ahead of schedule.

They were greeted at YVR by 25 members of REST. There was a lot of joy, smiles and tears.

The family, consisting of: parents, Honada and Said; daughter, Nour (18); son Ahmed (12); and youngest son Ibrahim (11) are Palestinian but had lived in Syria for many years. They had saved money for 18 years to buy a house in Syria and after a year in their new home it was destroyed. That was approximately 5 years ago, and they have been in a refugee camp ever since.

The family were transported by Sylvia Enga and Shannon and Stephen Muir of St. Agnes, North Vancouver, driving an SUV and a van to a suite in a West Vancouver home where they spent the first two weeks of their new lives in Canada. As of February 1, they moved into a nearly totally furnished house in North Vancouver's Blueridge neighbourhood.

During the drive, Said and Honada spoke to their hosts through an interpreter. Said said, "What Canada and Canadians did is over and beyond my imagination with their hospitality and the warm welcoming!" Honada added, "I haven't felt the love, support and welcoming for five years since I left Syria." During a visit with the family on January 16, Honada told her supporters that they had chosen Canada as the destination for their new home over Germany and Holland when they did the interviews with the United Nations (UN) in Beirut.

They are very eager to learn English. Said who is a builder by trade (concrete specialist) is keen to look for work, however his hosts assured him there will be opportunities to job search but he will have to learn a bit of English first.

On Saturday evening, January 16, REST produced a fundraising Pub Night at the North Vancouver Legion and raised in excess of \$4,000. This was followed on January 30 by a *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* night facilitated by St. Agnes' which raised \$1,000.

During the week of January 17, REST volunteers took the family for medical appointments and there was a planned trip to a church thrift shop where and when the family had an opportunity to choose some clothing, as they'd arrived in Canada with little more than the clothes they were wearing. They had also requested that they meet with media to tell their story and express their gratitude. An interview with the North Shore News was done and the story printed in the January 27 issue.

On Sunday, January 24 at 5 pm, Pastor Jennifer Marlor and the worshipping community of Gloria Dei Lutheran

in North Vancouver (also members of REST) opened the doors of their hall to host a welcome potluck party for Honada's family attended by well over 100 people. This crowd included a large turnout of REST members and supporters including representatives of: St. Martin's; St. Agnes; St. Clement's; St. John's, North Vancouver; St. Catherine's, Capilano; Mt. Olivet Lutheran; and Sutherland High School. The party was a lot of fun and when Honada took to the microphone during the festivities she beamed with happiness and gratitude and said through an interpreter, "I am very happy to be here and I feel like I am around family... and Canada is my country."

By the time this issue of *Topic* is online, February 26 and in homes March 5 or 6 there will likely have been a lot more news about the family.

As of this writing in late January there are a number of refugee projects connected to the diocese as an SAH beginning to complete, including: the arrival of a Ali, a blind Somali man who is also sponsored by REST; the approval for REST to bring over another family connected to the Syrian crisis; and a family of four from Syria sponsored

by Vancouver Acts a group supported by Christ Church Cathedral. ✠



Said smiles as he puts on his warm winter coat in the YVR parking lot. PHOTO Randy Murray



Big smiles from (left to right) Nour, Ahmed, the Rev. Stephen Muir (in the background) and Honada. PHOTO Randy Murray



Nour, Ahmed, Honada, Ibrahim and Said prepare to cut the "Welcome" cake. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



The Abdulhafiz family with their interpreters, Sawsan Salih and Carole Talijeh arrives for the potluck at Gloria Dei on January 24. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



# St. Agnes' Day 2016

RANDY MURRAY  
Communications Officer & Topic Editor



Bishop Skelton and Bishop's Chaplain, Kathy Campbell, ODNW sing the Opening Hymn. PHOTO Randy Murray



The children's talk. PHOTO Randy Murray

On January 17, 2016, the parish of St. Agnes', North Vancouver welcomed Bishop Melissa Skelton back to her parish for the second time in her episcopacy to participate in the celebration of their patronal festival (St. Agnes' Day is January 21), and mark the Second Sunday of the Season of Epiphany.

This wasn't just a Feast Day Eucharist; this would also be a liturgy when and where Bishop Skelton would preside over the Reception of Annamarie Kersop into the Anglican Church of Canada.

Following the procession, the singing of the Opening Hymn, *I Come With Joy*, and the Collect for Purity, Bishop Skelton gathered the children of the parish around her and connected them to the theme of the Gospel reading for the day, *John 2: 1-11*: "The Wedding at Cana—Changing water into wine." Bishop Skelton substituted a birthday party for the wedding and a birthday cake that never showed up in place of the wine that had run out in the Gospel story.

Following the reading of the Gospel, by the deacon, the Rev. Lizz Lindsay, Bishop Skelton positioned herself at the lectern to preach. She thanked the parish for their warm welcome and expressed her gratitude to the parish for inviting her to celebrate with them on St. Agnes' Day, "The feast day of a child who sacrificed her life for the Christian Way."

In her examination of the familiar Gospel story (the text of the sermon is available in the *Opinion* section of this issue of *Topic* on page 23), she spoke of how a wedding is an event that is a microcosm of our lives, but everything is enlarged and exaggerated including emotions and our senses.

Bishop Skelton asked the questions, where in our lives, parishes, diocese, broader church are we running out of wine? And do we have the courage to admit that we are running out or have run out?

The Reception of Annamarie into the Anglican Church of Canada followed the bishop's homily. First there was the Examination, then the Baptismal Covenant and the Litany, concluding with the laying on of hands and the following words, "Strengthen, O Lord, your servant Annamarie with your Holy Spirit; empower her for your service; and sustain her all the days of her life." To which the people of God responded, "Amen!"

Prior to the dismissal, Bishop Skelton blessed a new plaque for the Memorial Garden, and Shannon Muir had the happy task of telling the congregation about the arrival two days previously of the Palestinian family who are refugees due to the Syrian crisis, and are co-sponsored by the parish of St. Agnes' (More information is available in this issue of *Topic* on page 19).

The brunch in the parish hall following worship was in celebration of St. Agnes' Day and the bishop's visit. After the company had found seats and the buffet table was adorned with Bette Geddes delicious culinary delights, the rector, the Rev. Stephen Muir welcomed everyone to the meal and reception. He informed them that the parish meeting with the bishop would take place after the main course but before dessert was served, which prompted a few chuckles. Stephen then continued with the morning's wedding theme, informing the parish that Bishop Skelton had been wed in the summer of 2015, and in recognition of that event the parish had arranged for a gift for her and for her husband the Rev. Eric Stroo. Eric is a vocational deacon in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, who in his professional life is in practice as a relationship counselor.

Eric was scheduled to preach at his parish in the Seattle area and was unable to attend.  
Bishop Skelton immediately opened the gift, revealing

a stunning serving plate, an original piece of hand-painted crockery. She was delighted with the gift, thanked the parish, said Grace and then it was time to enjoy the brunch. ☩



Bishop Skelton preaching. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Rev. Lizz Lindsay, Annamarie Kersop, the Rev. Stephen Muir. PHOTO Randy Murray

*"...where in our lives, parishes, diocese, broader church are we running out of wine?  
And do we have the courage to admit that we are running out or have run out?"*



The clergy present Annamarie for Reception. PHOTO Randy Murray





The laying on of hands. PHOTO Randy Murray



Eucharistic Prayer. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Peace. PHOTO Randy Murray



Shannon shares the good news about the arrival of the refugee family. PHOTO Randy Murray



Stephen presents the new plaque for the Memorial Garden to Bishop Skelton for a blessing. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT & RIGHT The gourmet brunch sliders prepared by caterer extraordinary, Bette Geddes and her team. PHOTO Randy Murray



Finding seats for the brunch. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT & RIGHT Bishop Skelton opens and displays the hand painted serving plate. PHOTOS Randy Murray



## A Letter Regarding the January 2016 Primates Meeting in Canterbury

KERRY BAISLEY

Order of the diocese of New Westminster (ODNW)



Kerry Baisley (left) receiving the Order of the diocese of New Westminster (ODNW) from Primate Fred Hiltz (right).

To Anglican Journal & diocese of New Westminster, *Topic*

I agree that the Primates 2016 Meeting was a success, thanks to the life and witness of Jean Vanier.

Vanier told the Community of St. Anslem to trust themselves, listen to their inner voice and use it to provide *a compass to make us more in tune with the things of God*. He manifested the spirit of servanthood in the washing of feet that led the Primates to do the same for each other. I could not find any release stating Vanier is Canadian. We were told he is Roman Catholic ☺. Clearly the Holy Spirit was present in Canterbury throughout that week. What remains to be seen is whether that same Spirit can lead the Primates towards true *mutual accountability and interdependence* and not controlled compliance shrouded as doctrinal consistency.

For the Primates I have a number of observations:

You are servants; you cannot speak for the entire Church. Your meeting was initiated by Archbishop Coggan in 1978 for *leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation*. We pray you will remember you are one part of the Body of Christ and not the whole.

*You do not have a monopoly on pain* (An observation Bishop Michael Ingham made when an individual focussed the conversation solely on his own experience). The Communique speaks of *deep pain throughout the Communion*. There is deep pain indeed, yet the focus here seems centred on the Primates. We do hope the Primates will *walk together and not apart*. While on that journey they should be wary of the path once followed by the Sadducees. We all know what Jesus thought of them. The parable of the Good Samaritan is my recommendation for their next Bible study.

To Archbishops Welby and Hiltz, your apologies to Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Queer (LGTBQ) people are heartfelt and inconsequential without action. Those of us who lived through laws of discrimination, prejudice and AIDS are finely tuned to political statements that sound great but in real terms are “waterish, bleak, and thin.” (George Herbert, *The Windows*, 1633)

Bishop Jim Cruickshank, of beloved memory, led the diocese of Cariboo in costly discipleship when they moved from an old model of the Church and journeyed to a new one. Bishop Jim observed, *the people will still gather, the word will be proclaimed, the bread will be broken and the cup will be shared*. At the final Synod of the diocese of Cariboo Bishop Jim was given a quilt. On a background of green foliage there is a white cross with a silver cup and plate; above the cross are the words *Alleluia anyway*.

Between Jean Vanier and the diocese of Cariboo, the Anglican Communion would do well to have a little more Canada!

Yours in Christ.

Kerry Baisley, ODNW ✠

## Prayer During Lent The Gift of Time to Commune With God

ART TURNBULL

Retired priest of the diocese of Ontario;

retired Priest with Permission to Officiate, diocese of New Westminster

“Blind leading the blind!” My grandmother used to say that. The words go back a long time. Old sayings have a habit of pointing to truths. Certainly we can learn a great deal about blindness from a blind person. We should also be able to learn a great deal about prayer from people who pray. The problem is to know who is blind and who prays.

In this season of Lent it is good that we are called into prayer. Many people take time during the 40 days of Lent to learn more about prayer. Daily devotional materials are made available in parishes. Opportunities are provided for small groups of people to study and practise various forms of rites of prayer. In corporate worship the prayers of the people are given a focused tone that asks us to respond, “Lord, have mercy.” There are plenty of moments in which to talk to God.

Christians are asked to pray every day. The apostles began that particular tradition by asking Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray.” The response has become known as the Lord’s Prayer. It is intended to be a form of prayer used every day. Perhaps most disciples of Jesus do pray every day, do take time to converse with God, do have a quiet listening for the voice of the Creator. Even a few moments taken out of a busy schedule to pray, “Our Father,” is accepted.

The Church also asks the members to faithfully assemble at least once weekly to worship God together. The Sunday services provide an opportunity to hear the Bible being read, the thoughts being interpreted, and the concerns of the world being raised up to God in prayer. In our Anglican Church, as with many other branches of the Church, the sharing in the Lord’s Supper takes place also at least weekly.

Christians should be used to praying. Christians should find it second nature to be at prayer. Christians should be in touch with God every day, all day. I suspect that, as with reading of the Bible, prayer is neglected.

It would be interesting to find out somehow just how many parents still teach their children to pray. I know that as a wee boy I was introduced to bedtime prayers of the “God bless Mommy and Daddy” format. These were and are simple prayers, easy to memorize and recite. The habit of taking time to communicate with God was inculcated. Now if memory serves me right,

the image of God that I had back then was a bit of a wispy shape with a bearded old fellow not to be confused with Santa Claus. Perhaps the blind were leading the blind.

It is no surprise that World Day of Prayer asks all Christians to at least pray on the one day in March every year. Once known as Women’s World day of Prayer, and still planned and promoted by women of the world, this time has been set aside for all Christians to come together, join hands and voices around the world, and pray. Are there other days for community prayer?

It is my opinion that if we took our daily prayers seriously, if we really placed gathering with our brother and sisters in Christ on Sundays as a top priority, if we really took God’s Word to heart and lived as ones called by God to follow Jesus, we would all pause for prayer every day.

In the middle of Lent, all of us need to listen and learn carefully to what is being taught in the lections read each Sunday. Listen to the prophet Isaiah saying to us, “The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches: for I give water to drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they may declare my praise.” (*Isaiah 43: 20*) Indeed it is God who appeals to us to be carriers of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Paul the Apostle says, “We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (*2 Corinthians 5: 20*) To be ambassadors, to be reconciled to God, to give praise, perhaps really means we ought to be talking with God. That is prayer in action. Living examples of the faithful who pray individually and collectively are then present in the world. It is no longer the blind leading the blind when all of us have accepted the privilege to commune often with God and with one another.

Lent is a period of time for us to reflect upon the quality of our faith in Jesus Christ. As we prepare for Easter we are given the gift of time to commune with God. Perhaps in our blindness we can reach out to each other, and be led together into a deeper spiritual life. With the blind man who receives sight, we can also say, “Lord, I believe.”

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus says, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” (See *John 9: 35–41*) ✠



Art Turnbull.



## OPINION

## Running Out of Wine

MELISSA M. SKELTON

Bishop, diocese of New Westminster

*The following is the text of the sermon Bishop Skelton preached during her second episcopal visitation to the Parish of St. Agnes, North Vancouver on January 17, 2016 (Epiphany 2), the Sunday that the parish celebrated their patronal festival. St. Agnes' Day is January 21. Coverage of the day is available on pages 20 and 21 of this issue of Topic.*

*The Gospel for the day was particularly appropriate as this was the first Sunday following the Primate's decision in Canterbury to exclude The Episcopal Church (TEC) for three years from: participating as members of the Communion for ecumenical and multi-faith gatherings, being appointed or elected to internal standing committees; "and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity."*

*This was also ten days before Bishop Skelton would facilitate (with Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton) the first of two open discussion sessions on the potential changes to the marriage canon that will be debated at the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, the summer of 2016. Coverage of the first discussion session on January 27 is available on page 17 of this issue of Topic.*

*We have included the Gospel reading for the day for reference. • Editor*

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. • John 2: 1–11

Most of us think of weddings as occasions that are in a category all by themselves, separate and apart from everyday life. This has to do both with how important weddings are in people's lives, and in this day and time, it also has to do with the industry that has sprung up around weddings. And so most weddings these days require many, many special things: special clothes, a very special setting, special words, special guests and, of course, lots of special food and drink. Everything must be special: the clothes more beautiful than our everyday clothes, the setting more exquisitely decorated than our everyday setting, the words more solemn and joyful than our everyday words, the guests more carefully chosen and more artfully invited than our everyday companions, the food and drink more plentiful, more sumptuous and more delicious than our everyday food.

I, like many other clergy, have had quite a lot of experience officiating at and attending weddings. I have watched countless couples come together to make their vows with jangly nerves, shaky hands and trembling lips. I have seen men and women stand before me literally in tears, yes, on account of their feelings of love for their soon to be husband or wife but also on account of all the pressure on them to

make their wedding not only special but spectacular.

And yet, and yet, if we make our way through all the suits and dresses, through all the satin and flowers, through all the questions and vows and blessings, through all the aunts and uncles and cousins and friends, through all the punch, pâté and pinot grigio; if we make our way through all these things, in my view, what we will find are all the questions of ordinary life—right there at the heart of a wedding—questions that you and I ask ourselves everyday: Questions like these: Where am I located? Who or what am I committed to and what is the nature of that commitment? Who is my community? What am I going to wear and what am I going to eat and drink? And so weddings are not really outside or separate from everyday life, they are intensifications of ordinary life—intensifications of the questions and the experience of being alive, of living the human life we are all living.

And so, if this is the view we take, that weddings are a kind of intensified drama of what it's like to be alive, we see a particular version of that drama today in our story of the wedding at Cana of Galilee, a wedding to which Jesus, Jesus' mother and some of the disciples have been invited. We see a



Bishop Melissa Skelton.

particular version of the human story, a story in which all those earlier questions I posed are, of course, being asked—questions like: Where are we located? Who or what are we committed to and what is the nature of that commitment? Who is our community? What will we wear and eat and drink? We see a story in which all of this is going on when something unexpected happens: they run out of wine.

Think of it. There they all are in the middle of an event that is emblematic of life itself when they suddenly discover that they have run out of the thing that carries their sense of celebration and joy and community with one another. They run out of wine.

And so this morning before we ever get to what Jesus brings as his gift to this wedding in Cana of Galilee, I wonder: where are you finding that you're running out of wine in your life? Where is your sense of joy and celebration and community with others draining away from you? Where is it gone? Or to ask another question, where are you running low on this same wine here in this parish or here in our diocese? Or how about this: Where in our Anglican Communion as a whole are we unable to access the joy, the sense of celebration and the sense of community with one another in the middle of asking our important questions: Where are we located? Who or what are we committed to and what is the nature of those commitments? Who is our community? What will we wear and eat and drink?

For you see, without sensing that we may have run out of wine, without an honest admission that our wine is gone, Jesus will not have much to offer us, will have little to add to our lives. He will instead sit there as a passive guest, not active because, well, why would he be? Why should he be?

And so it is important, so important, to have the courage and in some cases the simple and brash innocence just to say it. I have no wine. We have no wine. We have been out of wine for weeks, months, even years!

For once we say it, somehow, someday, a new presence may make itself available to us, a new presence that gives us access to our joy again, access to our kinship with others again access to the gift of our lives again, all which renews our sense of celebration, the sense of celebration that we had lost.

It will not come as a literal transformation of water into wine the way it does in our Gospel for this morning, that is, as if

by magic, for this is not really John's point in his telling of story of the wedding at Cana. It will come in and through a lived intimacy with a God, a heightened awareness of a God, who in the Gospel of John is the creator, "In the beginning was the Word and Word was with God and the Word was God... All things came into being through him." A God who is the lover of souls, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." A God who has lived every dimension of our lives, "The Word was made flesh and lived among us." And a God through whom all humanity became one family of God, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." For in John, that wedding guest sitting quietly with his mother and his friends is none other than all holiness, all human solidarity, all renewed consciousness, all life's giftedness in our very midst, so close and so ordinary we can touch it, so close and so human we, ourselves, can become it.

This, then is what Jesus is all about: God's very self, inhabiting human life, God's very self, asking the very same questions we ask in our lives, God's very self, creating new capacities in us: the capacity to live ordinary moments in ordinary places and to see them for the extraordinary moments that they really are, the capacity to have ordinary relationships and to see them for the extraordinary relationships that they really are, the capacity to make ordinary commitments and to see them for the extraordinary commitments that they really are; the capacity to live in community with ordinary people and to see this for the extraordinary community that it really is, and yes, the capacity to wear ordinary clothes and eat and drink ordinary food and to experience these as the extraordinary gifts that they really are.

And so, this morning, the people gathered here in this church, and all people of our beloved rascally, frustrating, gifted Anglican Communion, we have run out of wine, in our fractiousness, in our grief, and in our fatigue. We have surely run out of wine. But look there, just as we say this, there he is, the Holy One among us, there he is, telling the servants to fetch the stone jars and to fill them up to very brim with the ordinary water of our lives. Fill them up to the brim, he tells them, so that we can taste all that is extraordinary again. There he is. There he is. Here he is. ✠

*"Think of it.  
There they all are in the middle of an event  
that is emblematic of life itself  
when they suddenly discover  
that they have run out of the thing  
that carries their sense of celebration and joy  
and community with one another.  
They run out of wine."*





## Diocesan Youth Movement

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### YOUTH CONNECTIONS

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News & Events for Youth in the diocese of New Westminster

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**youth groups •**  
For Parish Youth Groups go to <http://bit.ly/1T5cWk0>

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**contact •** Caitlin Reilley Beck,  
*Diocesan Coordinator for Children & Youth Ministry*  
[cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:cbeck@vancouver.anglican.ca)  
604.684.6306 ext. 225



Steve Bailey with the chalice serves communion at a DYM retreat at Camp Artaban in 2011. PHOTO Phil Colvin

## Celebrating Clergy in our Diocesan Youth Ministry

CAITLIN REILLEY BECK

*Children & Youth Ministry Coordinator, diocese of New Westminster*

All parish clergy are youth ministers, just by virtue of ministering to the young people in their congregations, but in order for our diocesan youth ministry to flourish, we need parish clergy who are willing to step up and get involved at the diocesan level. We need them to be present at diocesan youth events and gatherings to provide pastoral support, to encourage young people from their parishes in their spiritual journey, to celebrate the sacraments and to collaborate with the dedicated lay staff and volunteers who do this ministry.

There are priests who have made a concerted effort to accompany young people from their parishes to youth retreats or to be guest speakers and leaders in our diocesan youth ministry in recent years. The contributions they have made have been important, in particular in terms of connecting this diocesan ministry to the life of the parish Church. This fall, the Rev. Ruth Monette and I decided it was time to do some recruiting from among the parish clergy in our diocese to take on this role of supporting the

youth ministry that happens at the diocesan level through their presence at events. We sent letters asking priests and deacons to commit to coming to at least one diocesan youth event every two years.

This ministry of presence with young people is important for their spiritual growth and development. Young people, who have positive and supportive connections with clergy, experience a stronger sense of connection to the church. The attendance of priests and deacons at these events will also strengthen their own parishes' youth ministry. Perhaps this will make it easier for a young person from their parish to feel comfortable attending their first gathering, perhaps they will have new stories of youth ministry to share with members of their parish, perhaps other adults from their parish with an interest in youth ministry will learn about a new way to get involved.

At these events, these clergy would connect with young people and help with the little logistical pieces during the event that ensure that things run smoothly. Serving food,

cleaning up after meals, making photocopies, counting young people, loading and unloading vehicles, setting up and putting away tables and chairs—these are the less glamorous, but crucial tasks that make youth ministry happen (in fact they are crucial for ministry with all ages). A priest I worked with once told me, as we were setting up tables and chairs, that you can't work for a church and not expect to spend some time setting up tables and chairs. It is wonderful to have clergy at youth retreats living out this kind of collaborative, servant ministry.

And these ordained servant ministers in our midst also serve as important examples for those young people in our diocese who have a vocation to ministry as priests or deacons. Ruth shared the following story about ordained leaders in her experience of diocesan youth ministry and discernment process:

"Diocesan level youth ministry was an essential component of my spiritual formation and eventual call to ordained ministry. It was where I first met female priests and discovered the breadth of our Anglican tradition. The exposure I experienced was possible because adult leadership, including ordained leaders, took the time to be present with teenagers.

At this year's Diocesan Youth Movement (DYM) winter retreat, held over the February long weekend at Sorrento Centre, participants had an opportunity to consider their own vocations and discernment. There are many faithful, talented, creative young people at a youth retreat and part of our responsibility is to help them discern what ministry God is calling them to in the Church. The more different examples of ministry they see, the more likely it is they might be able to see that God is calling them to their own unique ministry as well.

I wanted to take the opportunity to celebrate and thank publicly those clergy who responded to our invitations and have already committed to being involved in diocesan youth ministry by being present at event such as our annual DYM Winter Retreat. I want all of you in our diocese to celebrate them as well and know who they are because this ministry strengthens our whole diocese. They are:

Steve Bailey  
Denise Doerkson  
Kelly Duncan  
Laurel Dykstra  
Andrew Halladay  
Liz Hamel  
Daebin Im  
Clarence Li  
Lizz Lindsay  
Janice Lowell  
Elizabeth Mathers

Lynne McNaughton  
Clare Morgan  
Marnie Peterson  
Liz Ruder-Celiz  
Paula Sampson  
Stephanie Shephard  
Emilie Smith  
Shirley Stockdill  
David Taylor  
Helen Tervo  
Karen Urquhart

Some of these clergy have long been involved in diocesan youth ministry and some are new to the team, and I wanted to let them all know that I am very grateful for their commitment and their ministry with young people in our diocese. Thank you all for valuing this ministry and I look forward to continuing to work with you!"



LEFT Daebin Im joins in a game with a group of youth at the 2015 *Keep Calm and Stay Cool* retreat. PHOTO Caitlin Reilley Beck



Andrew Halladay explains the serious business of transformation to some junior youth at *Equip, Empower, Engage* in 2015. PHOTO Kim Blair



Clergy and future clergy are well represented in the band at *Keep Calm and Stay Cool* — Clare Morgan, David Taylor and Andrew Halladay. PHOTO Caitlin Reilley Beck

*"This ministry of presence with young people is important for their spiritual growth and development. Young people, who have positive and supportive connections with clergy, experience a stronger sense of connection to the church."*