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“Do you dance?” he asks.

“No,” she replies.

Tobias Powell, the world renowned ballet dancer, now teacher at Julliard, in the film *Match*, asks this question of the character Lisa, as he shares what teaching is like for him...

“Second position, upper body. I sometimes have my students stay in this position for 10 minutes. I tell them to let the world flow through them — its strength, its power, its love... Oh, its very new age, but it works. And we just stay there like this, and with it drains away all the hideous breakfast fight with the boyfriend, the perverted uncle, the broken expectations, the sadness which is everywhere... and sometimes we stand there and LET Go, and I swear to God it ALL goes away. Will you try?”

“I don’t think I can.” Lisa replies.

“Why not?” Toby asks.

“If I let go, everything will break...”

Second position upper body... beautiful in ballet.

Second position upper body... the position for prayer — the priest at the table... the believer open to God.

Second position upper body... the form of the cross... the ultimate “Let Go...”

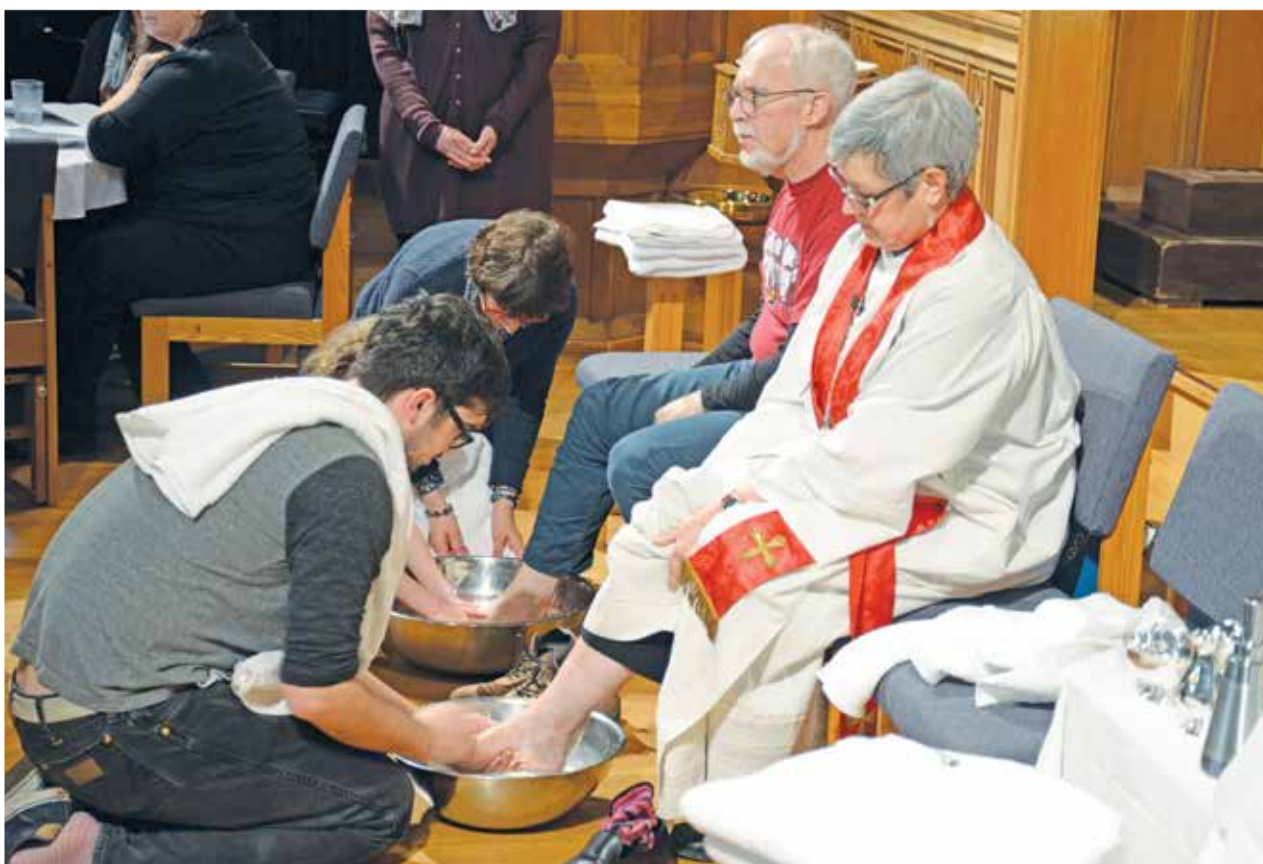
The preceding was the opening of the Rev. Louise Peters’ sermon on March 25, 2016, Good Friday at Christ Church Cathedral. In the photo of her on this page we see the Rev. Peters’ arms in the classical ballet second position.

This sermon preached by the current executive director of Sorrento Centre was one of the many inspiring and truly moving worship experiences around the diocese of New Westminster during Holy Week and Easter 2016.

In recent years, diocesan communications officer and editor of *Topic*, Randy Murray has spent Holy Week and Easter Day visiting a number of parishes in our diocese, taking photographs and scribbling notes with the goal of sharing what can only be a *sample* of our diocese gathered together in worship during the week that is of the greatest significance to Christians.

On this page there are a number of images chronicling those liturgies and inside this issue on pages 12–19 we hope that you will enjoy the more than 100 captioned images that make up this 2016 snapshot of our diocese at worship. ♣

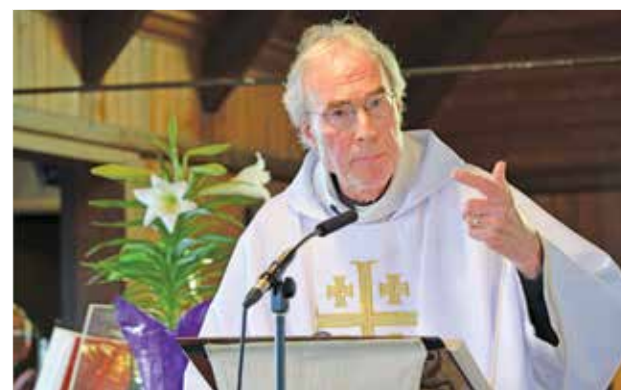
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Cameron Gutjahr washes the feet of guest preacher for the Great Three Days liturgies, National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Bishop Susan Johnson, on March 24 at St. Mary’s, Kerrisdale.



LEFT Rector of St. Mark’s, Ocean Park, the Rev. Craig Tanksley leads the singing of the Eucharistic Prayer at the 10:30 am Eucharist, Reading of the Passion and Liturgy of Palms, March 20. RIGHT The Rev. Timothy Dutcher-Walls preaching about the significance of “Easter Faith” at the 10:30 am Easter Day Eucharist at St. Oswald’s, Port Kells.



LEFT The Rev. Liz Hamel chants the litany at the opening of the Holy Eucharist with Reaffirmation of Baptismal and Ordination Vows and Consecration of Chrism celebrated at Christ Church Cathedral, March 22. Behind her is taper bearer Mark Munn who announced that day that he will be ordained to the transitional diaconate on June 18, 2016. MIDDLE The Eucharist at St. Michael’s Multicultural Church in East Vancouver on Good Friday, March 25 at 10 am. RIGHT The Rev. Louise Peters preaching at Christ Church Cathedral.

# Chrism Mass 2016

## The Renewal of Ordination Vows & the Blessings of Chrism & Unction

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The Renewal of Ordination Vows and the Blessings of Oils celebrated at 12:10 pm on the Tuesday of Holy Week is one of the many innovations in worship, learning and community-building that Bishop Melissa Skelton has introduced to the diocese of New Westminster since her ordination and consecration March 1, 2014. It is also one of the most successful, not only in terms of increasing participation (particularly by the laity) but it is successful in that it has grown and developed into a prayerful, uplifting and inspirational liturgy that is truly one of the highlights of the season. At a time when clergy are experiencing the busiest and often most stressful week of the year, this liturgy comes along to refocus and energize.

More than 60 vested clergy and perhaps 20 more in clericals or mufti attended the March 22, 2016 worship. This year's version featured a few changes. The vested clergy did not process during the Litany. The Litany was led by a litanist, the Rev. Liz Hamel, a resident deacon at Christ Church Cathedral who is also the Anglican Chaplain to the Vancouver General Hospital. Rev. Hamel is a superb and accomplished choral singer and having her voice as the focus for the extensive prayer during the opening procession set the tone.

Lay people were involved in the liturgy as readers and communion administrators and the laity who participated on March 22 were gathered from all around the diocese.

In 2014, and 2015, a catered light luncheon was provided for the clergy following worship and it was strongly suggested that those who planned to eat registered in advance. This year, that was not the case, and the food lovingly and skillfully prepared by Bette Geddes and Associates Catering was offered to all who were present. With everyone welcome to eat together, and the vested clergy processing out at the conclusion of worship, changing and returning to the chancel for the meal there was a more relaxed and familial atmosphere than in previous years.

One thing that hasn't changed is Bishop Skelton's presence in the west chancel alcove following worship. After the dismissal, a long line consisting of dozens of lay and clergy formed on the west side, each taking their turn to receive the laying on of hands from Bishop Skelton and to share with her their desire for prayer and spiritual support.

During the worship the Peter Hallock setting chosen for *Psalm 71: 1-17* was beautifully canted by one of Cathedral Choir's tenor section leads, Byron Hanson and the Hymn choices accompanied by the Cathedral's director of music and organist punctuated the prayers and Scripture perfectly. Particularly moving was the choice of Offertory Hymn, *My Song is Love Unknown* sung while Bishop Skelton incensed the altar following the placement there of the bread and chalice.

Bishop Skelton took the Gospel, *John 12: 20-36* for her sermon text. As in previous years this sermon is primarily a message for the ordained folks, however there was a good amount of material for laity as well. The theme of her sermon came from the text:

"Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

"Dying and rising in our lives." Bishop Skelton went on to examine how in her words, "the particular dimensions of dying and rising in the life of ordained people parallel the dimension of Benedictine life, something I spoke about

when I first came to the diocese. The specific ways we need to practice dying and rising seem to parallel Benedict's notions of stability, obedience and conversion of life." She then examined: stability, obedience and *conversatio morum*, conversion of life as they apply to vocation. The full text of Bishop Skelton's sermon is available on the web at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2016-03-22-renewal-of-ordination-vows-and-blessing-of-oils-2016](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2016-03-22-renewal-of-ordination-vows-and-blessing-of-oils-2016)

The reaffirmation of vows, and the consecration of chrism and unction, both occur within the larger context of the Eucharist, although the blessing of chrism and unction are part of a concluding rite and could be seen as less connected. However, what really ties the conclusion of the

liturgy together is the congregational singing of the hymn, *Blest by the sun, the olive tree brought clusters of fair fruit to birth...* while deacons of the diocese collect the containers of sacred oils and immediately portion the contents into small jars for distribution to all the parishes of the diocese for the year's upcoming baptisms and healing needs.

Although the next Chrism Mass is a year away please consider making plans now to attend on April 11, 2017.

A Facebook photo album on the diocesan Facebook site, *Anglican Conversation* is accessible on the web at <http://bit.ly/1SGdewr> and the Chrism Mass is represented in this issue of *Topic* on pages 12-13. ✦

*"...a prayerful, uplifting and inspirational liturgy that is truly one of the highlights of the season."*

## The Diocese of New Westminster During Holy Week & Easter 2016

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE



LEFT Farooq Al-Sajee, a virtuoso of the *oud*, a middle-eastern stringed instrument similar to the lute gave a solo recital and performed with *Songs With Friends* at St. Helen's, West Point Grey the afternoon of March 20. St. Helen's director of music, Kevin Zakresky became aware of Farooq's presence in our greater community and brought his skill to the attention of St. Helen's rector, the Rev. Scott Gould. Plans were put in place for a concert which would be in the form of a solo recital, however this evolved into something more. Rev. Gould is guitarist, vocalist and songwriter in the group *Songs With Friends*, which consists primarily of Anglican musicians. *Songs With Friends* were looking at performing a concert (they perform two or three times a year with proceeds being directed to various charities associated with the church) so it was decided that they would invite Farooq to perform as a soloist and also with them. Farooq is a young Iraqi man, who grew up in Syria and recently arrived in Canada as a refugee. The word got out about this unusual but wonderful way of welcoming and the story of the concert was featured on CTV Vancouver's main newscast at 6 pm, March 20.



LEFT Sensational R&B/Gospel singer Warren Dean Flandez at St. Helen's, Point Grey during the Good Friday reading of the Passion and Stations of the Cross, on March 25 at 12 noon. RIGHT Rector of St. Timothy's, Burnaby the Rev. Stephanie Shepard holds the freshly lit Pascal candle to begin the Vigil of Easter with Baptism on Easter Day at 8 am.



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



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### The Bishop of New Westminster

The Rt. Rev. Melissa M. Skelton

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**Thank you!**



## Diocese of New Westminster

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

### Mission Conference

May 14, 2016 marks the first diocesan-wide Mission Conference. This event has three purposes:

1. For the diocesan community to gather and connect in a less formal way than Synod, with more of the community present. This goal developed out of the Reconnect Task Force's work in 2012–2013.
2. To be an opportunity for the diocesan community to think about mission — what is it that God is doing in our diocese (through individuals, parishes, and groups outside of the diocese) and how are we participating?
3. To energize and strengthen Anglicans as they are sent into the world (in their homes, schools, workplaces, community and civic organizations) to participate in God's mission in this time and place.

All members of the diocesan community are invited to participate — registration has been open throughout the month of April. Unlike Synod, where parishes elect delegates and each parish is assigned a number of delegates based on the size of the parish, the Mission Conference can be attended by anyone. The program is designed to welcome clergy and lay people, adults, youth, and children.

The program will include a plenary session with Bishop Melissa Skelton, diocese of New Westminster and Bishop Brent Alawas, Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines. Being present at the Mission Conference will be part of a longer official visit by Bishop Alawas as our Companion Diocese Relationship continues to develop. The two bishops will share time discussing what mission looks like in our different contexts and wondering together about what we might learn from one another about being sent into the world as participants in God's mission.

Following the plenary session, there will be three opportunities for Mission Conference participants to attend workshop sessions. At press time, workshop titles and leaders were being confirmed. Anticipated workshops include sessions such as:

- An opportunity to learn more about the Musqueam on

whose land we will be meeting.

- Time for parish leaders involved in or hoping to provide community meal programs to gather and exchange ideas.
- Reflections on how our baptismal identities shape us in secular vocations.
- Skills-building offerings around welcoming and supporting individuals with mental health challenges in our communities.

Mission Conference 2016 will conclude with a celebratory salmon dinner. Although the dinner is optional to accommodate those with Sunday morning commitments and long drives, the Planning Team hopes many people will stay and that some from the diocesan community might join us just for dinner. The dinner will include a special guest speaker and offer opportunities for fellowship within and across parishes.

The Planning Team has been led by the Rev Ruth Monette, Director for Mission and Ministry Development, and the Rev Helen Lingham, deacon at St Andrew's, Langley, whose professional work is in organization and leadership development.

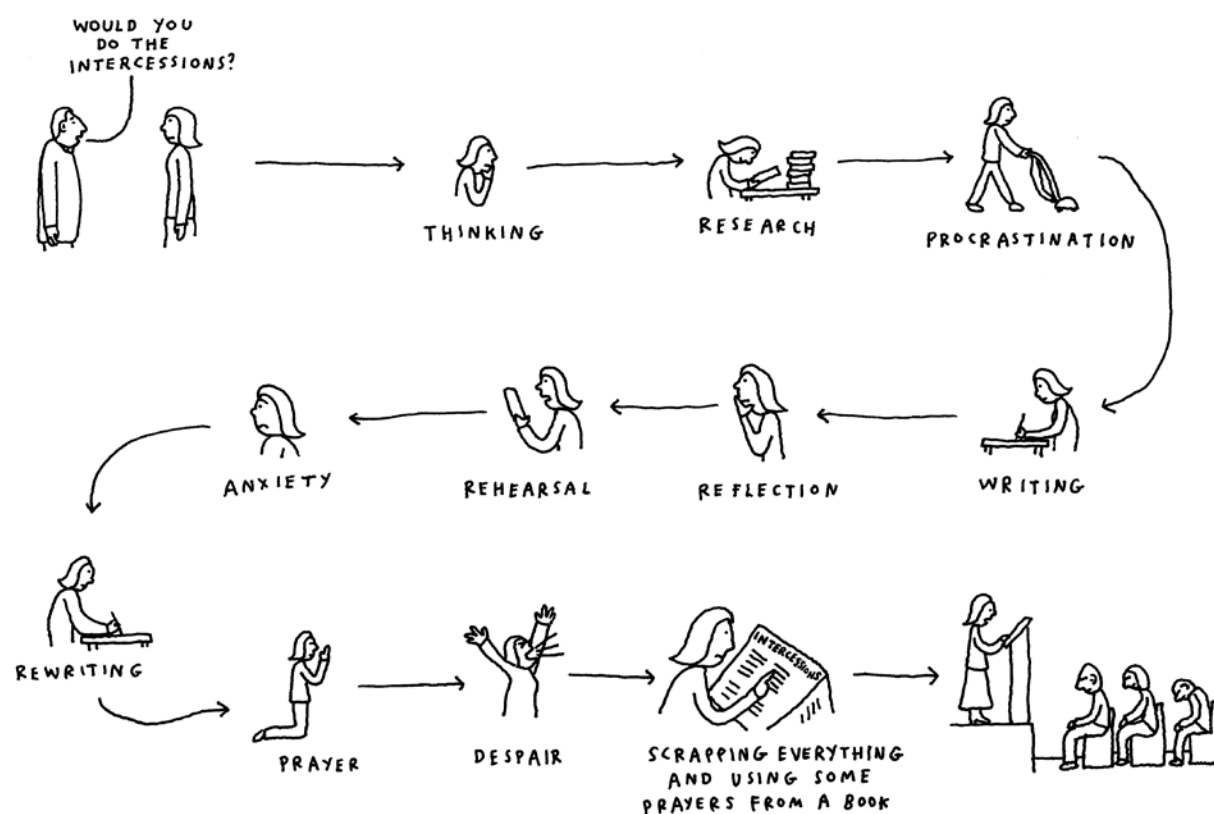
Here are the details:

- WHO** All members of the diocese are welcome — clergy and lay people from all parishes and of all ages.
- WHEN** Saturday, May 14, 2016  
9 am to 4:30 pm with a dinner option
- WHERE** Musqueam Community Centre (photo above) and Cultural Education Resource Centre  
6735 Salish Drive, Vancouver, BC
- COST** \$25 per person.  
The Wild Salmon BBQ Dinner is \$30 per person and requires separate registration.

By the time this issue of *Topic* is online and in homes and parishes the online registration for the conference and dinner will have closed, however, there is a special extension for *Topic* readers who would like to attend. You may register by contacting Phil Colvin at the Synod offices by email [pcolvin@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:pcolvin@vancouver.anglican.ca) or by phone 604.684.6306, ext. 210 prior to May 10, 2016. ✦

## THE INTERCESSIONS

HOW TO PREPARE THEM



CartoonChurch.com

### THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

compiled by Anglican Archivist Melanie Delva

- 10 years • 2006** Diocese holds its first "Green Synod" with Environmental Unit (Eco-Justice) at the centre of the gathering.
- 30 years • 1986** Youth of the diocese travel to Malaysia for an exchange as part of Partners in Mission program.
- 35 years • 1981** Douglas Hambidge is installed as Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Provincial Synod of BC & Yukon.
- 55 years • 1961** St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton creates its own Credit Union in order to finance its new parish hall.



Reattaching the roof dormer. PHOTO Martin Knowles of MKPhotomedia



Completion of insulation and the vapour barrier. PHOTO Martin Knowles of MKPhotomedia

## Cathedral Makes Progress on Zinc Roof

JOAN SEIDL

*Christ Church Cathedral*

Nearly twelve months since the vast tarpaulin drapery descended over Christ Church Cathedral, grateful parishioners have finally got a possible date for the lifting of the big veil. Builders now estimate that the scaffolding and its voluminous cover should begin to come down in late July.

Initially scheduled for completion by December 2015, the roof project proved much more complex and time-consuming than expected. Complications arose from the discovery last fall of lead dust in areas of the roof, and then throughout the building. The dust probably resulted from decades of cars driving by the Cathedral, burning leaded gasoline. Safely cleaning and containing the dust set the project back several months and an additional \$1,500,000. We are pleased to say the Cathedral is now safely lead-dust free, and looking forward to a clean, green future.

The old roof also proved to be inadequately attached to the building. Following the construction techniques of yesteryear, the old roof structure was essentially resting on the walls by gravity, with few solid connections to the walls. Builders added extra cross bracing of all the joists and installed proper tie-ins of the joists at the ridge and onto the walls, and improved (and in several instances, added) connections to the interior hammer beams and trusses framework. The chancel barrel vault ceiling was also more securely attached to the main structural frame (and not just nominally nailed to the roof structure where it met, as it was previously). Cathedral project manager and Cathedral Associate Warden, Ian Birtwell reports that the prolonged process of bringing the existing roof's connections and supports up to today's standards required 27 separate structural up-grade memos and change orders.

The *Raise the Roof* project also committed the parish to complete the seismic upgrades to the Cathedral, which were postponed during earlier renovations because they would have required removal of the magnificent and heritage valued interior ceiling. A seismic steel framework was fabricated off-site, delivered in sections, and installed with substantial bolting connections to the building's wood frame structure and to the drilled steel anchors and reinforced stone walls, and with some complex welding under very safe weld/fire watch conditions.

TEK Roofing has started installing the 2x8 sleepers, 6 inches of insulation

and plywood to create precise level planes (tolerance of 1/8 inch over 10 feet) in preparation for the zinc roof. Installation of the roofing membranes and air mats and then the zinc panels, prefabricated off-site, will complete the roofing.

For over a year, project photographer and parishioner Martin Knowles has documented the views from the scaffold in twice-monthly photo sessions. Knowles has followed the roofers to the peak of the roof and the ends of the gables, capturing breathtaking shots. A sample of the photographs can be viewed on the *Raise the Roof* project's Photo Gallery at [raisetheroofthecathedral.ca/latest-news](http://raisetheroofthecathedral.ca/latest-news).

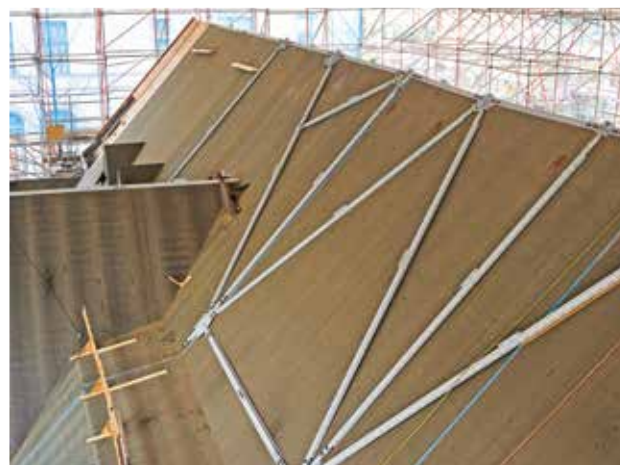
The scaffolding has also been a unique playground for urban wildlife. At Christmas a skunk was discovered wandering around the scaffold. More routinely raccoons prowl under the tenting. In the early mornings, an owl sometimes perches in the trees at the Park Place end of the scaffold.

Overall, the project schedule is now driven solely by the zinc roofing contract time frame. It is anticipated that the scaffold should start to come down in late July, possibly early August, starting with the tenting and upper portions.

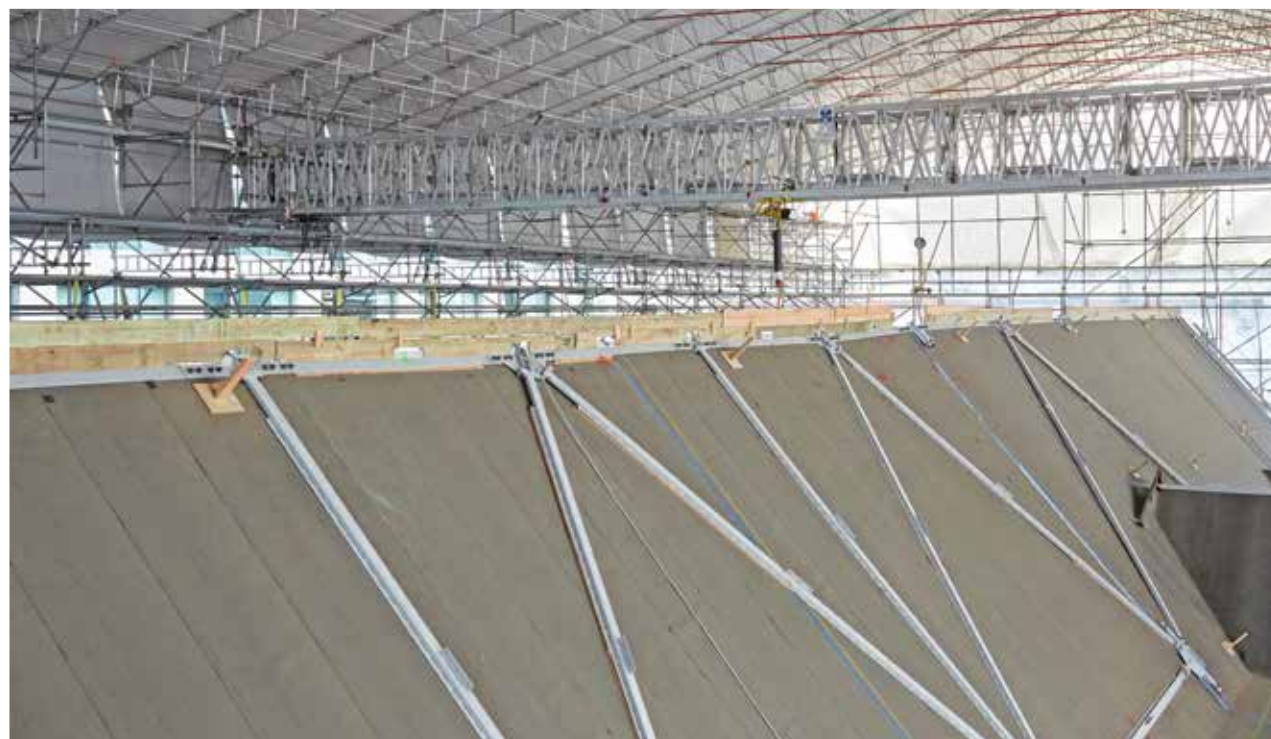
The first areas of the roofing work should be finished by late July, early August, the bell tower installed in late August, and the bells and glass artwork installed in late August or mid to late September. There are tentative plans for a dedication ceremony and events in October 2016.

Fundraising has reached \$7,060,000 raised toward the target of \$9,000,000. The Cathedral is grateful for the donations from the Jack and Darlene Poole Foundation, the Province of British Columbia, and over 500 donors who have contributed thus far to the campaign. While parishioners are encouraged by the generosity of the many who have given, they know there is still a mountain to climb.

If you have already given to *Raise the Roof, Ring the Bells, Feed the Hungry*, thank you. If you have considered participating in ensuring the future of our downtown Cathedral, please do so now. If this is the first you have heard of the campaign, there is still time to make your gift. Please contact Emily Pritchard at 604.682.3848, ext. 21 for more information. ✝



LEFT Structural steel, the seismic braces holding the roof and building firm in the event of an earthquake. RIGHT An exterior view of the cedar ceiling. PHOTOS Martin Knowles of MKPhotomedia



Creating a level roof. PHOTO Martin Knowles of MKPhotomedia

# Refugee In Stained Glass

ANNE FLETCHER  
Christ Church Cathedral

Before the Syrian refugees, before the Bosnian, Burmese and Ethiopian refugees, even before the Vietnamese boat people (50 years, in fact, before the Vietnamese boat people), on February 23, 1929, a boy—perhaps 11 years old (perhaps not)—got off a train in Vancouver.

Luder Keshishian may have been the first Armenian to arrive in the young, white West Coast city. On that day, the refugee orphan was certainly the only Armenian in town when his adoptive parents, Anglican priest Cecil Owen and his wife, Alice, picked him up. Luder would follow a path familiar to many refugees in the years to come—he would turn his smattering of English into fluency; he would excel in school; he would become a Canadian. Two more things would happen, though—he would give his life for his new country in World War II, and his sacrifice would be remembered in stained glass.

From 1915 on, 1.5 million people died in the seven-year Turkish persecution of Armenians. And the desperate plight of the uprooted survivors found its way into Canadian newspaper headlines for a decade and more.

Luder's first years are blurred by the confusion of that time. He may or may not have been born someplace called *Chat* in Armenia on May 14, 1917, as his Canadian records so confidently state; he could have been orphaned by the age of three; he did live for a while in an Armenian-run orphanage. American record keeping kicked in, in 1922, when Luder arrived at an orphanage run by the Near East Relief in Syria. The New York City-based organization had been founded in 1915 to help Armenian refugees.

On this side of the ocean, in Vancouver, Cecil and Alice, with so many others, had suffered through the Great War, losing their only son, Harold, on a battlefield in Flanders in 1916. Cecil, himself, had taken leave as rector of downtown Christ Church to serve as an army chaplain in France. By the 1920s, Cecil had settled in as chaplain at Vancouver Hospital, a job he would hold until he retired in 1947, at the age of 82. He played a public role in the city—in 1924, he spoke at the dedication of the Cenotaph; and in 1926 he was named Vancouver's Good Citizen of the Year. He also organized the BC branch of the Save The Children Fund in 1919.

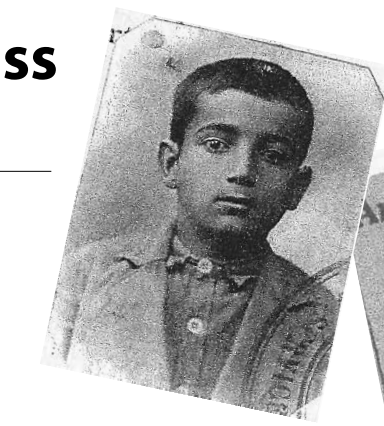
Though their son was gone, Cecil and Alice still had four daughters, and grandchildren had started to arrive. But, even in their 60s, the couple was ready to bring young life into their home. They had sent support for Luder for five years before the boy boarded the *SS Asia* in Beirut on January 7, 1929. By then, Luder spoke Arabic, to go with his native Armenian, and had picked up some English, French and Turkish. He was carrying sheet music in his luggage, in case his new family could find him a flute to replace the instrument he had played in his school band. He was also carrying with him first-class tailoring skills, which he would use to make suits for his adoptive father.

The ship steamed into the harbour at Providence, Rhode Island on February 8; Luder was put on a train to the Near East Relief offices in New York City, and then on to Toronto for a week in the home of Levon Babayan. Babayan, as the first Armenian rug dealer in Toronto, had grown wealthy from the business he opened in 1896. He used his money, and the position it gave him, to become a spokesperson for the small Armenian-Canadian community, and for the Armenian cause. Luder was the subject of news reports in a Toronto paper, and again in Winnipeg, before finally reaching Vancouver.

He was a bright boy, good at school and sports, and happy at St. George's Anglican Church (now St. Mary Magdalene), two blocks from the hospital. He spent grade nine at King Edward High School (KEHS), at Oak Street and 12th Avenue, on what is now the western edge of the hospital complex. He once again played flute in his school orchestra, and took to the rugby field. The next year, he moved to the Vancouver Technical School, an all boys' school at the time, where he won the citizenship award in 1935, and the academic medal in his grade twelve year in 1936. His name is still there, on the school's honour boards. Luder's graduation write-up in the VanTech yearbook reads:

"(His) favourite saying is 'By golly.' Captain of senior rugby team, an all-round athlete, not interested in girls (says he), and always heard singing (?) during drafting periods. Top notcher in his class."

Family memories suggest Cecil and Alice's pre-teen granddaughters adored their outgoing older playmate. And former schoolmate, Billie Muirhead, who died just last September, aged 94, could quickly summon up the hero worship she had as a young girl for Luder. With Luder, she went to St. George's and to KEHS. "He was very popular



## Armenian Orphan Is Legally Adopted By Rev. C. C. Owen Here

Echoes of the Armenian massacre were heard in Supreme Court when Chief Justice Morison approved the adoption by Rev. C. C. Owen, 685 West Twelfth, of 12-year-old Louder Keshishian, a native of Bayrouth, Armenia. Six years ago the boy came under the care of the Near East Relief Orphanage after he had been deported from Turkey. All trace has been lost of his parents, and Mr. H. E. Molson, who made the application, explained that the mother and father had apparently perished in one of several massacres which had swept Bayrouth at the hands of the Turks in recent years.

amongst his own crowd," Billie recalled. One memorable day, the whole school took part in a display of gymnastics and dancing. Billie, small and not athletic, took no pleasure in the horse vaults. "We had to jump over these blasted things and (Luder) was there to catch us." The first time through, Billie hurt herself, and Luder stepped in to reassure her. "I can remember him saying, 'Don't worry. I'll catch you.' I know I would have killed myself without him to catch me and, of course, I thought he was really wonderful... he was quite short but very athletic and a very, very nice person."

Luder joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1938. He died six years later, as D-Day troops moved steadily into Europe. His Stirling aircraft took off from RAF Methwold in Norfolk at 23:25 hours on June 23, 1944. With Luder as the bomb aimer, the crew of seven headed for northern France to take out a V1 flying bomb launch site (The first doodlebugs, or buzz-bombs, had been launched 11 days earlier, in a systematic bombing of London).

The plane was shot down by a German night fighter, crashing near the village of Heuchin. Locals retrieved the bodies, putting them in coffins, but, to the outside world, the men had simply vanished into the vortex of war. From the VanTech 1945 annual:

"We remember Luder Owen, one of the finest gentlemen and ablest students Tech has had... Luder (has) been missing in action for months now, and we may never see (him) again."

Finally, a January 1945 RCAF letter from Ottawa told Cecil



LEFT Passport photo for Luder Keshishian could be dated c. 1928. MIDDLE No date or source for newspaper clipping, probably c. 1930. RIGHT Immigrant Inspection Card dated January 7, 1929. PHOTOS The private collection of Pamela Miller, great granddaughter of Cecil Owen

and Alice the story. The coffins were "taken in a cortege to a boys' school, preceded by a Canadian flag; this in spite of the Germans in the village," the letter said. "A guard of honour was placed and soon after the coffins were covered with flowers. The whole population filed past... a vigil was kept beside them until June 27, 1944." The coffins were then buried in the nearby village of Fruges. "A parish priest of Fruges gave his benediction and military honours were accorded by German soldiers."

Before Luder's death, Cecil and Alice were already grieving the loss of their only grandson, Charles Hamilton. He had enlisted in the United States Navy, losing his life on January 13, 1943, one day short of his 21st birthday, in a night-training accident in the South Pacific. Years earlier, the couple had enshrined Harold's memory in a stained glass window in Christ Church, designated a cathedral of the diocese of New Westminster in 1929. Now, they would do the same for Luder and Charles at St. George's. St. George himself, the RCAF insignia, and its motto, *Per Ardua Ad Astra* (Through Adversity to the Stars), mark Luder's section of the three-paneled window, unveiled in May 1946.

Alice died in September 1953; Cecil died on Christmas Eve in 1954. Luder's window lives on. ✦



LEFT & RIGHT Luder Keshishian Owen, c. late 1930s, Vancouver, BC. PHOTOS The private collection of NESTA Primeau, grandniece of Cecil Owen



Luder after one year in Canada taken on the steps of the Owen home in Vancouver, February 20, 1930. PHOTO The private collection of Pamela Miller, great granddaughter of Cecil Owen



TOP The Memorial Stained Glass window from the old St. George's, Vancouver. BOTTOM A close-up of the window displaying the memorial message. PHOTOS Pamela Martin

# St. Catherine's, Capilano Welcomes North Van Region to World Day of Prayer Worship

HEATHER LUCCOCK

St. Catherine's, Capilano

St. Catherine's Anglican Church hosted the 2016 World Day of Prayer service on March 5. It was a very successful event with six denominations participating: Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army and United Church of Canada totalling over 100 in attendance. The service was written by the women of Cuba with the theme *Receive Children, Receive Me*. We were blessed by having the children's choir under the direction of Tae Maeda (who also provided the piano accompaniment) from Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church who added so much to the service. We involved young people from the various churches by engaging them in the service itself and in making origami butterfly jasmine flowers for distribution to the congregation. The butterfly jasmine flower is the national flower of Cuba and a very important symbol. The children from St. Catherine's Messy Church program made colourful tissue paper flowers for decoration.

Gail Sokalski from St. Andrew's United Church gave the address, covering events she experienced on her trip to Cuba last year with a group of young people. She also brought a very good display and made herself available to answer questions during the reception.

Peter Goodwin, the coordinator for the Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) for the diocese of New Westminster also attended with a very interesting display of church sponsored projects in Cuba. The service was followed by a well-attended reception which was enjoyed by all. ✠

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Event Organizer, Heather Luccock. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



The kitchen team prepared food for 100. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



Origami flowers on the altar. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



Origami butterflies and maracas on a credence table. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



The service featured multi-generational participation. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



Tae Maeda and the Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church Children's Choir. PHOTO Courtesy of Tae Maeda

## Second Indigenous Justice Circle • May 25, 2016



Brander at the inaugural Indigenous Justice Circle held at the Synod office Conference Room on January 13, 2016. PHOTO Randy Murray

Indigenous Justice Ministries Coordinator for the diocese of New Westminster, Brander Raven McDonald with encouragement and collaboration from Bishop Skelton is pleased to announce the second diocese of New Westminster Indigenous Justice Circle which will take place on May 25, 2016, at the Synod Offices at 1410 Nanton Avenue from 10:30 am (arrive and register at 9:30 am) until 3:30 pm.

The aim of this session will be a facilitated process to explore First Nations cultural values, beliefs and worldview from an "insider's" point of view. As Brander explains:

"The purpose is to dispel the misconceptions, negative stereotypes, myths about our cultural values and ways in which we see the world and to how we walk in it. Unless one first learns these principles of living, and the First Nations philosophy of life, one may never have a meaningful understanding conversation with Indigenous peoples. It will always be from your own context and framework. It will always be a question of culture assimilation and even appropriation. So in order to alleviate this cultural ethnocentric viewpoint I have set up training to help you examine:

1. Your own worldview values.
2. An understanding of First Nations worldview values and then ask how this dialogue can happen in real life.

It will also assist you in better framing your dialogue with Indigenous people because it will give you a strong point of reference. You will be forced to examine various paradigms that make up the native worldview and set them in comparison to your own

and to the world around you in context of church, society and even theology.

The result will give you at least an understanding of our native peoples "global" ways and values that will better help you to dialogue and frame conversations appropriately, alleviate stereotypes and possible racist presuppositions about native peoples and finally to allow you to do the good work of relational bridge building and healing work of reconciliation with our people. In essence, you will be able to better share your *Jesus Walk* with our native peoples without all the baggage of an ethno-centric perspective.

This training will also help you *walk out your understanding* of who you are in the world, based on these paradigms and give you necessary tools to dialogue cross-culturally in a larger pluralistic world.

The day will provide you with the framework and tools necessary for cross-cultural dialogue and relationship building to First Nations communities and peoples, and help you to understand the necessity of, and meanings within indigenous protocols.

Finally, it will give you better indigenous justice advocacy cross-cultural skills and understandings."

To register for the second Indigenous Justice Circle on May 25, 2016 go to this website, <http://conta.cc/1S0yHzU> or call the Synod office at 604.684.6306

If you would like more information, email Brander at [bmcDonald@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:bmcDonald@vancouver.anglican.ca). ✠

# St. Catherine's, Capilano Welcomes North Van Region to World Day of Prayer Worship

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



Members of the Mt. Olivet Children's Choir at the reception buffet tables. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



LEFT Peter Goodwin and the PWRDF Rustic Greenhouse for Cuba display. RIGHT The pineapple meringue cake sporting a Cuban flag made by the folks at Panaderia Latina Bakery. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



TOP & BOTTOM Everyone who attended the worship, stayed for the reception. PHOTOS Wendy Matsubuchi



Keynote speaker Gail Sokalski and her Cuba display. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi

## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • A Memorable & Historic Visit to the EDNP •

Many in the diocese are aware that there is a proposed Companion Diocese relationship currently being explored by the diocese of New Westminster and bishop, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton and the Episcopal Diocese of North Philippines (EDNP) and its bishop, the Rt. Rev. Brent Alawas. For more information please refer to the March 2016 issue of *Topic* beginning on page 12.

A great deal of progress was made in this exploration as a result of the March 1-7

visit of Bishop Skelton, her husband the Rev. Eric Stroo, and the Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster, the Ven. Douglas Fenton to the EDNP. Bishop Skelton had been invited to be present and preach at the EDNP Convention (think diocesan Synod) that was held March 1-4 in Bontoc.

Needless to say the trip was by all accounts a huge success. Following the days in Bontoc the three from the diocese

of New Westminster visited other parts of the EDNP including the towns of Sagada, Tadian, Otucan and Besao. Archdeacon Fenton had his camera with him and did a fabulous job of chronicling the six-day adventure in photographs. Please visit this link, [on.fb.me/1px554r](https://on.fb.me/1px554r) to access a Facebook photo album that tells the story of the visit.

The reports from the bishop and the executive archdeacon are creating a great

deal of excitement around the diocese of New Westminster and all are looking forward to Bishop Alawas's visit to our mission conference which will take place May 14, 2016.

A full feature article with details of the trip to EDNP will be published in the Summer 2016 issue of *Topic*, which should be available online and in homes by late June. ✚



LEFT Bishop Skelton with Bishop Alawas and deacons at the EDNP Convention in Bontoc on March 1, 2016. MIDDLE Bishop Skelton preaching at the Opening Eucharist of the EDNP Convention in Bontoc on March 1, 2016. RIGHT Bishop Skelton joins in some dancing with youth. PHOTOS Douglas Fenton

## AROUND THE DIOCESE

## • New Website for the 127 Society for Housing •

SUBMISSION Joan Seidl

See the new face of the 127 Society for Housing by visiting the recently launched website at [www.127society.ca](http://www.127society.ca). The website features compelling portraits of the Society's tenants taken by Vancouver photographer Ryan Mah who captured tenants' individuality as they posed in their apartments, on their balconies, at community meals, and minding the low-cost food store. In partnership with BC Housing, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC), and the City of Vancouver, the 127 Society operates three apartment buildings that offer 259 low-income, senior safe, affordable homes in the Downtown South area of Vancouver—Jubilee House, Brookland Court and The Wellspring. A new Jubilee House to replace the existing aging structure is under construction and scheduled to open this summer.

Some of the tenant's portraits show faces lined by years of hard work. Brief stories from tenants surround the photographs. Val, a tenant at Jubilee House for 30 years, recalled, "I have lived and worked all over Canada and the Yukon. I first started working harvesting peat on Lulu Island, then on to the CP and CN railways lifting steel, fighting forest fires in BC, Yukon and Alberta, then sawmills, ship's hand in the boiler room, and construction—too many jobs to remember."

And Mona, a tenant at The Wellspring since 2004, reminisced, "When I arrived in Vancouver, I worked as a waitress, elevator operator, chambermaid, helped with laundry, and my favourite job was usherette in a theatre on Granville. I don't know what my husband did—he packed up his clothes and left me."

The Society was established in 1981 by a group of diocese of New Westminster Anglicans led by the late Hilda Gregory. You can check out the website's "History" sec-

tion for the misleadingly innocuous-looking church flyer that ignited the creation of the 127 Society for Housing 35 years ago. The diocese helped the Society with start-up funding and also from time-to-time with funding through programs such as *Stewards in Action*, *Going the Extra Mile* (GEM) and *care + share*. As a non-profit society, the 127 Society is governed by a board of directors, the members of which at present are also parishioners at Christ Church Cathedral. The Cathedral parish also provides much appreciated annual financial support for the Society.

The 127 Society takes its name from *Psalms 127*:

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders will have toiled in vain."

The Board understands this to mean that it provides homes for low-income people as part of living out the calling that we share in our work for social justice. The Society does not make religious beliefs a condition for helping its tenants. Neither tenants nor staff are required to believe in or practice any religion.

Funds are provided by CMHC, BC Housing and the City of Vancouver to build and maintain the apartment buildings. However, the Society needs to fundraise for the Community Worker program, which is key to developing the sense of community that characterizes the 127 Society's approach.

The website enables visitors to make online donations to support the 127 Society's work, and also links to the websites of organizations that support the 127 Society, including Christ Church Cathedral. The Society appreciates the support provided to us over many years by individual faithful donors from this diocese and beyond. ✦



TOP &amp; BOTTOM Two photographs of 127 residents. PHOTOS Ryan Mah

## • Indigenous Justice Coordinator Visits Diocesan Council •

For the first time in his tenure as Indigenous Justice Ministries Coordinator for the diocese of New Westminster, Brander Raven McDonald visited and made a presentation to Diocesan Council on March 16, 2016. Bishop Skelton introduced Brander to Council, informing them that she is fortunate to have him reporting directly to her regarding his work in Indigenous Justice for the diocese.

Brander began by acknowledging the First Nations whose lands that we are on and thanked them. He then provided some biographical history about his family; Cree from rural Manitoba, and the subsequent move of the family to northern central BC where he was raised.

After the move from the more isolated area, Brander's parents decided that it was unwise to speak their language. Brander and his two siblings were told that it was better to live like white people in order to be successful and the result was that he lost his language at the young age of five.

Brander presented some information about First Nations worldview, cosmology and summarized by saying that we are all in relationship with our world and the Creator. He spoke about the fact that First Nations do not have the concept of Original Sin and that can be problematic when First Nations Christians who are called to ordination are asked to change their worldview or understanding.

Life for First Nations is a circle, or perhaps more accurately it is a cycle. You start out young and impetuous, perhaps making choices that could be better and then you evolve into an elder and in thanksgiving for that journey you give back. When you die you are still connected to Creator. As Brander has said in the past and as Bishop Skelton told Council, whilst reminiscing about a conversation she had with Brander when he was asked whether he *longs for God* (seeks the divine) he had answered "No," for he is always connected to the Creator, there is no separation.

Time is not *time specific* in First Nations worldview and to illustrate this, Brander related some anecdotes from his childhood. The issue of time is also reflected in First Nations understanding of tasks. Not task-oriented per se by the settler's understanding, but focused on the relational nature of the task whether meeting in a group to do some work or gathering in the Long House.

He spoke about direct interaction and how different it can be for First Nations people regarding their comfort zone for speaking with people that they do not know. Brander suggested that it works best to

come *along side* as opposed to face to face.

Brander spoke briefly about punishment and how it is generally regarded in First Nations worldview. He said, "the indigenous justice model is accountable, equitable, restorative relationships." Those being punished remain and share responsibility.

When it comes to survivors of Indian Residential Schools (IRS) it is important for those from outside this experience to realize that the victims suffered banishment. Their families experienced the loss of those with whom they share connection. Banishment is separation and the connectedness of all things is torn apart. This is very much contrary to First Nations worldview and the damage done is devastating.

Diocesan Council gave Brander a very warm welcome and listened intently to his words. He concluded his presentation by promoting the Second diocese of New Westminster Indigenous Justice Circle scheduled for May 25 at the Synod office Conference Room where Worldview will be a focus of the days learning and sharing. Please register by visiting this link <http://conta.cc/1S0yHzU>. ✦



Brander laying out the concepts of First Nations World View to Diocesan Council. PHOTO Randy Murray



Diocesan Council members listened intently. PHOTO Randy Murray

## • Isn't that the Reverend Dr. Bill Crockett?! •

Bette Geddes (the "official" but technically unofficial caterer for the diocese of New Westminster) and the Rev. Lizz Lindsay, deacon at St. Agnes, North Vancouver and founder of the *Sharing Abundance* compassionate service food programs decided to take some time off from feeding folks in February 2016, and go on a cruise.

The cruise shipped off from Houston, Texas, which allowed them some time to do a little sightseeing in that metropolis. Well, surprise, surprise, but who do they see standing beside the George H.W. Bush monument located on Bagby Street in downtown Houston, one of the leading theological scholars in the Anglican Communion (a retired Vancouver School of Theology professor who also happens to be a parishioner and honorary assistant at Christ Church Cathedral) the Rev. Dr. Bill Crockett.

Bette reported that Bill and his wife, Jean were on the same cruise ship. Many thanks to Bette and Lizz for sharing this



Bette Geddes and Rev. Dr. Bill Crockett. PHOTO Bette Geddes



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • care + share Recipients for 2016 & 2017 •

Members of the 116th Synod of the diocese of New Westminster voted on May 22, 2015, to grant 2016–2017 *care + share* funding to:

- The St. Paul's Advocacy Office and Homeless Outreach Program

The Advocacy Office at St Paul's provides support to individuals in the community through information, advice, guidance and encouragement, and to advocate for individuals in regard to their rights to access government and other services. The Homeless Outreach Program extends the work of the Advocacy Office directly onto the street with the numerous homeless in our community. The primary goal of the Outreach Program is to accompany people who are currently homeless through the process and transition to housing and beyond.

- The Community Support Ministry Collaboration Project: Hudson Street Hub & Kerrisdale/Marpole Community Pastoral Resource Centre (St. Augustine & St. Faith)

The Community Support Ministry Collaboration is an effort to bring together the work of the Community Pastoral Resource Centre at St. Faith and the work of the Hudson Street Hub at St. Augustine which both work in partnership with numerous community groups to provide services and goods to vulnerable people on the west side and in the south of Vancouver. The Pastoral Resource Centre focuses primarily on advocacy and warm referrals to the appropriate resources for housing, food, community health and well being. The Hudson Street Hub offers low cost clothing and goods, hosts a Food Bank depot, offers three community meals a week, hosts recreation/socialization programs, and provides

workshops and clinics related to the daily needs of people in need.

"By bearing witness to each person's story, holding them in prayer and seeking to support them, we are committed to sharing God's love and hope with the most vulnerable members of our community; to uphold them as they seek to live with the dignity that is the right of every human being."

As part of the mission and ministry of the diocese of New Westminster our shared diocesan outreach program *care + share* was established following a resolution at Synod 2011. The ministries included in *care + share* have submitted proposals to the Mission and Ministry Development Committee (MMD). Once their proposals have been approved by that body a resolution is presented to Synod, and Synod votes on whether or not to accept the recommended ministries as *care + share* recipients for a two year period.

Ministries included in *care + share* do not receive "funding," instead they receive voluntary contributions made by parishes and individual Anglicans, sent to the diocesan office which forwards funds several times a year to the *care + share* ministry groups.

Donations given by individuals and parishes to *care + share* go 100% to the groups we support. The overhead for fundraising and administration for *care + share* is included in the regular diocesan budget, and not taken from donations.

Donations may be directed to both ministries or to either individually in any combination or amount. You may give to *care + share* via your parish stewardship program or as an individual. Together we as a diocese decide which ministries to support with voluntary dollars so please prayerfully

consider your support of *care + share* and give generously.

You can give online by going to <https://pushpay.com/pay/vancouveranglican/EM69JN3b28QIDBboVvY3rw>.

For more information on other ways to give to *care + share* please contact Sandra Stevenson by email at [ss Stevenson@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:ss Stevenson@vancouver.anglican.ca)

or by phone at 604.684.6306, ext. 212.

For information about the *care + share* program contact the Director for Mission and Ministry Development, the Rev. Ruth Monette by email at [rmonette@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:rmonette@vancouver.anglican.ca) or by phone at 604.684.6306, ext. 219. ✦



LEFT Helping folks find housing and services using the internet is a big part of St. Paul's Advocacy Office's work. PHOTO Jayme Vander Hoeven RIGHT Sorting clothes at St. Faith's. PHOTO Christine Wilson



Folks enjoying the meal at St. Augustine. PHOTO Caitlin Reilley Beck



Serving the salads at the Marpole Hub Community Meal at St. Augustine, Marpole. PHOTO Caitlin Reilley Beck



The St. Faith Community. PHOTO Christine Wilson

### • Evensong for Elizabeth II •

In honour of Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday, Christ Church Cathedral will celebrate a special evensong on Sunday, June 12, 2016 at 3 pm. Saturday, June 11 is the Queen's birthday. ✦



PHOTO Courtesy of Getty Images/iStock

### • Summer Topic Delayed •

In order to provide full coverage of the May 14 Mission Conference and the Rt. Rev. Brent Alawas' visit to the diocese of New Westminster, printing and subsequent distribution of the June issue of the *Anglican Journal* and the summer issue of *Topic* will be delayed 2–3 weeks. The summer issue of *Topic* will be online in early June and the two publications will be delivered to homes and parishes hopefully by the third week of June. ✦



Bishop Brent Alawas speaking at the EDNP Conference, March 1, 2016, Bontoc, Luzon, Philippines. PHOTO Douglas Fenton

Do you have a story to tell?

Or an event to share?

Let us know!

The next deadline for *Topic* Submissions is:

July 22  
for the September 2016 issue

Please contact Randy Murray at [rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca) for more information



LEFT St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church, Itabo, Cuba. MIDDLE Vegetable beds near the church using small spaces around buildings. RIGHT Land behind the church where a greenhouse will be built. PHOTO Courtesy of Peter Goodwin

## A Rustic Greenhouse for the Parish of St. Mary's, Itabo Cuba

PETER GOODWIN

PWRDF Unit Chair; St. James' Parishioner

The Primates World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) continues its focus this year on Food Security programs with the goal of providing funds to partner organizations to help empower them in their objectives to advance nutritious food production in their communities with the hope of obtaining better health and greater food security for all. The Episcopal Diocese of Cuba and its Integrated Development Program (IDP) is one of two partner organizations supported by PWRDF in Cuba. Central to the PWRDF Food Security Initiative is the Food Exchange whereby during the summer at Sorrento Centre partners from overseas participate in week long food exchange courses, sharing information on their programs while learning about food production at the Sorrento Farm and from others involved in food production elsewhere in Canada. In return, delegations from Canada visit the partners' communities to learn of their food production. Bishop Griselda, Episcopal Bishop of Cuba, was a guest and a presenter at Sorrento in 2014.

In March 2015, Tessa Dudley, PWRDF Youth Council

member, and Peter Goodwin, PWRDF Diocesan Representative and Chair of the Diocesan Unit, were members of the PWRDF Food Security Delegation to Cuba. Tessa and Peter passed on greetings from our diocese to Bishop Griselda in a letter written by Bishop Skelton. Delegates were guests of the diocese and the parish of St. Mary the Virgin where they spent two nights. Delegates heard from Bishop Griselda how as a priest in the early 1990s she began rebuilding the church at a time of extreme scarcity following the withdrawal of the Russians and their resources. This was part of a vision that included greening of the land and providing for basic food needs of parishioners and the most vulnerable in the surrounding community. To quote Bishop Griselda "a congregation should go out from the church and reach the community, to share and live the Gospel." Besides the production of food, the program has evolved into what it is today which includes a range of support for the most needy and education to promote positive personal relationships between men and women. Upon becoming bishop six years ago Bishop Griselda began replicating the

Itabo programs at other parishes throughout Cuba with the newly created IDP program which PWRDF supports.

Bishop Griselda indicated to delegates that the primary "wish list" item she and her fellow parishioners have is to build a greenhouse to facilitate year round fresh food production and take their objectives of attaining greater food security to the next level. The experience gained in building a greenhouse in Itabo could then be replicated in other parishes and communities.

As a follow up to the delegation's visit and the expressed wish for building a greenhouse, the PWRDF diocesan unit with the support of Bishop Skelton is fundraising to provide for the costs of building a rustic greenhouse. Costs are approximately \$8,000 CAD (based on the early March currency exchange rate for \$5,500 USD). If funds in excess of those required for the greenhouse are collected they will be applied to other related needs identified by Bishop Griselda.

Project information and objectives as outlined in the proposal submitted by Bishop Griselda and the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba include:

- **The Purpose:**

To build a rustic greenhouse to produce and consume some agricultural products year round. The Itamboverde Project, located at Saint Mary the Virgin Church, seeks to increase the production levels of vegetables, fruits, flowers and other agricultural products for benefit of vulnerable groups of the town. To reach the purpose, the project team, with the participation of clergy and lay people in Itabo, wants to work with a rustic greenhouse.

- **Why it is Important for the People in Cuba:**

To strengthen the food security of excluded and vulnerable sectors (the disabled, the elders, alcoholics and women), improving their quality of life. To increase church's sustainability through stewardship, project management, and exploration of the possibilities that Cuba's new economic model has to offer.

- **Involvement:**

People of the ecclesiastical congregation; especially women, young people and the elders. Planned beneficiaries: 130 people (Direct 25, Indirect 105).

- **Our Support Needs:**

1. Workshop on working with greenhouses • \$1,000 USD
2. Advisory to local process • \$1,000 USD
3. Acquisition of equipment module and construction: Inputs and production materials, irrigation system • \$3,500 USD

Further information on the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba is available at [www.cuba.acnews.ca](http://www.cuba.acnews.ca).

To support and join Bishop Griselda and her parishioners in their efforts to build a rustic greenhouse in Itabo, Cuba you can:

- a. Use a parish envelope marked "PWRDF Itabo Cuba Greenhouse"
- b. Use your credit card online on the diocesan website at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca), click on "Give" and choose "PWRDF Itabo Cuba Greenhouse"
- c. Call PWRDF toll free at 1.866.308.7973 or by mail at PWRDF, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 3G2

As of this May issue of *Topic* going online and being delivered to homes and parishes there will be less than two weeks left in the Easter Season but still time to give a gift to this worthy Anglican initiative.

Peter Goodwin would welcome the opportunity to visit your parish and talk more about the PWRDF delegation's visit to Cuba, the two PWRDF partner organizations supported in Cuba, and building of the rustic greenhouse.

For further information you may reach Peter at 604.929.6143 or by email at [goodmac22@gmail.com](mailto:goodmac22@gmail.com). ☩



LEFT Tessa Dudley (left) and Peter Goodwin (right) bring greetings from Bishop Skelton to Bishop Griselda (middle), bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Cuba. RIGHT Worship at St. Mary's. PHOTOS Courtesy of Peter Goodwin



A Farewell from Parishioners. PHOTO Courtesy of Peter Goodwin

*"Imagine being able to grow fresh food and vegetables year round rather than just for 4 months!"*

So say the parishioners of St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church in Itabo, Cuba.

*"You can be part of our exciting Easter Season diocesan initiative to fundraise to build a rustic greenhouse so that the parishioners of St. Mary's can grow fresh food year round for themselves and the most needy in their community in a land where fresh nutritious food is in very limited supply."*

So say members of the PWRDF Diocesan Unit.

# Book Release Promises a Busy Spring & Summer for Diocesan Leader

## Interview with Simon Choa Johnston

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Simon Choa Johnston, currently a parishioner at Holy Trinity, White Rock is about to be very, very busy. Prior to Simon and his wife Sheila moving to South Surrey they had been long-time parishioners at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale. Since 2014, Simon has been (and continues to be) Chair of the diocesan Synod Planning Committee and he is also a current member of the General Synod Planning Committee. Simon has agreed to chair the local component of planning for the General Synod (Joint Assembly) scheduled to take place here in the diocese of New Westminster in the summer of 2019.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Simon immigrated to Canada to attend McMaster University where he graduated in 1972. After post graduate theatre studies in New York, he returned to Canada where he has worked as a playwright, director and artistic director.

His plays have been seen at: the Arts Club Theatre (BC); Gateway Theatre (BC); Western Canada Theatre (BC); the Belfry Theatre (BC); Kaleidoscope Theatre (BC); Youtheatre Montreal (Quebec); Collective Arts Production (Ontario); and the Lighthouse Festival (Ontario). Simon was writer-in-residence at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and was featured at Toronto's Factory Theatre Cross Currents Festival.

Amongst his numerous awards are: City of Richmond's Cultural Leadership 2011; McMaster University Alumni Award; Winner, Theatre BC's National Playwriting Competition; Canada 125 Medal for Arts and Tourism; and three Vancouver Jessie nominations for best Play.

He is currently the Artistic Director Emeritus of the Gateway Theatre in Richmond, BC where he was Artistic and Executive Director from 2000 to 2012.

The big news is that Simon's latest novel will be released May 4, 2016 (close to the day that this issue of *Topic* will be in homes and a few days after it is available online). *The House of Wives* is the title of the work and it is published by Penguin Random House. Although the book will be officially launched in Toronto there will be three release events for *The House of Wives* held in the Metro Vancouver Area. The events are free and open to the public:

DATE May 12  
TIME 7 pm  
WHERE The Gateway Theatre  
6500 Gilbert Road, Richmond

DATE May 15  
TIME 2 pm  
WHERE Peninsula Productions Studio, Centennial Park  
14600 North Bluff Road, White Rock

DATE May 17  
TIME 7 pm  
WHERE BMO Theatre  
162 West 1st Avenue, Vancouver

With these exciting events on the horizon Simon took some time to speak with *Topic* editor, Randy Murray.

Q: *The House of Wives* is your latest novel, how many other published works do you have to your credit?

A: In the mid-80s when I was young and naïve, a small Toronto press published my novella. It was a mistake. But I've forgiven myself for it and apologized to everyone who had the misfortune to read it. Since then I've published a children's book and six or seven plays through the Playwrights Guild of Canada and had as many professionally produced in BC and Ontario theatres.

Q: Is *The House of Wives* influenced by real events and personal experiences?

A: Yes. It was inspired by the life of my great-grandfather, Emanuel Raphael Belilios a Jewish merchant from Calcutta who in the 1880s became, "The foremost opium merchant in Hong Kong." He had two wives: Semah from Calcutta and later Pearl, a Chinese woman from Hong Kong from whom I am descended. I should hasten to add that opium trading was legal at the time.

Q: When did it first occur to you that the experiences of your family would make a compelling story?

A: It was more of a process than any one moment. I had always known about Emanuel and when the internet kicked into popular usage around the 2000s, I was able to access the Hong Kong Archives and other sources that eventually

led me to discover his first wife Semah and subsequently to his second wife whom I call Pearl. While these were facts, there wasn't a story yet. But when my mother passed away in the mid 2000s, she left a box filled with fascinating ephemera: letters, photos and diary entries that I had never seen before. I became obsessed with the threads that traced back to the trio who started the dynasty. Who were they? How did they meet? What formed their lives? And most importantly, what did they say to each other behind closed doors?

Q: As a child were you aware that your family was somewhat unusual?

A: Not really. I had 32 cousins and we all shared the same history. Also, we were part of a wider Eurasian community all of whom were descended by complex liaisons during the hurley-burley decades of British Colonial rule in Hong Kong. As a kid on the playing fields we spoke English, Cantonese, occasionally French and even some Urdu—or was that Bengali?

Q: Looking back who do you feel had the most influence on you when you were a child?

A: This may be strange to hear that it wasn't either parent but my Chinese nanny Ah Wan, which means Cloud in Cantonese. Cloudy, as I called her was anything but. Bright, caring and fiercely protective, she was always present from birth until I was about 12 years old. She was a gifted storyteller and filled my head with panoply of stories from Chinese folklore.

Q: Which languages were spoken at home?

A: English, Cantonese, occasionally French.

Q: What was the most significant challenge in writing this book?

A: Other than property records, business transactions, birth and death records, there is not a lot of detail available about Emanuel, Semah and Pearl's personal lives, particularly their motivations that led to certain actions. I had to make a chart of the things that were facts then using it like a skeleton, I added the flesh most of which was invented. My goal was to write a book that reads like a biography.

Q: What segment of the creative process delighted or surprised you the most?

A: The research. Finding a nugget in a dusty archive at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank where Emanuel was

Chairman in the 1870s; discovering his home in Kolkata, visiting the synagogues that his family built in Calcutta and Hong Kong, seeing photos of his enormous mansion Kingsclere, and finally paying my respects at their gravesites. Each discovery became a delightful touchstone that ignited my imagination.

Q: Do you think that your life in theatre influenced your writing at all and if yes, can you give an example(s)?

A: Yes of course. Everything influences everything else. Understanding story, plot points and pacing are the technical aspects required in both mediums. But the most important is Character. What would King Lear be without, well, Lear? Not that I'm comparing the two, but Emanuel is an engaging protagonist and everything he does has an affect on those closest to him. How that dynamic plays out is the traffic of any good story.

Q: What do you feel is the central theme of *The House of Wives*? What do you want people to take with them after they have read and digested the book?

A: I had this written on a sheet of paper and stuck to the wall above my computer screen: "Two women compete for the affections of their opium-merchant husband in a tale of friendship, fortune and rivalry in colonial Hong Kong,"

Q: As a committed Anglican, how did your faith influence your telling of the story, if at all?

A: I'm still trying to figure that out.

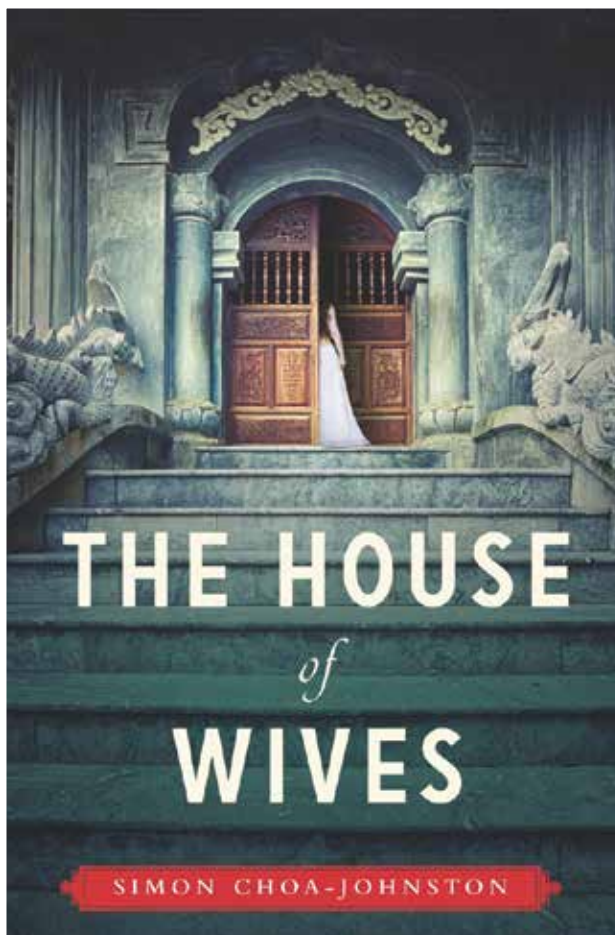
Q: What do you foresee in the future for Simon Choa Johnston, novelist? Where do you think this might lead?

A: As long and as arduous as novel writing can be, all I want to do now is write another one. It will be a story about the children of the three characters in *The House of Wives*.

Q: What might people expect at the book launches to be held in the greater Vancouver area May 12, 15 and 17?

A: The events are open to the public. I will be there along with my Book Ambassador who is hosting the event. Books will be available for purchase. I want to meet as many people as possible and have one on one face time with them. I'll give a little introduction about the story and autograph copies of *The House of Wives*. If readers would like advance information they can go to my website: [www.simonjohnston.ca](http://www.simonjohnston.ca) There they can read a sample of the book, read a blog and see a list of appearances. ✦

*"As long and as arduous as novel writing can be, all I want to do now is write another one."*



*The House of Wives* bookcover. PHOTO Courtesy of Penguin Random House



Simon Choa Johnston. PHOTO Emily Cooper

# Holy Week Around the Diocese



The new sign welcomes worshipers at the corners of Number One Road and Francis in Steveston.

## St. Annes • Palm Sunday, March 20



Bishop Skelton listens as St. Anne's rector, the Rev. Brian Vickers reads the Passion of Our Lord from Luke's Gospel.



Bishop Skelton blesses the new palm crosses to be distributed that morning.



LEFT The deacon for the liturgy, the Rev. Karin Fulcher reads *Luke 19:28-40* during the Liturgy of the Palms. RIGHT After the 10 am service, there was lunch and a celebration (a cake of course!) and here we see the Rev. Vickers helping Bishop Skelton unwrap a gift from the parish as she was still plagued by the broken wrist she suffered in a fall on February 14. PHOTO Katherine Kwok



St. Mark's rector, the Rev. Craig Tanksley welcomes the congregation to the parish hall for the Liturgy of the Palms.



LEFT Prior to the commencement of the Liturgy of the Palms, parishioners of all ages prepare



LEFT The young of the parish gather at the chancel railing as the processional choruses of *Hosanna* are sung. The Eucharist was interim assistant to the rector, the Rev. John Mash who focused on the Gospel.



LEFT The Very Rev. Peter Elliott, dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral makes sure that everything is prepared before beginning the procession. RIGHT Bishop Skelton leads the reaffirmation of vows.



Deacon, bishop and sacristan singing the responses to the Litany.



The Sanctuary party is in place for the reading of the Gospel, *John 12:20-36*.



Clergy and lay renew their baptismal covenants.



Incensing the altar during the Offertory Hymn, *My Song is Love Unknown*.

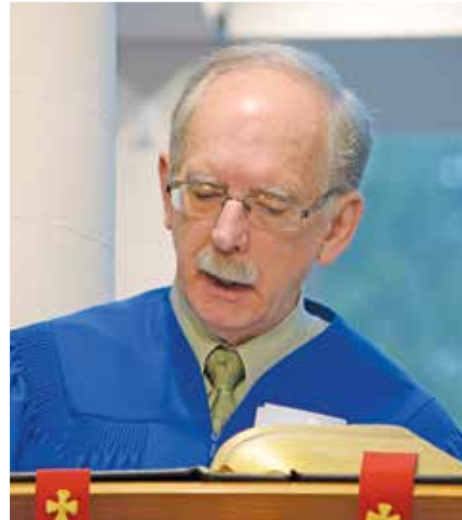


Bishop, deacon and sacristan blessing the people.

## St. Mark's, Ocean Park • Palm Sunday, March 20



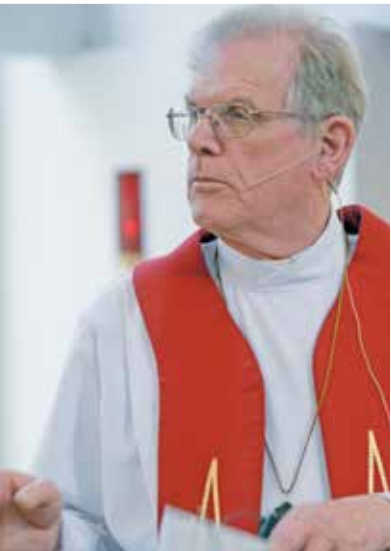
LEFT The deacon for the liturgy offers the reading from the Hebrew Bible. RIGHT The readers assembled in the chancel read the Passion of Our Lord from St. Luke's Gospel.



The Offertory Hymn, *Ride On, Ride On in Majesty* concludes.

for the procession. RIGHT The Palm Sunday procession enters the nave.

The Epistle is read, *Philippians 2: 5 – 11*.



Groups of readers locate themselves in various areas around the chancel in preparation of the reading of the Passion.



The Prayer over the Gifts.

*anna in the Highest* conclude. RIGHT The preacher for the Palm message of "second chances."

## Christ Church Cathedral • Chrism Mass, Tuesday, March 22, 12:10 pm



Deacon, bishop and sacristan singing the last verse of the Offertory Hymn.



LEFT Communion stations in the chancel. RIGHT The Laying on of Hands, receiving the bishop's blessing. Dozens of clergy and lay lined up to receive a blessing.



Deacon for the liturgy, sacristan and the three deacons who processed in and presented the oils for the Consecration of Chrism and Unction.



LEFT Three deacons of the diocese prepare the oils for distribution to the parishes. The Rev. Chris Magrega, deacon at Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Westminster is pouring very carefully. MIDDLE A sandwich lunch, thoroughly enjoyed by all was catered by Bette Geddes. RIGHT The procession out.



# Holy Week Around the Diocese



At 6 pm the worship began with the congregation at tables singing the hymn, *As We Gather at Your Table*. A parish soup supper took place within the context of the Eucharist.

## St. Mary's, Kerrisdale • Maundy Thursday, March 24, 6 pm



Foot washing took place while the congregation sang *Peace is my last gift to you, my own peace I now leave with you, peace which the world cannot give, I give to you*.



Various members of the SMK faith community took turns bringing the soup to the tables.



After supper the remains of the soup: Corn Chowder, Carrot and Ginger, Lentil, and Black Bean with Sour Cream.



LEFT St. Mary's guest preacher for the Three Days of the Triduum was the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), Bishop Susan Johnson. Bishop Johnson took for her text the central theme of the evening, that we love one another (even though that can sometimes be very difficult).



The community stands to sing the Offertory, John Bell's *Put Peace into Each Other's Hands*.



Bishop Johnson's table. Visible behind are the elements for the Eucharist that would follow the meal.



## St. Michael's Multicultural Church • Good Friday, March 25, 10 am

LEFT Priest-in-charge of St. Michael's, the Rev. Wilmer Toyoken led the reading of the Passion; *John 18: 1 – 19, 42* and also preached. In his sermon he asked that the faithful bring five things to the cross: Repentance; Gratitude; Burdens; Others (Friends and Relatives); and One's Heart. LEFT CENTRE Organist Hiroki Uchino plays the hymn tunes from the liturgy prior to worship. RIGHT CENTRE Justice Bentayen was the Psalmist and led *Psalms 22*. RIGHT The Rev. Wilmer Toyoken leads the Solemn Intercession.



LEFT During the Meditation on the Cross, Rev. Toyoken invites the people to come to the front and place black stones at the foot of the wooden cross as a symbol of "sin and repentance." RIGHT Coming forward to place the stones at the foot of the Cross. Every member of the congregation participated.



ABOVE The Eucharist. LEFT Placing the stones on the altar cloth during the Meditation on the Cross. RIGHT The Cross of black stones began as 14 black pebbles on the credence table that would be used as the altar for the Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord's Passion.



# St. Helen's, Point Grey

## • Good Friday, March 25, 12 noon



Members of the St. Helen's Choir.



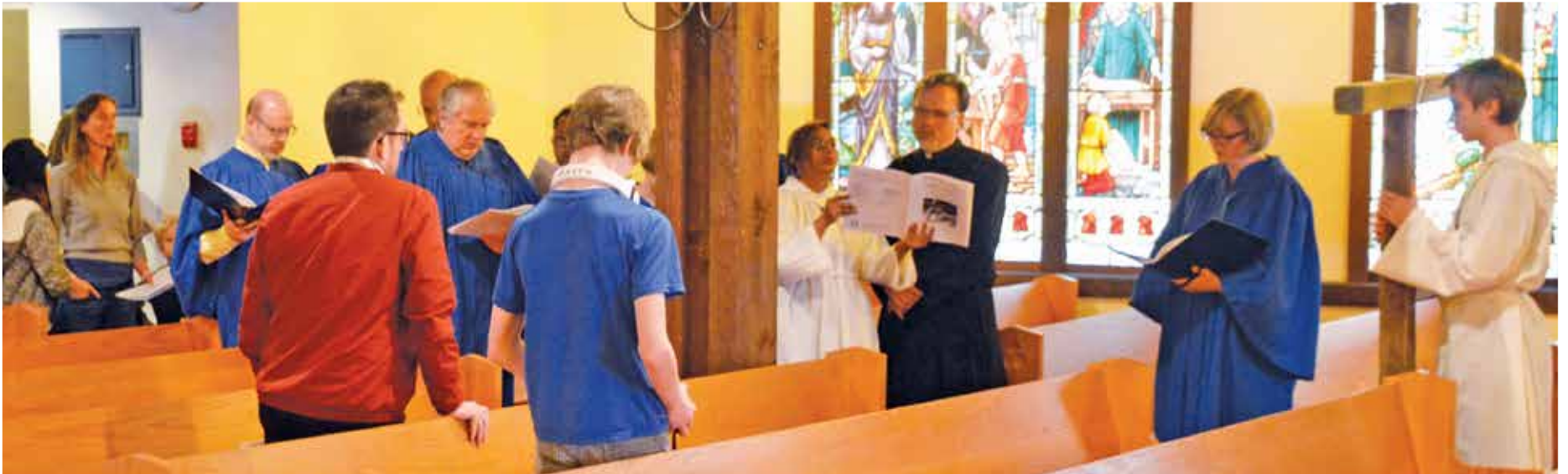
The Sanctuary party, musicians and choir are in place.



Beginning the Stations of the Cross.



LEFT R&B/Gospel singer Warren Dean Flandez sang, *His Eye is on the Sparrow* prior to the reading of the Passion; *John 18: 1 – 19, 42*. MIDDLE The First Station of the Cross, "Jesus is Condemned to Death." RIGHT The musicians, Kevin Zakresky, piano and Brian Deans, cello, during the Stations of the Cross playing the accompaniment for the repeated Antiphon, *Give me Jesus, give me Jesus. You may have all this world. Give me Jesus.*



The Fifth Station of the Cross, "The Cross is Laid on Simon of Cyrene."



LEFT St. Helen's rector, the Rev. Scott Gould took the role of narrator in the reading of the Passion. He also preached and in his sermon pointed out "that there are lots of other things we could do today, have a day off, enjoy ourselves, lounge around with the computer, free ourselves of negativity and be positive... so what do we do with Good Friday?" RIGHT Jim Hodgson read Jesus' words from John's Gospel.



Chorister, Stephen Pickett was the third of three readers sharing the Passion story.



The congregation gathers in the chancel for the Fourteenth Station, "Jesus is Laid in the Tomb."



The Solemn Intercession and the Hymn, *Were You There* concluded the Good Friday worship at St. Helen's, West Point Grey.

# Holy Week Around the Diocese

## Christ Church Cathedral • Good Friday, March 25, 3 pm



LEFT The readers for the Passion gather on the chancel platform. RIGHT The preacher for the three days of the Triduum, the Rev. Louise Peters, executive director of Sorrento Centre.



Priest, chaplain, bishop and deacon stand for the Solemn Intercession.



LEFT The wooden Cross is processed in through the nave up to the chancel and put in its stand behind the altar. RIGHT The MCs prepared the altar for the Eucharist during the Offertory.



Cathedral Choir under the direction of Rupert Lang lead the singing of the Offertory Hymn, *O Sacred Head Sore Wounded*.



LEFT Meditating on the Cross. RIGHT Bishop Skelton returns to her seat in the nave during the Meditation on the Cross.



The Eucharistic Prayer.



More preparation of the altar.



The reserved sacramental wine is poured.



Marcus Mosely on the left about to lead the singing of *Were You There?*



LEFT The clergy listen as Cathedral Choir sings verse 3 of the Offertory Hymn. RIGHT The Eucharist is administered in front of the chancel platform.





## St. Timothy, Burnaby • Easter Day, March 27, 8 am



LEFT Following some diligent work with matches, the Flame of Easter is lit. RIGHT After a very heavy 6 am rainstorm Easter Day it is still a bit damp outside to be lighting the Pascal candle.



LEFT Verses of *Morning Has Broken* were sung between each of the six readings of The Vigil of the Word. In this image the reader is sharing *Exodus 17: 1 – 16*. RIGHT Reading the Gospel — *Luke 24: 1 – 12* — is Lutheran pastor, the Rev. Matt Senf. He is considered associate clergy by the St. Timothy's faith community. He and his family are resident in the parish and are occasional worshippers at St. Timothy's.



Tricia is baptized.



LEFT Pouring the waters of baptism. MIDDLE Rev. Shepard anoints Tricia with Chrism. She mentioned that Bishop Skelton had blessed the Chrism just five days earlier. RIGHT One of the traditions at St. Timothy's is to present the newly baptized with a soft toy lamb.

## St. Alban's, Burnaby • Easter Day, March 27, A 9 am visit between services



LEFT The wooden Cross at St. Alban's is already displaying a few fresh flowers. RIGHT Rector of St. Alban's, the Rev. Faun Harriman took some time out between the Easter Sunday services to show some of the completed renovations. The new wood paneling in the chancel is beautiful.



The reredos, damaged in the fire is beautifully restored complete with the refurbished hand-lettered, gold painted "Holy Holy Holy" and all set against the brand new wood paneling.



An unscheduled drop-in visit to St. Alban's to see how the renovations are progressing on Easter Day morning following the June 11, 2015 fire that started on the west side of the building resulting in over half a million dollars in damage. ✠



LEFT Rev. Harriman lost all her vestments in the June 11 fire and Sheila Bush has made new stoles for her. RIGHT Rev. Harriman displays her white stole recently crafted by parishioner Sheila Bush.

# Holy Week Around the Diocese

## St. Oswald, Port Kells • Easter Day, March 27, 10:30 am



The church sign facing to the east on 190th Street in the Surrey industrial district of Port Kells.



The church exterior facing southeast.



LEFT A helpful sign near the church's entrance. MIDDLE Prior to worship, the priest-in-charge, the Rev. Pastor Timothy Dutcher-Walls spoke to the congregation to let them know that the "technology" had failed and the PowerPoint service capability would not be available, therefore we would be using copies of the Book of Alternative Services and the "red" hymn book from the 1970s. RIGHT Just before beginning the Children's Talk, Pastor Tim wanted to give one of the younger members of the congregation a commemorative Easter sticker.



Before worship, the faithful placed fresh flowers on the wooden Cross.



Pastor Tim's Easter message to the younger members of the parish took the form of three trivia questions:

1. What part of a chocolate Easter bunny do people eat first?
2. What flower is most commonly associated with Easter?
3. In the song *Here Comes Peter Cottontail* what is the bunny "bringing for Tommy?"

- 3. Jelly Beans
- 2. Lily

Answers: • 1. The ears

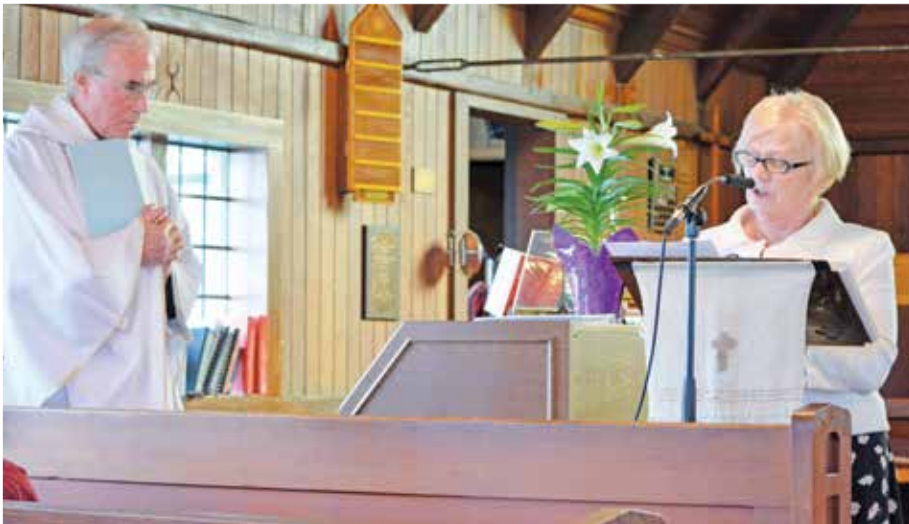


Pastor Tim had a gift of an Easter bookmark for each child. "Thanks Pastor Tim!"

# St. Oswald, Port Kells • Easter Day, March 27, 10:30 am



LEFT Roylene Hicks reads *Acts 10: 34 – 43* and she also read the epistle, *1 Corinthians 15: 19 – 26*. MIDDLE Elvin Craig reads the Gospel. RIGHT Seen on the left exchanging the Peace with a friend is a parishioner who recently celebrated her 101st birthday.



The intercession led by Margaret Smith. The entire congregation meets in the aisle for the Peace.



LEFT While the sharing of the Peace continues in the nave, Jennifer Driscoll-Holmes who led the music in worship, playing the organ and singing prepares to begin the Offertory Hymn. RIGHT The Eucharistic Prayer.



The bread of Holy Communion, the Body of Christ. The wine of Holy Communion, the Blood of Christ.

## Four Deaths

LYNDON GROVE

*Christ Church Cathedral; Former Editor of Topic*

Over two or three days, as 2015 was becoming 2016, four names I knew well appeared in obituary columns: Dal Richards, Carole Stewart, Maisie Hunter Johnson, and Jim Cruickshank. And while the deaths of contemporaries no longer come as a shock, or even surprise, these four continued to hover in my mind like a midwinter fog.

Dal Richards and I met when Robert Blackwood, preparing an article on the bandleader for a magazine I was to edit, arranged to have me appear on Richards's radio program, *Dal's Place*, unfailingly described as "a nostalgic look at the sounds and times of the big bands."

After taping the program, we repaired to Dal's other place, a Manhattan-style apartment centred by a spiral staircase, walls covered by artists' autographed photos. And while Dal had corked his own bottle years before, he still mixed what may have been the city's best Martini.

Dal was more realist than romantic, but when I was writing a piece about lyricists, he told me, "Sometimes when I see a couple dancing, the woman will be singing the lyrics. Perhaps the words prompt memories. The man may be humming, but the woman is singing."

At the end, though, it was Dal who sang. It was New Year's Eve; a night Dal had played for 75 years, the longest run of any Canadian bandleader, and probably of any bandleader anywhere. Slipping away, in his 98th year, Dal began to sing his closing theme, *The Hour of Parting*.

Carole Stewart had the self-assurance of someone who had been told from infancy that she was beautiful. And she was. If she and Jennifer Lawrence had been in a room together, no one would have noticed Jennifer Lawrence.

To become a secretary at CHQM, it was necessary to be smart and efficient, but being seen as strikingly attractive was not a handicap. Carole was the loveliest of four such secretaries positioned in an open square between the executive offices. Pierre Berton, exiting after an interview, was so taken by them he walked into a glass door, raising a lump on his forehead the size of a grapefruit.

The last time I saw Carole was over lunch at a Hyatt Hotel, where she had become public relations director. After that, she left for California, and married Tom Ardies, a likable newsman/novelist (*Kosygin is Coming*) who had moved south to edit Don Cromie's *Palm Springs Life*.

Someone who had known Carole in high school, and reconnected, posted a late photograph of her after the death notice appeared. In it she appears fragile and translucent, as porcelain blondes often do as they age, and also a little puzzled, as if surprised to see the sun setting so early across the palm desert.

There are those who knew Maisie Hunter Johnson as a longtime parishioner of St. Philip's, Dunbar, but some of us knew her as one of the golden girls who came to Central Collegiate from King George School, on Moose Jaw's north hill, as close to aristocracy as prairie teenagers could get.

She was tall and lanky, with freckles and honey-colored hair, and rather shy. The shyness vanished on basketball and volleyball courts, and I was delighted to learn that when she was at the University of Saskatchewan (degree in home economics) she was on the fencing team.

Close your eyes, classmates, and see her again at a front row desk in Miss Irwin's Room 2a. Form notes from those years

## A Trip to Jordan

BEVERLY STEWART

*Retired Priest of the diocese of New Westminster*

He is just a regular pimply-faced teenager. From the time we entered he had a permanent smile—a smile of kindness, a smile of hope, a smile of joy at our visit. We never spoke a word, and yet he spoke to everyone present. His presence among us seemed to flower in the desert. He is staying as a

guest of Jordan, just miles away from his home where he lost his leg to a Syrian Air Force barrel bomb. Gentle, sweet Abdullah remains a symbol of the hope, the resilience of the refugees from Syria.

I was blessed to be with a delegation of people from George Mason University,



Syrian school children sit in class at a makeshift, crowded school at a camp for displaced Syrians in northern Syria. PHOTO iStock/Getty Images

mention her giggles, fondness for chewing gum, and struggles with Latin. Some of you may remember those things. I don't. What I do remember are her slightly tentative, coltish movements, and, especially, that lovely shy smile.

One afternoon in the late 1960s, Art Hives, then a communications director for the Anglican Church of Canada, asked me if I knew of a young priest named Jim Cruickshank and a place in BC's interior called Sorrento Centre. I said I didn't. He said, "Check it out."

It was early evening when we turned down a treed dirt road off the Trans-Canada Highway. I had telephoned from Kamloops, said I was a friend of Art Hives, and might there be accommodation? Jim Cruickshank was the first person we met. He bounded out of an old brick building called Spes Bona, and asked if he could carry our bags.

Sorrento turned out to be a place where lives were changed. You didn't expect it—at least, I didn't expect it—and Jim Cruickshank was the reason. He was 32 years old that summer; he had been a priest for five years, and director—founding director—of Sorrento Centre for three of those years. He had grown up in Prince George, a rough and tumble forestry town in northern British Columbia, part of a fractured family.

He said that if he hadn't become a priest, he would have been "a drunken hunting and fishing guide."

There were, at Sorrento that summer, a number of people who would go on to do remarkable things, and none more so than John Turvey, perhaps the only person to have been an alumnus of both St. George's School and the Hell's Angels. Brought to Sorrento by Art Hives to kick a drug habit, he was living in Jim's A-frame and working as a kitchen assistant. It wasn't long before he threw away the drugs and the methadone and walked into the Shuswap to be baptized by Jim. Later, as a social worker on Vancouver's downtown east side, he began Canada's first needle exchange program, was a founding member of the BC AIDS Network and the Vancouver Native Health Society, and was founder and executive director of the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society. As he was dying, at 61, of mitochondrial myopathy, a muscular and neurological disorder, a representative of the Governor General's office flew to the west coast to invest him as a member of the Order of Canada.

Jim Cruickshank liked gardening, water skiing, movies, Scotch, fast driving, German-style pork hocks, and, most of all, live theatre. He was a great audience for a Neil Simon or Alan Ayckbourn comedy, and he could dig a spiritual message out of every play and film he saw. After seeing Ayckbourn's *Communicating Doors*, which opens with the arrival of a dominatrix,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



LEFT The 7th Bishop of the diocese of Cariboo, the Rt. Rev. Jim Cruickshank on his election in 1992. PHOTO Courtesy of the Anglican Archives of the Provincial Synod of BC & Yukon RIGHT The Author, Lyndon Grove. PHOTO Kent Kallberg



students of non-violent conflict resolution. We were under the leadership of Dr. Marc Gopin, rabbi, author, professor, and bridge builder between Israel and the Occupied Territories, and more recently in Syria. The other leader was Hind Kabawat, originally from Damascus, now living in Toronto. Hind is one of only two women at the table in Geneva when negotiations are discussed among the parties involved in the Syrian conflict. She represents the victims, the *anawim*, the women and children of her beloved native land, Syria. She is also an Orthodox Christian who speaks with the Arab world and knows and respects the Muslim world.

Half our time was spent listening at the feet of these two amazing people. Among others, we also heard from those who work in the refugee camps, from journalists, from UN representatives, and from representatives of the US Embassy, and the Canadian Embassy. As a Canadian, I learned that there is thanksgiving that Canada has withdrawn its planes so that we are no longer involved in bombing civilians to help more persons lose a leg or a life. Our expertise as peacekeepers and sharpshooters is well known and respected, and there is gratitude for the changes in policy with our new Prime Minister. Everywhere, I was warmly greeted when I said I was from Canada.

The other half of our time was spent visiting schools. The school where we met Abdullah, begun by a local Jordanian sheik is for disabled children. The father of another child who has lost a limb said he left Syria when the bombs fell on his house, killing his wife and one child and injuring one of his daughters. Several children were deaf from the bombs. They put on short plays and sang to us of hope. But the most poignant song was when they sang, "Please do not kill us, we are only children."

The other school we visited was Project Amal ou Salam (which means hope and peace). We took art supplies and sports equipment, including a whole suitcase of supplies given by the people of St. Dunstan's. This school was begun by Hind's 26-year-old daughter, Nousha. Amal ou Salam is one of several "underground" schools in the Middle East. Some are actually underground, and some, such as Amal ou Salam are located in small villages.

Here, the children are taught by Syrian teachers, not only the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also art and music and play. Such joy to behold as our contingent arrived in a small bus. We sang with them, played basketball and soccer with them, drew pictures with them and shared simple meals with them. One often wonders if it does any good for Westerners to simply drop in to such situations as schools for refugees. The answer for me would be an overwhelming "Yes!" The children and the adults know we have come a long way just to be with them for even a short time. They know they are not forgotten. Across the lines of culture, geography, religion, they know they are not forgotten.

The conflict in Syria is very complicated and took years to get where it is. Historically we have all been involved, and we know that further war is not the answer. But that is a story for another time.

In the meantime, let us give thanks that we have some ability to help the Syrians by supporting such schools as Amal ou Salam, by welcoming refugees here to our country, and by the power of prayer. This was a powerful journey, and I will always hold Abdullah in my heart. ✠

## OPINION

## The House of Bishops' Statement • One Bishop's Reflections

BISHOP MELISSA SKELTON

*These reflections were originally formatted as a letter from the Bishop and distributed by email and posted on the diocesan website and on diocesan social media, March 14, 2016 (the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton's birthday). Even though the letter was widely circulated I think it is appropriate to include it in this issue of Topic.* • Editor

The statement from the special meeting of the House of Bishops on the potential change to the marriage canon was released just as I boarded a plane for a visit to the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines to explore a companion relationship between our dioceses. In that I wasn't at the special meeting (first, due to a conflicting work commitment and, second, due to my broken wrist), I'm just now sharing my thoughts with you on the bishops' statement and on my thinking to date on the discussion within the Anglican Church of Canada on marriage.

The backdrop on both of these things is complex and includes: a) my own experience in the Canadian House of Bishops and with all of you in our life together and in our listening sessions on the proposed changes to the marriage canon, b) my own experience as a priest in the Episcopal

Church during the time that the Episcopal Church authorized liturgies in which same sex couples could make lifelong vows before God and those assembled, to live in a faithful, lifelong, baptismally-grounded, covenanted relationship with each other, and, c) the fact that I, myself, am a newly remarried person, and so myself am in the midst of the mystery, the wonder, and the character-building vocation that lifelong partnership with one other person is all about.

And so, dear friends, I'm calling this communication "a reflection" rather than a pastoral letter in that this term better expresses the tone of what you may be about to read.

#### The Anglican Church of Canada:

In my experience, the Anglican Church of Canada is a church of more diversity than many other parts of our Communion. We are a church made up of people from an array of cultures, countries of origin, and theological perspectives. We are a church that is attempting more than ever to listen to the experience and perspectives of Indigenous peoples. What this means is that we need to work hard to listen to each other and find ways that allow for flexibility,

tolerance and mutual respect in the way we approach the discussion of important issues.

#### Our Listening Sessions on the Report of the Marriage Commission:

I deeply appreciate the participation of all who attended one or both of the two listening sessions Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton and I hosted on the report of the Marriage Commission. Most who attended the sessions had heart for, rather than issues with the proposed change to the marriage canon. Some (clergy and laity), however, had a different perspective—either voicing disagreement with the proposed change or saying that, should General Synod vote to change the canon, they would need to exercise the conscience clause. Many were concerned that regardless of the outcome, people would get hurt.

#### Our View of Those Who Differ with Us:

As I continue to ponder this issue, I keep coming back to this question: Do we believe that people of good will who are doing their best to interpret Scripture faithfully and to live in prayerful community with us and within our Anglican Church can come to different opinions and perspectives on the subject of marriage? While our answer to this question may have no effect on the strength of our own convictions on the issue of the potential change to the marriage canon, our answer to this question will affect the way we view those who disagree with us. My answer to the above question is

*"Do we believe that people of good will who are doing their best to interpret Scripture faithfully and to live in prayerful community with us and within our Anglican Church can come to different opinions and perspectives on the subject of marriage?"*



## Four Deaths

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

shocking many in the audience, Jim told a gathering of the House of Bishops that it was a parable of redemption. The next evening, there were two rows of episcopal purple in the Arts Club Theatre.

His sermons, and often his conversation, were studded with memorable—sometimes controversial—dictums. He told people, "There is nothing you can do to make God love you more, and nothing you can do to make God love you less." He said, "To be holy is to be able to walk through evil and not become evil." He criticized those who "love things and own people," when they should love people and own things. His favorite Gospel was Mark's, and he believed Paul's Letter to the Romans contained everything one needed to know.

He was not popular with evangelical fundamentalists or rigid old-line moralists. Some thought it improper that Sorrento was subtitled "Centre for Human Development," and there was a suggestion he should be tried for heresy for declaring that all people are saved, not just those who made reservations early. But critics were few, in number and in stature, compared to his friends and supporters, including the bishops he served: Ralph Dean, Ted Scott, Godfrey Gower, David Somerville, and Douglas Hambidge.

Jim didn't—probably couldn't—affect a scholarly image, but he earned a doctorate at the intellectually rigorous University of Chicago. After Sorrento, after Chicago, after his years as an influential teacher at the Vancouver School of Theology, he was made Dean of New Westminster and rector of Christ Church Cathedral. Not long after his installation, he was invited to become principal of Toronto's prestigious Trinity College. I told him to take it. He turned it down, feeling an obligation to Christ Church parishioners. (Years later, he confided that he had been offered the principal's office also at Wycliffe and the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, among other schools.)

Tom Huntley, an early Sorrento booster, said, "It will come as a blow when you realize that Jim is human." It wasn't often evident, but Jim had his insecurities, fear that he might suffer from "the impostor syndrome," times when his usual generous sympathy might slip, times when he could be seized by a competitiveness that he deplored. And he could show anger, as he did at one Synod, when, ten years after the ordination of women to the priesthood, some clergy still refused to honour the church's decision. He told them to accept it or get out.

His years as Bishop of Cariboo were extraordinarily difficult. He began his episcopate as the scandal of residential school abuse was about to shake the church, and nowhere more than in his diocese. Dealing with issues not of his making, "he guided the church," wrote Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, "in making decisions that were difficult but necessary, and, more than that, right."

The result was that the diocese of Cariboo ceased to exist, and he became a bishop without a diocese. But back in Vancouver, he continued his unique style of ministry in an unofficial way at St. Mary's, Kerrisdale, and renewed his pleasure in gardening.

As his health deteriorated, he felt his capabilities slipping. But he still had his magic, and continued to lead workshops and study sessions (one of his last was at Sorrento, a tidy closing of the circle), and he could be funny about his situation. Describing a fall on a bus, he said, "I tripped on a stair that said 'Watch Your Step'."

When they told me he had died, I scribbled these lines: "There will be much said and written about Jim Cruickshank. And none of it will be adequate." Including this.

But we all have our memories.

Of Jim. And of Maisie, and Carole and Dal. ♦

"yes." What is yours and how does it affect how you think about and treat those with whom you do not agree?

#### Where I Am:

I myself am strongly in favour of the Church better preparing couples for, pronouncing God's blessing on and supporting couples in the living out of their publically-declared, baptismally-based, lifelong, faithful, covenantal promises to each other. I am in favour of the Church offering this both to heterosexual couples and to same sex couples. As much as I am a person supportive of the rights of individuals, I hold this position in that I believe that such an offering by the Church is a faithful response to the Gospel of God in Christ.

Along with this, I would strongly protect a parish's, a priest's, or a bishop's right both to differ with me on this position, and to decide not to participate in extending this opportunity to same gender couples. Additionally, I would want those taking this position not to be scorned, judged or themselves made to feel marginalized on account of their position.

#### Going Forward to the 2016 General Synod:

Until any change occurs in the marriage canon, we in this diocese continue our policy to authorize those parishes who wish to offer a blessing to same sex couples who have been legally married to do so. This, of course, is a policy that has grown out of significant discussion and debate within our Synod.

The recent communique from the House of Bishops, as I understand it, was simply to offer the Church some transparency in that the House of Bishops had been in discussion about the potential change in the marriage canon for a number of sessions. The communique from the House of Bishops in no way prevents the full discussion of the proposed change among laity, clergy and bishops and the voting on the proposed change at General Synod.

In the meantime, I believe we should continue to focus on the priorities Diocesan Council and I have been discussing: strengthening our parishes in their core purpose of gathering, transforming and sending people to enact their baptismal identity and purpose in the world; working on concrete acts that build our relationships with Indigenous peoples; increasing our capacity to attract, engage and provide leadership opportunities to diverse peoples; and cultivating a diocesan culture that is more transparent, collaborative, courageous, forgiving, and in which parishes and leaders have a greater sense of choice. My hope is that we will also add the exploration of a companion relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines to these priorities.

On the potential change to the marriage canon, I would ask you to read the full report of the Marriage Commission ([www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Marriage\\_Canon\\_REPORT\\_15Sept22.pdf](http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/Marriage_Canon_REPORT_15Sept22.pdf)) and pray for the Church as it reads and reflects on the report. Pray for our LGBTQ members and friends for whom this discussion can be painful, frustrating and exhausting. Pray for those who may be struggling with expressing less popular or minority perspectives in their contexts (here and in other dioceses), for it is difficult to express a minority perspective. Pray for all delegates to General Synod. Pray that we all continue to be guided by the Holy Spirit in our desire to walk together and that we all will continue to be open to what emerges in the discussion. ♦

# YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

41st General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada  
July 7 to 12, 2016 • Toronto

## Reflections on the Upcoming General Synod

*A few months ago I sent out a request to the: bishop, three lay delegates, one youth delegate, and three clergy delegates to General Synod 2016 to be held July 7–12 in Richmond Hill, Ontario. My request was as follows, “How are you feeling about the 2016 agenda items that you currently know about and how will decisions on these items affect the future of the Anglican Church of Canada?”*

*The theme of the Synod is You Are My Witnesses which comes from Isaiah 43: 10 and we begin with the response of lay delegate, Rob Dickson who happens to be the Business Administrator for the diocese of New Westminster. • Editor*

### Rob Dickson

I have been asked to reflect on the upcoming General Synod taking place in July this year. The current practice is that the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada meets once every three years. It is a gathering of elected representatives of clergy and lay from all the dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada together with the bishops of the Canadian Church. It is the body that meets to discuss issues of national and international concern of the church throughout Canada—both mission and doctrine and governance.

There are profound moments and very ordinary moments. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with Anglicans from the many regions of the church throughout Canada. To make friends, renew friendships, learn and pray together is one of the lasting memories of the event.

I have been elected as a lay delegate from our diocese to represent our diocese at the General Synod this summer in Richmond Hill, Ontario (north of Toronto). This is both a significant honour and a serious responsibility. Our diocese will be represented by three lay delegates, three clergy delegates, one youth delegate and our bishop.

The General Synod gathering usually has many issues for the members of Synod to consider, discuss and possibly require coming to a decision. This year is no exception. Of the many topics that will be discussed and considered there are three that immediately come to mind. The motion to change the Marriage Canon to allow same-sex marriages in our church, the continuing discussion of the place and role of Indigenous peoples in our church, particularly from a governance position,

and the very important topic of the environment and how our church should move forward both in day to day practice and in our position concerning our investment of assets policies.

All of these issues and many others require thought and prayer. My fervent hope is that all of these discussions and others that occur during the seven days of the assembly will happen in an atmosphere of listening, of consideration for others and their opinions, and of conscious daily remembrance that it is the work of the mission of Christ we are tasked to take up—not the human rules of the church.

I hope that everyone will leave this assembly with the sense that they have helped in God's Mission. ✠



Rob Dickson. PHOTO Wayne Chose

### The Right Reverend Melissa Skelton

This will be my first General Synod in the Anglican Church of Canada, and so I find myself excited about participating with the other delegates in meeting people, listening and contributing to the conversations, voting on important issues and learning more about our Church. I'm hoping that:

- We will pray, listen, learn, socialize, deliberate and vote trusting that the Holy Spirit is and will be present in the Synodical process.
- We will be fully ourselves in all conversations, sharing the experience we are having uniquely in our context and with our people.
- We will “walk together” as we explore our own and others' perspectives on the potential change in the marriage canon and on any proposals related to how the Church will structure itself to allow for the full inclusion of Indigenous peoples and their perspectives in the Anglican Church of Canada.
- We will come away strengthened in our relationships with others in our Church.
- We will find productive ways to deal with the outcomes of General Synod 2016, whatever they may be.

Please pray me and for all our delegates. Pray for all the Bishops, clergy and laity

who are part of the General Synod. Pray for those preparing for and planning General Synod 2016. Pray for a spirit of courage, wisdom and forbearance in our deliberations and the presence of the Holy Spirit in all we say and do. ✠



The Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton. PHOTO Sarah Sovereign

### Melanie Delva

The best answer to the question, “How do you feel...” would be, “anxious and excited.” I am anxious regarding the potential work around the Marriage Canon and the knowledge that it will evoke both hope and pain in many members, not just of the General Synod, but the wider church who are our family. My great hope with regards to the Marriage Canon conversation is that we find a way to not lean solely into our intellectual understandings or our emotional reactions, but that we would lean into what the Spirit is calling the church to be in the world, and if/how that calling and this issue manifests the Gospel in our time and place.

I am also anxious that the conversation about the Marriage Canon may overshadow the other, very important pieces of work we have before us. This includes the prophetic emergence of Indigenous self-determination within the Anglican Church of Canada. That our Indigenous members want to remain within the Anglican Church of Canada while living fully into who the Gospel has called them to be as Indigenous people is—as I see it—a huge gift to us as a church and needs to be recognized as such. I am hopeful that we will see the wider church come to understand this blessing more fully and support it not out of guilt or shame of our past actions towards Indigenous peoples, but out of a true understanding and hope-filled vision of



Melanie Delva. PHOTO Randy Murray

our future together as a complete, continually reconciling Body of Christ.

Finally, I am excited to experience the wide variety of people and perspectives from across the Anglican Church of Canada. One of the gifts that General Synod has given me in the past is the realization that it's not “all about us” and what we are doing at a local level. The breadth and depth of our church family in this country is rich and inspiring, and I am very excited to be reconnected with what is happening in other parts of our country. ✠

### The Very Reverend Peter Elliott

It was at the 1963 Anglican Congress in Toronto when Anglicans gathered from around the world—bishops, clergy and laity—that the now familiar description of the kind of communion that Anglicans share was first expressed as “Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence in the Body of Christ.” It was a way of saying that the expression of a church locally in its authorized liturgies and ways of organization would be different throughout the world and appropriate to local realities. It set up an asymmetrical pattern of church life

General Synods are important meetings in the life of the Anglican Church of Canada. Our “national church” has very narrowly defined limits of authority. For the most part, the Canadian Church is a diocesan church: bishops and their Synods are responsible for the ministry of the church in the many different geographical areas of Canada.

At the upcoming General Synod the question of whether the sacrament of marriage is open to all duly qualified Canadian Anglicans will be debated. It's not a new debate: the place of LGBTQ folks in the life of the Canadian church has been on the agenda of General Synod since at least 1992: regional and theological differences make this debate particularly agonizing. As well, how Canadian Anglicans respond to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be considered, as an entire day of the agenda will be devoted to issues arising from the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACIP).

At each General Synod I've attended, I am very conscious of the presence and lead-

ing of the Holy Spirit as we worship, work and pray together. The agenda items before this Synod are the right ones for Canadian Anglicans to be engaging at this time. The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, presides gracefully, giving room for all to speak and be heard. I hope that the Anglican Church of Canada can live more fully into the communion envisioned by the phrase “mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ.” ✠



The Very Rev. Peter Elliott. PHOTO Wayne Chose

*More Reflections...*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

## OPINION

## Reflections on the Upcoming General Synod

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

## The Venerable Lynne McNaughton

As of this writing in mid-March I have just returned from the meeting of the Council of General Synod, (CoGS) a four day meeting of final preparation for General Synod 2016, I am feeling very excited about the work ahead.

The most historically momentous work of General Synod is towards self-governance for the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACiP). At CoGS, ACiP presented an “indigenized” version of the Five Marks of Mission, with goals for self-determination as an act of mission. This focus on mission moves this away from simply a focus on politically restructuring our church, and into concrete actions such as response to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I think ACiP walking with us will bring a hope-filled, faithful future to the Anglican Church of Canada. I look forward to celebrating this with ACiP at General Synod!

Another important conversation at General Synod will be about ethical investments. There will be a call to review our investments. As an expression of our desire to move to a low-carbon economy, there will be a resolution that we become a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (<http://bit.ly/235IjyE>).

CoGS issued a statement to the Church regarding the General Synod process and resolution for changes to the marriage canon to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples. I commend that statement to you (<http://bit.ly/1RNxHrn>). I would be happy to speak to anyone in our diocese regarding this. I urge everyone to read the report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, This Holy Estate (<http://bit.ly/1op1tzl>).

I feel very privileged to serve as one of your delegates to General Synod. Please pray for us as we “take council” for the work

of God’s church.

For more information, please read the Highlights of Council of General Synod by

going to the Anglican Church of Canada’s website at [www.anglican.ca](http://www.anglican.ca). ✦



Ruth Kitchekekisik (left), Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh in Split Lake, Ontario. Ruth is on the translation team putting the Bible into OjjiCree syllabics; the Ven. Lynne McNaughton (middle), clergy rep on CoGS for BC & Yukon; and the Rt. Rev. Lydia Mamakwa (right), Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. PHOTO Courtesy of Lynne McNaughton

## A Reflection Inspired by a Really Good Homily

DAVE ABBOTT

St. Helen’s, Point Grey

This is a reflection on a really good homily with the general theme of *Anglicans and the Residential Schools* delivered last February by Anglican Archivist for the diocese of New Westminster and the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon, Melanie Delva. I heard the sermon whilst attending Eucharist at St. Brigid’s a church plant ministry of Christ Church Cathedral.

A comment after the homily got me thinking. The gist of the comment was, “if only we knew the truth 40 years ago.” Well, I knew the truth 34 years ago. I knew all about the horrors of the Indian Residential schools as of May 1982, when my secondary school music teacher came up with the best band trip ever. We would visit Bella Bella located about 180 kilometres north of Port Hardy on Vancouver Island. This would mean a two hour bus trip and an

over-night ferry adventure. To get us acclimated to the life of a Canadian Indian Reserve, our music teacher invited a woman from the Cape Mudge Band to visit our class. Rather than music, she would spend the class time explaining how native kids experienced school. She told us in detail what the Indian Residential School system was like. As of her visit to us, St. Michael’s Indian Residential School in Alert Bay, where she went to school, had only been closed for seven years. The poor woman was in tears during her entire talk. We were both transfixed and mortified. I have yet to forget it.

We did travel to Bella Bella, but not with our entire class. Explicit racism prevented a girl — who we guys thought was the hottest in the class (okay, we were sexist and racist) — from going to Bella Bella. Her father

wasn’t allowing his girl to be pawed over by native boys (never mind that she’d attended all the other band trips). We all knew this to be the reason. Once in Bella Bella, the local band held the best feast I’ve ever had for us. Truly local food. I loved oolichan.

We were awed by *MTV (Music Television)*, the first ever dedicated cable TV music station launched out of New York by Viacom August 1, 1981). Bella Bella had satellite TV. MTV was less than a year old in 1982. The first video I saw on MTV was Stevie Wonder and Paul McCartney’s *Ebony and Ivory*. In May, it was at the top of the charts, all about racial harmony. We watched *Ebony and Ivory* in the centre of a Reserve in a white bubble. We never got to socialize with native kids. We were billeted with white teachers. We met communally at the United Church. We only entered the

Bella Bella school gym for the feast and our concert. We were treated really well, and saw all the sights including a fish hatchery, but not the people. I remember asking my white teacher billets over supper why the entire teaching staff was white. The couple were both teachers at the community school and obviously well meaning. Even I could tell that. One of them told me that it would take probably 30 years for school at Bella Bella to catch up to off-reserve schools. I thought 30 years was forever. Turns out I was right. It has taken forever. I’m probably a tad less racist now than then, but I have known about Indian Residential Schools for 34 years. And, done little about it. But, the Bella Bella band trip was the best ever. Really. ✦

The Inaugural Inspire Conference  
• March 4 – 6, 2016

CAITLIN REILLEY BECK

Children &amp; Youth Ministry Coordinator, diocese of New Westminster

A room with over 120 children’s, youth, young adult and family ministers is rare in mainline denominations in North America these days. Not that it is something that used to be more common; it is still a relatively new phenomenon to have people working specifically in these ministries. In fact, many of the people in the room are not just ministering with children, youth, young adults and families, but all of them see this as an important part of their vocation, which requires ongoing training, development and attention. This room was at the recent Inspire Conference, organized by an ecumenical group and hosted by St. Andrew’s Wesley United Church and Christ Church Cathedral. It was a privilege to be a part of this first Inspire Conference, which was a great success, and now to look forward to future conferences where these ministers can gather to learn, connect and be inspired.


I am pleased to be able to offer the following reflections from three people engaged in children’s, youth, young adult and family ministry in our diocese who were a part of this inaugural event.

## Phil Colvin

It was a pleasure to be able to contribute to the Inspire Conference, not least because that allowed me to attend some of the programming and to share with the wide variety of leaders and participants at the event. The diocese of New Westminster last partnered with our ecumenical colleagues on a youth ministry conference in 2009, and a lot has changed in our understanding of this ministry in that time. One of the keynote speakers of Inspire, Dan Hodge of the Center for Youth Ministry Studies at North Park University in Chicago, reflected that youth ministry operates on the cutting edge between what he refers to as the “sacred and the profane.” Young people may be drawing away from institutionalized mainline religion, but at the very same time they’re articulating deep spiritual questions

and longing for authentic relationships with those who don’t want to try and offer easy answers... many of whom, ironically, could be mainline Christians!

It’s especially exciting to see how programs are embracing the challenges posed by a more nuanced understanding of the world around us. Speaking on Saturday morning, Anna White reflected on how participants of *CampOUT*, a summer camp program for queer, trans, questioning and allied youth, have helped her and other leaders to engage in deep questions about what it really means to create safe spaces and authentic community. And Bishop Mark McDonald helped facilitate discussion about what ministry in a church looking to faithfully implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Com-



## Diocesan Youth Movement

### YOUTH CONNECTIONS

News & Events for Youth in the Diocese of New Westminster

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

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

mission could look like.

Ivy Beckwith, Faith Formation Leader for the United

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# The Inaugural Inspire Conference • March 4–6, 2016



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Conference organizers Eric Hamlyn of the United Church of Canada, Julie Lees of Vancouver School of Theology and Kristen Steele of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada are all smiles as the conference begins. PHOTO Doris Kizinna



Participants greet one another and share in conversation about a reading from Ezekiel during opening worship. PHOTO Doris Kizinna



Worshippers, including the diocese's own Cameron Gutjahr and Phil Colvin reach up to the sky as a part of a body prayer in morning worship on day two of the conference. PHOTO Kerrie Perry



Kimberly Blair, youth minister at St. Laurence, Coquitlam and member of Diocesan Council, listens intently to one of the keynote addresses. PHOTO Kerrie Perry



Children's and Youth ministers from different denominations come forward to plant seeds as a part of the opening worship on Friday morning. PHOTO Doris Kizinna



The band sings as seeds are planted "I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love," — Bahá'ú'lláh. PHOTO Doris Kizinna



The Rev. Andrew Halladay leads the congregation in song along with fellow band members Curt Allison, the Rev. David Taylor, Caitlin Reilley Beck and Chris Giffen. PHOTO Kerrie Perry

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Church of Christ, offered a final keynote which reminded those present that the key to true engagement with children and young people occurs within the worshipping life of a church community, not beside it in a separate classroom. It was this combination of breaking new ground by reclaiming principles about how we worship together which typified the key messages of Inspire. I'm looking forward to see the conversation continue to evolve at future conferences.

**The Rev. Jeremy Clark-King**

I was not sure what to expect from the Inspire Conference. My experience of youth ministry training and education was both a while ago and not very good. It was amazing to see so many young (and not so young) people committed to excellence in ministry with and among young people coming together from all over Canada. The speakers I heard were passionate about seeing the world and the Gospel through the eyes of youth and children and finding ways to express that vision. I was particularly impressed by the combination of fun and seriousness used to interrogate culture to help all of us (not just adolescents) navigate what we see, hear and consume daily. I hope that this level of education and development continues to be made available. Thank you to the organizers.

**Anita Fonseca**

The Inspire Conference was truly a place of energizing creativity. Perimeters such as denomination, jobs and geographical location became faint whispers as we heard keynote speaker Daniel White Hodge encourage us to pay attention to the voice of God in the most unexpected of places, or during any of the worship services where harmony pulled us into one spirit before our God the Inspirer, or even as we spoke and got to know kindred souls we didn't know we had.

There was a particular moment during worship on Saturday that felt like the heart and soul of the Inspire Conference to me. In acknowledgment of the world that we are in and that surrounds us, we were asked to stretch out our hands to skies, and to all four latitudes. As I observed every arm in the sanctuary stretch out, and every hand sway in unison I could not help but stand in kindling awe of the power we hold when we work together. I think this conference in a way not only inspired us, and helped us unearth the creative seeds within, but it also inadvertently taught us what community building feels like. No matter where we are from or how motivation blossoms for us, we all come from the same God who loves and protects us, and is ever hoping that we are able to listen to each other intently, love each other wholeheartedly, and collaborate in building peace in a world that seeks to be inspired. ✦



LEFT The Gospel Choir of St. Andrew's Wesley United Church, led by Curt Allison at the piano, performs at the closing concert at Christ Church Cathedral. PHOTO Doris Kizinnal RIGHT Eric Hamlyn and Julie Lees send participants on their way with a packet of sunflower seeds as a blessing and a reminder to those who minister with children, youth, young adults and families to "continue tending the earth, planting seeds, nurturing what grows." PHOTO Kerrie Perry

