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# Lent *in Anglican Tradition*

BILL CROCKETT, Professor Emeritus, Vancouver School of Theology

The story of Lent begins with the early church. That is a good place to start for Anglicans, because we stand in continuity with and are heirs of the whole Catholic tradition.

The season of Lent can be traced back to a three-week period of preparation for baptism, which appears by the 3rd century in Rome, Jerusalem, North Africa, Constantinople and other centres. By this time Easter was becoming the primary day for baptisms in many places, but not everywhere. Baptisms took place at the Easter Vigil and were very dramatic events. The candidates had spent an extended period of preparation, which included instruction, prayer, and fasting. During the Easter Vigil, before entering the baptismal pool, they laid aside their clothes. Entering the baptismal pool naked was symbolic of drowning; dying to an old life lived apart from God, sharing in Christ's death. After being baptized the candidates came up from the baptismal pool and were clothed in a white robe, symbolic of the new birth of baptism and sharing in the risen life of Christ.

During the 4th century the previous three week period became standardized as a 40 day period in imitation of Jesus' 40 days fast in the wilderness prior to the beginning of his public ministry. The season which we now call Lent (from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* meaning "spring") thus became a time for personal examination and renewal for all Christians, not only for those preparing for baptism. The emphasis was on fasting, prayer, confession, study, and service (almsgiving). This meant not only personal and

corporate renewal, but also reaching out to those in need.

In the western church Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604) established Ash Wednesday as the beginning of the 40 days of Lent. To begin the season of fasting and repentance, Gregory marked the foreheads of his congregation with ashes, a biblical symbol for penance. It was also a reminder to early Christians of their mortality: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (*Genesis 3: 19*) How are the 40 days of Lent calculated? Here's the math: the 40 days of Lent extend from Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday, omitting the Sundays. The last three days of Lent are the sacred Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

After the English reformation, Lent continued to be an important season in the church year with an emphasis on the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Thomas Ken, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, issued a pastoral letter to his clergy in 1687 on the keeping of Lent. While emphasizing the importance of repentance, prayer, and fasting in the observance of Lent, there are two passages in his letter that emphasize Lent as a time for reaching out to the poor and hungry and in charity to those with whom we differ.

"Remember," he writes, "that to keep such a Fast as God has chosen, it is not enough for you to afflict your own soul, but you must also according to your ability, deal your bread to the Hungry."

He also writes, "I exhort you to endeavour all you can,

to reconcile differences, to reduce those that go astray, to promote universal Charity towards all that dissent from you, and to put on as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, even as Christ forgave you."

In the present period of Anglican liturgical renewal the primary focus is again on the season of Lent as a time of preparation for the celebration of Easter, when we celebrate and renew our life in the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter Vigil becomes the principal time in the Christian year when baptisms take place. The Exhortation in the Ash Wednesday liturgy in *The Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) makes this emphasis on the paschal mystery the central focus and at the same time speaks of the traditional practices of repentance, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as the means for this renewal of life:

"Dear friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by remembering our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign, speaking of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marking the penitence of the community as a whole. I invite

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# Lent in Anglican Tradition

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

you therefore, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God." (BAS, page 281)

I well remember that when Bishop Melissa Skelton was elected as our bishop she spoke about the centrality in her own life of the paschal mystery. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the heart of our Christian faith. It is into Christ's death and resurrection that we are baptized. "Do you not know," says St. Paul, "that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so too we might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6: 3–4)

Whatever we face in our personal lives—emotional struggles, broken relationships, sickness and suffering, the loss of loved ones, and whatever we encounter in our world—the inhumanity of human beings towards one another and our exploitation of the planet, we can know that God has borne all of that in the cross of Jesus Christ, and in raising him from the dead has opened up the promise of new life in the face of the worst that we can encounter in our lives and in our world. This is the meaning of the paschal mystery that we celebrate at Easter and prepare for in Lent.

With this emphasis on Lent as preparation for baptism and the celebration of the paschal mystery, there can be no better way to examine our lives than by reflecting on the promises made in our baptism:

**Celebrant** Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

**People** I will, with God's help.

**Celebrant** Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**People** I will, with God's help.

**Celebrant** Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

**People** I will, with God's help.

**Celebrant** Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

**People** I will, with God's help.

**Celebrant** Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

**People** I will, with God's help. (BAS, page 159)

We can also explore some creative ways of living out the traditional disciplines of Lent in 2017. These disciplines are counter-cultural. They challenge the narcissism, the consumerism, and the indulgence of our culture and open us to the world's need.

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*"I exhort you  
to endeavour all you can,  
to reconcile differences, to reduce  
those that go astray, to promote universal  
Charity towards all that dissent from you,  
and to put on as the Elect of God, holy and  
beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness  
of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing  
one another and forgiving one another,  
even as Christ forgave you."*

Thomas Ken,  
Bishop of Bath and Wells,  
1687

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



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**Thank you!**



## Lent in Anglican Tradition

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What does prayer mean for us in the present context? To pray is to open our lives to the One who is the Source of all life and all love and to live in communion with that Three in One, who is the Source of all being, The Incarnate Word, and the Holy Spirit. This is a counter-cultural practice in our secular society, where the Transcendent Mystery that sustains our faith, our hope, and our love is denied and human life is reduced to what we can see and understand by the sciences, which themselves open up the prospect of a mystery which they can never fully encompass.

The true meaning of repentance is to change our minds, to change our direction in life, to turn and follow Jesus as his disciples in denying ourselves (our egos) in order to find

our lives in the service of the One who is the true source of our lives and in the service of our neighbours.

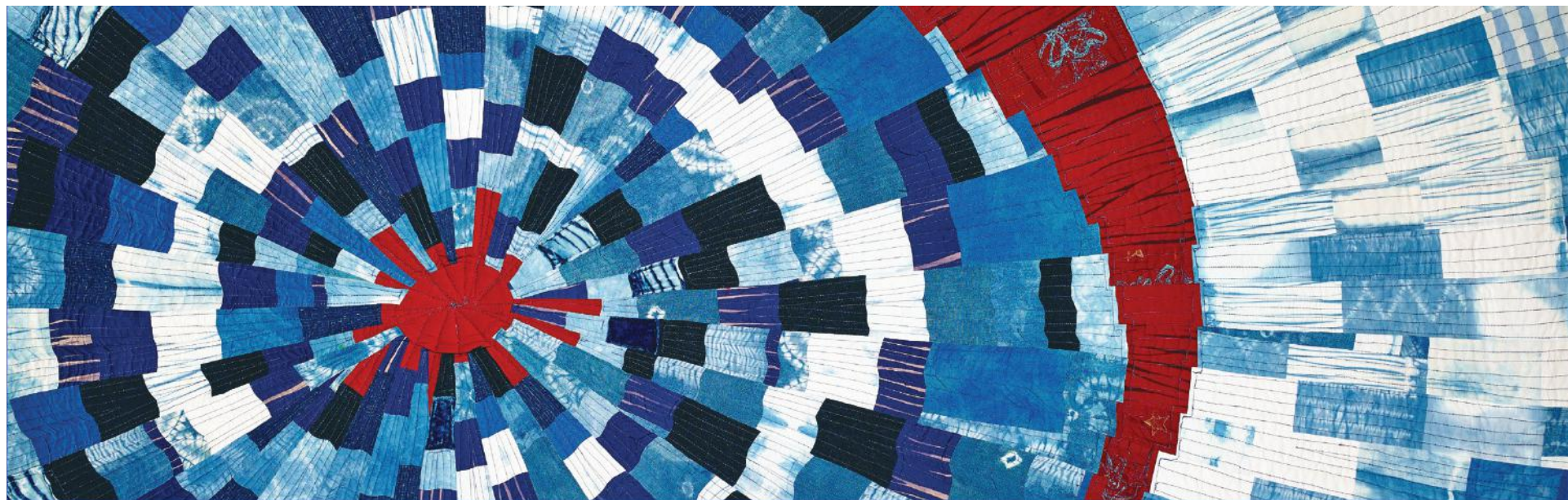
Fasting in our society is equally counter-cultural. It is a protest against the consumerism of our society and the tendency to hoard rather than share the world's resources. Fasting can remind us of the need to share the resources of the earth and to share our food with those in need.

Almsgiving, likewise, is a reminder that all that we possess is a gift of God and not our personal possession. This opens us to share what we have and to reach out to those in need.

To study, to read and meditate on Holy Scripture, and to explore the depth of meaning in our faith is also an

important discipline.

The beauty of Lent in the Anglican tradition is that we can draw on all the resources of the past as part of a living tradition, which is ever old and ever new, and which can revitalize our lives today in the paschal mystery as it has for the lives of our forbears in the faith. ✠



*(in)finite:* EXPLORING THE FINITE LIMITATIONS OF HUMANITY  
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A juried exhibition inviting artists working in fibre media to submit artwork that:

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- is designed for meditation, personal devotion, community prayer or public worship.

The exhibition will include perspectives from First Nations.

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FOUNDATION OF CANADA  
60years

Canadian Textile Juried Exhibition • May 25 to June 4, 2017 • Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver, BC

## An (in)finite Need for Volunteers...

In May of this year the chancel of Christ Church Cathedral will be transformed into a gallery exhibiting sacred and spiritual textiles from across the country. The exhibition entitled *(in)finite* will be a unique opportunity to see a variety of artwork created for personal devotion and public worship. You are invited to be a part of this project—celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Anglican Foundation of Canada—by volunteering as a docent or tour guide. At a volunteer orientation before the exhibition begins you will have a sneak peek at works from the exhibition and get some background on the artists and their process.

Please contact Thomas Roach for more information at [infinite@anglicanfoundation.org](mailto:infinite@anglicanfoundation.org). ✠

### THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

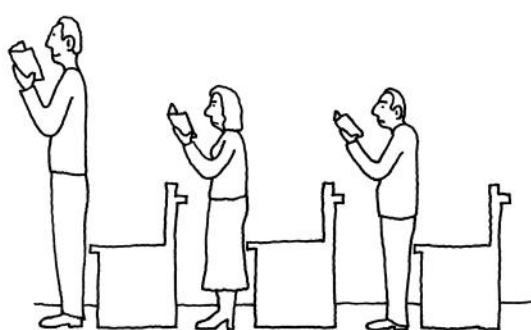
compiled by Anglican Archivist Melanie Delva

**20 years • 1997** Diocesan Council approves the use of the "NWnet computer bulletin board system" as an official communications vehicle of the diocese.

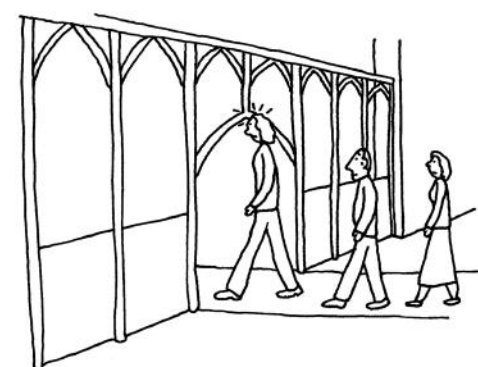
**30 years • 1987** Diocese of New Westminster signs refugee resettlement/sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada.

**50 years • 1967** The Women's Auxiliary is officially renamed the Anglican Church Women (ACW).

## THE PERILS OF BEING TALL



CAUSING AN OBSTRUCTION



BANGING ONE'S HEAD



IT IS DIFFICULT TO HIDE WHEN A VOLUNTEER IS REQUIRED



BEING ASKED TO RETRIEVE THINGS FROM HIGH SHELVES

CartoonChurch.com





Praise Team sound check. PHOTO Randy Murray



Bishop Skelton prepares to preach. PHOTO Randy Murray

# God Does Not Expect Perfect Followers

RANDY MURRAY (WITH FILES FROM NATASHA MACDONALD: ST. JOHN THE APOSTLE, PORT MOODY; CO-FOUNDER OF THE BIRD’S NEST)  
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

“Jesus does not look for followers from among those who have social status, from among those who are somehow perfect, or from among those who are well-prepared. Instead Jesus calls the lowly and in doing so calls into question the system that keeps people down low. Jesus calls the imperfect and in doing so calls into question the notion that God expects us to be perfect as followers.”

The preceding words were spoken by Bishop Melissa Skelton at just past the halfway point of her sermon preached at the main 10 am Eucharist with Confirmations for Epiphany III on January 22, 2017 at St. George’s, Maple Ridge. She had taken the Gospel, *Matthew 4: 12–23* for her text and her message of dedication and discipleship without perfection or laborious preparation was extremely appropriate for this liturgy where 19 members of the St. George’s faith community were confirmed, reaffirmed and received.

Not only were the 19 recipients of the laying on of hands, but there were in excess of 150 in attendance, exceeding by 50% the recent average attendance at the 10 am worship and exceeding by 200% the parish’s average Sunday attendance in 2015 of 52. The rector, Rev. David Edgerton informed diocesan communications that the last confirmations at St. George’s were in 1988 — and that was in the previous building. The current building was opened in 1990 so the 19 Confirmation, Reaffirmations and Receptions on January 22 were the first for the current building.

The liturgy looked and sounded a little different than most worship events in the diocese of New Westminster. Rev. David Edgerton, deacon, the Rev. Melody Pearson and Bishop Skelton did not robe. The chancel and the altar were only used for the readings, the intercession, the prayer over the gifts and the Eucharist. Rev. Edgerton and a praise team that included his wife Bridget on drums led the music in worship from the front of the nave. Rev. Pearson and Bishop Skelton sat in one of the front pews, however the Bishop’s Throne was put in place in front of the chancel entrance for Bishop Skelton to lead the Baptismal Covenant and for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

After the gathering song, *Give Thanks to the Lord*, the Collect, and two more songs, Bishop Skelton gathered the children of the parish around her at the chancel entrance for what the St. George community refers to as *All Together Time*. During this few minutes, Bishop Skelton held up a number of photographs illustrating just what she as bishop does as an answer to the subtitle of the segment: “What does a bishop do?” The photographs were of: people during public prayer; Bishop Skelton in community with others; a line of people holding hands being led by someone who knows the way; a teacher; a shepherd; and Bishop Skelton presiding at the Eucharist. A recording of *All Together Time* for January 22 is available on the World Wide Web at <http://bit.ly/2jqUnf2>.

In her principal address, Bishop Skelton pondered the decision of Peter, Andrew, James and John to take immediate action and follow Jesus in what appears to be an abandonment of everything: jobs, family and their community in a “sudden redirection.” Bishop Skelton then continued to give some background in reference to what it was like to be a fisherman and what it was like to be a disciple in the time of which Matthew is writing. A downloadable audio file is available on the World Wide Web at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



The St. George’s, Maple Ridge faith community singing, *We Stand and Lift Up Our Hands*. PHOTO Randy Murray



Prior to the laying on of hands of Confirmation, Reaffirmation and Reception Bishop Skelton leads the congregation in reaffirming their Baptismal Vows. PHOTO Randy Murray



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

<http://bit.ly/2jqUXJS>.

Following the song, *We Stand and Lift Up Our Hands* a video featuring some of the confirmands offering their reasons for wanting to be confirmed was shown on the screen in the chancel. The video can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://bit.ly/2k5d0qd>.

After the film Bishop Skelton presided over the Confirmation, Reaffirmation and Reception of 19 members of the community, and led the Baptismal Covenant. This was followed by the intercession, an enthusiastic exchange of the Peace of Christ, the Offertory and Communion.

When the Prayers After Communion were completed, Rev. Edgerton went to the lectern and invited Bishop Skelton to come up to the altar and share *A Prayer for St. George, Maple Ridge*:

God of Mission:

We ask your blessing on St. George's as this community seeks to grow both in depth of faith and in size.

May this be a place where people of all ages can worship God, can meet with Christ, and can be filled with the Holy Spirit

May this be a place where people of the gospel are equipped to Live the Good News with adults, children and youth growing as Whole-life disciples.

And May this be a place from where people are sent out to live and share the Good News of Jesus Christ wherever their Monday to Saturday takes them. Amen.

After worship there was a reception and a light lunch and then Bishop Skelton met with the parish officers and the parish council.

Following the meeting a group of folks including Bishop Skelton, her husband the Rev. Eric Stroo and the Rev. Edgerton paid a visit down the street to *The Bird's Nest*, a house that is lived in by professional wrestler Andy Bird, and others.

*The Bird's Nest* is a non-profit organization founded in January 2016, with a mission to bring First Nations youth out from remote Canadian reserves to Maple Ridge, BC. Once in Maple Ridge they are enrolled either in a post-secondary preparation program where they can upgrade their high school diplomas in preparation for college or university, or enrolled directly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



The first of 19 to receive the laying on of hands. PHOTO Randy Murray



Reaffirmation. PHOTO Randy Murray



Deacon, the Rev. Melody Pearson, Bishop Melissa Skelton and rector, the Rev. David Edgerton sing the Sanctus during the Eucharistic Prayer. PHOTO Randy Murray



Emily approaches Bishop Skelton. Emily's sister, Beth and her mother, Janet were also confirmed that day. PHOTO Randy Murray



Vera Morgan a member of the diocesan Anglican Church Women Executive receives the bishop's blessing. PHOTO Randy Murray



# God Does Not Expect Perfect Followers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

into post-secondary if their High School diploma is already strong. *The Bird's Nest* organization also provides access to numerous trades programs.

There are currently eight young First Nations people living at *The Bird's Nest* and two others living with co-founders Denise and Natasha in their homes. All of these young people are either studying or working, or in most cases both. The vision of *The Bird's Nest* is:

It is our bold vision to enlighten, educate and inform Canada's First Nations youth to their unlimited potential as productive and self-empowered members of both their culture and society as a whole through the love, help and encouragement of *The Bird's Nest*.

*The Bird's Nest* is developing a relationship with the parish of St. George. Andy is from the Montreal Lake Reserve in Northern Saskatchewan and relocated a few years ago to the lower mainland to pursue his career as a professional wrestler. Among other initiatives to support *The Bird's Nest* and

Andy, Rev. Edgerton will be dedicating the proceeds that he will raise running in the BMO Marathon this coming May.

Bishop Skelton and Rev. Stroo had a great time in Maple Ridge and really enjoyed their visit to *The Bird's Nest*. ✠



LEFT Rev. Edgerton invites Bishop Skelton to the altar to offer the Prayer for St. George's, Maple Ridge. RIGHT The 19th person to receive the laying on of hands. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Eucharist. PHOTO Randy Murray



Andy Bird and Bishop Skelton at *The Bird's Nest*. PHOTO David Edgerton

**ASH WEDNESDAY March 1**  
**Reading: Isaiah 58:1-12**  
Is not this the fast I choose? -- Isaiah 58:6  
  
This is a day to remember who we are...  
That we are mortal, formed of the earth.  
Receiving ashes in the sign of the cross  
is an acknowledgement of our human frailty.  
Today we confess that human sin causes injustice.  
During Lent it is traditional to fast.  
What is the fast you will choose?

**NEW THIS YEAR! Receive PWRDF's Lent Resource as a daily email!**  
Sign up at [www.pwrdf.org/seasonal](http://www.pwrdf.org/seasonal) and each day you'll get an email that includes a reading, prayer or meditation specially chosen by the Reverend Susan Spicer. Dig deeper into the issues of food security and food sovereignty and read more on-the-ground stories from PWRDF.

**The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund**  
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA



Natasha Macdonald and Bishop Skelton at *The Bird's Nest*. PHOTO David Edgerton



*"...by far the most impressive speakers were the youth. Hesitantly or courageously, they introduced themselves in their own languages, they offered prayers, and spoke about their growing connection to land and culture. They also talked about the experience of shame and disconnection from culture."*



LEFT CHS Chair Linda Adams and UNYA staff member, Cheryl Robinson. RIGHT The MC, Jerry Adams. PHOTOS Laurel Dykstra

## Wisdom of Elders Celebration

LAUREL DYKSTRA

Priest-in-Charge, Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship; Interim Indigenous Justice Coordination for the diocese of New Westminster

Under a full moon on January 11, 2017, approximately 80 people met in the upstairs offices of an East Vancouver service organization. The group was about one half Indigenous youth and youth-workers, the other half church people over the age of 50 and maybe one or two who were both. Shy teens offered paper cups of tea to churchwardens and drifted back to stand against walls covered with hand-drums, community agreements written on flip-chart paper, and button blankets. We had gathered to celebrate something that, until 200 years ago, had been an unbroken and unquestioned heritage: Indigenous elders passing their knowledge on to youth.

During the past year, through a collaboration between the Coming Home Society (CHS) and Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA), Cree, Nisga'a, Kwakwaka'wakw, Gitksan, Babine Lake, Tahltan, Squamish and youth from other nations spent time with culturally skilled elders making drums, carving canoe paddles, identifying native plants and making medicines, harvesting and weaving cedar bark, and learning about traditional spirituality.

The MC for the evening, Jerry Adams acknowledged our place on Coast Salish territory and praised UNYA as a place where many young leaders have gained strength, community, and practical skills. Jerry also noted that both indigenous people and church people have a tradition of eating together as a way of building relationships and patted his stomach in testimony to his membership in both groups. Linda Adams, ODNW president of the Coming Home Society emphasized that everyone present was there because they care about indigenous youth. Before he drummed and sang, elder Bruce Robinson reminded all of us of our role as teachers. He called us to look at the heart of others to see how we are all the same and to honour the ancestors that brought us here. The atmosphere was one of mutual regard

and holding one another up.

The staff, elders and supporters of the Wisdom of Elders program were passionate and articulate, but by far the most impressive speakers were the youth. Hesitantly or courageously, they introduced themselves in their own languages, they offered prayers, and spoke about their growing connection to land and culture. They also talked about the experience of shame and disconnection from culture. Their obvious regard for the program elders and staff, and their affection for one another was a privilege to witness.

Wisdom of Elders has some of its roots in the diocese of New Westminster. In 1998, CHS was initiated, as the diocese and St. James' parish sought to respond to social problems in the Downtown Eastside. They partnered with UNYA in 2000 to create the Young Wolves Lodge, a spiritually and culturally rooted residential recovery program for Indigenous women ages 17–24. When the Lodge was closed in 2015 due to a shift in federal priorities and funding, the creative partnership between CHS and UNYA made Wisdom of Elders possible. CHS raised funds from the Anglican Foundation and United Church of Canada Healing Fund; UNYA had arts, support and recreation youth programs in place but it was the youth and staff who identified the specific ways that elders could make a difference for them. Both organizations identified and invited elders able to provide cultural skills, traditional knowledge and spiritual guidance.

The Wisdom of Elders program is a concrete example of churches honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action which explicitly called churches to:

- Respect Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination in spiritual matters, including the right to practise, develop, and teach their own spiritual and religious traditions, customs, and ceremonies (48ii).
- Establish funding for aboriginal community controlled projects for healing and reconciliation, culture and language revitalization, education and relationship building and dialogues between youth and Indigenous spiritual leaders (61).

Both Jerry and Linda Adams talked about reconciliation through small actions that build relationships. But the Coming Home Society has been humbly going about the practical work of reconciliation between church and Indigenous people and communities for nearly 20 years and that is no small thing.

You can support this important work by sending a cheque to the Coming Home Society at 303 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, BC, V6A 1L4. ☙

The full moon on the evening of January 11, 2017. PHOTO Laurel Dykstra



Elder Bruce Robinson. PHOTO Laurel Dykstra



Smudge and Eagle feathers. PHOTO Laurel Dykstra



# Lord Bishop Sahib

## Colonial Times & the Gospel of Christ

GILCHRIST (GILLI) MCLAREN  
*Warden, All Saints' Mission*

Colonial times were a fascinating era in the history of our world, a time when people with no particular merit set out to explore other lands and exploit the wealth of other people for their personal gain and profit, largely through the use of superior technology and deadly weapons. But then there were others, magnificent souls, people willing to give their all, in their zeal to take the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the world, even to the end of their lives. They lie buried in foreign lands, often forgotten, some with not even a cross to mark their graves. They committed their lives in full measure, without counting the cost. The pages of history are filled with the stories of these remarkable women and men who heard God's call, and obeyed, saying nothing except, "Here I am."

I would like to tell you the story of one such man, and in the process also give you a glimpse of colonial India, the land of my birth.

### St. John's Church, Calcutta • The Old Cathedral

We worshipped at St. John's Church, Kolkata in the 1970s, a church rich in character and history. Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of the East India Company (1774–1785), wished to build a proper church, where British expatriates could worship in the tradition of the Church of England. He headed the building committee, and the church, patterned after St. Martin-in-the-Fields, was among the first public buildings erected by the East India Company after *Calcutta* (now called *Kolkata*) became the effective capital of British India. The church was financed by British subjects who solicited funds from local businesses and lotteries. The Maharaja Nabo Kishen Bahadur gave the land, and Warren Hastings laid the foundation with grand Masonic ritual and ceremony on April 6, 1784.

St. John's Church was consecrated as the Cathedral Church of Calcutta on June 24, 1787 by special commission of John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury (1783–1805). Archbishop Runcie (1980–1991) acknowledged his predecessor when he sent his blessings on the 200th anniversary celebrations of the church in 1987. Archbishop Runcie worshipped at this church during his 1986 visit to India, when and where I had the privilege of meeting him.

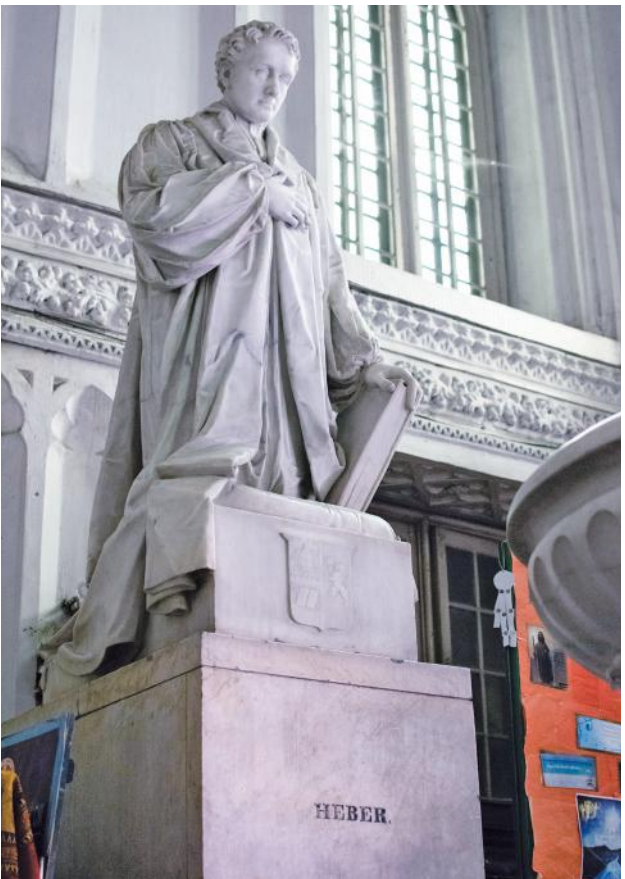
### The Altar Must Be in the East

Liturgy is structured to enable people to worship God in Jesus Christ, and through the ages has always been reformed and reformatted in response to evolving theological perspectives. St. John's Church was laid out east to west, with the altar in the west, directly under the spire. This was cause for great consternation amongst the *wise men* of the Vestry Committee (in those days women could not be part of the Vestry), because they felt the altar should be in the east from whence comes light and wisdom—remember: *We three kings of orient are...* The wise men of the vestry came up with an expedient solution: change the layout, brick

up the entrance in the east, move the altar from the west to east, and make a new entrance in the west. They could not do anything about the spire, so we have the grotesque architectural anomaly, perhaps the only one in the world, of the entrance to the church now located directly under the spire. Bishop Reginald Heber (1783–1826) was the second bishop of Kolkata. His first impressions of St. John's Church were: "The cathedral was a very pretty building, all but the spire, which is short and clumsy. The whole composition indeed is full of architectural blunders, but still it is in other respects, handsome."

### Bishop Heber • A Memorial

Bishops Heber died in India at the young age of 43. The news of his death reached England four months later and shocked and grieved his many admirers. His friends at Oxford, described him as: "A man distinguished in this university by his genius and learning, virtuous and amiable in private life, thoroughly devoted to the great cause in which his life was lost." They at once opened a fund, and commissioned Sir Francis Chantery, a leading artist and sculptor, to carve a marble statue to perpetuate his memory. Sir Francis produced a marvellous work of art, a colossal



The Bishop Reginald Heber statue. PHOTO Amit Abraham

figure of Bishop Heber on a high pedestal, kneeling with his right hand on his heart and his left holding the Bible—in absolute obedience to the Lord's command to preach the gospel. His friends designated that this statue may be placed inside the Cathedral Church of St. John.

Unfortunately when the marble statue arrived, the wise men of the Vestry discovered much to their embarrassment that the new entrance to the church was too small to allow ingress.

### St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta

As the city's population grew it was decided to construct a new larger cathedral in Gothic architectural style. The corner stone of the new cathedral, named St. Paul's (now a major tourist landmark in Kolkata) was laid in 1839, and the building was completed in 1847. It is the seat of the diocese of Kolkata.

It was agreed that Bishop Heber's statue would be placed inside the new cathedral although that was not the intent of his friends who had arranged it. Exile is a state when one is in a place that is not your home, and that is where the statue has found a home, in exile in the newer cathedral.

### But, Who Was Heber?

Reginald Heber was born on April 21, 1783. His parents Mary and Reginald were Tories, High Church, and allergic to any radical doctrine or challenge to Church authority. Heber Sr. was profoundly shocked by the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793. His father was the rector at Hodnet, a village and civil parish, a position to which the young Reginald eventually succeeded, and was parish priest for 16 years.

Reginald was a child prodigy, at the age of five he could read fluently, and grew up with a phenomenal knowledge of the Biblical text. He was brought up in deep Christian piety by his devout parents. At the age of 16 he went to Oxford. He made many friends at the university, some of which rose to eminent and powerful positions and were of great help to him in his subsequent ecclesiastical career. He had a talent for poetic writing, and at Oxford won several prizes. Although Reginald did not take orders till 1804, the Heber's were a missionary-minded family. Our Lord's commission "*Go ye therefore, and teach all the nations...*" was precious to them. After obtaining his MA degree at the age of 24, he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Oxford on May 24, 1807. Although he had serious misgivings about the *Thirty-nine Articles*, and could not accept the implied cruelty of the doctrine of predestination, his belief in God and in Christ Jesus remained as steady as his heartbeat. In April 1809, he married Amelia, daughter of Dean Shipley of St. Asaph's and settled down to the comfortable life of a rector.

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St. John's, the new entrance. PHOTO Amit Abraham



St. Paul's Cathedral, Kolkata. PHOTO Esther Simick



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**Reginald Heber • A Priest**

He was forthright in his preaching. One of his sermons ended with this exhortation, “we are now about to have a collection, but before the plates are held at the door, we will sing a hymn, during which those who don’t intend to give may sneak off.” He is also credited with saying, “I think when I get to heaven, the first ten thousand years will be taken up in wonder and astonishment.” A poor woman, to whom he gave three shillings, blessed him exclaiming, “May the Lord reward you four fold!” Heber commented afterwards, “How unreasonable are the expectations of men! This poor woman’s wish for me, which sounds so

noble, amounts to but twelve shillings, and we when we give a pittance expect heaven as our reward.”

He preferred the *Book of Common Prayer* and a structured service that creates an aura of worship. He did not like extemporary praying, explaining that his lips were rather like that of Moses than Aaron. Unlike the Methodists who liked to sing jubilantly at their worship (Charles Wesley wrote 6,000 hymns), the Church of England initially frowned on the singing of hymns in the church. However, Heber was of the opinion that liturgical activities that attract more worshippers should be encouraged. He

began writing hymns and wrote for almost a decade. He designed these hymns to be sung between the creed and the sermon and his texts used less emotional language than Wesleyan hymns.

**William Wilberforce • A Need for a Bishop in Calcutta**

William Wilberforce, the British MP largely responsible for the abolition of slavery had been campaigning for years to establish an episcopate in India, and also allow missionary ministry by the East India Company in the Indian territories controlled by them. Eventually Wilberforce’s brilliant oratory and persuasion won the day.

In 1814, Dr. Thomas Fanshaw Middleton was appointed the first bishop of the new Calcutta diocese. He was a moderate, but leaned toward High Church worship. He had a limited mind but a taste for scholarship. He was a disappointment to the Evangelicals.

In July 1822, Bishop Middleton died and the establishment gingerly approached Heber, asking if he would consider taking on the episcopate at Calcutta. He initially declined on grounds of family and health concerns, but later reconsidered his decision and accepted the Great Commission to go to India—his extensive diocese included not only India, but also Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Australia and New Zealand.

**Reginald Heber Accepts the Great Commission**

On June 1, 1823, Heber was consecrated the second Bishop of Calcutta by Archbishop Sutton, assisted by the Bishops of London, Llandaff and St. Asaph. He sailed to India, and on the long voyage he would lead worship and read prayers to passengers and crew. He visited the sick and preached some of the sermons that he had used at Hodnet. Heber confessed that *sea knees* were as necessary as sea legs, for when the vessel leaned in the wake of choppy seas he had to kneel on a chair to be heard over the wind and waves.

**Welcome to Calcutta**

Kolkata is situated on the banks of the Hoogly River, a tributary of the Ganges. The Governor-General Lord Amherst sent his yacht down the river to fetch the Heber’s, arranged a splendid house for them, and attended his installation at St. John’s Cathedral. It must have been a grand occasion when Heber first preached in his own cathedral, full of pomp and ceremony, with dignitaries in attendance. There would have been army top brass in dress uniforms, justices in their colourful robes and wigs, and senior bureaucrats all anxious to get a glimpse of the new bishop. Weather-wise Heber’s arrival was badly timed with the temperature hovering around 30° Celsius with 94% humidity. The heat and damp placed their western garb at a cruel disadvantage. Incidentally, William Carey, the legendary Baptist missionary was a contemporary of Bishop Heber. He was based at Serampore, a Danish colony because the East India Company prohibited any missionary activity in their domain, lest it may interfere with their trading interest. Carey at that time was old and infirm, and could not meet the new bishop.

**Bishop Heber Takes Charge**

The absence of a bishop, since the death of Bishop Middleton, had created a vacuum in the administration. The Archdeacons of Calcutta and Bombay had become accustomed to running their own affairs. They resented the directives of the new bishop, but Heber wasted no time and immediately set about putting the stamp of his personality on his diocese. He decided to tour his vast episcopate, starting from Calcutta and heading toward Bombay, a distance of 2,000 kilometres.

Our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, when on a visit to one of her outlying parishes, uses a car, well protected from the inclemency of weather, and also climate-controlled for comfort. She drives on good roads with a GPS to guide her, but Bishop Heber in 1823 had no such benefits, no planes, trains, cars or roads.

**Heber Tours His Vast Episcopate**

Heber planned to visit many cities in Northern India and eventually get to Bombay in Western India. He embarked June 15 planning to travel for the better part of a year. His retinue included: Martin Stowe, his domestic Chaplain; Archdeacon Michael Corrie with his wife and family; and a small company of servants. He sailed out on the river Hoogly in four boats, two small craft for baggage and kitchen, a barge for the Corries, and a 16-oar boat for himself and his chaplain.

He travelled up the river Ganges to the holy city of Benares, and then onto Allahabad, yet another holy site in Hinduism, situated at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, preaching en route and at every station, confirming new Christians and administering the Sacrament.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Jhong, a fortified town in Northern Nepal (much farther north than Bishop Heber travelled; however, this photo supplies some context). PHOTO iStock/Getty Images



Benares also known as Varsani. PHOTO iStock/Getty Images





The Red Fort. PHOTO iStock/Getty Images

## Lord Bishop Sahib • Colonial Times & the Gospel of Christ

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### Heber Travels Overland

At Allahabad, it was decided that further travel would have to be overland. The caravan consisted of 24 camels, three elephants, eight bullock carts, the archdeacon's horse and buggy, and a Turkestan steed that Heber had bought for himself. There were two-dozen horse servants, 40 other servants, 12 tent-pitchers, and a guard of 20 armed sepoy (Indigenous soldiers serving under British military orders). It must have been an impressive procession—imagine Bishop Skelton embarking on a tour of her episcopate in this grandeur!

At Lucknow, the magnificent capital of the Kingdom of Oudh, he had the opportunity to have breakfast with the Nawab, an independent, powerful, and erstwhile vassal of the mighty Mughals. They got along famously, with Heber connecting through his passable Hindustani. Heber compared the Nawab to King James the First which would have pleased him immensely.

### Hardships & Sorrow

It had been a hard journey. Heber's friend and spiritual companion Martin Stowe fell ill and died. At one stage, upon receipt of the news that his wife and daughters were unwell he was tempted to abandon the arduous tour and return to his stricken family in Calcutta, but on receiving a further letter that his family was now well he decided to carry on. During the journey Heber himself fell ill, and had to be carried in a palanquin (a covered litter for one passenger, consisting of a large box carried on two horizontal poles by four or six bearers). His personal valet Abdullah feared for the bishop's life.

### The Himalayas

On November 25, he made a short detour into the Himalayas visiting Almora, a small Gorkha kingdom in the mountains, where he had his first glimpse of the Himalayan snow clad peaks. He wrote in his diary: "And now the snowy mountains which had been so long eclipsed opened on us in full magnificence. To describe a view of this kind is only lost labour, and I found it nearly impossible to take a sketch of it. Everything around was so wild and magnificent that

man appeared as nothing, and I felt myself as if climbing the steps of God's great temple."

Heber was not naïve about British popularity, and in fact was critical of the British policy of discrimination against the Indians. He believed that the only distinction of persons recognized in the Gospels is of those we love and those we ought to love. He found that Almora, a hill town, and a Gorkha fortress were a place where the British were accepted. On November 28, 1824, Heber celebrated Holy Communion and preached to a congregation of 35 officials and army officers, under their commandant, Sir Robert Colquhoun. Colquhoun later acquired fame as a distinguished plant collector—the evergreen genus *Colquhounia* was named in his honour.

### Audience with the Mughal Emperor

The high point of his tour was the audience accorded him by the Mogul Emperor, Akbar Shah at the Red Fort in Delhi. Although it had all the pomp and ceremony of being announced to the emperor, the scene was rather pathetic and tragic for the great mogul empire had now been reduced to just the precincts of the Red Fort, occupying but 250 acres with the remainder of the sub-continent of India being ruled mostly by the British of the East India Company, and independent principalities. Incidentally, the Red Fort was built by Emperor Shah Jahan, (the builder of the Taj Mahal) and would have seen glorious days in the golden age of the Mughals. It was the seat of the empire, the *Koh-e-noor*, the world's most famous diamond adorned the Mughal crown. The emperor ruled his vast empire from the jewelled peacock throne, and the splendour of the court was perhaps unmatched anywhere in the world. But those days were gone, and the Mughal Emperor now presided over what remained of it, just 250 acres. However, pomp and ceremony remained the norm, and royal protocol and court etiquette was strictly observed.

Bishop Heber's servants and Indian staff used to address him as *Lord Bishop Sahib*, and that is how he would have been announced by the sentries when he arrived at the

gates of the great fort (*Sahib* is an Urdu word that was introduced into the English language, and was a deferential and obsequious form of address to a European). They in turn would have shouted, "Lord Bishop Sahib, Reginald Heber... etc." to the sentry at the next gate, and so forth, until he arrived at the inner sanctum, and the throne room to meet the emperor.

Bishop Heber had a cordial meeting and presented to the emperor an Arabic Bible, and an Urdu prayer book. From Delhi he went to Agra, where he ordained Abdul Masih, formerly Master of Jewels at the palace of the Oudh king, and now a Christian missionary. He no doubt would have visited the Taj Mahal.

### Heber, A Hymn Writer

Bishop Heber had a brilliant career at Oxford, won prestigious awards for his poetry, and beginning in 1811 became a prolific writer of hymns. He wrote 57 hymns, some of these hymns are in our hymnals today and we still sing them. There are glorious hymns such as: *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty; Bread of life in mercy broke; and God that madest earth and heaven*. However, he also wrote some awful hymns, which in our time are considered inappropriate, and were likely counter-productive in presenting the Gospel of Christ to the people of India.

When he was the rector at Hodnet, he penned one of his famous hymns, *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*, and some of it jars on modern ears.

From Greenland's icy mountains,  
From India's coral strand...  
They call us to deliver  
Their land from error's chain.

Where every prospect pleases,  
An only man is vile...  
The savage in his blindness  
Bows down to wood and stone.

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Gandhi chided missionaries for misrepresenting Hinduism. “You, the missionaries, come to India thinking that you have come to a land of the heathens, of idolaters, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest of Christian divines, Bishop Heber, wrote two lines, which have always left a sting with me: *‘Where every prospect pleases. And man alone is vile.’*”

Gandhi is said to have stated that he’d wished Heber “had not written it... (for) I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great (rivers) Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Jumna, man is vile. He is not.”

We are all products of our time. I think the German word *Zeitgeist* aptly describes the situation. Translated as *the spirit of the times* or more specifically the trend of thought and feeling in a period, it denotes the intellectual and cultural climate of an era. The West is less sure today that it has monopoly over wisdom, light and truth. But I suppose Heber was a product of his time.

Heber returned to Calcutta on October 21, 1825, after spending more than a year touring his episcopate, starting from Calcutta on the Hoogly River, visiting Eastern India, Northern India, ending in Western India, and then returning on a ship via Ceylon

Untimely Death

The only part of his episcopate in India that he had not visited was Southern India, and so he set out on a tour of the South. February 27, 1826, he preached at St. George’s Cathedral, Madras (now called Chennai) one of his most famous sermons on the fear of death, with the text *“to die is gain,”* and it looks like the sermon was prescient. On April 3 he attended a service for Tamil-speakers at Trichinopoly, confirmed 11 people, and gave his blessings in Tamil. He then went to his bungalow, to rest and bathe, and died in the cool bathing pool. He was not yet 43 years old. The son of a wealthy landowner and cleric, he died far away from the parish at Hodnet, where he was born, where the cherry trees grew, and roses filled the air with fragrant scent. Heber was buried at Trichinopoly deep in the south of India, where the tall palm trees swayed in the breeze and the aroma of ripe mangoes filled the air.

When the news reached Madras, Calcutta and Bombay, flags were flown at half-mast, and Lord Amherst, the Governor General of India ordered a 43-gun salute in tribute to the 43 years of his earthly life.

Over the grave itself is a florid slab of black marble, inset with brass, with blue and red colouring, bearing the carved words: *Here rest the remains of Reginald Heber, DD third bishop of Calcutta.* The slab had been sent from England, and unfortunately there was a typo error, because Reginald Heber was the second Bishop of Calcutta and not the third. But as the saying goes, it was written in stone, and could not be erased. The local church elders were embarrassed, and decided to put in a small brass plate on the grave, as a corrigendum stating that he was in fact the second bishop of Calcutta.

A Descant

Sometimes in the loneliness of my thoughts I wonder what made Heber do what he did. But then soaring above the tumult of his adventures, his joys and sorrows, his hopes and disappointments, I hear like a descant the melody of absolute obedience, faithfulness and devotion to serve God, and follow Jesus’ path to the ends of the world, to the end of his life endeavouring to fulfill the task. I realize that is the cost of discipleship. If you look at a starry night and see a twinkling light, it may be from a star long extinct, and yet that light having traveled through eons of time, shines for us. And so it is with luminaries, such as Heber, though long gone, their light shines for us in our firmament, even in our time.

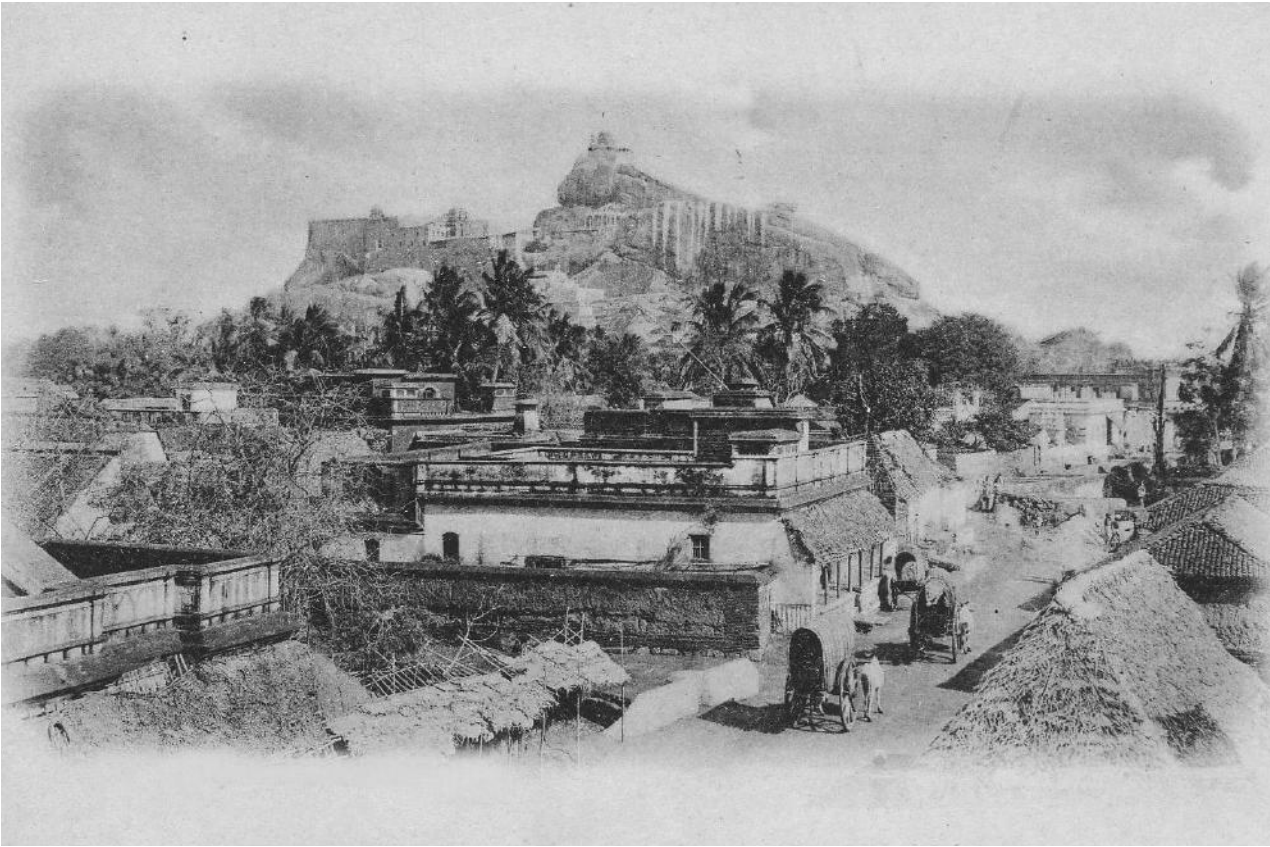
Collect

The Anglican Church of Canada commemorates and prays for Reginald Heber on April 4 (BAS), and the following Collect is said:

Almighty God, you granted to Reginald Heber a manifold life of service, to shepherd a rural parish in England and to preach in the cities of India. Give to your people such faithfulness, that in every place and circumstance they may sing of your power and minister your gifts for the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Early in the Morning, Our Song Shall Rise to Thee

Today, this great leader of the Church — disciple of Christ has his larger than life statue within the portals of St. Paul’s Cathedral, Kolkata. He is kneeling on a high pedestal, his right hand on his heart, his left holding the Bible. As late-comers hurriedly walk past his statue, scarcely giving it a glance, perhaps they do not even know who it is that



A 19th century postcard of the Fort at Trichinopoly. PHOTO Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 unported License. Specific Attribution: Owned by Sylvia Murphy

*“He was not yet 43 years old.  
The son of a wealthy landowner and cleric,  
he died far away from the parish at Hodnet, where he was born,  
where the cherry trees grew, and roses filled the air with fragrant scent.  
Heber was buried at Trichinopoly deep in the south of India,  
where the tall palm trees swayed in the breeze  
and the aroma of ripe mangoes filled the air.”*



Gilli McLaren at Warren Hastings’s desk in the vestry at St. John’s church. PHOTO Earl Jensen

welcomes them with a blessing, snaking past the procession already formed in the narthex, the organ speaks a D Major and swells, the crucifer raises the cross, the procession begins to move forward, and the congregation rises to sing with the heavenly hosts one of the great hymns of Christendom, a hymn penned by Reginald Heber:

Holy, Holy, Holy  
Lord God Almighty  
Early in the morning  
Our song shall rise to thee. ✠

*Acknowledgement: This writing is based on memories of many conversations with fellow worshippers, records and journals of St. John’s Church, Kolkata and St. Paul’s Cathedral, Kolkata. I also benefited from a small book, titled Bishop Sahib: A life of Reginald Heber by Derrick Hughes. I picked up this book from a roadside stall on a visit to Hay-on-Wye, Wales the world capital of used books.*





Feeding Centre members at breakfast (The Elderly and HIV Positive).



Feeding Centre members at breakfast (The Elderly and HIV Positive).



All Saints' Church.

## All Saints' Feeding Centre • Thyolo Anglican Parish, Malawi

STEVEN SIKOTI

Priest-in-Charge, All Saints' Anglican Church, Thyolo Parish

In London, England in the spring of 2010, at the first Dialogue of Canadian and African Bishops, Bishop Michael Ingham was paired with Bishop James Tengatenga of the diocese of Southern Malawi. Unfortunately Bishop Tengatenga was unable to attend due to his responsibilities as then-Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council and a young priest named Steven Sikoti attended as his designate. After a brief period of awkwardness, the ice was broken and Bishop Ingham had many discussions with the shy young cleric.

Bishop Ingham and Rev. Sikoti stayed in contact. Bishop Ingham received an email communication during Easter 2011, wherein Steven asked him if he might consider sending a request out to the diocese of New Westminster for vestments, linens and "holy hardware" that could be donated for his church as they had very few of these items and very little hope of acquiring the resources to purchase them.

Bishop Ingham liked the idea, and with the generous support of the diocese of New Westminster, Capilano and the staff support of communications officer and Topic editor, the items were sent.

For six weeks the items poured in and were stored in an office at St. George's Cathedral parishioner, Terry Love and others the items made their way to the church.

Over the last five years Rev. Steven Sikoti has stayed in touch with Rev. Ingham and has arranged for the purchase and shipment of a good quality point-and-shoot camera.

2017 finds Rev. Sikoti at another parish and he has written an article on the site, The All Saints' Feeding Centre and the need for funding.

### Overview

Thyolo Anglican Parish is one of the 30 parishes that comprise the Anglican diocese of Southern Malawi. The parish is situated in the southern part of Malawi in a district called Thyolo, located almost 30 kilometres from Blantyre. Except for one other large city, Thyolo District falls under Thyolo Parish. All Saints' Church is where the Parish Headquarters is located. The rest of the adjunct worship stations that make up Thyolo Parish are: St. Mary, Thekerani; St. Barnabas, Msenga; St. Thomas, Luchenza; St. Matthew, Chisinkha; St. Phillip, Kalintulo; and Bishop Mackenzie, Mchenga. The latest parish census puts the number of Christians in Thyolo Parish at 1,350. The current Parish Priest for Thyolo is the Rev. Fr. Steven Sikoti.

In the year 2009, an idea was hatched by Fr. Willard Kamandani and his Church Executive to look into the possibility of establishing a community feeding centre at All Saints' Church to try and address the issue of people frequenting the priest's house asking for alms. This idea became a reality in 2011, when the All Saints' Feeding Centre was established. The local church had full responsibility over this program until some members of the English congregation at All Saints' came on the scene. This is the genesis of the present day All Saints' Feeding Centre.

### The All Saints' Feeding Centre

In its infancy, the All Saints' Feeding Centre had a Board of Trustees made up of three members of the English Congregation and the Parish Priest. The Board basically took care of most of the financial responsibilities of running the program with 75% of the program in the hands of the English Congregation and 25% the responsibility of the local Malawian Church Members. The Board was therefore entrusted with the major responsibility of sourcing for donors both locally and internationally.

Currently, the Feeding Centre has a Working Committee that looks into the day to day running of the program. The Parish Priest is the Chair of the Working Committee. Another member of the Working Committee from the local Malawian Church is the Parish Warden.

Membership in the feeding program is unattached to membership to the Anglican Church. It is an ecumenical, interfaith initiative. The Centre has contributors who are: Anglican, Presbyterian, Catholic, Muslim, Lutheran, Evangelical Church of Malawi, Seventh Day Adventist, Living Waters, Abraham, Zambezi Evangelical, to mention a few.

The All Saints' Feeding Centre has three wings of its operations. These are: The Elderly, HIV Positive members, and the Pre-School Group. In terms of figures, there are 120 Elderly Citizens, 40 HIV Positive members and 75 Nursery School Children. This brings the total number of All Saints' Feeding Centre members to 235.

What is available at the Centre could be loosely considered "breakfast," which consists of 1 cup *Likuni Phala* (fortified enriched soya flour made into porridge with milk and sugar) and a cup of tea.

### The Elderly

This group consists of senior citizens. Their age is mostly above 65 years. In certain instances some of these elderly citizens are regarded as rejects in their respective communities and the Feeding Centre provides solace to them to some extent. It also so happens that most of these elderly citizens are frail with illnesses. In a bid to address this sickness component of the elderly cohort, the Working Committee sought the services of two nurses from within All Saints' who run a clinic at the church every Friday. These two are employees of the Malawi Government working with Thyolo District Hospital. During these clinic days it is common to see the elderly having their blood pressure checked and those in need of pain medications provided with them during these Friday gatherings. As a token of appreciation for their services these two nurses are provided with a small monthly allowance.

The Feeding Centre has also put in place 10 volunteers who follow up on those who are clients of the Centre that from time to time need medical attention. These volunteers were trained a long time ago on the basics of Home Based Care. Upon receiving instructions from the nurses, these

volunteers visit Centre participants in their homes with the required prescribed medication. Travel for the volunteers is a problem as they try to execute their noble responsibility of home visitations. We hope and pray that one day a Good Samaritan will come forward and provide us with bicycles for our volunteers.

### The HIV Positive

This is another group of people that the feeding program has targeted with the intention of at least providing the group with nutritious porridge. The Centre has helped these members form a strong support group that focuses on their day-to-day wellbeing. There are success stories of those who have regained their body immunity following participation in the Centre's program. For many, the porridge that they receive in the morning is the only food that they have in a whole day.

### Nursery School

The Nursery School has three streams of children according to their ages. There are 25 children in each stream. Most are orphans; some are from very needy families. The School requests as little as 75 cents per month, as school fees, per child. The School also provides porridge and tea on a daily basis. The School has six voluntary teachers and two support staff. Even though these teachers and support staff are labelled voluntary, the truth of the matter is that they do receive a small allowance.

### Challenges Facing the Feeding Centre

In the preceding paragraphs we have communicated the positive impact of the Feeding Centre; however, even with all the positives and success stories, the program is currently facing a lot of challenges, mostly in the area of finances and human resources. Finances are problematic because prices of commodities for daily consumption are increasing at an alarming rate and we have suffered a reduction in support from both local and international donors. This unstable financial base is limiting potential personnel from coming forward and helping in various capacities at the Centre.

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(HIV Positive).



The Nursery School.

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the Rev. Christine Rowe, then-rector of St. Catherine's, and Randy Murray, calls went out around the diocese

Catherine's and with the generous help of Christ Church to Holy Cross Church, Chilomoni Parish, Malawi. Randy Murray and it was the diocesan staff's privilege to get a digital camera to Steven's parish at Christmas in 2012. The article about the compassionate service ministry, located for the vital programs found at the Centre. • Editor

have left the Centre due to our inability to pay even the best honorarium.

For the feeding program to run smoothly there is a high cost that runs well above half a million Malawian kwachas. As of January 10, 2017: \$1 CAD = 550 Malawian kwachas (K), so the estimated cost of the Centre's operation is approximately \$1,000 CAD per month.

In trying to sustain the running of the program at a large scale, two years ago All Saints' came up with the idea of starting a chicken-farming project. This idea culminated in the construction of a building currently located on the parish's property. The structure was constructed up to the level of roofing, plastering and flooring. The idea is to raise the chickens for their meat. The project has currently been delayed because of lack of finances to establish basic utilities, electricity and water. There are also the costs of a minimum of 600 chicks at K400 each (about 80 cents), feeding troughs and the cost of three different grades of chicken feed. The time frame for harvesting the chicks will be approximately 10 weeks. The cost to get the poultry project running will be in the vicinity of \$1,600 CAD.

If this project is implemented it will help All Saints' parish and the community that we serve to improve their welfare at the same time improving the financial base of the Parish for the purposes of the sustainability of the community feeding program.

It is the parish's prayer that the chicken-farming project will finally take off and see the light of day one of these days. When this happens, I am sure the good work that the parish's Feeding Centre is currently doing for the community will be sustained and thereby be able to reach out to more people, currently unable to participate due to the parish's financial constraints currently dogging the Parish. If you would like to connect with Fr. Steven about this project please contact him directly through his email address at padrestevensikoti@yahoo.co.uk. ✠



At the blackboard in the school.



LEFT The out building where the porridge and tea are prepared.  
RIGHT Chicken-farming project building.



# Parish Development Grants Support & Encourage Ministry Growth

A new process for granting funds to parishes was approved by Diocesan Council in early 2015 as a way to streamline financial requests from parishes and to shift the focus of diocesan funding to parishes towards a greater emphasis on parish development. The Parish Development Grants are designed to assist parishes in the diocese as they develop, with God's help, into healthier, more faithful, and more effective communities of faith. The timeline for the Grants has been designed to require advanced planning and to ensure parishes enter the year knowing that their proposal will be funded.

The first set of grants were applied for and processed in 2015 with grant funding beginning in 2016. Nine parishes were approved for grants for 2016. The grants ranged from \$1,500 to \$30,000 with a total sum of \$94,000 approved. Grants supported a variety of work ranging from the implementation of *Godly Play* for children's formation to supporting the development of a new worshipping community, St. Brigid's, at Christ Church Cathedral. Other grants supported expanding music ministry at St. John, North Vancouver and increasing ministry with children and youth at Holy Cross. Both *Faith House* at St. Mary's, Kerisdale and *Hineni House* at St. Margaret, Cedar Cottage, received funding for their efforts at building intentional, residential Christian community among young adults.

The second round of the Parish Development Grants process began in early 2016—just as the first round of recipients were beginning to receive funds. The grants team received 18 *Intent to Apply* forms. Through the spring and summer, the team reduced those 18 to 10 parish applications who were invited to face-to-face meetings in September and October. In conversation

with parish leaders, team members were able to explore proposed work in more depth, hear directly from participants in ministry, and ask questions regarding connections, visions, and capacity. The 2017 Grant Recipients include:

- **All Saints, Ladner** to deepen pastoral care and congregational development among children and families who make the parish's monthly Messy Church event their primary worship experience.
- **Christ Church Cathedral** for a final year as the **St. Brigid** community continues to grow and develop with its Sunday evening liturgy which has been growing among younger adults, the GLBTQ community and its allies, and people looking for the sacramental, ritual life and theological openness of the Anglican tradition.
- **Holy Trinity, White Rock** to assess the parish's current offerings for children and youth ministry and to recommend a model of sustainable ministry among children and youth for the parish.
- **St. Catherine, Port Coquitlam** to support the parish in assessing its current practices and the needs of the surrounding community in order to develop and implement an action plan for numerical growth in the parish.
- **St. Hilda, Sechelt** to shape a program, which introduces people to spirituality through artistic mediums, building partnerships with some of the well-established artistic communities on the Sunshine Coast.
- **St. Margaret, Cedar Cottage** for a final year as the parish transitions *Hineni House*: Young Adult Community (a year-long residential program of intentional vocational and life discernment) to self-sustaining.

• **St. Martin, North Vancouver** to support the pilot program of Parish Health Ministry for a second year (*see below for more details*).

• **St. Mary Magdalene, Vancouver** to support the work of building identity and purpose as a new community since the late 2015 merger of St. Mark, Kitslano and St. George, Vancouver.

• **St. Michael, Vancouver** to support the addition of a children/youth worker to create vitality and sustainability of a rapidly growing parish ministry among young people.

• **St. Stephen, West Vancouver** to support the parish's establishment of a community children's choir which will have the benefit of offering musical education to children and increasing the parish's identity in the community.

Funding for the Parish Development Grants comes through the Anglican Initiatives Fund. Each year the Administrators of

the Fund set an amount to make available to the Parish Development Grants Team. The Team then does the work of soliciting, reviewing, and deciding on grant applications. Their recommendations return to the Administrators of the Anglican Initiatives Fund who give final approval. For 2017, a total of \$100,000 was made available for Parish Development Grants and \$99,500 was approved.

The mid-February 2017 departure of the Rev. Ruth Monette as diocesan Director for Mission and Ministry Development has created changes in areas of staff responsibility for Parish Development Grant administration; however, the website will be kept current with contact and program information regularly updated at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-resources/grants-loans/pages/grants-for-parish-development](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-resources/grants-loans/pages/grants-for-parish-development).

The *Intent to Apply* forms were posted February 1 and information about the availability of the forms was circulated through Parish Mail and the website news page. ✚



## St. Martin, North Vancouver • Parish Health Ministry

In 2016, St. Martin, North Vancouver applied for funding for a pilot project—the Parish Health Ministry program. Although centred at St. Martin, the deanery of North Vancouver have been active supporters and participants in the program. According to St. Martin's vicar, the Rev. Robin Ruder-Celiz, the Parish Health Ministry program is “a group of people that either have a nursing background or experience in the health care system [who work] to build meaningful connections between parishes, the health care system, and parishioners and their families. The primary focus of their work is support and advocacy for people navigating the complex health system.” The team members receive training in pastoral care and setting appropriate boundaries.

Parish Health Ministry can look like practical support for parishioners or their loved ones. For example, several team members have been visiting a client who is in hospital recovering from a fall and timing those visits to include meal times as the client is requiring some assistance with meals, above and beyond what busy hospital staff can provide. The Ministry

can also include using the expertise of team members to support clients through complex medical situations. At the invitation of a client, team members can assist in preparing for medical appointments, attend medical appointments with clients, and make recommendations for potential services, which might assist someone. Although the initial thought for

some when hearing about the Parish Health Ministry is the complex medical needs of seniors; people of all ages and life stages can access the program. This includes new parents, families facing a child's illness or special needs diagnosis, adults of all ages with a major illness or injury. Often it is only when the needs arise, do we discover how little we know about what community-based care options are available, how to decode the medical language we hear

from specialists and others, and many of us could use a non-judgmental, friendly outsider to accompany us on difficult journeys. As Father Robin pointed out, “the Parish Health Ministry is not trying to duplicate or replace what's in the health care system, but to walk alongside people and provide some support. For the most part these are fellow parishioners helping fellow parishioners. People who are clients of the service get a sense of their church community supporting them in truly meaningful ways.” The program has helped parishioners see ways to make real the often-voiced commitment to care for one another.

St. Martin applied for and received a second year of funding for 2017. This “seed money” has been helpful in setting up the program and allowing everyone involved to see the ministry in action. The parishes within the deanery of North Vancouver anticipate taking over the funding of in 2018 as the program spreads from St. Martin to the rest of the deanery. ✚



Pastor Jennifer Marlor and the Rev. Robin Ruder-Celiz commission the Parish Health Ministry Program Steering Committee at the North Vancouver Region Joint Worship, June 5, 2016. PHOTO Stephen Muir





LEFT Companions offer The Peace at their Commissioning on September 9, 2016 with Bishop Linda Nicholls and Sr. Constance Joanna. RIGHT Companions dining with the Primate, the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz. PHOTOS Courtesy of the Rev. Canon Dr. Sr. Constance Joanna Gefvert and the Sisters of St. John the Divine, Toronto



## Companions on an Ancient Path

The Sisters of St. John the Divine (SSJD, an Anglican monastic community in Toronto) have opened applications for the 2017–2018 cohort of their program called *Companions on an Ancient Path*.

This is a great opportunity for young women in their 20s and 30s who have a passion for the gospel, who want to serve others, who seek ways to deepen their lives as followers of Jesus, and who would like an experience of intentional community.

The SSJD are now more than five months into the first year of the program, and are excited and privileged to have five young women from across Canada and from various denominational backgrounds living with them this year. In fact one of the participants, Christine is from St. Catherine's, Port Coquitlam and was inspired to apply after reading the article about the first year of the program in the January 2016 issue of *Topic*. You can read more about the program at the following links:

- The Companions website and blog: [www.ssjdcompanions.org](http://www.ssjdcompanions.org)
- The Sisterhood's website: [www.ssjd.ca](http://www.ssjd.ca)

Here are a few highlights of *Companions on an Ancient Path*:

- It is a FREE opportunity for women to spend a year building community among themselves, learning from a healthy traditional community, and developing spiritual disciplines that they can take out into their future lives.
- The program is supported by SSJD and by a generous grant from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto.
- It would appeal especially to those who would like to take a gap year in their studies, a year off between studies and work, or a leave of absence from their work.
- And the program is offered in partnership with Wycliffe College where Companions will have the opportunity to take courses in spiritual formation that may transfer back to their home institutions.

The SSJD coordinator, the Rev. Canon Dr. Sr. Constance Joanna Gefvert is asking for help to make the program more widely known, by sharing this information with any young women who might benefit from

such an opportunity.

The poster, brochure and pew bulletin inserts are available for downloading on

the diocesan website at <http://vancouver.anglican.ca/news/companions-on-an-ancient-path>. ☛



Hanne and Sarah in the dishroom. PHOTO Courtesy of the Rev. Canon Dr. Sr. Constance Joanna Gefvert and the Sisters of St. John the Divine, Toronto



LEFT Hanne at the organ. RIGHT Christine gardening in the late fall of 2016. PHOTOS Courtesy of the Rev. Canon Dr. Sr. Constance Joanna Gefvert and the Sisters of St. John the Divine, Toronto



# AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Anglicans of West Point Grey Neighbourhood Ministry Bring Christmas to the Homeless •  
SUBMISSION Vicki Potter

On December 17, 2016, more than 20 volunteers gathered at St. Anselm's to prepare for the 9th annual Christmas street walk, serving the homeless and needy on Vancouver's Westside. The event culminated a month of activity in the parishes of St. Anselm, St. Philip's and St. Helen's, the three churches that make up the Neighbourhood Ministry. The parishes gathered donations from parishioners to make up 30 spectacular gift bags, stuffed full of nutritious food, sundries, hand warmers, and warm winter clothing. Rev. Alex Wilson and Rev. Dr. Pitman Potter (the Neighbourhood Ministry's clergy leader) sent

four carloads of volunteers off with prayers and hot chocolate to deliver the gift bags. From the beaches to Dunbar, Point Grey to Granville, and everywhere in between, within a few hours, the donations were in the hands of our most needy neighbours, and once again, volunteers felt transformed, humbled by the experience of serving God in this way.

The Neighbourhood Ministry is a street outreach program now in its 9th year. Volunteers from the three parishes provide care and companionship each Saturday morning to those living homeless on Vancouver's Westside. Volunteers provide

one-on-one assistance to people trying to access and navigate government services for which they are eligible—such as income and disability assistance, housing, and bus passes. The Neighbourhood Ministry works closely with BC Housing, and has been successful in securing permanent, affordable housing for dozens of local homeless people. Volunteers also provide support and community activities for a local supportive housing complex—the Dunbar Apartments—managed by Coast Mental Health.

In January, the Neighbourhood Ministry, in partnership with the University of BC (UBC) School of Medicine and UBC

School of Social Work, began a Mobile Care Unit (MCU) program. The MCU offers basic medical care and social service support in an integrated way. The team currently visits three sites on Vancouver's Westside—St. Mary's in Kerrisdale, St. Augustine's in Marpole, and the Kitsilano Shower's Program—where homeless and needy people gather weekly for a community meal and companionship.

New volunteers are always welcome, and there are many ways to serve and experience God's love through our neighbours' eyes. Contact Rev. Dr. Pitman Potter at [pbpotter@live.ca](mailto:pbpotter@live.ca) for more information. ✚

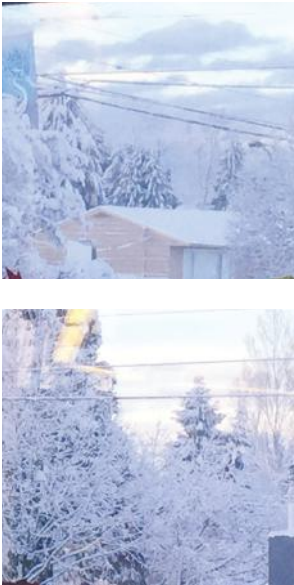


The volunteers and clergy leaders with the spectacular gift bags. PHOTO Courtesy of Vicki Potter



Peg Gabor of St. Anselm's. PHOTO Courtesy of Vicki Potter

• The Snow Globe Church •



LEFT The chancel and chancel window. PHOTO Philip Kenny RIGHT Snowy views. PHOTOS David Goodrick

The weather in most of the diocese of New Westminster for January 16—the day this short article was written—had changed from crisp-cold, warming up occasionally in order to allow some snowflakes to accumulate, to the more customary Pacific Rainforest damp drizzle and heavy rain. It was also “Blue Monday” considered by many to be the saddest day of the year in the western world as that is the day the Christmas bills come in.

As a way of harkening back to what was for us on the west coast a very cold and snowy December here are a couple of photos submitted by the rector of St. Cuthbert's, Delta, the Rev. Paul Woehrl from their Sunday morning worship on January 1. The photos create an image looking out into a Snow Globe, therefore the title, *The Snow Globe Church*. ✚



Coleen Metcalfe at the piano with the view out the west-facing window. PHOTO David Goodrick

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## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • Truth in Advertising •

With their rector away on a well-earned vacation for a good chunk of January 2017 following the rigours of the Advent/Christmas season, those responsible for regular maintenance at the Aldergrove parish of St. Dunstan's struck a blow for pithiness.

This no-nonsense message about the day and time for worship at St. Dunstan's was certainly eye-catching and was met with hearty approval by diocesan communications. ✦



PHOTO Randy Murray

### • Clergy Day •

Guidelines for Clergy

More than 60 clergy of the diocese gathered at the Synod Offices on Thursday, January 19, 2017, for an all day session that focused on a draft of Bishop Melissa Skelton's *Guidelines for Clergy in the Diocese of New Westminster*. In the opening paragraph Bishop Skelton outlined the purpose of the guidelines, which are intended "to assist us all as ordained people in living out our ministry in ways that express our faithfulness, strengthen our integrity and sustain our

health." Specific topics discussed included: *Self Care; Personal Conduct; Training and Formation; Serving in a Parish or Other Place of Diocesan Ministry; Staying Connected to and Serving in the Diocese; and The Broader Church*.

Bishop Skelton was assisted in the facilitation of the day by staff members and laity of our diocese who are expert in areas addressed in the draft guidelines. ✦

*"...Bishop Skelton outlined the purpose of the guidelines, which are intended 'to assist us all as ordained people in living out our ministry in ways that express our faithfulness, strengthen our integrity and sustain our health.'"*



PHOTO Randy Murray

### • Bishop Geoffrey Rowell Visit • CANCELLED •

The February issue of *Topic* contained a promotional article about Bishop Geoffrey Rowell who recently retired as the Anglican Bishop of Europe, and was scheduled to visit the diocese of New Westminster, specifically St. Philip, Dunbar for the last 10

days of March 2017. Unfortunately he has some health concerns and has cancelled his North American trip. As of this writing it had yet to be determined if his visit is likely to be rescheduled. ✦

### • Embroidery Guild •

The Embroidery Guild of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale 1959 – 2016

It is with regret but our eyes grew dim. Thank you for your orders over the years. For any inquiries please contact Guild

President, Shirley "Piper" Campbell at 604.563.7424. ✦

### Deadline for *Topic* Submissions

*March 17 for the May issue • April 21 for the June issue*

### • Anna Redsand at St. Dunstan's •

*One TWU* is a small but active organization dedicated to affirming the diversity of faith, sexuality, and gender in the community of Trinity Western University in Langley. This group was the principal presenter of author and educator Anna Redsand's book tour visit to St. Dunstan's, Aldergrove the evening of January 16, 2017. Anna Redsand was promoting her newest work, *To Drink from the Silver Cup: From Faith Through Exile and Beyond*.

Although *One TWU* were the primary promoters, this event was enthusiastically supported by St. Dunstan's rector, the Rev. David Taylor and the St. Dunstan's community. Parish lay leaders Carol and Doug Tindall (among others) were present and in Rev. Taylor's absence (he and husband, the Rev. Andrew Halladay were on vacation), St. Dunstan's deacon, the Rev. Linda Varin was present to welcome the audience and to encourage *One TWU* folks to consider a visit to St. Dunstan's for worship.

Anna Redsand has a presence. She has the confident, professorial bearing of someone who has long experience as an instructor and mentor but there is nothing stuffy about Ms. Redsand, and when she smiles her eyes sparkle and her face lights up.

For those of us who are Anglicans, worshipping in the diocese of New Westminster with even a cursory knowledge of what has gone on in this diocese and in the Anglican and Episcopal world over the last 20–30 years, it was interesting to listen to someone from one of the reformed denominations speaking to a group mostly from reformed congregations about coming out as gay to family and friends and jeopardizing their connection to their faith communities.

Raised by Christian Reformed Church (CRC) missionaries on the Navajo reservation, Anna Redsand realized in the early 1960s at the age of 16 that she would have to leave the faith community that had always supported her and embark on a decades-long journey for a spiritual home that would welcome her as a lesbian and as someone who's primary connection to the gospel is its message of social justice.

During her brief presentation, which ran 40 minutes, Anna selected various passages from her new book and read them to the 30 people gathered in the St. Dunstan's sanctuary. Beginning with the passage about her realization that she would have to leave and concluding with the section about attending the recent wedding of one of her nephews to his husband, Anna gave the audience a taste of the contents of the book.

Following the reading there was a brief Q&A when members of *One TWU* thanked Anna for her presence and her leadership. The question was asked about whether she is currently part of a worshipping community and she replied "yes" but encouraged the questioner to read the book for the full story. She did reveal that she returned to her Christian faith after five decades and during that time she explored a number of faith traditions, however it was her participation in 12 Step programs that eventually directed her back to faith.

There were a number of St. Dunstan's members present in the nave that evening and they offered some information about where the Anglican Church is at the present time in its journey toward full inclusion of LGTBQ2 people in the full life of the church. ✦



Anna Redsand at St. Dunstan's reading from her most recent book, *To Drink from the Silver Cup: From Faith Through Exile and Beyond*. PHOTO Randy Murray



Anna Redsand smiles as she prepares to answer a question during the Q&A segment. PHOTO Randy Murray



## A Sample of Diocesan Events for Spring 2017

### • Wardens & Treasurers Training Workshop • March 11 •

*The Warden and Treasurer's Training Workshop 2017* will be held March 11 from 9 am to 3 pm at the Synod Offices (1410 Nanton Avenue). This day is designed to give parish leadership teams the information needed for the individual roles of warden and treasurer. During this all day session skills will be developed to solve problems together, and those wardens, treasurers and clergy who attend will be introduced to the diocesan resources that can assist them in their ministries.

This training is considered essential for those who are new to roles as wardens or treasurers in 2017. For those who are con-

tinuing in these roles, it will be a helpful day including some updated information on policies and procedures. Parish clergy are warmly invited to register for the day and attend alongside your parish teams.

The day will feature:

- Joint sessions with Bishop Melissa Skelton and Diocesan School for Parish Development tools, which will help wardens, treasurers and parish clergy, work effectively as a team.
- Separate sessions with guidance, resources and questions answered for wardens and treasurers. ✚

### • The Stewardship Day: Tools for Transformation • April 1 •

*The Stewardship Day: Tools for Transformation* conference, to be held on April 1 will equip stewardship leaders to transform Anglican giving through an understanding of the theology of stewardship, learning actionable tools for growing generous and joyful giving, and developing leadership skills for both clergy and lay leaders.

Stewardship is important in your parish because it encourages an improved relationship with God by everyone in your congregation. Stewardship transforms discipleship and focuses on the need of the giver to give, rather than the need of the congregation to receive. Stewardship is about our compassionate response in returning God's abundance to each of us—it is about giving to God's Mission in the world through the church. The day is designed for stewardship teams, stewardship chairs, lay leaders, clergy and wardens.

It will feature three plenary speakers and associated workshops:

- The Ven. Michael Thompson, General Secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada, speaking about the theology of stewardship.
- Peter Misiaszek, the Director of Development for the Diocese of Toronto, speaking about Tools for Action.

Each of these plenaries has a workshop where participants will develop practical skills for communicating the theology of stewardship in their parish, learn stewardship tools for transformation, and build their leadership skills in stewardship work.

Both clergy and lay leaders are encouraged to attend *Stewardship Day: Tools for Transformation* on April 1. It will be held at the diocesan offices at 1410 Nanton Avenue in Vancouver beginning at 9 am. Registration opens at 8:30 am. Lunch will be provided. The conference will end at 3 pm.

Every person that attends the conference will receive a copy of the significantly revised *Stewardship Resources for Parish Leaders* book. This resource has been redesigned and divided into three sections: *Theology of Stewardship*; *Tools for Transformation*; and *Leadership Skills for Stewardship*.

Each parish that attends will receive one copy of *Ask Thank Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in your Congregations* by Charles Lane.

The registration is open for individuals and parish teams of three persons. You can register online at <http://conta.cc/2klq9Yx>. ✚

### • Confirmation Preparation Day • April 22 •

On April 22, from 10 am to 3 pm, the diocese of New Westminster invites all those being confirmed, reaffirmed or received into the Anglican Church this year to gather for a day of teaching, discussion and worship at the Synod offices (1410 Nanton Avenue). This day is designed to complement whatever preparation candidates will

be undertaking within their parishes. Please contact the Rev. Liz Ruder-Celiz at [liz@stmaryskerrisdale.ca](mailto:liz@stmaryskerrisdale.ca) for more information.

Registration and other information about the *2017 Confirmation Prep Day* will be available on the diocesan website, in the Parish Mail electronic mailing and in the April issue of *Topic*. ✚

### • Diocesan Confirmation Eucharist •

• May 13 •

Saturday, May 13 at 10:30 am at Christ Church Cathedral. ✚

### • The 117th Synod •

• May 26 & 27 •

The bi-annual governance and program meeting of the diocese of New Westminster will return to the Italian Cultural Centre on May 26 and 27.

Synod is the General Meeting of the diocese; the Bishop is the Chair of Synod.

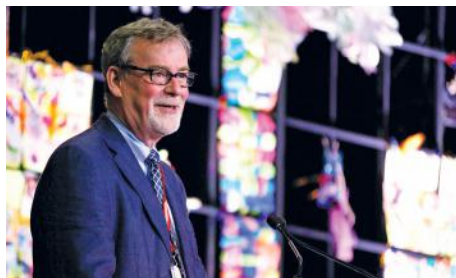
Chair of Synod Planning, Simon Johnston, ODNW, began meeting with Bishop Skelton and others to plan the theme and content of the 117th Synod in the fall of 2016. There will be a number of important decisions addressed at the 2017 Synod and a full agenda of worship and programmatic events. A preview of Synod 2017 content will be available in future issues of *Topic*, in the news pages and the dedicated Synod section of the diocesan website. ✚



Wardens at the 2015 Training Day. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Director of Development for the diocese of Toronto, Peter Misiaszek. PHOTO Courtesy of the diocese of Toronto RIGHT Bishop Skelton's opening address at the 2016 Stewardship Day. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The Ven. Michael Thompson. PHOTO Brian Bukowski/General Synod RIGHT Chair of Synod Planning, Simon Johnston, ODNW at the opening of the 116th Synod, May 22, 2015. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Hacky sack on the green at the 2016 Confirmation Preparation day. PHOTO Barb Steele



Bishop Skelton with the newly confirmed from St. Augustine, Marpole, Confirmation Day 2016. PHOTO Deanne Wallach



LEFT Synod Hall at the Italian Cultural Centre facing the head table and main screen, May 23, 2015. RIGHT Confirmation at Christ Church Cathedral, 2016. PHOTOS Randy Murray





# A Pastor with a Heart for the Poor

HEATHER JEAL  
Warden, St. Aidan & St. Bartholomew, Gibsons Landing

On December 13, 2016, the Feast of St. Lucy, the congregation of St. Bartholomew's Church (St. Bart's) in Gibsons gathered with a distinguished company of guests and members of the Anglican and Lutheran clergy to celebrate the new ministry of the Rev. Brian Heinrich. Inducted as the Vicar of the Parish of St. Aidan and St. Bartholomew, Brian's arrival at this particular ministry and at this particular time was viewed by his new congregation as "fortuitous."

Or as one parishioner put it, "God led Brian to us, and us to Brian."  
The Oaths and Subscriptions were administered by the Ven. Douglas Fenton, Executive Archdeacon of the diocese of New Westminster, and overseen by our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton. The Rev. Alisdair Smith from Christ Church Cathedral acted as deacon for the service.  
Delivering the evening's sermon, the Very Rev. Dr. Peter

Elliott, Dean of the New Westminster Diocese and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral (where Rev. Brian last served as Assistant to the Rector for Street Ministry) noted that St. Bart's, with its monthly Food Bank outreach, is a good fit with its new vicar. "With Brian, you have a pastor who has a heart for the poor. Most of his ministry has been working alongside of people who live in poverty. Brian is a counter-cultural Christian, one who will lead you to think about the world and the assumptions that media culture present in critical ways. He will invite you, as part of your Christian walk, to care for and about the poor." Speaking as Rev. Brian's longtime friend, Dean Elliott stated, "I'm here to tell you Brian's good but he's not perfect. Give him the benefit of the doubt. Let your generosity extend to how you regard him. He'll love you. He'll walk with you when your life is difficult. He'll speak the truth to you." Unaware of the light of the year's final, full "Super Moon" shining in through the east window, Dean Elliott concluded, "may the light of Christ which shines out in the darkness accompany you all as you begin this new ministry tonight."

Growing up Lutheran as part of Vancouver's Martin Luther Evangelical Church, Rev. Brian Heinrich was ordained more than 33 years ago, after training at Missouri's Concordia Seminary in Exile (Seminex). Immersed in the Lutheran historical-traditional method, grounded in deep learning, with a commitment to theology—and action—Rev. Brian developed his engaging "Socratic" style of preaching and teaching. "I'm not so much a preacher as the conductor of an orchestra. This is a living community, struggling with the text." His sermons, therefore, usually begin by asking the congregation at large, "What stood out for you in today's Scripture readings?" A freewheeling discussion usually follows, with all members of the congregation engaged. An obviously delighted senior noted, "He teaches us. And we're all learning!"

Seminex graduates are noted for their alternative ministry styles—notably urban "missions" serving the poorest neighbourhoods. Thus, although his first Canadian parish in Oliver in British Columbia's Interior served a traditional German farming community, Rev. Brian's most recent postings placed him squarely in the midst of Canada's poorest demographic, Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Here, he co-founded the Lutheran Urban Mission Society (LUMS) and from its itinerant beginnings, shepherded from various church gathering places (St. James' Anglican, First United Church, Christ Church Cathedral to its latest location on Jackson Avenue).

Devastated after their home in Vancouver's historic Strathcona neighbourhood was gutted by fire (destroying not only their refuge, a place of hospitality and welcome, but also a chapel where Rev. Brian served weekly Eucharist) and "tired of getting beaten up" on the DTES "mean streets," Brian and his partner, artist Nathan Strijack, discovered—and quickly purchased—a former Orthodox Monastery on BC's Sunshine Coast. They are looking forward to turning it into a contemplative and artistic retreat and had just embarked on the process when St. Bartholomew's then-vicar, Rev. Ian Nestegard Paul, asked if Brian was available to provide summer vacation relief at the historic Gibsons church. Well, yes, he was.

Sadly, Rev. Ian suffered a series of health reversals in spring 2016, and Rev. Brian was called earlier than expected to step in and guide Sunday services. When it became clear that his health would not permit Rev. Ian to return and that he would be retiring at the end of September, the congregation took the unusual step of asking the Bishop to appoint Rev. Brian directly, without the usual posting of the position. And so it came to pass that God brought Rev. Brian Heinrich to St. Bartholomew's, and there was great rejoicing throughout the parish. ✠



Clergy and St. Bart's lay leaders gathered in the chancel singing the Opening Hymn. PHOTO Courtesy of Members of the Parish of St. Aidan & St. Bartholomew, Gibsons Landing

*"With Brian, you have a pastor who has a heart for the poor.  
Most of his ministry has been working alongside of people who live in poverty.  
Brian is a counter-cultural Christian, one who will lead you to think about the world  
and the assumptions that media culture present in critical ways.  
He will invite you, as part of your Christian walk, to care for and about the poor."*  
The Very Rev. Peter Elliott, DD, \_Dean of the diocese of New Westminster Diocese & Rector of Christ Church Cathedral



LEFT The Ven. Douglas Fenton, DD reads the Bishop's License. RIGHT Regional Dean, the Rev. Clarence Li, rector of the neighbouring parish, St. Hilda-by-the-Sea welcomes the new vicar. PHOTOS Courtesy of Members of the Parish of St. Aidan & St. Bartholomew, Gibsons Landing



LEFT The new vicar, Rev. Brian Heinrich receives the keys from warden, Heather Jeal during the Covenant in Ministry. MIDDLE The Lord's Prayer. RIGHT Bishop Melissa Skelton and Rev. Brian Heinrich administer Holy Communion. PHOTOS Courtesy of Members of the Parish of St. Aidan & St. Bartholomew, Gibsons Landing



# Christianity is Our Passion & Our Spiritual Journey

## An Interview with Dr. David Fung

Dr. David T. Fung was installed as Chancellor, Board of Governors and Senate of Capilano University in North Vancouver, June 6, 2016. Dr. Fung is the chairman and CEO of the ACDEG Group of companies, a global technology integrator. He has founded or co-founded over 30 business ventures/corporations in North America, Europe and Asia. He is an “investment champion” for Global Affairs Canada and a member of the Selection Committee of the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and Gateway Performance Table of Transport Canada. Dr. Fung is a venture advisor of Cycle Capital Management Inc., one of the largest clean technology venture capital funds in Canada, a board member of WCI Environmental Solutions Inc. of Ottawa, Ontario and board chair of WCI Environmental Solutions (Asia Pacific) Inc. of Hong Kong, China.

In his long and accomplished career he has put his skills to good use (Dr. Fung is primarily a Chemical Engineer but also has extensive business and human resources training) as:

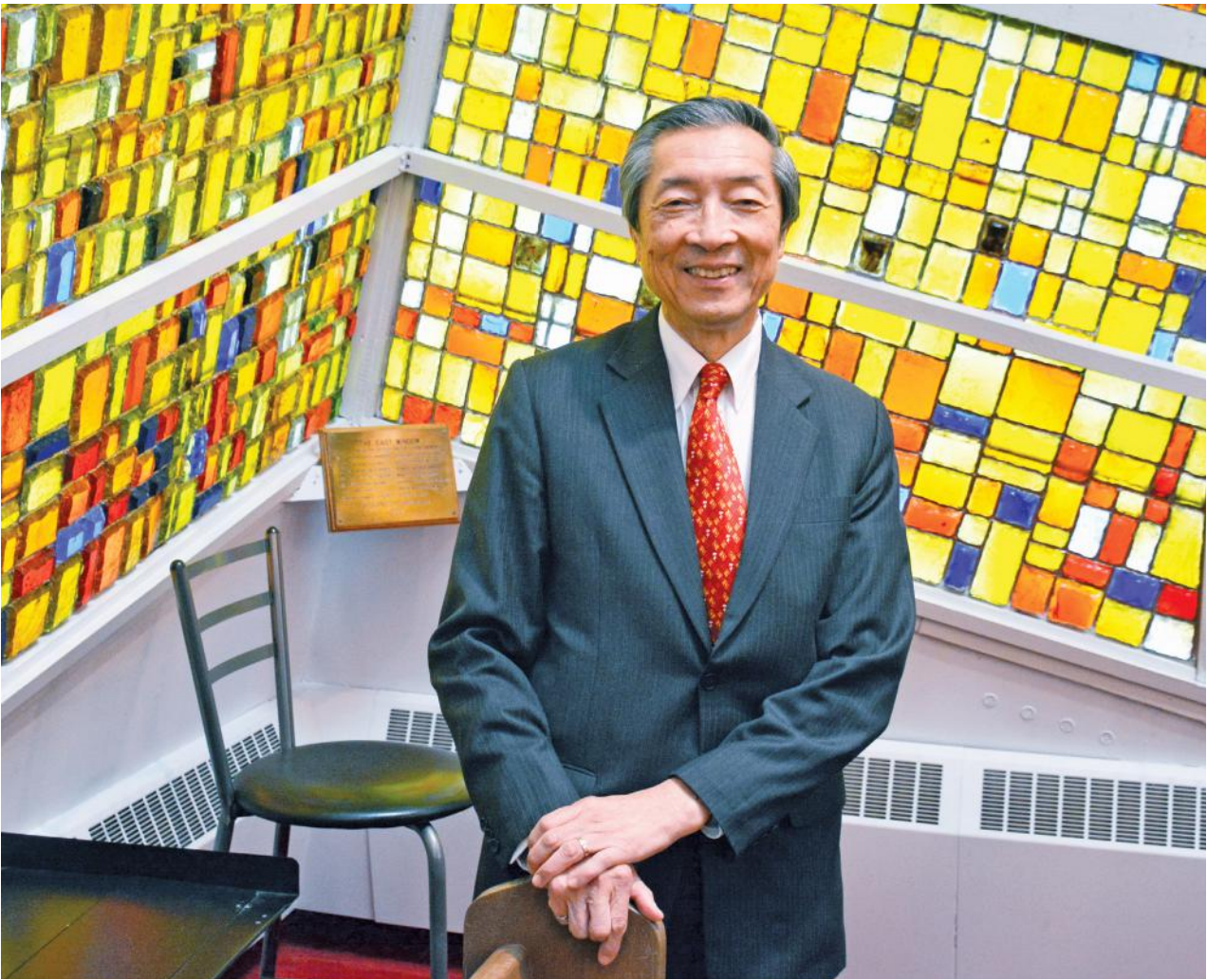
- Research manager of C-I-L Inc., one of the largest chemical companies in Canada (1984 – 1986)
- President of Chemetics International Company (headquartered in Vancouver), a global engineering and proprietary equipment company with five divisions on four continents, chemical plant projects on six continents and 11 offices in Europe (1986 – 1989)
- A major independent shipper of wood pulps into China in a joint venture with Ekman AB of Sweden, one of the largest pulp and paper traders in the world (2000 – 2005)
- A Shanghai based Sino-Canadian waste-gas-fuelled power plant joint venture with Westcoast Energy Inc. — one of the most successful Canadian initiated investments in China (1998 – 2010)
- A Canadian-German joint venture on packaging waste recycling in East Asia (2001 – 2006)
- Sustainable aquaculture and remediation of large water bodies by integrating technologies in water treatment and microbial ecology in China, Southeast Asia and North America (current)

In addition to his recent installation as Chancellor at Capilano University, Dr. Fung’s public service includes:

- Steering Committee of Metro Vancouver Regional Prosperity Initiatives
- Vice-chair of the national board of Canada China Business Council (CCBC)
- National board of directors of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME-MEC)
- National board of directors of Canadian Standards Association Group (CSA), a \$350 million technology service business in 15 countries
- Board member of National Zero Waste Council of Canada
- Board member of Canadian Green Chemistry and Engineering Network
- Board member of CentrePort Canada Inc. of Winnipeg, Manitoba (2009 – 2015)
- Chair of the national board of Chemical Institute of Canada (CIC) (2013 – 2014)
- Co-chair of the Members of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) (2009 – 2014)
- Chair, China Committee of International Science and Technology Partnership Canada (2007 – 2013)
- Chair of national board of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME-MEC) (2007 – 2009)

Dr. David T. Fung is also an Anglican who worships at St. Stephen’s in West Vancouver and has been part of that faith community for three decades. During those years he has served in parish leadership but currently finds that his extensive travel schedule limits his ability to commit to attendance at meetings and the other responsibilities of parish officers.

In mid-January 2017, Dr. Fung was kind enough to agree to be interviewed by diocesan communications officer Randy Murray for a feature *Topic* piece. Through a number of email correspondences and during one face-to-face visit Dr. David Fung enthusiastically spoke about his life as an engineer, an entrepreneur, a community leader, a husband, father, grandfather, but primarily as an Anglican lay person with his own perspective on the Anglican Church in the diocese of New Westminster in 2017. Never one to sit on the sidelines, David took time from his very busy schedule to attend the week-long Diocesan School for Parish Development course in 2015. He found the experience encouraging and uplifting and revealed that he thinks that it is one of the best things to come out of the diocese of New Westminster.



Tell us a little about your early life and your early experience in the church?

I completed part of my primary school and my whole high school education, including senior matriculation under the British system, in the Diocesan Boys School (DBS), a highly prestigious Anglican missionary school administered under the Anglican Province of Hong Kong in Hong Kong. As a top-ranked school with exorbitant school fees, most of the students were/are from the most privileged families in Hong Kong, China and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, with its historical origin as an orphanage initially established by the Anglican Church in the 19th century to support the inter-racial children left behind by the British officers stationed in Hong Kong, DBS has developed financial resources from many benefactors to support students from the less privileged families in Hong Kong. I happened to be one of those relying on the financial support of DBS to complete my high school education. I was baptized as an adult and confirmed by Bishop Hall in Christ Church, Kowloon in 1962. My home church at that time was St. Andrew’s Church in Kowloon. The regular Sunday attendance at St. Andrew’s during the four years 1962 – 1966 was approximately 15 – 20% of the seating capacity of the church building, similar to many of the struggling Anglican parishes in the diocese of New Westminster. A few years ago when I attended several Sunday liturgies at St. Andrew’s during my layover in Hong Kong during business travels, I was surprised by the overflowing attendance at the regular Sunday services. I was told that the congregation had to draw lots to get a seat for the Christmas worship services. The congregation was a mix of all generations and ethnicities. Instead of one priest serving the congregation, they were able to afford four or five priests. One of the key differences that I could identify between the two contrasting periods was the new emphasis on Outreach and the Good News. The Common Prayer Book was condensed to 36 pages while retaining most of the distinctive characteristics of the traditional Anglican worship services. The new congregation apparently relished the joy and excitement of spreading the Good News to those who were less fortunate instead of the past navel-gazing struggle of trying to keep the lights on.

You came to Canada to begin your post-secondary education. What stands out for you about your early years in Canada?

During my undergraduate studies at McGill University, I stayed at the student residence of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College (DIO), primarily because the room and board rates were the lowest on campus and it was located across the street from the Engineering buildings. At

the DIO, I debated often during my albeit limited leisure time with the priests-in-training from the Anglican Church and United Church on esoteric subjects; for example, the existence of God, the meaning of faith and grace, etc. I met Grace, my wife of 45 years, at McGill in Montreal, even though she graduated from high school at the Diocesan Girl’s School, the sister school of DBS, under the administration of the Anglican Province of Hong Kong. She came from the Methodist tradition in Hong Kong. With many friends, we attended the Sunday worship services at the People’s Church located close-by. We participated in many evening/weekend Bible studies at fellow parishioners’ homes and congregational social events.

How long did you remain in Eastern Canada and when did you come to Vancouver?

I spent much of the time in the east between 1966, when I began my undergraduate degree at McGill, and 1986, when my employer assigned me to Vancouver, so 20 years. As far as our life in the church in Eastern Canada, Grace and I were married in 1971 at St. James the Apostle Anglican Church in downtown Montreal. The service was conducted by the late Archdeacon Harry Hilchey and assisted by the curate, Rev. John Wright, who was then a new graduate from DIO. We became members of the Sigma Tau Young Couples Group and were teachers in the Sunday Schools at St. James the Apostle until our move to Oakville, Ontario in 1980. Both our older children were born in Montreal and baptized at St. James the Apostle. Most of my experience as a teacher involved ministry to teenagers and older youth.

We moved to Oakville, Ontario in 1980 and we attended St. Jude’s Anglican Church. Again, we participated as Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders and members of the church committees. Our youngest daughter was born in Oakville and baptized at St. Jude’s.

Following my job assignment, we moved to West Vancouver in 1986 and became members of St. Stephen’s. Grace offered her services as a Sunday School teacher and subsequently its superintendent. In the late 1980s, there were more than 60 children registered and regularly attending the Sunday School at St. Stephens’. Currently, we have five registered and only one or two with consistent attendance on Sundays. Our three children were all confirmed in the diocese of New Westminster and active participants in the youth groups at St. Stephen’s. After our children moved away to attend universities at Queens, McGill and University of Toronto/Institut d’etudes politiques de Paris (Sciences Po of Paris), Grace became more involved with the Altar Guild and is the current Treasurer of the Altar Guild



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

and she updates the parish website. I became a member of the Parish Council, youth group leader, Rector's Warden, trustee and chair of the Long Range Planning Committee over the years at St. Stephen's. I attended Synod during my terms as Rector's Warden in the early 1990s. Currently, I do not hold any official position at St. Stephen's, partly as a result of my extensive business travels. In 2015, I attended the residential program of the School of Parish Development at Rosemary Heights in Surrey and had a few discussions with Bishop Melissa Skelton. With a little effort, I met with 65 of the approximately 70 attendees, both clergy and laity. Some of the discussions reminded me of my former days at the DIO in Montreal.

What is your favourite passage from scripture? If you don't have a favourite, which one comes to mind first? Why? How has the message connected to your life?

The Beatitudes in *Matthew 5: 3–12* and *Luke 6: 20–22* are my favourites. They clearly outline Christ's expectations of a practicing Christian living in his/her communities. We receive health, wealth, good fortune and salvation through the grace of God. The resources, including health, intelligence, wealth and support, in our possession are not for us to keep. We are temporarily custodians of these resources for the purpose of promoting peace, equality and excellence in our communities. Compassion and love must prevail over nativism and fear.

Are members of your family still involved in the church?

Grace and I have seven grandchildren. Despite their training, consistent exposure to and active participation at the Anglican Church during their childhood and teenage years, our children's families have drifted away from the Anglican Church of Canada partly as a result of its persistent preoccupation with a few internal, though important, issues. Although the issues of same sex marriage and First Nations reconciliation are important issues to the Church and those more directly involved, our children are more attracted to, and their personal needs are better met by the global outreach programs and the domestic family support programs offered by Baptist and Alliance churches.

My next question has three sections:

1. Could you elaborate a little more on your previous answer without getting too personal?
2. Continuing that theme could you speak about our focus on social issues and the belief that many people of faith have that evangelicals are very slow to move forward?
3. Many young people in reformed congregations are attracted to the authentic ritual of the Eucharist and Compline. Where does tradition and ritual fit in reference to Gen Xers, millennials and their children?

The cited societal issues are important issues. However, the focus on these issues consumed all the oxygen. Our children's families look for priests/ministers who are keen to understand their daily challenges, offer them support to manage their family lives and provide leadership to build local and global communities in accordance with Christ's expectations in the Bible. They are nostalgic about their teenage years in the Anglican tradition. My son went back to an Anglican Church for his marriage vows. Authentic ritual is important. Motivating music is important. If the cited societal issues are not their top personal priorities, they felt neglected in the Anglican Church. My youngest daughter is in her early thirties. She and her husband are in Rwanda helping to build social enterprises to generate local employment and they participate in a music group to help heal the wounds of the genocide. When she was involved in music ministry at St. Stephen's, she and her youth group leader wanted to lead the programming of the afternoon Christmas family service one Christmas Eve. Instead of encouraging her with guidance, the priest refused her participation. The Anglican Church spent years bringing her up and lost her in a second.

Both you and Grace have substantial experience mentoring young people in Christian Formation (Sunday School) so what in your opinion "really worked" and had a positive impact on children and youth? What is your most joyful memory of teaching Christian Formation?

My experience has been more associated with leading youth groups. Projects that encourage our youth to live elements of the Beatitudes and the parables tend to shape positive attitudes, elevate ambitions and make the Bible relevant to their daily lives. For those who face bullying in school, a supportive youth group would be a sanctuary for the

transition to adulthood and Christ would be the anchor in a stormy sea.

Apart from the issues that could be referred to as societal developments (ordination of women, marriage of divorced persons, inclusion of LGBTQ2 people) what do you consider is the biggest change in the Anglican Church in Canada from 1971 to 2017?

The declining relevance of the Anglican Church to the needs of a highly educated post-industrialization family has led to a continuing loss of youths and working-age adults. The Anglican Church got stuck in the old English village concept of localized communities with limited education when families have become increasingly global and internet-savvy. Most of the societal developments are being achieved with or without the involvement of the Anglican Church. Consequently, the extensive resources being expended on these issues is fundamentally an internal catching-up exercise. The parishioners' respect for many of our priests has continued to decline as a result of their insistence to be the administrative executive with limited skills in leadership, marketing, organizational development, team building, delegation, empowerment and conflicts resolution. Over these 46 years, the managerial skills of the professional-class parishioners have progressed rapidly while those of the clergy moved at a snail's pace. Consequently, congregational growth gravitates to those few priests with the necessary vision and skills. The Anglican Church fails to nurture its core assets, the clergy, and is increasingly unable to effectively serve its core parishioners.

The fact that the Anglican Church is a very "big tent" is something I still find very attractive and is one of the reasons along with my deep connection from my childhood that I am still a member. I realize that we have a wide range of theological views within this diocese but for me that is not a problem. Diversity is a strength; you can't manage a business through a small lane. Don't impose your will on people; we are worshipping the same God, same God different pathways. Managing the "big tent" is a *skills issue*.

How do you think seminary training has changed since your discussions with your dorm mates in the 1960s? Or has it changed much? Specifically what needs to change to equip those who have been called to live into their vocations effectively?

Our priests are well trained in their biblical studies. Similar to engineering programs in universities, soft skills training is sorely missing. Additional training much along the lines of the Diocesan School for Parish Development curriculum would raise the awareness of the next generation of clergy to the fact that soft skills are a critical component of being a successful shepherd or lay leader.

How would you define soft skills?

Soft skills are skills in personnel management, critical thinking and problem solving. The skills that you learn outside of the pedagogy of your academic discipline that give you the knowledge, confidence and methodology to manage volunteers and staff, to delegate, to realize that parishes are a rich resource of skill sets that can be nurtured and

developed if only they are given an opportunity to flourish. Unfortunately, many of our priests are not trained to more effectively harness the capabilities of their parishioners.

What do you think we can do in our worship to transform and uplift those who gather that is not happening now?

As a businessman, I respect consistent successes. Whenever the opportunity arises, I would attend the worship services of churches with overflowing congregations of all ages and ethnicities to try to understand more of their formula for consistent success. Many of the psalms have little meaning to the younger generation. A lot of modern gospel music with one or more lay worship leaders is a consistent component. Similar to executive training programs, peer-to-peer networking family groups is a low-cost system to offer support to resolve many family challenges for the growing families with busy professional lives. Professional training and counselling for couples help to preserve families and loyalty. Communal and individual family supported outreach programs are a part of Christ's expectation of Christian living. All of these programs demand resources. If the Anglican Church continues to pour most of its limited resources into societal issues (important though they are) and resists mergers of small congregations that spend most of its limited budgets in maintaining buildings, the resources needed to fund services for the core parishioners of the future generation will not be available. We shall be politically correct but we are marching down the path of extinction. We need to restore the necessary balance.

Do you think that the methods and motivations you employ to engage with the broader community in your role as Chancellor of a university could crossover to your role as a member of an Anglican parish in West Vancouver (or anywhere for that matter)? What are the challenges?

The skills and methods are similar. When I ask for donations, I am not asking people's sympathy to part with their hard-earned money. I am offering them an opportunity to satisfy their personal passion. Christianity is our passion and our personal journey. We share dreams. Allowing single-issue campaigners to dominate the agenda in a complex world of many issues is not strategically wise. The Anglican Church must establish a balance of its strategic priorities. Nurturing the next generation must be one of the top priorities. The shepherd must keep his/her sheep and find even the lost one. Optimism and love must prevail over pessimism and fear. We must be strategically wise.

With all that you have achieved in your life how do you bring all that experience to your role as Chancellor of Capilano University?

Similar to the role of a senior executive, my role is to nurture, encourage, nudge and, whenever an opportunity arises, acknowledge achievements of those who actually do the work. We share a passion for education. Student interest is our guiding criterion. We share dreams of reaching for the stars. I deploy my network and partnership experience to render the impossible more possible. ✦





Risking the Tide

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL  
Retired Priest of the diocese of Calgary, Former Dean & Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver

Place: Iona  
Time: Spring 801 CE

Early in the sailing season of the year 801 CE, small groups of Viking warships slid out of the harbours of Avaldsnes and Skiringsalr in southern Norway. One of those squadrons headed due west for the Orkneys, then sailed around the north coast of Scotland through the Hebrides and the Shetlands until they reached Iona. The other sailed southwest for Lindisfarne. As they terrorized the small coastal communities the news of their cruelty went ahead of them.

As news began to travel south, a monk of Iona crossed the powerful tidal race between the island and the west coast of Mull.

He had to work hard to keep the currach steady. It occurred to him that he wasn't getting any younger. He'd been hearing recently how the atmosphere in the small communities up and down the coast was changing. Up to a few years ago life had been vibrant and on the whole joyous. Now the first of the Viking longships had begun to appear among the western isles, bringing pillage, slavery, rape and death.

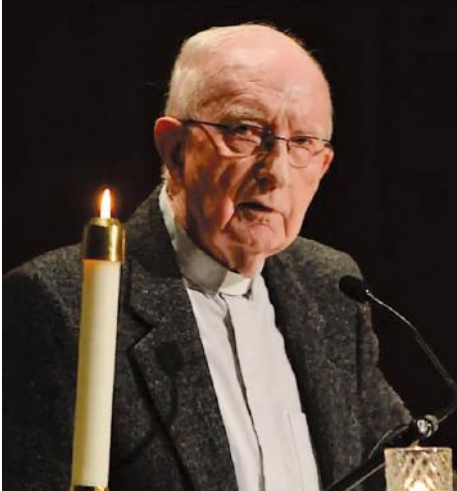
He began to think of the project he had begun, probably because he knew well his own life could be in danger at any time. He had begun to feel the need to express in some way what he had come to believe as a Christian Celt.

From time to time the abbot would speak to them about the Faith, teaching, explaining. He was fond of speaking of the Trinity, a kind of shorthand word for God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But somehow the abbot was never exciting or moving, and so the idea came to his student to write a poem. Because he knew his abbot would have to approve his work, he had begun with language he knew the abbot would like.

I bind unto myself today  
The strong name of the Trinity...

A few days later he had had added two verses about Jesus, his life and the things that had happened to him. There were a few lines he was particularly proud of... *His death on cross for my salvation. His bursting from the spic-ed tomb. His riding up the heavenly way. His coming at the day of doom.*

That last line had made him shudder, thinking again of the Viking ships.



The Rev. Canon Dr. Herbert O'Driscoll.

A sudden squall blew the tiny craft off course, but instead of fear he suddenly found himself challenged, even elated by the squall, the heaving of the sea and the shriek of the gulls. He realized that new lines were coming into his mind, lines that were capturing the beauty and grandeur all around him. Suddenly, risking himself, he stood up and shouted his new words into the rising gale.

I bind unto myself to day  
the virtues of the starlit heaven,  
the glorious sun's life giving ray,  
the whiteness of the moon at even,  
the flashing of the lightning free,  
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,  
the stable earth, the deep salt sea  
around the old eternal rocks.

He felt himself filled with gratitude for the inspiration that had come. All he wanted now was to beach the currach safely on the mainland shore, get to the community he was bound for, find a bit of manuscript and something to write with, and to capture the new lines before they faded from his mind. He felt that he would always remember

that moment in the squall, the feeling of an intense sense of oneness with creation itself, with the ocean, the wind, the gulls, the clouds, the sun, the distant hills. The strange and wonderful thing was that he had never before or since felt more secure, more at peace.

Perhaps that was the reason for what happened a few weeks later, just before he was due to return to his own community on the island. He was working in the small scriptorium his host abbot had lent him. He had just finished copying his newly completed verses when he realized that something more was demanding to be written. He felt almost as if his hand was being guided. He knew with absolute certainty that these new unexpected lines expressed his own deepest faith. "Christ be with me" he wrote, then continued to write...

All of this was long long ago. We will probably never know who he was. Doubtless he would have returned to his island, again pulling against the current, hearing the scream of gulls and seeing the surfacing of the odd curious seal.

The community must have accepted and preserved his verses. At some stage someone dedicated them to the long dead but revered Saint of their northern world, and the song became known as Saint Patrick's Breastplate. One thing we do know. The Vikings did indeed come to Iona, coming ashore on the beach at the north end of the island. There on the white sands they slaughtered 40 of the monks.

But we also know this, that the words of our unknown poet would be sung for more than 1000 years.

Christ be with me. Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.

This we know because ours are the voices that sing them. ✚



Beach with white sands — Isle of Mull. PHOTO iStock/Getty images

A Love Story

JERRY RICHES  
People's Warden, St. John's, Sardis

This is a love story. The story of the love of two people. Two quite ordinary people, actually. If you met them on the street or talked to them at a coffee shop, you would not notice anything remarkable about them. Just ordinary folks, you would think, very much in love with each other.

They met, as most couples do, quite by accident. A friend introduced them at a church function one Sunday after the services were finished and many of the parishioners were meeting over coffee. "A time of fellowship", the parish priest called it. A time to greet old friends and get to know a few new ones as well.

They struck up a casual conversation, after the introduction, which developed into a firm friendship. They often met for coffee, finding that each enjoyed the other's company and that they had many interests in common. After a time, they met for dinner at least once a week and a movie or some other entertainment became a regular occurrence. Nothing unusual about this, just a couple enjoying life together.

After a time, they moved in together. They kept their respective jobs but now only had one residence to pay for which allowed them to take occasional trips together. An Alaskan cruise came first, then a trip to Europe. Seeing them together became so commonplace, no one thought it the least bit unusual. Their friends now saw them

*"This would be the final step, the 'icing on the cake,' so to speak, to have their love and commitment to each other blessed in God's name in the church and in front of the congregation that they had come to love."*

as being in love and thought of them as lifetime partners.

After a few months of living together, the couple decided to take the next step and get married. Their friends were overjoyed at the idea and arrangements were made for the civil service, and for a reception afterwards. The service went off without a hitch, the reception was a social success and the couple left the following day for Mexico on their honeymoon. Nothing too unusual about this, couples did this sort of thing everyday.

They returned from their honeymoon and went back to their respective jobs, living happily and contentedly together. The couple settled back into their daily routine, as before, nothing had changed in any way, other than they were now a married couple, instead of just a couple. Friends, acquaintances and fellow workers noticed no significant change in them.

As a couple, they had continued to attend the church where they had first

been introduced. They were content with the services, and found the clergy and parishioners to be warm and friendly and they felt at home there. After a time, they started thinking about having their marriage blessed at this church. It seemed like a logical step to take, they were both Christians and had been attending this church for months. This would be the final step, the "icing on the cake," so to speak, to have their love and commitment to each other blessed in God's name in the church and in front of the congregation that they had come to love.

Remember, these were two people who were obviously in love with each other, who were committed to each other and had been together for a long time. They were married, they were regular attendees at a church of their choice where they were loved and accepted. They were both professed Christians. Their next and obvious step was to have their civil marriage blessed in this church by their priest, whom they admired and respected. What could be more fitting?

They were, however, turned down. Why, you ask? Had they not shown every sign of being a loving and devoted couple? Were they not regular attendees at their chosen church? Were they not committed to their church, their community and each other? What else did they need to prove to obtain this blessing they so desired? What was wrong with them, what had they done that was so terrible that they should be denied the blessing of their church?

Nothing. They had done nothing, really. They just happened to be two people of the same sex and that was the only difficulty. Their parish priest was quite willing to bless them but was not allowed to do so. The governing body of the church they attended hadn't yet come out of the dark ages of religion and refused to bless same sex unions. They were quite willing to bless houses, boats, pets, farm animals, bicycles, even dead bodies, but not two humans who were in love and committed to one another. The church would willingly bless convicted murders, rapists, criminals, degenerates of every ilk, but not this loving couple. This church professed to represent God's love on earth, but drew the line at same sex blessings.

Why?  
Can someone please tell me why? ✚



OPINION

Does the Faith Journey Make a Difference?

ART TURNBULL  
Retired priest of the diocese of Ontario; retired Priest with Permission to Officiate, diocese of New Westminster

Lent is as good a time as any to be asking questions. One of those questions we need to pursue could be, “Does this faith journey make a difference?”

The Church and the people who are the Church do get caught up in a lot of questions, individually and collectively. Some of these questions may not really matter in the long run, the ones that seem to get the most attention.

When I first entered the hallowed halls of King’s College in Halifax to start studying divinity, I was not aware of the many questions that could be asked. That was then. Now I ask lots of questions and find fewer answers. I also hang on to some basic bits that may not need so many questions.

In the early 1960s as I’d started this intellectual search, Pierre Burton’s book, *The Comfortable Pew*, had just been published for Canadian Anglicans. It raised the question of why people went to church on Sundays. It was basically asking if attendance made any difference to the lives of attendees. I never had thought of that question. I just went to church.

Before long Bishops Pike and Robinson were having books published. Now I was being confronted with questions these prelates raised. Is God dead? If God is dead, who is in charge? I perhaps did not spend enough time on such questions. I was busy translating the *Bible*, from Greek to English. I was trying to pass my courses by finding out who God was and what Jesus had to say about living. Perhaps finding the answers to such queries may have made a difference.

After a few more years, after I actually did graduate, and been ordained, the Canadian Bible Society published the *New Testament* in Modern English. Before that translation we had the bibles in older English. Well the new words raised new questions. I recall that at the first Nativity pageant at which we used this new wording, two or three mothers were quite quick to pull their children out of the cast. They were not letting their children speak such words. It seems the Bible Society chose to call Mary a “young woman,” and state that she was “pregnant.” In the older English it was a “virgin” Mary who “was great with child.” The words made a difference then, and raised some interesting questions as to whether this faith journey makes any difference. It also raised some ethical questions about how we teach children,

Two decades later I came across the writings of Bishop John Spong. He raised a whole bunch of new questions. This went beyond Robinson’s “God is dead” idea. The whole story of religion was now on the questioning block. This raised questions that were related to how we believe, and what we have faith in, as fundamental to following the Nazarene. Now my problem was not so much having questions but more what if there is no answer. This faith journey stuff was making a difference.

Now, it is my opinion that Lent really is a good time to seek answers to our questions. It is a good stretch over 40 days to see if we have an answer to, “Does faith make a difference?” What is our relationship to that which we call God? If we have a relationship with God, does that impact upon daily life? If Jesus is the example to follow, the teacher of what is possible to be as one made in the image of God, then does my footprint in the sand of life leave a trail for others to follow?

For those of us who still go to church on Sundays we get to hear some pretty long passages of scripture during the services of Lent. One is the long Good News story

for the Fourth Sunday in Lent. This story contains one of the great questions we humans have to answer, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” Do we believe, do we have faith in, do we live by the knowledge that God does make a difference? We, like the man who received his sight in the story, also need to answer the question of faith by going deeper and asking, “Who is he, sir?” The answer each of us makes will show a difference; will give or not give a purpose and a reason for our existence. The answer we find may justify the journey we are making.

So, I put aside a lot of the big questions and look to some of the answers. Many have gone before me and have written, fashioned or demonstrated the results in their lives. Perhaps that which I seek is much simpler

put by people who have left us words of their faith in God and all that God is and can be. The *Psalms* reveal such people. The faith they speak about does help answer in the affirmative that faith does make a difference. One such person is the one who wrote the words of *Psalms* 23:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul (life),  
he leads me in right paths  
for his namesake. (*Psalms* 23: 1 – 3)

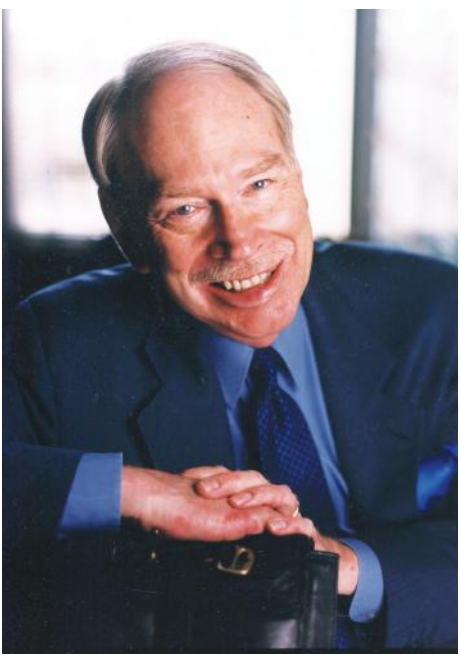
Faith is a funny thing. It encourages us to keep asking our questions but not to lose our way. That is a difference. ✠



The Rev. Art Turnbull.

Lent Lite

LYNDON GROVE  
Former Editor of *Topic*; Christ Church Cathedral



Lyndon Grove, ODNW.

*“I’m going to change  
my way of living,  
and if that ain’t enough,  
I’ll even change the way  
I strut my stuff.”*

We’re all familiar with the bearded sidewalk prophet carrying a sign reading, “Repent! The End is Near!” And we don’t pay much attention. Until Ash Wednesday. Then we nervously begin reviewing our past performance, and decide changes have to be made. “Turn back, O Man,” as they sing in *Godspell*. “Forswear thy wicked ways.”

It was Plato who wrote: “The life which is unexamined is not worth living.” But as Peter De Vries noted in *The Cat’s Pajamas*, “the examined one is no bed of roses either.”

The quick and traditional answer to a call to repentance is to renounce some dubious pleasure. But here’s the question: do vows to give up something for Lent last any longer than New Year’s resolutions? What is the shelf life of these solemn promises?

The pressure on the abstinent penitent is reduced when he remembers that all Sundays are feast days; therefore, the promise to give up martinis or hedgehogs or binge watching on *Netflix* can be set-aside on the Sabbath.

R. S. L. McAdam, the earnest young rector of St. George’s in Moose Jaw, was



Stewed tripe, yummy! PHOTO iStock/Getty Images

a dedicated cinemaphile, so he promised to give up movies for Lent. The Sunday feast day exemption wouldn’t have helped, because in those years, theatres were not allowed to be open on Sundays. (When that rule finally was relaxed, I wrote a jingle for the *Odeon* chain that began “Sunday is a fun day when you go to a show.” One more sin to mourn. But things change. After one longtime church injunction was overturned, a *New Yorker* cartoon appeared showing a couple of Satan’s demons stoking the unquenchable fires. One says to the other, “What do we do now with the people who ate meat on Friday?”)

We ran into a friend one Monday morning, and thought he looked like someone who could do with two weeks in a Florida rest home. He explained that he had promised to give up drinking for Lent, and then, “Because it was Sunday, I skipped my usual pot of tea, and started the morning with a Bloody Mary.” And on he went through the day, determined to make up for a long, dry week.

Repentance inevitably followed.

Mardi Gras — “Fat Tuesday” — is calculated to provide a springboard to 40 days of fasting, and if you really want to get into the celebration, grab your mask and head for Rio de Janeiro or New Orleans. The parish pancake supper does not have quite the same zing.

Curiously (or, seriously folks, as standup comedians say) the season of repentance that seems most powerful to this writer is Advent. Lent, from the imposition of ashes on, has enormous power, but in Advent

there is something about the approach of ultimate goodness and ineffable beauty that makes one want to rediscover innocence, line up behind the shepherds, watch from a discreet distance the arrival of Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, and, perhaps, catch a beam of starlight.

Still, for pretty much all the Christian world, Lent is the period of reflection and abstinence — although some people may say, “I’m just so darn good — Heaven knows, what I should give up for Lent.” But relax, fella — Heaven always knows.

Ralph Blackman once sternly told a Christ Church Cathedral congregation that giving up something you already had decided to ditch — like chewing tobacco or lottery tickets — is not an option. Nor is giving up something you don’t like anyway, vowing, for example, “No more stewed tripe this Lent.” (Personally, I like stewed tripe. And I’m not giving it up.)

And if you still have trouble deciding what you should give up, ask your spouse or partner. She or he is sure to have a list of helpful suggestions. ✠

Deadline for  
Topic Submissions

March 17 for the May issue  
April 21 for the June issue



# Godly Play at St. Clements

LYNNE MCNAUGHTON  
Rector, St. Clements



## 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  
604.684.6306 ext. 225



Noah's Ark mural with local creatures on the Godly Play room wall, with a basket of cushions for storytelling. PHOTO Courtesy of Parish of St. Clements, Lynn Valley



Spray painting the parable boxes. PHOTO Courtesy of Parish of St. Clements, Lynn Valley



The Disciples, made by a woodworker in the congregation are created from different varieties of scrap wood. PHOTO Courtesy of Parish of St. Clements, Lynn Valley



LEFT Altar on Godly Play shelf. RIGHT Tasha and Lynne put together Godly Play parable kits. PHOTOS Courtesy of the Parish of St. Clements, Lynn Valley



LEFT Teens help the younger kids put together new shelving for the Godly Play room. RIGHT Tasha Carrothers, a student intern from the Vancouver School of Theology (VST), pours the water for the Salal + Cedar Water story, a Godly Play story for the whole congregation. Water from Coleman Creek was used, which is the creek that runs passed St. Clements. A bucket brigade was formed to bring the water from the creek to the font. PHOTOS Courtesy of Parish of St. Clements, Lynn Valley



*“Godly Play is a wonderful way to bring alive, spiritual and biblical concepts and stories with young children. The storytelling, visual imagery, space for silent meditation and prayer, and process of wondering, gives our children the ability to learn, question, understand, and be close to God in ways that are meaningful for them.”*

Eloise Duncan (A businesswoman and parishioner at St. Clements with two school-aged daughters. She has completed the Godly Play training and has helped set up the program at St. Clements)

A couple of years ago the priest, parents, and Sunday School teachers at St. Clements met to assess our needs. Our largest cohort of kids are now teenagers. They are a fantastic bunch who are now involved as servers and greeters in worship, and staffing the nursery. But we only have a small group of younger children. A few new families have joined our congregation and we needed an excellent program to serve them. As with most families, regular Sunday attendance is challenging. Some families are single parent families whose children can only attend one or two weeks a month. Soccer, hockey, busy commitments mean regular Sunday morning church is tricky. Several of the children who attend are grandchildren of parishioners, again with unpredictable and infrequent visits, but we want them to feel at home and engaged whenever they come. The difficulty for the Sunday School teachers is how to program with such irregular attendance and wide age range: one Sunday there might be ten kids and the next Sunday only three, with a 4 year old and an 11 year old.

The Godly Play program seemed to us to have the potential to meet the needs of whoever showed up any given Sunday.

But how do we start?

A few of us went to an introductory session, and watched a Godly Play story. This intrigued us and affirmed: “We can do this!”

We applied for a grant from the diocese to help us with Godly Play Training and with the costs of setting up a Godly Play room.

In the fall of 2015, several adults—including our priest the Rev. Dr. Lynne McNaughton—embarked on the training held in Vancouver for three Saturdays. Several people were only able to commit to one training at that point, but it gave them enough of a sense of the program to start. One woman who completed all three found it a moving experience, which deepened her faith. Lynne, likewise, found it brought a new excitement to the old familiar stories. The open-ended “wonder” questions create a spacious, freeing approach, allowing one’s imagination to amplify and apply the text; the questions continue to resonate. One of our wardens attended training also, in order to support our new initiative and it has been helpful to have his understanding of what we are doing.

We still need more trained storytellers in order to have sufficient people on a roster to accommodate busy people. We don’t want to exhaust our storytellers by having them on every Sunday! We have three of our older teens that are interested and eager to take the training. We need more available local training to accommodate their business!

There are a couple of parents who are naturally “door-keepers,” who know the children and welcome them to the space, helping to free the storyteller to tend to the story.

The diocesan grant was very helpful in jumpstarting the needed Godly Play materials. We “decluttered” an old Youth Room that had become a storage space. We added a cozy rug and cushions. Our “desert box,” the dramatic location for the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and the Exodus, and all the wilderness stories of our Biblical ancestors, was an Ikea “under-the-bed-storage box” on wheels, glued to seal the edges and filled with play sand. We had a couple of work bees spray painting gold “parable” boxes and assembling the kits. Several kids put together shelves.

We have agreed with two neighbouring parishes—St. Agnes and St. Martins—to share some of our materials, which helps, as we cannot get all of the materials at once.

Our timing at the beginning wasn’t the best. We started in Lent. In retrospect, we would have been better to start with stories and parables, and get the kids engaged with those before introducing the less concrete ideas of the season of Lent. However, we have persisted into another season and the kids are catching the rhythm and pattern of the stories.

Also, earlier on it would have been good to have a Godly Play story for the whole congregation. When we recently had the Diocesan Watershed Discipleship Program Salal + Cedar lead our worship, they provided a Godly Play story for everyone; this has generated excitement for the program. We need to find ways to do this again in the main Sunday worship—for everyone—not just for children. ✠