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*"Every year we celebrate the holy season of Advent, O God.
Every year we pray those beautiful prayers of longing and waiting,
and sing those lovely songs of hope and promise."*

Karl Rhaner

*"Waiting is a period of learning. The longer we wait,
the more we hear about him for whom we are waiting."*

Henri Nouwen

Celebrations of New Ministries @ Evensong

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver has the reputation of being one of the finest church choirs



Executive Archdeacon of the diocese, the Ven. Douglas Fenton, DD invites the congregation to welcome the newly installed clergy. PHOTO Randy Murray

in Canada. In order to continue their commitment to leading music in worship at the cathedral church of the diocese of New Westminster, Director of Music, Rupert Lang, the choir and clergy have recently initiated *Sundays @ 3 – The Cathedral Choir Celebrates the Liturgical Year*.

The liturgy for the October 1, 2017 edition was Evensong, a traditional Anglican worship experience pretty much removed from standard church practice in North America by the *Ed Sullivan Show* in the 1960s and 1970s. This particular Evensong contained repertoire focused on the recent Michaelmas (The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, September 29) and included a Celebration of New Ministries of three recently hired Cathedral staff and three recently appointed Cathedral clergy: Vanessa Ho, Finance Administrator; Alberto Jaramillo, Hospitality and Food Coordinator; Anne Kessler, Children, Youth and Families Ministries Coordinator; the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss, Deacon at Christ Church Cathedral; the Rev. Ross Bliss, Assistant Curate at Christ Church Cathedral; and the Rev. Helen Dunn, Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral.

The liturgy began with Jacob Handl's transcendent *Duo*

Seraphim, followed by Opening Prayers led by the Officiant, Dean and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, the Very Rev. Peter Elliott:

"With St. Michael and all the angels we pray for God's people everywhere and ask that we be made instruments of God's peace."

To which the congregation responded:

"Where there is hatred, let us bring love, where there is discord, let us bring union and where there is despair, let us bring hope."

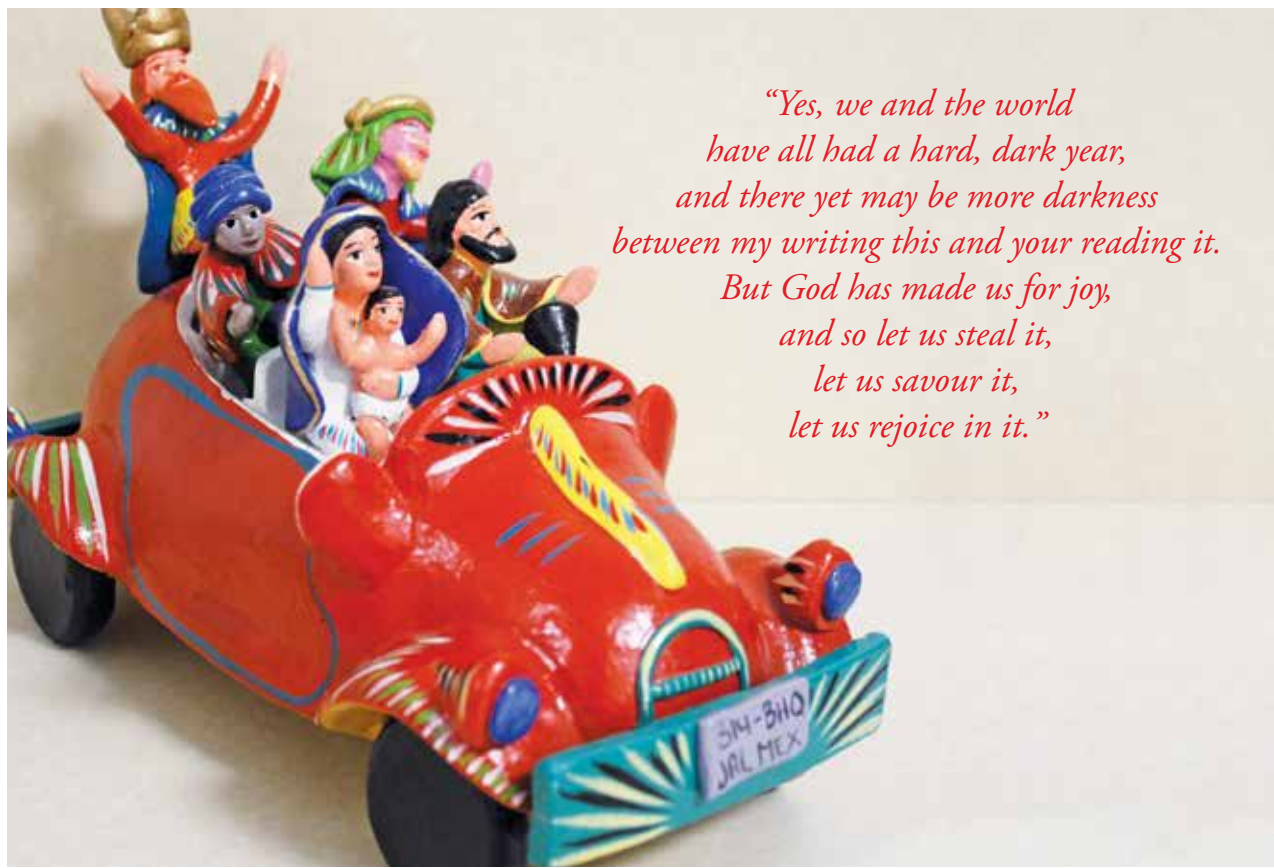
The two canticles, *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* were sung by the choir to settings composed by Rupert Lang, and the *Versicles and Responses*, those traditional lines facilitating evening prayer were the work of former Cathedral Organist and Director of Music, Patrick Wedd. Soprano soloist, Emily Cheung was the principal cantor for the liturgy.

The First Lesson, *Genesis 28: 10–17* was read by actor, Bernard Cuffling and the Second Lesson from Luke's Gospel, *5: 1–11* was proclaimed by retired Cathedral Choir chorister and librarian, Lynda Catchpole, ODNW.

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Stealing Joy

Bishop Skelton's 2017 Christmas Message



*“Yes, we and the world
have all had a hard, dark year,
and there yet may be more darkness
between my writing this and your reading it.
But God has made us for joy,
and so let us steal it,
let us savour it,
let us rejoice in it.”*

Dear Topic Readers

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

There are 66 easy to access parish pages grouped in 11 deanery sections with regional location information on the entry graphics and detailed location information for each parish. Many of the parish pages will also include specific listings for Advent and Christmas worship and events, inviting everyone to participate. All are welcome!

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

To you and yours the merriest of Christmas's and many blessings for 2018!

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

It was hard to figure out what image to use on my Bishop's Christmas Card this year: hard because my sense is that we have had a hard year — the continuing turmoil to the South of our border and the alarming words between the US and North Korea, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the events in Syria, the heart-rending story of the Rohingya refugees, the opioid crisis, and all manner of natural disasters: fires in BC, California and Washington, earthquakes in Mexico, and hurricanes and flooding in many parts of the world. For these reasons, I was seeking some image with *gravitas* to send to the ever growing Christmas card list that my gifted assistant, Bill Siksay, manages.

And so I tried some icon images of Mary and the infant Jesus, but her solemn expression, as understandable as it was, just made me sadder than I already was about the plight of many this last year. I sent off an email to the partner of a now deceased artist friend for something he might have created in fabric, but he was in the middle of a move and so no such image was to be found. I even combed back through photos I had taken in many of the churches I have now visited in my three plus years in this diocese, but nothing jumped out at me.

It was then that Bill suggested that I consider using a photo of one of the many wonderful crèches that I have collected over the years. The minute he suggested this, one of those crèches jumped to mind. It is the one you now see in the photo next to this article — a delightful creation by the Ortega family from Mexico that is a car. The car is driven by an exuberant Joseph, with Mary and Jesus in the passenger seat. The three magi are riding in the back, one of them clutching his gift, another sporting a crown and all of them waving.

It's hard to fathom what this particular depiction of the Holy Family and the three magi is supposed to say about the Christmas story. When I first saw it, what popped into my mind was this: "Someone finally gave the Holy Family a chance to be in the driver's seat!" But as intriguing as this idea is, I'm not really sure this was the artist's point.

My hunch is that the artist did not really have a point beyond pure, unmitigated joy — the joy of the poor little family astonished by the blessing of God that was completely out of proportion with what they had expected in life; the joy of the three wise men who came to find out that their wisdom amounted to nothing in the face of the absurd wisdom of a God who chose to be born into the humblest of circumstances; the joy of all of them out together for a (joy) ride, just for a moment not brooding or pondering or fearing or dreading a darn thing, but, instead, being caught up in exhilaration and holy surprise.

Yes, we and the world have all had a hard, dark year, and there yet may be more darkness between my writing this and your reading it. But God has made us for joy, and so let us steal it, let us savour it, let us rejoice in it. For though December may be gloomy, and though this time of our lives may be inhabited by a kind of quiet foreboding "the Word has become flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

My sincere best wishes to you
and those you love for a holy and blessed Christmas ✦



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



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The diocese of New Westminster

The Anglican Church in the Lower Mainland, the Fraser Valley and on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia, located on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish First Nations, consisting of 69 worshipping communities.



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Thank you!

Celebrations of New Ministries @ Evensong

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE



LEFT Actor, Bernard Cuffling reads *Genesis 28: 10 – 17*. MIDDLE LEFT Retired Chorister and Choir Librarian, Lynda Catchpole, ODNW proclaims the Gospel, *Luke 5: 1 – 11*. MIDDLE RIGHT Preacher, the Rev. Clara King. RIGHT Long time Christ Church Cathedral warden and trustee Ian Birtwell presents Vanessa Ho. PHOTOS Randy Murray

The Rev. Clara King of the diocese of Calgary was the guest preacher. Dean Peter Elliott introduced Rev. King to the congregation pointing out that she had presided that morning at her parish in Calgary prior to making her way to the airport and boarding a plane for Vancouver to be present that afternoon. Rev. King began her homily by saying, “I invited myself to be your guest preacher this afternoon... Helen [Dunn] is one of my dearest friends and we are very sad to lose her in the diocese of Calgary but we are delighted that she has this great opportunity.” Rev. King promised to share information about “this wonderful person you have hired” but first she embarked on a thoughtful exegesis of the gospel passage from Luke where we see Jesus helping some fishermen aim their lives in a new and more hopeful direction, and Peter casting his nets and “opening his heart.”

Rev. King said, "Helen is ready to cast her nets over the side and do whatever it takes for you... Helen has a heart like Peter... she is one of those people we meet in life who is generous-hearted enough to listen to ideas and to take risks... Helen Dunn opens incredible space for God to work... she is humble and she is curious about what can happen next."

Following the sermon, the choir created space for prayer and reflection offering Edward Bairstow's *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*. At the conclusion of the anthem, the liturgy for the celebration of new ministries began, Dean Elliott said, "It is our purpose now to welcome, acknowledge and pray for Vanessa, Alberto, Anne, Jeffrey, Ross and Helen as they begin their various ministries at Christ Church Cathedral."

Each staff member was presented to the congregation by lay and clergy leaders of the cathedral ministries most closely connected to the work of that individual. During the presentations they were asked by Dean Elliott, “Do you in the presence of God and this congregation promise to undertake the responsibilities with which you have been entrusted?” to which the three each in turn answered, “I do, the Lord being my helper.”

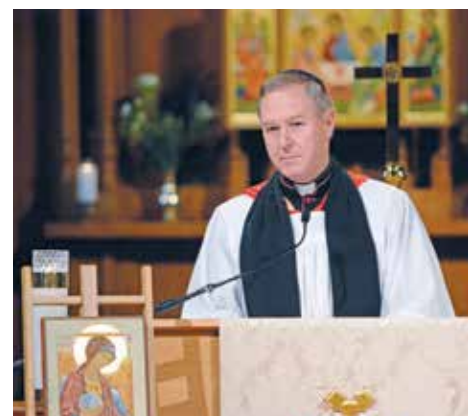
The Regional Dean of Kingsway and Rector of St. James', the Rev. Kevin Hunt led the prayers for the newly received staff members.

Then it was time for the presentation and installation of the clergy. The Ven. Douglas Fenton, Executive Archdeacon described the process for the appointments of the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss as Deacon, the Rev. Ross Bliss as Assistant Curate and the Rev. Helen Dunn as Vicar of Christ Church Cathedral. As a new arrival to the diocese, Rev. Dunn received Bishop Skelton's license to serve as priest at the Cathedral and as priest in the diocese of New Westminster so it was necessary for her to read aloud and sign the Oath of Loyalty to the Bishop. Following the procedure involving the Oath, Archdeacon Fenton read the license to the congregation and clergy.

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Members of Cathedral Choir under the direction of Rupert Lang lead the music in worship. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Regional Dean of Kingsway and Rector of St. James', the Rev. Kevin Hunt leads the prayers for Vanessa, Alberto and Anne. RIGHT Archdeacon Fenton describes the process and search that has concluded with the appointment of Rev. Dunn as Cathedral Vicar. PHOTOS Randy Murray

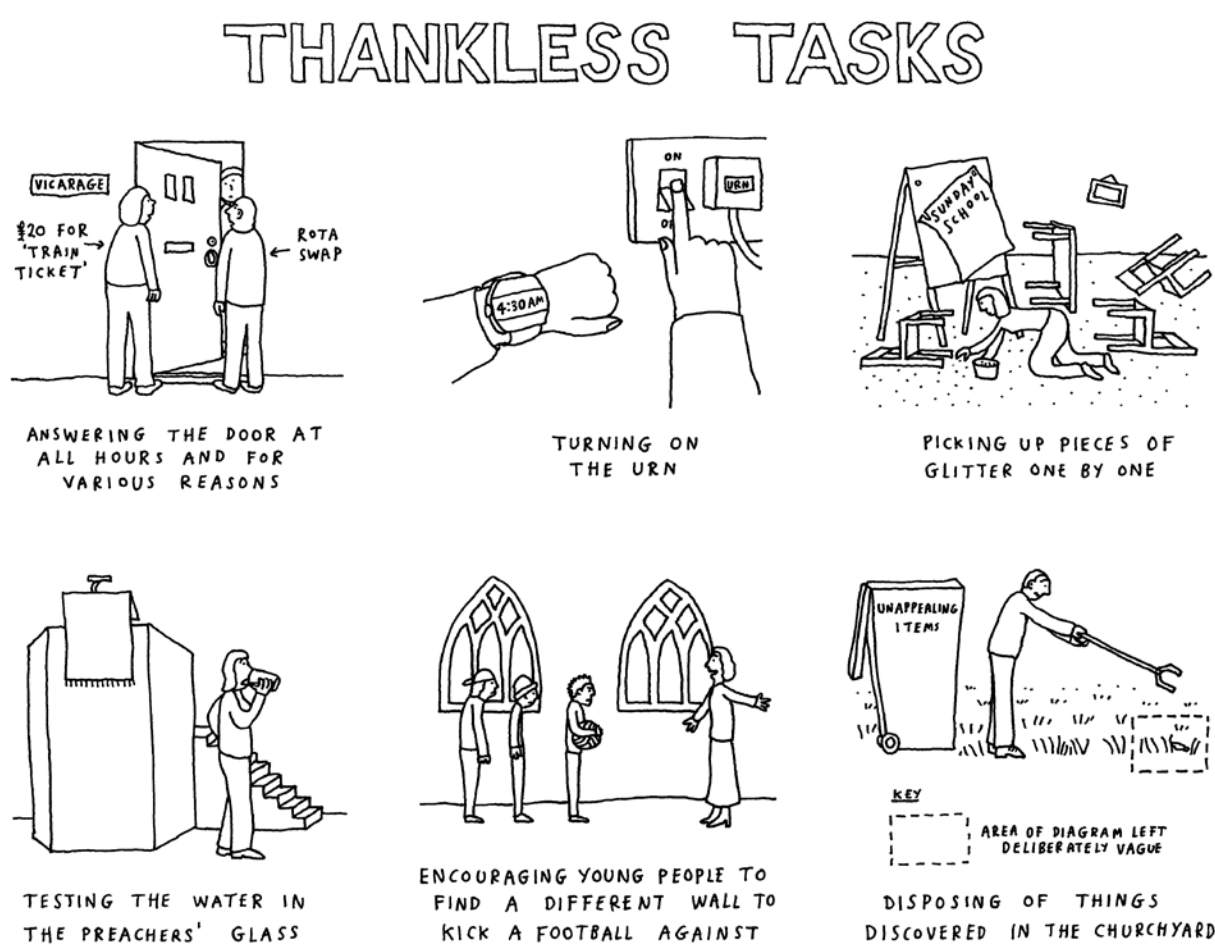
THIS MONTH IN TOPIC HISTORY

From the Diocesan Archives

20 years • 1997 Several parishes in the diocese begin offering special services for those who find the Christmas season difficult called *When Christmas Hurts/Blue Christmas*.

35 years • 1982 Jim Cruickshank named Dean of New Westminster.

50 years • 1967 The Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys announces a tour of Great Britain for the summer of 1968.



Cartoonchurch.com

Celebrations of New Ministries @ Evensong

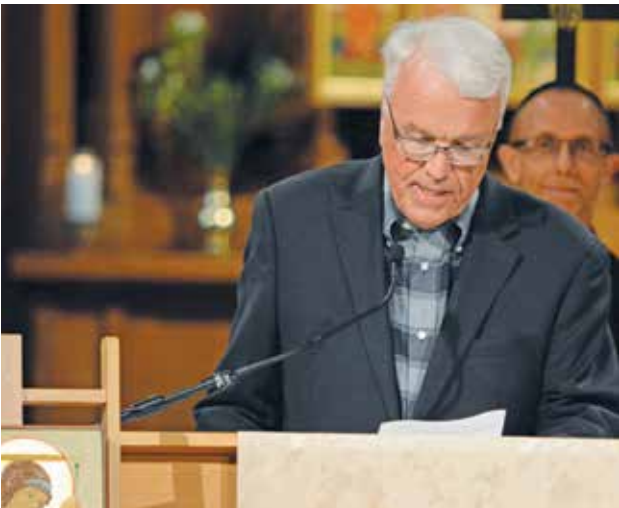
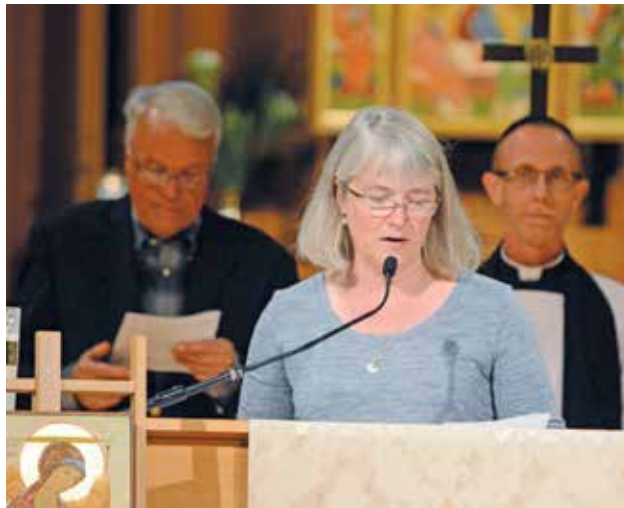
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As with the new staff, lay leaders (wardens and canonical committee chair) presented each of the new clergy. The Rev. Hunt, following the examination by Dean Elliott, led the prayers. With the formalities completed, Archdeacon Fenton presented the six and invited all those present to welcome them with applause.

Prior to the singing of the Offertory Hymn the appropriate *How Clear is Our Vocation, Lord*, the Prayers and Blessing and the Closing Hymn selected for Michaelmas, *Angel Voices Ever Singing*, Archdeacon Fenton led the con-

gregation in the following prayer:

“Gracious God, we ask you to bless all the ministries of your Church. We thank you for the variety of gifts you have bestowed upon us. Draw us together in one Spirit, that each of us may use our differing gifts as members of one body. May your Word be proclaimed with faithfulness, and may we be doers of your Word and not hearers only. As we who have died and risen with Christ in baptism gather and are sent into the world, may we be one in service to others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” ✠



LEFT People's Warden, Mary McCullum presents the Rev. Ross Bliss. MIDDLE Dr. Allen Newberry, Chair of the Canonical Committee presents the Rev. Helen Dunn. RIGHT The Rev. Helen Dunn reads the Oath. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Archdeacon Fenton reads the license. PHOTO Randy Murray



Rector's Warden, Dr. Jack Forbes moves forward to present the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss. PHOTO Randy Murray

A Note from your Diocesan Refugee Unit

SHANNON MUIR

Chair, Diocesan Refugee Unit; Co-coordinator of the Regional Ecumenical Support Team (REST); St. Agnes', North Vancouver

We can all be proud that the diocese of New Westminster has had a strong response to the worldwide appeal for sponsorship of refugees. We have many parishes and other groups who have worked with our diocese to bring people to our beautiful corner of the world and start a new life here. Several times a week, we receive requests from needy people around the world asking to bring themselves, their friends, or their families to Canada. For most of them, however, there is nothing we can do to help. In order to help a refugee to become a newcomer, we need an allocated space from our government as well as a parish group ready to provide settlement assistance. If your parish is interested in sponsorship, there is every kind of refugee waiting to be sponsored. These range from very large families to single individuals from all corners of the world.

If your parish is interested in becoming involved, or renewing involvement in sponsorship, there are many ways to do that! Here are some possibilities for you to consider:

Full sponsorship of identified individuals

This can happen through a referral from Mosaic BC, through a family member or friend who is already here, or some other connection. A person or family has been identified to be in need of sponsorship and outside of their home country. The sponsorship group submits a great deal of paperwork and then waits for the newcomers to arrive. The waiting process can be very long; somewhere between 18 months and several years, depending on the situation and the country where the people are waiting. There is PLENTY of time for fundraising!

Blended Visa Office Referred (BVOR)

This involves selecting an individual or family from a list the government has compiled of refugees who are "travel ready." This means that interviews, security checks, and medical examinations have already been completed and now the people are waiting for someone to select them from the list. There is a smaller amount of paperwork to be filed and the newcomers are expected to arrive in



Said and Bukhari at a REST celebration in the summer of 2017. PHOTO Wayne Chose

two to six months from receipt of their complete application. The Canadian government provides six months of funding for these individuals, at government rates (similar to welfare).

Rainbow Refugee Assistance Project (RRAP)

This is similar to the BVOR program, in that people are already identified. All of the individuals in this program are asylum seekers who are LGBTQ and/or HIV positive. The government provides three months of funding for these individuals, at government rates. We do not yet know if there is an expedited process for these people, but there may be.

Co-sponsorship

There are community groups or families who are willing and able to do most, or all of the fundraising and settlement work to bring refugees to Canada. They can form a group called a "Group of five" to do this, but it is easier and faster to work with a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), such as our diocese. If your parish is interested in being involved, but does not have the fundraising capacity or individuals able to do the settlement work, we may be able to match you with a community group. This is a wonderful way to build new ties with your community and make a sponsorship happen, with a lower level of involvement. Typically, these arrangements involve sponsoring identified individuals, so the wait time until arrival will be fairly long.

If you'd like more information about any of these options, please email refugee@vancouver.anglican.ca. We can then provide you with further information and/or arrange to have a chat with you. ✠



The Rev. Georgina Harris raises her hand to signal her approval of the sunny autumn morning. PHOTO Randy Murray



Bishop Skelton processes into the sunbathed sanctuary. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Collect. PHOTO Randy Murray



The choir sings All Good Gifts. PHOTO Randy Murray



"The Body of Christ." PHOTO Randy Murray

Asking the Big Questions

Episcopal Visitation to St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

On October 22, 2017, the 20th Sunday after Pentecost, Bishop Melissa Skelton visited the oldest church building (1859) in the diocese, located since 1983 at 21299 River Road in Maple Ridge. The community that calls that building home is a faithful and active one that have been rejuvenated of late under the ordained leadership of Interim Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Georgina Harris.

During Rev. Harris's tenure the community have met together twice in intensive workshop environments to discuss, pray and seek guidance as they move forward in their mission and ministry. The focus in the preceding months has been to assemble a Parish Profile to accompany a posting that will hopefully attract candidates for the position of Vicar of the parish. With the profile recently completed, the job posting was prepared by the Bishop's Office, posted in mid-October and sent all around the Anglican Communion.

The Eucharist at 10 am was well attended with many members of the parish and friends filling the pews of the 158 year old nave. Rev. Harris greeted the congregation prior to the Opening Hymn and asked for a show of hands from those who were relieved that the sun was out and shining.

Bishop Skelton preached and presided. She also offered a compelling Children's Talk, blessed the Pascal and Advent candles, and the beautiful new exterior signs constructed of Red Cedar. Bishop Skelton facilitated an open parish meeting after lunch, and following that event attended a meeting with parish leadership.

In her Children's Talk, Bishop Skelton asked the younger members of the parish, "What's your image of God? What do you think God looks like?" There were a number of suggestions about images of God: a man with a long white beard and white robes to God as light, evanescent and/or blinding. Bishop Skelton referred to Moses' desire to know what God looks like outlined in the Old Testament reading that morning, *Exodus 33: 12-23*. As the talk neared its conclusion, the Bishop produced a mirror and asked the children to look in the mirror. She said that we see the human face of God in the person of Jesus Christ, but we also "see in ourselves... the Living God."

Bishop Skelton took the Gospel for her sermon text, *Matthew 22: 15-22*. In this famous story where Jesus is asked about paying taxes to a foreign conqueror he turns the questions back on the inquirers. Bishop Skelton prefaced her message by pointing out that in the Gospels, Jesus is asked 186 questions but he asks 307. Bishop Skelton suggested to the congregation that the focus is on the questions



Bishop Skelton brings out the mirror as a prop to help illustrate her Children's Talk message. PHOTO Randy Murray



Bishop Melissa Skelton was preacher and presider for the Eucharist. PHOTO Randy Murray

and keeping that in mind we should endeavor to ask questions of ourselves. She said that Jesus doesn't supply simple straight forward answers in his teaching and that we need to come to terms with the fact that "simple questions and simple answers are not the life that Jesus has given us," but by asking the questions we come to the knowledge that *IT* all belongs to God. The choices we make belong to God, even the bad things, the hard decisions, the conflicts, "these too come from God."

During the blessing of the new signs, Bishop Skelton

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



The Eucharistic Prayer. PHOTO Randy Murray



Casey's father Larry Wright takes a photo during the blessing. PHOTO Randy Murray



Casey Wright and Bishop Skelton during the sign blessing. PHOTO Randy Murray

DIOCESAN SCHOOL FOR PARISH DEVELOPMENT

weekend & week-long



Registration is now open for both the Weekend and the Week-long Programs

The Weekend Program, which runs for four weekends each year on a Friday and Saturday, will continue to be held at the Synod Office. The 2018 dates for this program are:

• January 26 – 27 • May 11 – 12 • September 7 – 8 • November 16 – 17 •

The tuition for Weekend Program will remain at \$600.

The Week-long Program will return to the Vancouver School of Theology with accommodation in Walter Gage Tower at the University of BC. The 2018 dates for this program are:

• June 10 – 16 •

The costs of running the Week-long Program have increased. Tuition will now be \$800 for participants from our diocese.

Lay participants can apply for bursaries of up to half of the tuition costs.

Visit the school's pages on the diocesan website at www.vancouver.anglican.ca/parish-development/school-for-parish-development
Contact the Reverend Marnie Peterson by email at mpeterson@vancouver.anglican.ca for further information or call 604.684.6306, ext. 221.



“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25:40 (NRSV)

Through word, deed, prayer and presence, Fr. Matthew Johnson of St. James' Anglican Church, ministers full time to some of the most marginalized people in our society. Each of his encounters with a street-involved person offers a concrete opportunity to remind them of their infinite value in the eyes of God. His contacts have sometimes led to life changes - both large and small.

When the need arises, Fr. Matthew offers meal vouchers, bus fare, or purchases work clothing. These seemingly small gestures are sometimes enough to help someone to take first steps to get out of the cycle of poverty. Our goal is to raise funds to ensure emergency supplies for this important ministry are available through the winter of 2017/18. Can you or your parish help?

To donate online go to www.vancouver.anglican.ca & click "Give", selecting Street Outreach Initiative as the giving type OR make cheques out to "Diocese of New Westminster" with "Street Outreach-Street Ops" in the memo line. Mail cheques to: Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, 1410 Nanton Ave, Vancouver BC V6H 2E2. All donations are gratefully received! Tax receipts will be issued. Thank you!



Asking the Big Questions

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Louise and Rosemary serve the lunch. PHOTO Randy Murray

was joined by St. John's parishioner, Casey Wright. Casey is well known around the lower mainland and beyond as a tireless volunteer for Children's Hospital, cancer research and other fundraising organizations that involve sourcing revenue to treat young people with catastrophic illnesses. Still in his mid-teens, Casey is also an Honorary Staff Sergeant in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A rank he has held now for a number of years.

After the sign blessing it was off to the parish hall for lunch. Louise Charette, Beth Scott and warden, Rosemary Stasiuk led the team of chefs who prepared three entrées (sweet and sour stew, butter chicken and savory meatballs) with rice, bread and salad for the community. Warden Stasiuk did not take her seat at the head table with Bishop Skelton and the parish officers until everyone was served.

Following the meal, Bishop Skelton led a discussion with parishioners where she answered any and all questions, whilst making notes from the discussion on newsprint flip-chart paper. When the open parish meeting had concluded and the majority of those gathered departed to continue their Sunday activities, Bishop Skelton then met with the officers of the parish.

This is a time of transition for the Parish of St. John, Maple Ridge, but it also a time of anticipation and excitement as they wait to find out what God has planned for the faith community that worships in the oldest church building in the diocese. It is appropriate that the season of Advent approaches as they work with Bishop Skelton to find an ordained leader of their shared ministry together. Please keep them in your prayers as the next phase in the life of St. John's begins. ✠

A variety of archived news stories are available about Casey Wright. Here is a link to the Global News story from June 28, 2015: <https://globalnews.ca/video/2081000/casey-wright-gets-a-personal-rcmp-tour>.

Bird's Nest

DENISE TROTTIER & NATASHA MACDONALD
Bird's Nest co-Founders

The Bird's Nest is a non-profit organization founded in January 2016 by three concerned citizens: Andy Bird, Denise Trottier and Natasha MacDonald. The aim of the Bird's Nest is to bring First Nations youth, aged 19–29, out from remote Canadian reserves to Maple Ridge, BC. Here we enroll them either in a post-secondary preparation program where they can upgrade their high school diplomas for college and university or we help them find employment.

The opportunities for young first nations living on remote Canadian reserves are few and far between. Post secondary schooling and employment can normally only be found many hours from the reserve. For most youth the prospect of leaving the only home they have ever known to pursue these objectives with no one to guide or assist them is just too daunting to contemplate. Sadly many of those who do attempt it fail within weeks.

When we began from scratch to confront this enormous problem, we had two spare rooms at Denise's house, zero funding, no appropriate college prep course and no experience of how to start a non-profit.

Almost two years on we have already developed a tailored post-secondary preparation course, (with the dedicated help of the Maple Ridge Riverside College), secured band funding for our students, held several major fundraisers, gained non-profit status, bought an eight bedroom house in Maple Ridge and currently have 11 young people from Saskatchewan, all of whom are in school and or working. It's been a monumental task that has only scratched the surface of the problem, but we are incredibly proud of what we have achieved. However, this is just the start.

Providing a safe welcoming place where young first nations folks can come and begin building a vision that will allow them to see their long-term future with new eyes is the founding mission of the Bird's Nest. They arrive scared, skeptical and unsure and are greeted by warmth encouragement and friendly, often familiar faces. The day-to-day running of the Nest is carried out by Denise Trottier with help from Natasha MacDonald; it involves a great deal of cooking, cleaning, counseling and homework assistance to name just a few of the daily jobs.

Providing, equipping and running the *nest house* is an expensive and time consuming business and from the beginning we have relied heavily on donations of goods services and money from the wider community. Much of the help we have had has come from members of the Anglican Church. St. John the Apostle, Port Moody has dedicated their Lenten can appeal to the Bird's Nest for the last two years, raising many hundreds of dollars for us. Their Anglican Church Women (ACW) chapter and the wider diocesan ACW have both donated generously.

We are particularly grateful at this time, in fact grateful beyond words, for the support we have received from St. George's, Maple Ridge. The Rev. David Edgerton and his deeply caring congregation have, through the proceeds of their Spring Fair and the sponsorship from David's valiant BMO Vancouver Marathon run, raised sufficient funds for us to purchase a car. This vehicle has made it possible for us to bring out three young men who were offered a fantastic job opportunity in Pitt Meadows. With a car they are able to get to work at 7 am without having to rely on a public transport system that stops almost a kilometre from their jobsite. This is huge for them—they are equipped for success and full of hope as each barrier they face is removed. For us, the founders, as we watch the dawning sense of what's possible affect them, our gratitude for the St. George's community and people like them is humbling and heartwarming. We read and hear about the work of truth and reconciliation and the government's commitment to improving the conditions and circumstances of Canada's First Nations all the time. Here on the frontline of this work where our young people need hope, encouragement, food and shelter, it is the real and compassionate action of members of our local Anglican churches that we founders and our Bird's Nest youth feel so very deeply on a day-to-day level.

The most wonderful part of the support we receive is that the Anglican community never asks why we are doing this work or why it is necessary. They already know and understand. It is such a blessing never to have to explain why these young people are so deeply deserving of help. There is never any suggestion that they are somehow on the receiving end of an unwarranted privilege. Sadly we come across that suggestion far too often in the rest of the world and the lack of it from the church speaks to us of the great



The Bird's Nest community gathers around the new car. PHOTO Denise Trottier



The KIA Rio. PHOTO Denise Trottier

job of First Nations education that has been carried out in Anglican communities over the years. It makes such a difference to ourselves and the young people we care for.

More About Fundraising for the Car from Pastor David Edgerton

As part of St. George's 2020 Vision, launched in January 2017 at Bishop Melissa's visitation, we have committed as a church community to use our fundraising events to support local charities and non-profits. Our aim is that the church and its members should financially support the costs of our ministry and when we host fundraising events we will use them as an opportunity to be a blessing to our community. In spring 2017, we raised \$1,013 in sponsorship of the Rector on the Run at the BMO Vancouver Marathon and then \$1,522 at the Spring Fair towards the Birds Nest Vehicle appeal. The Diocesan ACW Board also made a donation to the Bird's Nest of \$1,000 plus \$271 at the AGM Eucharist, which was held this year at St. George's.

The car is a dark grey 2007 KIA *Rio*.

If you would like to contribute financial gifts, cheques may be made out to **The Bird's Nest Society**.

Mail to: Natasha MacDonald
1870 Charles Street, Port Moody, V3H 2M3
or to
The Bird's Nest
12051 234th Street, Maple Ridge, V2X 9K7

Volunteers are welcome as the Nest could always use a little help with cooking and math or English tutoring. Visitors are welcome to come and see life at the Nest. Please give Denise (denisetrottier@hotmail.com, 604.375.5238) or Natasha (freefromfear101@gmail.com, 604.961.6630) a call or email to arrange a visit. ✦



MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to all our donors.

Thank you for a great
60th anniversary year!

ANGLICAN
FOUNDATION OF CANADA 



Bukhari dressed for the Mosque. PHOTO Wilna Parry



Bukhari and Wilna at Dundarave in West Vancouver. PHOTO Aryn Bhulji



The June 28 Fundraiser at St. Agnes' with: Aryn Bhulji; the author, Wilna Parry; Cynthia Bunbury; Bukhari; Omar Abdi, Somali elder and leader of the local Somali community, and David Parry. PHOTO Wayne Chose

"Bukhari is embracing life as a new Canadian. There are great challenges still ahead for him with regards to full independence but we know he is adapting and growing into his new life day by day. All the mammas are cheering for him!"



Bukhari and Honada compare notes about their first year in Canada at Bukhari's Anniversary Dinner on September 23, 2017. PHOTO Wendy Matsubuchi



LEFT "Mamma" Wilna and "Mamma" Cynthia. MIDDLE Bukhari is prepared with his speech in hand. RIGHT Somali rice and vegetables. PHOTOS Wendy Matsubuchi

Celebrating a Year in a New Country

Bukhari's journey from Mogadishu to life in Vancouver

WILNA PARRY
St. Clement's, Lynn Valley, Member of REST

On September 13, 2016, a group of volunteers from the North Vancouver Regional Ecumenical Support Team (REST) gathered at Vancouver Airport to welcome Bukhari, a young blind man originally from Somalia. Randy Murray from the Synod Office joined us—some photographs and an article was published soon after online and on page 7 of the November 2016 issue of *Topic*. This is a follow-up to communicate some information about Bukhari's first year in Vancouver.

For the first three months Bukhari lived with my husband Dave Parry and I at our home in the North Shore's Lynn Valley district. This gave him, as well as the team of volunteers involved in his care, much needed breathing space to assess his needs, take care of numerous medical appointments and get him enrolled at the Vancouver Community College (VCC) campus' Program for the Visually Impaired.

The first medical appointment for Bukhari was with a local dentist who accepted Bukhari as a patient at no cost. We were all worried about cavities in his teeth, as he takes four spoons of sugar in his tea. To our delight it was found that Bukhari has no cavities. I am told that he only takes one teaspoon of sugar now—he has lost the addiction.

The next appointment was with an ophthalmologist. Severe damage was found to the optic nerves of both eyes as well as chronic inflammation. Unfortunately, because so much time has gone by, nothing can be done. Somali interpreter, Waeli and volunteer, Gulnar, explained this sad information to Bukhari. Here is what Gulnar wrote about that big disappointment:

"All of the above was explained to Bukhari by Waeli in Somali. We walked out of there and stopped in the alcove of the next shop and Bukhari started crying. Then I started crying, but told him that I knew how disappointed he was but that we were his family and would support him. And that he would have a good life in Canada. He kept saying, 'No problem, Mamma.' He was very quiet on the way home and looked very dejected. I let him be. I'm so sorry to bring this sad news. My heart has been heavy all afternoon and evening."

Bukhari's next appointment was with folks from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). He was set up for some white cane training as well as courses in "Lifestyle;" that is, how to be safe in a kitchen and preparing a sandwich for lunch. We were quite impressed by both the white cane trainer and Lifestyle expert who is blind herself but did an excellent job in guiding Bukhari.

Bukhari was fortunate to be accepted as a patient of a North Shore family doctor. We had a number of visits there as well as numerous lab tests and follow-ups. It was becoming clear to us all that Bukhari has a number of health concerns that will take time to diagnose and treat. This is going to be a long haul.

Bukhari's lifeline was his phone. He had a cell phone he used in Africa but it was useless here. In the end we bought him a new iPhone and enrolled in the cheapest plan we could find. Bukhari learned very quickly (and with Shannon Muir's expert help) how to manage the voice-over function on his phone. This meant he could "read" all incoming messages and respond, usually via *WhatsApp*, which is very popular in Africa. I was very happy that he now had his own phone as a number of calls from Somalia and Kenya came in at 3 or 4 am.

Further fun expeditions with Bukhari included swimming at Karen Magnussen Wave Pool, which he loved. There is no word to explain "indoor swimming pool" so we called it a "little sea" and Bukhari wanted to know if he'll find some fish (which he dearly loves and misses in his diet) in the pool. Bukhari always knows when he is walking amongst trees and loves the smell

of fresh grass and trees. He had a couple of workouts at the gym but this is difficult, as he needs constant supervision. We also discovered that Bukhari is very good at ironing and it is something he loves to do. He has a delightful voice and sings along as he irons. He, unlike me, never burns himself on the iron and every shirt is ironed to absolute perfection. Of course regular visits to the mosque are of the utmost importance to Bukhari and apparently he knows all of the Quran by heart. He has become a leader in the local mosque located near his apartment.

One of the REST volunteers invited Bukhari and some friends from Somalia to a Thanksgiving dinner at her house. Bukhari felt this was a "suit occasion" and dressed up for it. He looked very smart. All the guests greatly enjoyed eating turkey and all the trimmings although "western-style eating" presented a few challenges.

Bukhari began his studies at VCC in November 2016, in the department for Visually Impaired persons. He was learning braille and my husband Dave and he spent a lot of time together in the evenings doing homework. It was really amazing how quickly he mastered it given that he didn't know any braille at all prior to starting at VCC. A number of volunteers took turns driving Bukhari to and from school and the search for suitable accommodation closer to VCC was stepped up.

Finally an apartment was found for Bukhari as well as a live-in caregiver. The apartment was walking distance from VCC and close to a local mosque. Very quickly the apartment was cleaned and furnished so it looked fresh and welcoming. Bukhari moved in on December 6. The rental of this apartment and paying a caregiver stretched our budget and discussions quickly turned to helping Bukhari live independently in a small studio apartment. In late July of 2017, Bukhari moved into his own little apartment where he lives alone. There is a Somali woman who prepares food for him twice a week and he has learned to freeze small portions. A volunteer accompanies him the four blocks to and from VCC Broadway, where he is currently enrolled in a LINC Level 3 ESL class. He is making good progress learning English but struggles with homework. We are hoping to find volunteers who can assist him four days a week, from 4–6 pm with his homework. He is diligent, intelligent and hardworking and does not want to fall behind the other students in the class. If anyone living near the VCC campus on Clark can assist Bukhari please contact Cynthia Bunbury as soon as possible via email at cbunbury@sd44.ca

On a Saturday in late September, a large group of volunteers gathered to honour Bukhari's journey and to celebrate the milestones and challenges we as a group met and overcame over the past year. Bukhari dressed up in his suit and had prepared a speech (which he had typed out in braille) in which he thanked all "the mammas" for their support and encouragement. It was lovely to have the Syrian family that is sponsored by REST present as well to celebrate with Bukhari. Who knows more than they the many highs and lows of adapting to a new life? All who gathered enjoyed some delicious Somali food.

Bukhari is embracing life as a new Canadian. There are great challenges still ahead for him with regards to full independence but we know he is adapting and growing into his new life day by day. All the "mammas" are cheering for him! ♦



Roberta (Bobbi) Kelly, ODNW & Glen Olsen, ODNW

.....

Many members of St. Hilda's remember Bobbi as being one of the first people to reach out to them when they were newcomers to the church. She was also a pillar of the St. Hilda's chapter of Anglican Church Women (ACW). In 2010, Church Committee nominated Bobbi to be the first St. Hilda's parishioner to be nominated for investiture

Bobbi's sons are planning a Memorial Service for her in the spring of 2018, the season, which was most endearing to her. ♣

*Glen and Bobbi, may you rest in peace and rise in glory.
May God's perpetual light shine upon you both.*



The Rev. Dr. Don Gravston. PHOTO Jennifer Echols



The Harvest Thanksgiving Displays. PHOTO Randy Murray

Harvest Thanksgiving at St. Christopher, West Vancouver

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Harvest Thanksgiving, as a religious observance is very much a mainstream protestant practice and specifically a practice with its roots in the UK. Not surprising that Anglican churches probably participate in this celebration more than other denominations.

The *Harvest* as a festival predates recorded history and goes back to pagan times. Harvest festivals are held all over the world but due to different climates and different seasons there is no one date selected. The Thanksgiving holiday in Canada is the second Monday of October, and was chosen due to the harvest of produce that took place around the time of the first full moon of autumn, coinciding with the fall equinox when the growing seasons in the northwest part of the planet come to an end. Harvest Thanksgiving in the Anglican Church of Canada is celebrated on the second Sunday of October.

Celebrating Harvest Festival in church is a relatively recent practice. It was in 1843, that the Rev. Robert Hawker, from Cornwall, England introduced the trend of holding a service, offering communion bread made from the first of the processed grains of the harvest and choosing appropriate Victorian hymns to be sung: *We Plough the Fields and Scatter; Come, Ye Thankful People, Come; Now Thank We All Our God; and All things Bright and Beautiful*. As the 20th century progressed and became the 21st century, dependence on the harvest in a particular part of the world become less of an issue. Instead of being thankful for the harvest, we give thanks to God for our abundance, and observe this festival as an opportunity to focus on those in need, those who are hungry in our communities, and do not have access to the abundance that the majority of the population enjoys.

It is also a time to express our gratitude to God through beautiful displays of liturgical art and St. Christopher's, West Vancouver is a parish where liturgical art and beauty are valued. From the autumn leaves, dried corn and green apple mantles around the sanctuary to the large wicker basket/cornucopia positioned near the altar the folks who decorated the church did a great job. The groaning table of non-perishable food items displayed in the narthex titled, *Bounty from the Pantry*, manifested the shift over the last few decades of Harvest Thanksgiving being a time



The Bounty from the Pantry. PHOTO Randy Murray



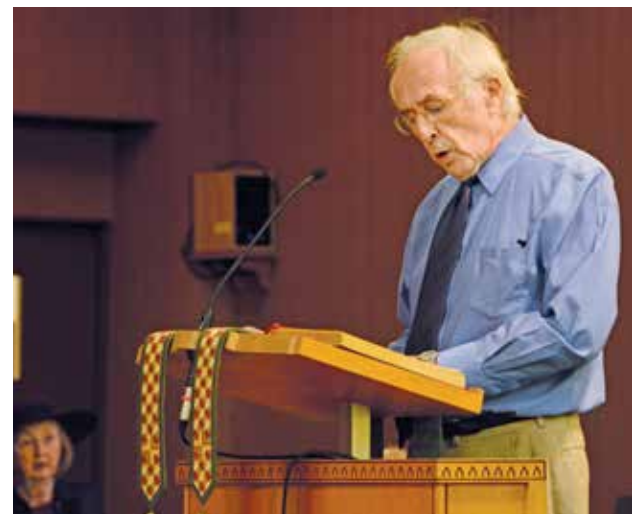
Transept display. PHOTO Randy Murray

of contributing to the greater community.

The Parish of St. Christopher's has undergone some changes of late. The Rev. Michael McGee resigned as rector in June 2017, to undertake an interim contract as a chaplain at CFB Borden and Dr. Annabelle Paetsch—long term organist, choirmaster and director of music—resigned about the same time to accept the position of Music Director at the neighbouring parish of St. Stephen, West Vancouver. However, things are beginning to turn around for the best with the arrival of interim priest-in-charge, the Rev. Karen Urquhart, a newly hired director of music, Konstantin Bozhinov, and the return of former parish administrator, Lorraine McNeight. The Harvest Thanksgiving Eucharist was well attended and it was evident from the energy in the room that the congregation appreciates the preaching skills of the priest-in-charge and the musical talents of the director of music

Rev. Urquhart took the Gospel, *Luke 17: 11–19* for her text, the story of the ten with leprosy. "Anyone considered a leper was unclean and shunned, they had to live outside of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



LEFT Reader and Intercessor, David Rafferty. RIGHT The Rev. Karen Urquhart proclaims the Gospel, *Luke 17: 11 – 19*. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Offertory. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Choir of St. Christopher's. PHOTO Randy Murray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

the city. They were ostracized from their family, their friends and their community—they were outcasts.” In the gospel story Jesus comes across a group of lepers. Jesus sees them, tells them to go and show themselves to the priests and they find that they have been cured. One of the lepers sees that he is cured. Rev. Urquhart examined the meaning of the word that is translated into English as “see” but in Greek has three meanings: to physically see; to theorize; to deeply perceive, “seeing and knowing are linked.” Through this lens she examined the various components of the worship experience taking place that day on Harvest Thanksgiving “to see with all our senses”—the offertory, the peace, the Eucharist—which means thanksgiving and urged the congregation to look deeper “may we really see the significance of this meal, and really see and know the presence of Jesus among us.” She concluded the homily with a quote from Rabbi Abraham Heschel:

“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement. ...get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.”

Rev. Urquhart’s sermon is available online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUI3Fk8x450&feature=youtu.be ↗

*“Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement.
...get up in the morning and look at the world
in a way that takes nothing for granted.
Everything is phenomenal;
everything is incredible;
never treat life casually.
To be spiritual is to be amazed.”*

Rabbi Abraham Heschel



Director of Music, Konstantin Bozhinov. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Gifts of God for the People of God. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Eucharist. PHOTO Randy Murray

care + share

Recipients 2018 – 2019



Outdoor Altar. PHOTO Devin Gillan



The Sacred Earth Camp with Takaya Tours. PHOTO Caitlin Reilley Beck



Break Free From Fossil Fuels Action. PHOTO Laurel Dykstra

Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship and the Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry's Mobile Care Unit are the two organizations chosen by the Synod of the diocese of New Westminster May 27, 2017, to receive proceeds from the diocesan flow-through funding initiative, care + share from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

Salal + Cedar

SUBMISSION Laurel Dykstra

Salal + Cedar is a community of Christians responding to climate crisis. Commissioned by Bishop Skelton in a grove of Douglas Fir on the Autumnal Equinox in 2015, ours is a relatively new ministry in the diocese of New Westminster. Under the leadership of our "gathering priest" the Rev. Laurel Dykstra, we are growing a local reputation as credible partners in the work for environmental justice.

We meet for worship out of doors, rain or shine, all year round and our mandate includes liturgical innovation. We also support other parishes that invite us to provide programs and lead worship on environmental themes. St. James' is a member-parish of Salal + Cedar and we have relationships of mutual support with Saint Mary's, Kerrisdale; St. Clement's, North Vancouver; and St. Anselm. Our children's curriculum, lectionary blog and liturgical resources have been used by churches in Ontario, Michigan, California, and New Mexico.

Some of our program highlights include:

- A *Blessing of the Bicycles*, which was featured in *Metro News* and *Vancouver Courier*, and involved 11 church communities in the lower mainland taking action to lower the carbon footprint of their worship commute.
- A *Live Nativity*, telling the story of Jesus' birth while introducing farm animals to city kids.
- A two-week residential camp program for young environmental leaders.
- We are looking forward in 2018 to a conservation project to improve wildlife habitat of Coleman Creek on the grounds of St. Clement's church.

We always welcome new faces to learn and worship with us.

We launched our ministry with financial support from the Anglican Initiatives Fund and the justice branch of the Primate's office of the national church. We are developing our donor base and our grant writing. In addition to *care + share*, our funding for 2018 and 2019 will come from the Anglican Foundation, several small project-based grants, individual donations, and fees for speaking and animating Sunday worship in parishes.

Contributions to Salal + Cedar through *care + share* will support programs that provide opportunity for Christians in the lower Fraser watershed to engage effectively for environmental justice. Each month we offer a unique event in one of three areas. Education events include identification of native medicinal and food plants, using

environmental education in Sunday School, and anti-oppression training. Conservation work parties are a hands-on opportunity to engage in physical care for this bioregion: tree planting, invasive species removal, shoreline clean up. Social change events include, letter writing, community organizing and action.

We are grateful to have been chosen as a *care + share* recipient and are proud that the diocese supports creation care and ecclesial innovation.

We also provide a visible and identifiable place for Christians to connect with one another at environmental justice events or demonstrations organized by other environmental groups and we are respectfully and appropriately present at Indigenous-led environmental events. ✚



The Blessing of the Bicycles. PHOTO Bayne Stanley

Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry • Mobile Care Unit

SUBMISSION Vicki Potter, ODNW

The Neighbourhood Ministry is a collaborative ministry offered by the Anglican parishes of St. Anselm's, St. Philip's, St. Helen's, and St. John's, Shaughnessy on Vancouver's Westside. Under the guidance of the Rev. Dr. Pitman Potter, the Neighbourhood Ministry is in its 9th year of offering care, companionship and practical help to our most vulnerable neighbours living on the Westside streets and in marginalized conditions.

The Mobile Care Unit which will be the recipient of the funding is one of the four pillars of the Neighbourhood Ministry's platform, the other three are: Street Ministry; Building Community at Dunbar Apartments; and The Angels Program. In 2017, the Mobile Care Unit (MCU) was launched in partnership with the University of BC (UBC) Schools of Medicine and Social Work. The MCU is a travelling team who provides basic medical care and social services to homeless and low-income populations in our neighbourhood who may face barriers to care. The team is comprised of doctors, medical students, social work students, and Neighbourhood Ministry volunteers. They visit three sites

on average eight times per month, sites where homeless and needy neighbours



LEFT Neighbourhood Ministry volunteer Heather talks with a local "binner" about her recent hip surgery. The Neighbourhood Ministry provided extra care to her during her recovery. RIGHT A Neighbourhood Ministry "Angel" helps a long-time homeless man pack up his camp and accompanies him to his new supportive housing unit. PHOTOS Vicki Potter

gather for community meals. Currently, this includes visits to: the Kitsilano Showers for the Homeless program at the Kits Community Centre (Saturdays); St. Mary's, Kerrisdale (Tuesdays); and St. Augustine's, Marpole (Thursdays). Our MCU team also visits homeless people where they live—in alcoves, laneways and beaches. Volunteers assist in any way they can to help clients access resources and services available.



Funding for the Neighbourhood Ministry activities is shared by the four sponsor parishes of St. Anselm's, St. Helen's, St. John's, Shaughnessy and St. Philip's. Parishes donate items-in-kind and cash, and provide the bulk of volunteers. Over the years, neighbours and friends not associated with the churches have joined as volunteers, to be part of this special and life-changing ministry. Beginning in 2018, the Neighbourhood Ministry is the grateful recipient of *care + share* funding from the diocese of New Westminster for the Mobile Care Unit. ✚

For more information about opportunities to give to *care + share* please contact diocesan Administrative Assistant, Rachel Taylor by email at rtaylor@vancouver.anglican.ca or call, 604.684.5306, ext. 220.

One time and recurring gifts through credit card donations may also be made through the diocesan website at www.vancouver.anglican.ca (please click either "GIVE" button found at the top and bottom of each page of the website) and select *care + share* from the "Giving Type" drop down menu. ✚



The Presider, the preacher and members of the congregation gather outside for a group photograph taken by the Regional Dean of Richmond/Delta. PHOTO Brian Vickers

Secularization of St. Edward’s, Bridgeport

RANDY MURRAY (WITH FILES FROM ELIZABETH NORTHCOTT & ARCHBISHOP DOUGLAS HAMBIDGE)
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

On the morning of Saturday, October 7, 2017, rain was in the forecast but it held off and the sun peeked through as 23 people, former parishioners and friends gathered at St. Edward’s in Richmond’s Bridgeport neighbourhood. The liturgy that took place was a service of secularization and what follows is an excerpt from Bishop Melissa Skelton’s Declaration that was read aloud following the Opening Prayer, “...this building, having now been declared deconsecrated and secularized, I declare to be no longer subject to my jurisdiction...”

The Ven. Elizabeth Northcott, Archdeacon of Westminster and Rector of All Saints’, Ladner was the Presider and she was joined by the Rev. Brian Vickers, Regional Dean of Richmond/Delta and Rector of St. Anne’s, Steveston; and Archbishop Douglas Hambidge, retired Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster (1980 – 1993) and Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon (1981 – 1993). Archbishop Hambidge gave the homily.

As the service began, Rev. Vickers announced that the cremated remains in the memorial garden and the plaques marking those remains will be moved in their entirety to a site at St. Anne’s, Steveston and that a liturgy will be celebrated when the remains are placed at their new location (reception of the cremated remains with prayers and reflection took place at St. Anne’s on Saturday, November 4). Following that announcement, worship began with this Opening Prayer led by Archdeacon Northcott:

“We who are gathered here know that this building, which has been consecrated and set apart for the ministry of Gods holy Word and Sacraments, will no longer be used in this way, but will be used for other purposes.

To many of us this building has been hallowed by cherished memories, and we know that some of us will suffer a sense of loss. We pray that they will be comforted by the knowledge that the presence of God is not tied to any place or building. It is the intention of the diocese that the congregation that worshipped



St. Edward’s, Bridgeport in 1959. PHOTO Courtesy of the Anglican Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster/Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon



Archbishop Hambidge and Ann Lysholm. PHOTO Brian Vickers

here will not be deprived of the ministry of Word and Sacrament.”

Following the reading of the Bishop’s Declaration, the Collect, prayers, a hymn and the Gospel, *John 15: 12–17*, Archbishop Hambidge spoke—remembering some of the stories of the past, prompting people to giggle in the pews but his reflection also led to a number of eyes welled up with tears. Archbishop Hambidge’s sermon notes were kindly forwarded to diocesan communications and they are as follows:

“We have to be very specific as to why we’re here today.

St. Edward’s Church’s activities have come to an end. We take our leave of it. We honour, remember and celebrate the past. Most especially we give thanks to God for his faithfulness through the years

We remember faithful pastors and priests who served here: John Reuss, Cap Cummings, and a host of others. We think of wardens and parish councils, organists and choirs. We recall the faithful people who have worshipped here—the ones we have known—the ones who touched our lives for good.

Children Baptized here.

Couples Married here.

Loved ones buried from here.

We’ve broken the bread and shared the wine here. We have heard the Word of God read and expounded, we’ve sung and prayed here. We’ve known good times and bad. We’ve faced problems—solving some, failing to solve others. St. Edwards has meant a lot to many people over the years. These are the kind of things we are remembering and celebrating today, here in these so familiar surroundings.

Yet as we look back we realize that all our memories and associations are about relationships—they’re about people, and nothing can ever take them away. None of it is lost. Just as in every other aspect of life we build relationships which we carry with us forever, even though we move on into new situations, and establish new relationships, so now, we turn this building over for other purposes, and we go on to life as we are living now. Because this building is, and always will be, special, we preserve its memory as a special place that can never be spoiled or misused. That’s what “secularizing” means. It may or may not ever be a church again—it will always be a church in our memories. For that we give thanks to God.”

There was more time for prayer led by former parishioner, Ann Lysholm and there were roses distributed as everyone who had gathered departed the building.

There was a lot of picture taking both inside and outside and a congenial atmosphere of conversation as folks prepared to make their ways home. There was a strong feeling of satisfaction that this liturgy had been celebrated and that time and energy had been spent to recognize the work and ministry now a part of the past.

The sale of the building to a Chinese language school for youngsters has successfully completed. St. Edward’s was blessed with a very robust Sunday School cohort during the 1960s and 1970s; it is safe to assume that the voices of children will again fill the space. ✠

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

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

Deadline for Topic Submissions
December 22 for the February 2018 issue
& January 19 for the March 2018 issue





St. Stephen's, West Vancouver: The Rev. Janice Lowell blesses the pets with cedar boughs and Holy water. PHOTO David Fung



St. Stephen's, West Vancouver: A number of doggies have collected near the Font by the chancel entrance for blessing. PHOTO David Fung

St. Stephen's, West Vancouver
SUBMISSION Hilary Clark
On Sunday, October 1, St. Stephen's, West Vancouver celebrated St. Francis of Assisi's Feast Day by following in his footsteps, and blessing the animals. Led by guest priest, the Rev. Janice Lowell, Associate Priest at appropriately, St. Francis-in-the-Wood, many parishioners brought their pets for God's blessing. And amazingly well behaved they all were!
It was a warm and inclusive service with a lot of humour and obvious joy among the animals. The choir capped the service by performing *The Blessing of St. Francis* by Rick Simpson under the direction of Minister of Music, Dr. Annabelle Paetsch, as the Communion Hymn. Afterwards, the pets were given treats, and the congregation tea, coffee and sweets. ✦

Pet Blessing Reports for 2017

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi on October 4 remains one of the more popular (and observed) of the Saint's Days in the Anglican Church. There has been an increasing trend around the diocese of New Westminster to transfer this Feast Day to the closest Sunday, and in 2017, the Sunday was October 1.
A number of parishes in our diocese included pet blessings

within the context of the principal Sunday morning Celebration of Eucharist although some added a service later in the afternoon.
Many thanks for these submissions from: St. Stephen's, West Vancouver; St. Mary's, Kerrisdale; All Saints, Mission; and St. Catherine's, Capilano.

St. Mary's, Kerrisdale
SUBMISSION Kimberly Blair
St. Mary's had a blast on Sunday, October 1, celebrating the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi and participating in the annual pet blessing.
Pets and *stuffies* alike were blessed, and it was a joy to have them in church.

A special thank you to all the owners who brought them in, and a super big thank you to Glen Mitchell who took photographs.
Check out the full photo album on our Facebook page at <https://tinyurl.com/yctfow5q>. ✦



St. Mary's, Kerrisdale: Two strawberry blondes at the Pet Blessing. PHOTO Glen Mitchell



St. Mary's, Kerrisdale: Puppy and baby. PHOTO Glen Mitchell



St. Mary's, Kerrisdale: Ready for a blessing. PHOTO Glen Mitchell



St. Mary's, Kerrisdale: Peek-a-boo. PHOTO Glen Mitchell



All Saints', Mission: The Rev. Paul Bowie blesses a beloved pet. PHOTO Courtesy of Gilli McLaren



All Saints', Mission: LEFT Sheroo receives a blessing. RIGHT Mohit, Sheroo and the author. PHOTOS Courtesy of Gilli McLaren



All Saints', Mission

SUBMISSION Gilli McLaren

Gilli's coverage of the Pet Blessing at All Saints' is within the context and format of a letter to his granddaughter, who is now attending the University of BC (UBC), the ten month old Samoyed, Sheroo is her special friend.

Dear D,

Yesterday was the feast of St. Francis Assisi — patron saint of “birds and beasts.” We decided to take your Sheroo to church for the Pet Blessing. While all the other dogs sat properly with their owners in the pew, with sanctimonious piety, some in laps and others beside their owners, Sheroo just made a nuisance of himself. Eventually your dad had to drag him away to sit at the back of the Church in the last pew.

During hymn singing, Sheroo and some of his friends decided to join in, much to the consternation of the congregation. I think a few, probably belonging to a different denominational tradition, kept barking their “Amen’s” several times while the intercessory prayers were being said, unlike the Anglicans who are disciplined to say “Amen” only at the end.

During the sermon he kept interrupting, though I could not figure out whether he was agreeing or disagreeing with what the Rev. Bowie was saying.

There was a poignant moment when our priest invited the people to come forward and write on slips of paper the names of their pets, who had gone to “doggie heaven.” Your grandmother walked up and tearfully wrote the names of *Quito* and *Champy*. Afterwards the priest said a prayer for the departed, whom we had loved and who brought so much joy into our lives.

I can't say Sheroo either understood the power of the moment or the purpose of the brief memorial.

He did walk up to the altar, with as much dignity and poise as a tight leash would allow, receiving the blessing. Nevertheless our hopes that he might be converted were not realized, because nothing whatsoever has changed at home.

I think the only redemption is to find out if we can have an exorcism rite, hoping that that will get the “Devil” out of him!!

I was wondering about the etymology of the word “pet?” I found that it has Scottish origins dating back to the 16th century. It means a domestic or tamed animal kept for companionship; a person treated with special favor that others may regard as unfair; to treat someone affectionately; an indulged child; in 1530 the word “pet” meant an animal companion.

Sheroo in his short stay of ten months has become our affectionate companion; we enjoy his antics, indulge in him, and attribute to him human traits and characteristics that make us smile and fill our hearts with joy and happiness. And he in turn gives to us unconditional love. How wonderful it is when he welcomes us home with hugs and licks.

We miss you and look forward to being together with you soon.

Love and blessings
Dada (Grandfather in Urdu) ✦



St. Catherine's, Capilano: LEFT A baby seal stuffie and live terrier await a blessing. RIGHT Hymn singing. PHOTOS Wayne Chose



St. Catherine's, Capilano: Some canine activity during the Rev. Sharon Salomon's proclaiming of the Gospel. PHOTO Wayne Chose



St. Catherine's, Capilano: LEFT Participation in Holy Communion. RIGHT Receiving a blessing from the Rev. Keith Gilbert. PHOTOS Wayne Chose



OPINION

Christmas Memories

On October 11, 2017, the day that the November issue of Topic went to print, an email was sent to a number of people, all of whom had submitted written material to Topic during 2017. The email contained the following request: “Please jot down a Christmas memory, it can be happy or sad, spiritual or not but something that has really stuck with you over time... or may have happened recently.” The suggested word count was 150–250, however those numbers were presented as a suggestion and not as a condition. Happily, a number of Topic contributors responded and here are the eclectic results of that post-Harvest Thanksgiving request. • Editor

A Very Special Christmas
Paula Porter Leggett

I remember a very special Christmas long ago, when I was living in an intentional Christian household off Cheeseman Park in Denver, Colorado. A blizzard came into town the morning of December 24. Businesses closed down by noon. Come the evening, an incredible quiet settled over the neighbourhood. Everything was covered with snow, and in the crisp air it sparkled as if tiny Christmas lights were scattered everywhere. We got our snow shovels out and wandered the streets helping people clear off their cars. We helped push some folks who were stuck in the road, and others to get from their parking space into the street. The cheer and ready smiles, expressions of delight in the snow and silence, made it an evening to remember. We piled into the old VW van and made our way through the snow to our home church to celebrate Midnight Mass, feeling that God was very close to all that night. ✦

One of Life’s Unforgettable Memories
of a Mingled Sound & Feeling
Herbert O’Driscoll

It’s about 5 am, maybe 5:30. Time doesn’t matter. It’s Christmas morning, 1938. My brother and I—he’s four years younger—share a double bed. At the ripe old age of ten I’m getting a bit agnostic about Santa, but only a bit. Still feels a little risky not to believe. Like the chap in the Bible, I’m at the I-believe-forgive-my-unbelief-stage. My brother is still a believer. One of us wakes; then wakes the other. The room is still dark; we move our feet very, very tentatively under the bedclothes. We feel the weight of gifts and hear the sound of things rattling slightly in unseen boxes. O joy! O wonder! Excitement beyond measure! Here I am just beyond my 89th birthday and that incomparable excitement comes across all those decades! Must check with my brother, now in Nova Scotia. After all, he’s still four years younger than I. Wonder if he’s still a believer. Writing this has made me a believer again.

Happy Christmas! ✦



A Christmas Gift Through a Turkey
Hilary Clark

Over coffee, after a fitness class, between Christmas and New Year’s, a friend and I began talking about our respective Christmases. I had previously told her about the special turkey my chef-trained son was preparing, called “turducken” that involved boning a turkey, a duck and a Cornish game hen, putting one inside the other, binding the three together, and roasting it. She mentioned that her son had had “turducken” as leftovers on Boxing Day, and she was sure that there were not too many families on the North Shore who would be enjoying this exotic preparation. She rightly guessed that our two sons must be friends. We both checked this out and found that unbeknownst to us, they had been friends since grade school. Delving a little further, we learned that they both were born on the same day (although a year apart). She asked me where the family name originated, and I mentioned Canso, Nova Scotia. She replied that so had her family been born there, and that we had better look into the family trees. When we did, we discovered that we had a common great aunt, which made our two sons distant cousins! Quite a gift from a curious recipe for a Christmas turkey. ✦



A Merry Little Christmas
Lyndon Grove, ODNW

Radio stations are never short on stress, and as Christmas approaches, the stress levels rise dangerously near meltdown. But, there’s still fun. At the Saskatchewan station where long ago I pretended to work, the copywriters hung mistletoe over their office door. Some of those writers would still be grinding out commercials at 4 pm on Christmas Eve. But, as the greatly missed Jack Wasserman used to say, that’s not the item. This is a memory—slightly tarnished and maybe cracked, like a 50 year old tree ornament—of two parties, both broadcast, one on Christmas Eve, the other on Christmas Day. The Christmas Day show was a recording of the staff party in mid-December, at which each person was required to perform, solo or as part of a group. As the host and M/C I had the least embarrassing role and took a certain wicked pleasure in having a staid station accountant and a severe senior secretary sing *Baby, It’s Cold Outside*. A week later, a production crew would drive through the snow to Indian Head, east of Regina, later one of the settings for the television series *Little Mosque on the Prairie*. We were going to a party for children at the Orange Benevolent Home, an institution founded for children without families or whose families were unable to care for them. There were entertainments and gifts and a luncheon, which, I suppose, could have been called festive, and while the children seemed well looked after, there was a Dickensian sadness about the scene. The children’s faces seemed older than they were. I walked around the room with a microphone and talked with as many as I could. They would hear their voices on the air on Christmas Eve. At the end of the afternoon, sky already dark at 4 pm, we packed up the equipment and said goodbye. It was a quiet drive back to the city, all of us conscious of the homes we would be going to, and wishing we might have been able to give those children more than a bag of candy or a toy car. They would be middle-aged now, with families, one hopes, of their own. And, my December prayer, perhaps their Christmases are merrier. A worn Christmas ornament of memory, one side merry, one side blue; a decoration that appears on the tree each year. ✦

An Antarctica Christmas
Tom Esakin

December 25, 2011. A Christmas lived by me witnessing the pure beauty of God’s pristine creation in Antarctica. Aboard a former NOAA research ship, in the morning we landed on the Antarctic continent at Neko Harbour on Andvord Bay and observed all of Adélie and Gentoo penguins, a so-called Penguin Highway, plus a Skua in flight while hiking up a nearby hill. In the late afternoon we arrived at Orne Harbour and observed Chinstrap penguins and both Crabeater and Weddell seals. The day ended with us observing a group of Humpback whales feeding in the Northern end of Gerlache Strait. A Christmas day and overall trip that humbled me at the curiosity of animals yet taught to fear humans, the unparalleled awesome beauty of a land mostly untouched by human impact, and the sheer power of hurricane force winds and waves in a stormy Antarctic Ocean. Thanks be to God, my bucket-list was completed. ✦



OPINION

A DIY Christmas

Randy Murray

My younger sister loves to perform. And as much as she loves performing she loves to tell other people what to do even more. What better career path to become a dance teacher, director and performing arts school owner - yes, you guessed it — that is what she has done for all of her adult life.

Our parents were also very much involved in the arts. Our mother was a Royal Academy of Ballet instructor, our father a skilled baritone, voice teacher (at age 85 he continues to teach) and choral music leader and both of them were heavily involved in community and semi-professional theatre. Our parents were also not what we might currently refer to as DIY folks, although my mother admittedly did do some sewing for a few years. Our father knows just enough about tools to be considered dangerous (sorry dad!) but that didn't stop them from embarking on the construction of a Christmas gift that 50 years later I vividly remember. And the best part is, it wasn't for me.

The item began as three sheets of 3' x 5' light plywood, some hinges, some cloth, wallpaper and other components that the sands of time have blasted from my memory. With less than a week to go before Santa's visit my parents became Santa's elves, working at night after my sister (who was not always cooperative about bedtimes) had fallen asleep, assembling the aforementioned

materials into some sort of construction. They connected the three sheets with hinges, cut a large rectangular opening in the middle sheet, sewed together the cloth to make curtains which were attached to either side of the space and decorated the remainder of the plywood sheet's exposed surface areas with wallpaper and other shiny, decorative design elements.

On Christmas Eve, the final touches were applied and on Christmas morning my sister emerged from her room, walked into the living room and there illuminated by the glow of lights on the Christmas tree and the fireplace mantle display she beheld... a custom-built puppet theatre.

She was ecstatic! Needless to say, it was a very popular addition to my sister's day-to-day existence. Mr. Punch, Judy, Barbie, Skipper, Ken, Raggedy Ann and perhaps a pet or two became actors in the series of performances presented in the rectangular opening of the puppet theatre that was assembled with so much love (and a dash or two of frustration). After just the right amount of time, the wallpaper began to peel, the curtains frayed, the hinges straining against the screws in the plywood began to shift and the whole thing became unsteady. It was retired and stored in a garden shed until the day its wood was repurposed or discarded... I can't remember which. As I reflect on this I remember the old adage:

"Give someone a fish and feed them for a day, teach them to fish and feed them for a lifetime!"



Christmas at Nineteen

Barbara M. Brown

The Christmas I was 19, in second year of my nursing program, I found myself on F flat, the men's public medical ward. Along with an orderly worth his weight in gold, I was in sole charge of the 20 patients too ill to leave for Christmas.

One of my patients was Michael, an 18 year old dying of metastatic bone cancer. No medical treatment existed; chemotherapy was decades away and surgery was never a possibility.

Michael came from a large farm family, which could no longer care for him at home. In the gathering chill of autumn he had been admitted here, to Winnipeg General Hospital. His family was far away, on a snowbound farm, unable to visit.

Usually dying patients were segregated in private rooms. I suspect Michael had been left in the large ward to give him the company of the other men. And from his bed Michael had a perfect view of the live fir tree in the centre of the room. We left the coloured lights on through the night.

As the weeks went on, Michael endured intractable pain. We could no longer turn him to provide skin care, and offer the brief comfort of a change of position. The slightest movement could result in a spontaneous bone fracture.

The night shift came on duty at 11:30 pm, took reports and made rounds. I found Michael in extremis; he would lapse into semi-coma and awaken moments later crying in pain. "Help me, help me," were the only words he could speak, tears rolling down his cheeks.

I did something students were never allowed to do. I phoned Michael's resident physician. Not the supervisor or the intern — the resident. And he came to examine Michael.

In the 1950s, administration of narcotics was nearly akin to the ritual of Holy Communion. The rite included the cleaning of a silver tray and a spoon in which morphine tablets were melted in a few CCs of water sterilized in an apparatus holding the spoon over a tiny flame.

The resident wrote new orders: "Morphine, prn." PRN: pro re nata — for emergency as needed. This meant Michael could be given any reasonable amount of morphine as often as he asked for it. No restrictions. The resident looked me in the eye and asked if I understood? I did, completely. He asked if I had any problems with the order? I did not.

The visit of a resident physician at midnight meant that a death was imminent. A silence settled over the ward. And at midnight, 1, 2 and 3 am I went through the ritual of preparing Michael's morphine — the discreet clamour of the narcotic keys, the diminutive "plink" of the tablet in the spoon.

Shortly after 3 am, Michael's breathing changed to the end stages of Cheyne-Stokes respirations and then stopped. The orderly and I stood silently beside him for a little while and then quietly encircled his bed with screens.

The other patients gradually resumed their familiar nocturnal habits. Slowly the sounds began — the cough, the slap of water glasses on bedside tables, the clink of urinals being replaced. The Christmas tree continued to glow.

More Christmas Memories
on pages 18 & 19...

Neither Snow, Nor Rain

Jane Dittrich

To borrow a bit from the US Postal Services' creed, "neither snow, nor rain..." I reflect back to Christmas Eve of 2008, when Vancouver experienced record amounts of snowfall. This slogan rang true at Christ Church Cathedral that snowy afternoon and evening as people were resolute to make their way to December 24 services, despite all of the walking, transiting and driving challenges. At each of the four services, there were leaders, greeters, musicians and guests who were scheduled to participate, who were simply unable to safely make it due to the inclement weather conditions. But for the crowds who did, there was such a heightened sense of Christmas spirit, teamwork, community and seasonal joy. Building staff and volunteers intrepidly shoveled snow non-stop outside of the Cathedral entrances throughout the day and eve. Upon greeting them, countless parishioners and visitors shared with myself and other welcomers that they had spent as many as five hours getting to our Cathedral as their Christmas would have felt incomplete otherwise. Joy to the World!

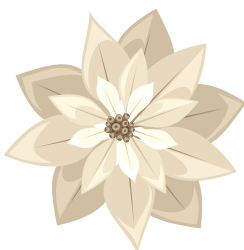


A Partner For Worship

Michiko Tatchell, ODNW

When I officially became a senior citizen this summer, I realized that something was missing in my faith life. My husband! We've been going to two separate churches for the last seven years. So, I made a kind of retirement move to my husband's mother church. On one Sunday, I met three girls, the children of a couple we've known for years. Their father is a faithful warden at the church. I haven't seen them for years, especially, the youngest daughter, Olivia, who was not yet born when I first met their parents at the church. She's going to be 14 this year and already taller than her mother. I clearly remember how cute she was in an angel's costume at the Christmas Pageant when she was three or four. This Christmas, I will embrace our family gathering time more than ever and I will simply say "Thank you" to the Lord, our God, for giving me a partner to worship Him together.

Merry Christmas!!





Christmas Prayer
Margaret Marquardt

Jesus, born among us in humility,
lived a life of courage in God, in humility,
never pointing to self,
rather to the God of generosity
who always welcomed everyone.
This one died in humility
facing the rulers and powers of the country,
who did not welcome or desire to share power, or land, or
the fruits of the earth.
In a power that holds creation in awe, God found a way
to bring the beauty of Jesus' life among us again in humility.
And so we know a God who is among us
and for us, alongside us
and encouraging us to live this humility as children of
justice and compassion and courage.
At Christmas, we pray for such humility
in seeing Christ in the other,
and living for God.
Creator God, maker of worlds, generous One;
Child of God, You who show us the welcoming table,
finder of lost ones and healer of broken ones;
Sustainer, builder of community,
spirit of sharing, compeller of justice;
Fill us with your life.
Embrace us in your love.
Bind us together in your Spirit.
Amen ✦



Christmas Memories

...continued from pages 16 & 17.

The Night Before Christmas
Jennifer Ewing

Christmas is a time filled with so many memories — mostly happy, some sad — but always they are filled with family, friends, food and books.

Over the years Christmas Eve has sparked many traditions, mostly to do with food from my father's French Canadian background. The evening is full of friends and family, a lot of laughter, and a hearty meal of homemade Tourtière (meat pie) served with spicy ketchup and glasses of wine (cider for the kids).

Once our Christmas Eve meal is complete and the desserts are dished out, another tradition that was started early in my childhood, and passed onto my younger brother and now onto his son, begins...

We read the book *The Night Before Christmas* by Clement C. Moore. The story is never read the same way twice.

Often, it is read aloud with laughter and humour, passed from person-to-person, each reading a page in various voices.

Sometimes, it is read quietly to a gathering of sleepy, pajama clad children.

Once or twice, it has been read with sadness, when we missed the voices of loved ones that were no longer with us.

Always, it is a lasting memory that brings the family together.

Hopefully, it will be a tradition that continues on for many more years. ✦

Christmas in Boston
Karl Przywala

In 2001, while at theological college in Australia (St. Mark's, Canberra), I spent the Christmas vacation in Boston, Massachusetts (Christmas in midsummer just doesn't feel right). I stayed at St. Margaret's Episcopal Convent in Roxbury (since sadly closed).

As well as worshipping with the Sisters in their excellent chapel, I attended services at Trinity Church, Copley Square. This has one of the largest congregations in the Episcopal Church and a fine building dating back to when the renowned preacher Phillips Brooks was Rector (1869–1891).

The 7:30 pm Christmas Eve service at Trinity was packed — I had to clamber over a pew divider to get a seat. Afterwards, the people already there thanked me for "sharing our pew" with them...

As Christmas Day and Boxing Day (St. Stephen's Day) are "major festivals," the Sisters (and I) were able to speak during the meals — something for which I was grateful (much more festive).

In 2014, I stopped off in Boston en route to taking up my position at Holy Trinity, Vancouver. I was due to fly on January 6 (this is an Epiphany rather than Christmas tale) but winter weather put paid to that.

I headed back into town and had an enjoyable lunch at the top of the Prudential Center, overlooking Copley Square (and the rest of Boston). When I came to pay, I pointed out that I hadn't been charged for my drink, and was told that a lady at another table (who had since left) had paid for it; wearing a clerical collar sometimes pays dividends! ✦



The Waifs & Strays Christmas Lunch
Robin Ruder-Celiz

I stood and stared at the schedule posted on the wall hardly believing my eyes. There it was, as plain as day. I was schedule to work the evening shift from 3 pm – 11 pm on Christmas Day. It had been a busy few weeks and season on the orthopaedic ward of Kelowna General Hospital. The ward was full and while we were trying to discharge as many people home as we could, I realized that there still would be a significant number of people needing care.

As I was reconciling myself to work Christmas I realized I had no set plans for Christmas Day, nor could I really make any. While I was scheduled to work from 3 pm, there was still Christmas Morning up to the time I would need to leave for work. Almost everyone I knew in town would be getting settled into their usual Christmas traditions with friends and family.

During one conversation with a choir member, which inevitably turned to, "So, what are you doing for Christmas?" I explained that

I had to work. Without hesitation she invited me over for lunch with her and her husband. She explained that she was hosting a "Waifs and Strays Christmas Lunch" for anyone who would be in town, with no family or set plans. I happily accepted.

When I arrived at the house on Christmas Day I was welcomed by many friends and people from the Cathedral. I was surprised to see so many people who were in a similar position as me, essentially alone on Christmas, with family out of town or with other commitments that prevented us from participating in our usual Christmas Day traditions. It was a great time with laughter and fellowship. For the remaining years I lived in Kelowna, the "Waifs and Strays Christmas Lunch" became a new tradition for me. As I reflect back on that lunch it serves as a reminder of what really is important at Christmas. Beyond the shopping and business that Christmas brings, Christmas is about finding the Holy with friends and family and allowing God to be born in community. ✦

OPINION



Another Journey Story Sheila Johnston

Christmas starts with the journey of Joseph and Mary, as they head home. One Christmas, in the 1960s, I was enjoying the anticipation of Christmas, and especially the imminent arrival of my Grandmother. Jessie lived in London, Ontario, and we lived in Stratford, Ontario. It was a 45 minute ride on the Via Rail train. What could go wrong? “Snowmageddon” happened. The train had slowed to a crawl. My Dad and I paced the platform, for what seemed like hours, peering down the rails that were obscured by swirling snow, hoping to see Granny’s train hove into sight. Finally the train arrived. Finally we hugged and bade each other “Merry Christmas.” A short ride in the car brought her to our warm home, and her Christmas journey was over.

One Christmas, in the 1970s, I was again enjoying, with anticipation, our family Christmas in Stratford. My brother John was at the University of Toronto, but he had promised he’d get on a Via Rail train, travel the 90 minutes to get home, and be with us on Christmas Eve. What could go wrong? “Snowzilla” this time. Somewhere between the BIG CITY and our small city, the snow forced his train to come to a full stop. “Everyone stay put!” the conductor instructed. Ignoring this advice, my daring brother walked through the night, walked through the storm, until early on Christmas morning, covered in snow, he arrived home in time for breakfast. His Christmas journey was at an end. I wonder... will this Christmas bring another journey story? ✦

A Christmas Conversion Neale Adams

The Christmas I remember was during my undergraduate years at a small New England College. It was Christmas of my third year, and for once I had decided not to go home — 1,000 miles to Florida — for the holiday. Part of the reason was money — I was really short and couldn’t afford the airfare and my family was stretched also — but the other reason was I just wanted to avoid all the hassle of family life. My mother was especially disappointed, but I’d certainly see her in late spring, and I just didn’t want to go. I was perfectly happy living on the mostly vacant campus, catching up with my work and spending some time to read what I liked.

I was a pretty faithful church attender at College and went occasionally to a discussion group led by one of the College’s chaplains (the College had chaplains back then). I decided to go to the Christmas Eve service traditionally held in the College chapel attended mostly by townspeople and the College’s staff. I arrived a bit late

and heard the sound of a Christmas carol. I looked through the door and saw candles lined the pews and it looked lovely. But I thought: most of the Christmas story is myth. Christianity in the main is myth. I’m a young intellectual student. I don’t have to put up with any of this nonsense. I’m going to be an atheist! So I didn’t enter by went back out into the night. It was one of those lovely clear and crisp winter nights. Recently fallen snow had made everything clean. I felt light headed and delighted — as free as ever I have.

Needless to say, the feeling didn’t last long. I just couldn’t stay an unbeliever. Through the slog of winter — the harsh and cold January and February days, and the dirty melting snow of March and April — I drifted back. My conversion to atheism failed me. I started praying again, returning to regular church attendance, returning to the Confession and Absolution every week. Christianity was just too much a part of my life. An atheist would say I backslid. I would just quote him *Psalm 139*. ✦



The Doctor Who Wrote a Bestseller

HERBERT O’DRISCOLL
Retired Priest of the diocese of Calgary; Former Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver & Dean of the diocese of New Westminster

Dante called Luke, “The Scribe of Jesus’ Gentleness” and the title is richly deserved. To meet Luke we go to Antioch, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. The year is 66 CE Luke is in his early to mid-60s...

When the letter arrived, hastened by courier from Rome, he knew even before breaking the seal the news that it was bringing him. Still, when he did bring himself to read it, it was no less saddening. Paul was dead.

He had already heard of the disintegration of political life in Rome, all brought about by the viciousness of Nero. To cap it all, a fire had started in the slums, devouring much of the city; following which the growing Christian community had become the scapegoat. In the last few months he had heard of the deaths of many friends. Now death had ended the great friendship of his life.

He began to reminisce. He and Saul, as he then called himself, had met in the university in Tarsus; Luke himself from Syria, trying to decide if he really wished to do medicine, Saul quite certain he would do Jewish Law.

He had often wondered how in the world their friendship had begun, much less lasted. They had been utterly different. He himself easy going, sensitive, open to the world and to people: Saul, restless, intense, argumentative.

More memories came. In those days a group in the university was forming around the teaching of a rabbi from Galilee who had been recently executed by the Romans. Back then Luke had found it difficult to understand what the community meant when they claimed Jesus of Nazareth was somehow alive among them. Only when he himself had later become one of the community did this begin to make sense to him.

Saul on the other hand had been adamantly against the group. He would never forget the day he told Saul he had become a follower of the rabbi of Nazareth. Curtly Saul had declared their friendship ended. He had been devastated.

They didn’t meet for a decade. He heard of Saul’s becoming an implacable enemy of the Jesus movement. He recalled taking the risk of seeking out Saul, trying desperately to reason with him. The encounter had been painful in the extreme and had ended in utter failure. A few months later he had been appalled at being told that his old friend had actually hounded a young Christian leader named Stephen to his death.

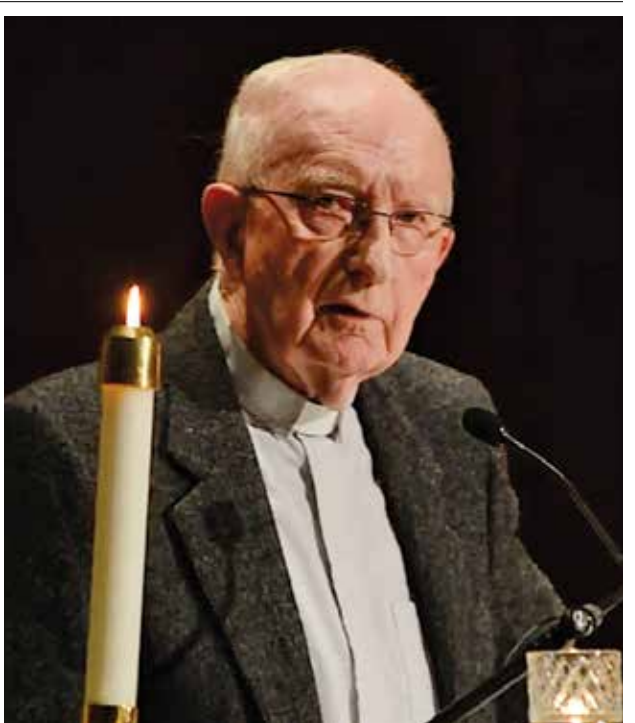
Then out of the blue he had received the unbelievable news that Saul had had a complete and astonishing change of heart. At first he had dismissed the news as wishful thinking in the Christian community. When it persisted he again sought Saul out. This time he could not believe the difference in what he found. Saul claimed to have had a direct experience of the presence of Jesus of Nazareth. He even refused to bear the name Saul anymore, declaring himself ready to become the champion of the Christian movement. This he would do as Paul of Tarsus.

Everything had changed. Their friendship had rekindled. Paul gave the community a much larger vision of the significance of Jesus and of what he could mean for the world. The movement had grown exponentially.

But now Paul was dead, executed by a lunatic who wielded ultimate power as Emperor. In his grief the letter fell from Luke’s hand to the floor. He leaned down to pick up and in that moment, in a kind of blinding flash he discovered what he had to do with the rest of his life. He would become chronicler of all that was happening in the new Christian movement.

Yes, John Mark and Matthew had written manuscripts but, by background and his extensive travels he would write for Greeks and Romans and Syrians like himself. He, Luke, could write about Jesus for the empire.

And so Luke did. As evangelist, physician, historian, he has given us an incomparable record of Jesus’ compas-



The Rev. Dr. Herbert O’Driscoll. PHOTO Randy Murray

sion, of his wisdom, of his gift of healing, of his death on the Cross and of his rising. For over 2,000 years humanity has been in Luke’s debt, and will be so as long as men and women seek the grace and love of the Man of Nazareth.

Perhaps most important of all is a gift that Luke alone has given us. It may have come from his meeting Jesus’ mother, by then in her mature years. Perhaps it is from that conversation that Luke could give us the incomparable language with which we express to this day the beauty, wonder and majesty of the season we will soon call Christmas. ✦

AROUND THE DIOCESE

• St. Hilda's Celebrates Back to Church & Record Pie Sales •

• Back to Church • Triple Celebration •
SUBMISSION Janet McIntosh

The Parish of Sechelt's St. Hilda's-by-the-Sea held a triple celebration on Sunday, September 10. Morning services were combined and held at Porpoise Bay Provincial Park under cloudy skies that kept the rain to themselves. Rector, the Rev. Clarence Li and deacon, the Rev. Bruce Morris led the outdoor service while parishioners arranged themselves on folding chairs and blankets. Music Director, Katherine Hume created a beautiful ensemble of wind and percussion instruments to accompany the vocals. Invitation cards were available for handing out in advance and other user groups of St. Hilda's, such as the Drumming Circle, were invited to attend.

A portable sound system powered by batteries was set up allowing participants an excellent audio experience. A nametag table with some guessing games and *Get to Know You* bingo got everyone mixing in a variety of languages from English to French to Chinese. Following the service, the baptism of Suzanne was held on the beach of the Sechelt Inlet at the park. After changing into swim trunks and sandals for the immersion baptism in the inlet, Rev.

Clarence and Deacon Bruce conducted this emotionally moving ceremony with Suzanne surrounded by family and friends supporting her commitment to Jesus Christ.

Once Suzanne, Rev. Clarence and Deacon Bruce dried off, the day was completed with a potluck picnic lunch, drumming led by Terry (Coyote) Aleck, and several games of bocce ball. For some participants this was their introduction to the ancient game. ✦



A Ray of Light illuminates an empty chair during the outdoor worship at Porpoise Bay Provincial Park. PHOTO David Moul



Drumming. PHOTO David Moul



The Baptism of Suzanne. PHOTO David Moul

• ACW Pie Sale a Huge Success • Any Way You Slice It •
SUBMISSION Amelia Foster

After months of preparation, the bakers of St. Hilda's (about 20 women and men) produced 190 pies for sale at the annual event held this year on Saturday, October 7 (Many more than previous years). They were all sold within two hours, the fastest time ever and a record \$2,600 was collected.

The Anglican Church Women (ACW) will be able to disburse the funds to a variety of worthy initiatives both locally and overseas. Locally, monies will go towards Christmas Hampers, the Food Bank, Salva-

tion Army, Hospice, and to the Rector's discretionary fund. Internationally, the ACW will gift to the Stephen Lewis Foundation, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), and to Ndandini Village in Kenya where St. Hilda's has an ongoing presence helping with secondary school scholarships.

Not only were the ACW happy with the sale, they were happy to hear that they bake some of the best pies on the Coast. ✦



Group shot of the Thanksgiving Pie Sale crew. PHOTO David Moul



Picking the perfect "pumpkin." PHOTO David Moul



Unusual for Topic but this is not a cake. PHOTO David Moul

• Walk for PWRDF •

SUBMISSION Janet Coghlan

On Saturday October 7, a group from St. John the Divine, Maple Ridge (The Divine Dashers!) and St. Laurence, Coquitlam got together and walked 5 km in Pitt Meadows to raise money for the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF).

They were not able to participate in the

Ride for Refuge this year on September 30, so they did this instead.

It was a beautiful walk along the Fraser River, the rain kept off and they enjoyed refreshments and fellowship afterwards!

The combined total raised was \$804. ✦



• St. Bart's Mincemeat •

SUBMISSION Sheila Carlson

There was a great work party held in October to make the St. Bart's World Famous Mincemeat.

Betty Brown originally prepared this heritage mincemeat in the 1970s when her husband, the Rev. David Hugh Plunkett Brown, became the rector of St. Aidan and St. Bartholemew, Gibsons (1971–1980). There was a "hiatus" sometime during the 1980s, but the recipe was revived in time for the 1991 Christmas bazaar, and has been used yearly ever since. Long-time parishioner, Irene Earle amended the recipe at that time, to leave out the fat (what, no suet??),

but not the alcohol!

The mincemeat recipe is a closely guarded secret of dried fruits, spices and pounds and pounds of apples, plus the aforementioned alcohol. It is always made at least six weeks before the Christmas sale, lovingly stirred weekly by the gentlemen of the parish, and featured for sale at the *Christmas Food Fare*.

The *Fare* this year was held November 18 and although this writing in mid-October is long before the sale we will assume that as in past years the mincemeat was very popular and sold out quickly. ✦



AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Giving Thanks for Jonathan's Ministry •

SUBMISSION Hilary Clark

A celebratory cake in thanks for the Rev. Jonathan LLOYD's first year as rector of St. Stephen's, West Vancouver was served following the principal worship on October 15. During his homily, Rev. LLOYD reviewed his first year in West Vancouver and affirmed how happy he is to be at St. Stephen's.

As October 18 was the closest Sunday to St. Luke's Day, Rev. LLOYD made reference to St. Luke and connected the theme of the Gospel to his ministry at St. Stephen's. ✠



PHOTOS Amanda Fung

The second annual vocation's day titled *Exploring God's Call* was held in the Trendell Lounge, the bright, spacious room shared by St. John's, Shaughnessy and the Synod of the diocese of New Westminster from 10 am to 2 pm on Saturday, October 21, 2017.

Exploring God's Call is a principal step toward the diocesan goal of actively promoting vocations to diaconal and priestly ministry. This active promotion aligns with our desire as Christian people to be faithful servants of the Lord, ensuring that all those who sense a call have the opportunity to explore and discern that call potentially leading to ordained ministry.

The event was hosted by: Bishop Melissa Skelton; the Ven. Bruce Morris, Archdeacon for Deacons, and a deacon at St. Hilda's, Sechelt; the Rev. Sharon Salomons, Director for Diaconal Formation for the diocese of New Westminster, and assistant interim priest at St. Catherine, Capilano; and the Ven. Elizabeth Northcott, Archdeacon of Westminster, and Rector of All Saints', Ladner. Also present were: deacon of the diocese, the Rev. Linda Varin; Senior Port Chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers, the Rev. Peter Smyth; newly ordained deacon of St. David and St. Paul, Powell River, the Rev. Ronald Berezan; and postulants, Juanita Clark of St. John, North Vancouver and Alecia Greenfield currently on a field placement at Christ Church Cathedral.

With this much expertise in the room, those who gathered to participate were in excellent company and the agenda for the day which included a keynote address from Bishop Skelton in the morning, a detailed description of the discernment process, and a panel discussion about the experience of divine call with panelists, Reverends Salomons, Smyth and Varin and postulant, Juanita Clark moderated by Archdeacon Morris, progressed through the four hours (with a lunch break) very smoothly.

There was also time for prayer, reflection, questions and small group discussions.

• Exploring God's Call 2017 •



LEFT The Rev. Sharon Salomons, Director for Diaconal Formation speaks about her "call". RIGHT Archdeacon Bruce Morris. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Panel. PHOTO Randy Murray

The penultimate agenda item was a small group discussion with the plenary forming four self-selected groups each with at least one facilitator and each discussing four questions:

1. What have you heard today so far that connects with your experience or energizes you?
2. What have you heard today that gives you pause?
3. What other questions do you have?
4. What if any next steps do you want to pursue?

All those who attended *Exploring God's Call* benefitted from the experience and the opportunity to explore the meaning of, and perhaps understand more deeply these words from Thomas Merton:

"Discovering Vocation does not mean scrambling toward some prize just beyond my reach but accepting the treasure of true self I already possess. Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be, to fulfill the original selfhood given me at birth by God." ✠

• Sunshine Coast Faith Community Stewardship Workshop •

SUBMISSION Heather Jeal

The Anglican Parish of St. Aidan and St. Bartholomew (St. Bart's) welcomed participants from St. Bart's, St. Hilda's-by-the-Sea, and Living Faith congregations to a Sunshine Coast Faith Community Stewardship Workshop presented by the Ven. Dr. Stephen Muir, Archdeacon of Capilano and Rector of St. Agnes, North Vancouver.

The workshop focused on developing a culture of leadership in our worship communities. This means inviting members of the congregation to take a more active role in parish activities, donating time and talents to various endeavours. This helps build relationships and friendships within the

faith community, while encouraging members to reach out with hospitality and care. One section that particularly stimulated discussion was stewardship "best practices." As we completed the questionnaire exercises, we realized that we could all be doing more to build our foundation—and in the discussion that followed, we discovered we weren't doing as badly with our resources as we thought. All of us felt there was work to be done to build our base, and all felt that this workshop provided good and useful tools to help us achieve that goal.

Participants were very grateful that the diocese of New Westminster have

contributed to developing this very condensed workshop—with start and end times dictated by the Sunshine Coast ferry schedule—so that all could attend easily and in comfort (Many are unaware that a workshop in Vancouver starting at 9 am requires Coast participants to be on the rise at 5 am to be on the 6:20 am ferry—the next sailing, at 8:20 am, is too late). In the midst of the very intensive information session, we stopped to enjoy hearty and delicious homemade soup prepared by Rev. Brian Heinrich's partner, Nathan Strijack. For this, too, we were very grateful! ✠



The Sunshine Coast Faith Community Stewardship Workshop Group Shot. PHOTO Heather Jeal

Ahoy there, landlubbers!

Mission to Seafarers needs your help... we are looking for donations of winter coats (men's size medium and large), mittens/gloves, and long sleeve shirts.

These winter clothes will be worn by those brave sailors who cross the frigid waters of the Pacific to bring us 90% of the goods we consume here in Canada.

Please contact us at 604.253.4421 to donate



Caring for Seafarers and their Families

604 253 4421
www.flyingangel.ca

Get on board with us

AROUND THE DIOCESE

• PWRDF Executive Director Visits 1410 •

Monday, October 23, 2017, was a fairly quiet day at the offices of the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster. Bishop Skelton was travelling to the House of Bishops and Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Douglas Fenton was at a clergy retreat; however, Peter Goodwin, Chair of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) Unit of the diocese brought a special guest to 1410 Nanton Avenue — PWRDF Executive Director, Will Postma.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, appointed William Postma on April 26, 2016. He replaced Adele Finney, who retired after 5 ½ years leading the Anglican Church's agency for emergency relief, refugees, development and justice.

Postma came to PWRDF from a long career in non-governmental organizations, including Save the Children Canada, World Vision, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and most recently Pathways to Education, where he was vice-president of programs and research.

The PWRDF Executive Director was



Will Postma and Peter Goodwin. PHOTO Randy Murray

en route from the diocese of Qu'apelle's Synod held the previous weekend to meetings in Victoria with the diocese of British Columbia. Mr. Postma took some time to have a tour of the building, chat with Director of Buildings and Finance, Rob Dickson and Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving, Glen Mitchell and pose for a picture with Peter Goodwin in the green space between the Synod Office and St. John's, Shaughnessy. ✚

• New Interior Signage for 1410 Nanton Avenue •

"Signs, Signs, everywhere there's signs," is the first line of the chorus of *Signs* the hit song recorded by Ottawa's Five Man Electrical Band in 1970. For some of us here at the Synod Office of a certain age, that refrain was going through our minds as we worked to arrange for the creation and installation of signage inside and outside of the building.

The sales, customer service, design and installation professionals from Innovative Signage of North Vancouver have been working with Synod Staff since mid-

September to create more than two dozen signs that will clearly identify the different areas and rooms at 1410 Nanton Avenue.

The installation began on October 24 and although there were some tweaks needed the installation wrapped up a week later on November 2.

Plans for exterior signage are also in the works and hopefully we will follow up with more information about that project in the January issue of *Topic*. ✚



LEFT The Conference Room sign, the space below is to enable the insertion of printed room use schedule information. RIGHT An installation professional from Innovative Signs tightens the Klaus Bolts after installing the "Kitchen" sign. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Trendell Lounge exterior lettering. PHOTO Randy Murray

• SMK in Autumn •

Many thanks to diocesan communications contributor, Jane Dittrich of Christ Church Cathedral for sharing this photo of the trees

in their autumn colours on the grounds of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale taken on October 26, 2017. ✚



PHOTO Jane Dittrich

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

Please email Randy Murray at rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca.

All contributions are appreciated • Editor

Deadline for *Topic* Submissions

December 22 for the February 2018 issue

& January 19 for the March 2018 issue



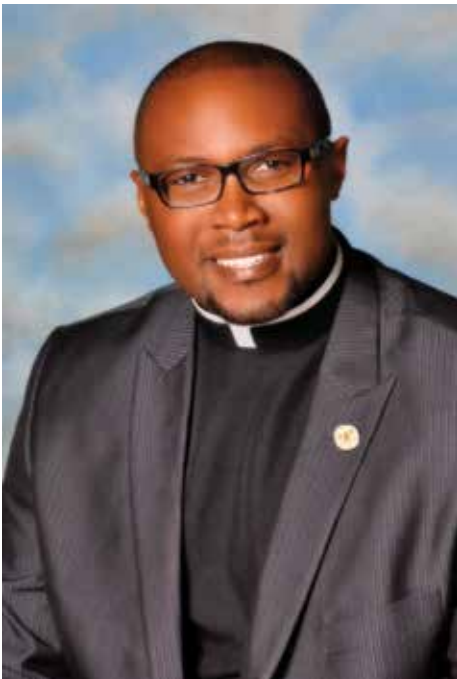
• New Director for Mission & Ministry •

The Bishop has appointed the Rev. Tellison Glover, DMin, as Director of Mission and Ministry Development for the diocese effective January 16, 2018. Father Glover comes to us from the diocese of the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Father Glover was born in Nassau, Bahamas. From humble beginnings he grew up in the St. Cecilia constituency of Nassau, Bahamas, more commonly known as "The Grove." Up until his young adult life he attended St. Barnabas Church where he served as an altar server until he left for seminary at the age of 19.

In 2006, Fr. Glover graduated from the University of the West Indies where he read for the Bachelor of Arts in Theology. He was ordained a deacon in 2006 and priested the subsequent year. Holding to two diplomas, one in Education and the other in Pastoral Studies, he saw the need to pursue further studies and in May 2013 completed a doctorate in Leadership and Congregational Development at Nashotah House Theological Seminary.

He has served three parishes — as the assistant curate at the Pro-Cathedral of Christ the King, Freeport in the north and as rector of St. Philip's Parish, Great Inagua, and now as the rector of The Church of St. Monica.



The Rev. Tellison Glover. PHOTO Courtesy of Tellison Glover

Fr. Glover's personal purpose statement is, "To seize life with passion and drive; to make a difference in the world and to empty oneself of every God given 'gift and vision' before leaving this world." His personal creed is, "Informed by history, transformed by destiny, conformed to His will." ✚

AROUND THE DIOCESE

The Holy Trinity, Vancouver (HTV) faith community and their rector, the Rev. Karl Przywala are leading our diocese in



LEFT The Katharina and Martin poster in the parish hall. RIGHT In the narthex area on the second floor of HTV, the Rector Rev. Karl Przywala and HTV Synod Delegate and Parish Council Member, David Quinton, ODNW invite all to view the display and take the quiz. PHOTOS Randy Murray

promoting the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Beginning last May, HTV began an ambitious series of informative and engaging Reformation programs and to finish off they are presenting a quiz. A series of 30 beautifully produced

posters chronicling the history of the Reformation and the life and legacy of Martin Luther are displayed on the first and second floors of the HTV building, 1440 West 12th Avenue. All are invited to tour the building, read the posters and take the quiz.

Correctly completed quizzes returned to the church office by year end will be entered into a draw for a gift certificate donated by Pacific Theatre. The draw takes place on January 7, 2018. This is a fun way to learn about the Reformation and possibly win a great prize. For information about when the poster display is available call, 604.731.3221 or contact HTV by email at reception@holymtrinityvancouver.org. ✚

• Advent Worship & Events for the Community •
St. George's, Maple Ridge at 23500 Dewdney Trunk Road
SUBMISSION David Edgerton

A Time To Remember
December 6 at 7 pm
Ridge Meadows Hospice Society's annual non-denominational service held at St. George's to remember loved ones who have died this year, or in previous years. Listen to music sung by the choir and light a candle in memory.

Christmas Worship • Informal Service
December 17 at 7 pm
Our evening service takes on a Christmas theme with treats and mulled wine from 6:30 pm ahead of the service which starts at 7 pm. Music is led by our praise band, as we will sing songs of worship and new renditions of Christmas carols. To help us plan for the refreshments please purchase tickets will be available from the church office. Call 604.463.9622

Old Fashioned Carol Sing
December 21 at 10:30 am
In partnership with Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows Community Services Seniors Connect we have a morning of Christmas Carols and music including appearances by local children, choirs and soloists. Christmas eats, treats and coffee to follow. ✚

• Café Church Returns for 2018 in North Vancouver •
SUBMISSION Patrick Blaney

Café Church, the alternative Sunday worship experience at St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver returned for its second season October 7. The gatherings take place on the first Saturday of every month at 4 pm in the St. John's lounge. You will be invited to enjoy tea, coffee and goodies, and a guest speaker who will introduce all in attendance to their unique and engaging topic. There will be interactive conversation, music, and a time for prayer and reflection. All are welcome. Please drop in.

- 2018 Program Lineup
- Saturday, January 6
- Donna Lawrence
Long, Long Night Of Hope
- Saturday, February 3
- MLA, the Honourable Bowin Ma
Being A New Politician
- Saturday, March 3
- Brander Raven Macdonald
Reconciliation

- Saturday, April 7
- Fr. Matthew Johnston
God in The Street
- Saturday, May 5
- Rabbi Dr. Yoseph Wosk
What The Sabbath Means To Me
- Saturday, June 2
- Juanita Clark
Becoming A Deacon ✚



JOIN US FOR CAFE CHURCH A NEW KIND OF SERVICE

You are invited to Cafe Church on the first Saturday of every month at 4:00PM in the St. John's lounge. We'll have tea, coffee and goodies, and a special Guest Speaker who will introduce us to their unique, engaging topic. There will be interactive conversation, music, and a time for prayer and reflection. All are welcome. Please drop in.




ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH,
220 WEST 8TH ST. NORTH VANCOUVER
604-986-1151
WWW.STJOHNNV.CA

QUIZ TIME!

In celebration the Reformation's 500th anniversary, we have designed a quiz to challenge the grey matter.

A series of 30 posters are displayed on the 1st and 2nd floors of HT's building.

We invite you to read the posters and find the answers. The posters and quiz may also be accessed from HT's website – have fun!



All correctly completed quizzes returned to the church office by year end will be entered into a draw for a gift certificate donated by Pacific Theatre. Draw date: Sunday January 7th

Holy Trinity Anglican Church
Welcoming ♦ Relevant ♦ Traditional ♦ Evangelical
1440 West 12th Avenue, Vancouver
holymtrinityvancouver.org facebook.com/htacv twitter.com/htvancouver

AROUND THE DIOCESE

• Jazz Vespers with the Mighty Fraser Big Band •

LOCATION St. Stephen's, West Vancouver,
885 – 22nd Street
DATE & TIME Sunday, December 10 • 4 pm

The Advent visit of the Mighty Fraser Big Band always creates a lot of anticipation and excitement among the St. Stephen's, West Vancouver community and Jazz Vespers fans.

This band is the largest ensemble that the church facilities can accommodate and is a favourite of the congregation.

A donation at the door—gratefully accepted.

See the poster on the right. ✦



Worship and All That Jazz



MIGHTY FRASER BIG BAND



Sunday, December 10, at 4p.m.

St. Stephen's Anglican Church

885 – 22nd Street West Vancouver
Phone: 604-926-4381

A donation at the door gratefully accepted

• Order of the Diocese of New Westminster •

Information & Nomination Forms for 2018 Now Available
In May 2016, Diocesan Council passed a motion amending Canon 22, the Canon relating to the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster (ODNW). Beginning in 2016, new members to the ODNW will be nominated and invested every two years. The next Investiture of New Members to the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster will take place Saturday, November 3, 2018. Time and location to be confirmed.

The Parish Nomination Information for 2018 document and the ODNW Parish Nomination Form for 2018 are now available on the diocesan website at www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/the-odnw.

Details regarding eligibility criteria are available in the documents and nominations may be made by any member in good standing of a parish to the rector or priest-in-charge. All nominations are reviewed and approved by the rector or priest-in-charge who, in consultation with the wardens, will choose not more than one nominee, and forward that name to the Bishop. The nomination form must be completed in full, and must be accompanied by the \$35 processing fee and a photograph of the nominee.

The completed form, fee and photo must be received in the Bishop's Office not later than April 30, 2018. Nominees will be notified by the Bishop's Office after the completion of the nomination process in June or July. Rector, priests-in-

charge and wardens will also be notified. Please contact Bill Siksay, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop's Office at bsiksay@vancouver.anglican.ca or call 604.684.6306, ext. 228 with questions or for more information. ✦



The ODNW Class of 2016. PHOTO Wayne Chose

• Journey of Christmas Rolls into 19th Year •

LOCATION St. Mark's, Ocean Park
12953 – 20 Avenue,
South Surrey
DATES & TIMES December 15 – 23 • 6 – 9 pm
December 24 • 3:30 – 9 pm

St. Mark's, Ocean Park is proud to announce that our mannequins, stereo soundtrack, backdrops, props and lights that create the outdoor presentation of *Journey of Christmas* will launch its 19th season on Friday,

December 15 for ten nights.

Set in the woods behind the church in South Surrey, this Christmas treat has put Christ first in its celebration of the Christmas season. The nine theatres feature different scenes from the first Christmas including the shepherds, the angels, Simeone, the three kings and of course, the manger scene. This 22 minute guided walk is shared with close to 1,000 people each Christmas. It is a favourite annual tradition for many while others discover it for the first time each year. After your "journey," you are welcome

in to our decorated parish hall for hot chocolate, cookies and live entertainment.

As of the December *Topic* deadline, these are the scheduled entertainment highlights:

Friday, December 15
• Boy Scouts host and lead the carol singing

Saturday, December 16
• Gilbert & Sullivan Society Singers

Monday, December 18
• Dormaren Recorder Consort

Thursday, December 21
• St. Mark's Choir

Saturday, December 23
• Chris Simmons and Debra daVaughn

Other dates are still being confirmed. Please check the diocesan website and the St. Mark's website at www.stmarkbc.org for further updates.

Embrace Rwanda

In advance of the *Journey of Christmas*, Alex Browne, local arts editor of the Peace Arch News, will present a dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* on Friday, December 8 at 7 pm at St. Mark's. There will be a Rwandan Market Place in the hall at 6 pm with carol singing at 6:45 pm. Tickets are \$15. All funds raised at this event goes to support *Embrace Rwanda*. ✦



The Holy Family Theatre. PHOTO Barbara Walks



Jesus, Mary and the Wise Men. PHOTO Barbara Walks



Bishop Skelton and Teddy after their "journey" in 2016. PHOTO Barbara Walks

Doctoral Thesis Deserving of a Larger Audience

RANDY MURRAY
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Early last fall on a Saturday morning, the Ven. Dr. Stephen Muir, Archdeacon of Capilano and rector of St. Agnes’ presented excerpts from his Doctor of Ministry (DMin) thesis, *Why Do They Stay?—Lay Church Leaders and Demands of Institutional Change* to an audience of two-dozen (+) in the parish hall of St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver.

On the entry page to the online posting of Muir’s thesis there is a summary. It is one paragraph, albeit a fairly long paragraph but it does a very good job of encapsulating the work. The thesis is found online at <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/77646>.

The first two sentences of the summary are as follows:

“Current trends indicate the Anglican Church of Canada is declining in members, with many parish churches facing the possibility of closure. Despite this reality, there are thousands of lay people across the country staying involved and providing leadership in parish churches of all sizes.”

He began his presentation by giving some background on the parishes that were his principal focus for the thesis; the years that they came into being, beginning with St. John the Evangelist in 1889 and concluding with the dedication of St. Richard in 1950. Seven Anglican churches located within a very small geographical area attended by a majority of the residents of North Vancouver during the nine decades between 1890 and 1980, boasting large congregations and numbers that now seem astronomical to Anglicans in 2017. For example, St. Catherine of Capilano’s 1960s and 1970s Sunday School with upward of 1,000 members. However, by the 1980s, the decline was fully underway due to the shift away from mainstream protestant Christianity and also demographic changes fueled by a sharp drop in immigration from the United Kingdom.

The approval of the Blessing of Same Sex Unions at Diocesan Synod 2002 further fractured the North Vancouver Anglican communities with the result being that one of the congregations, St. Simon’s removed itself in 2004, from the Episcopal oversight of the diocese of New Westminster/Anglican Church of Canada and aligned with the diocese of Rwanda. At least two of the remaining six parishes remained in deep conflict with many parishioners leaving those communities. And one of the seven parishes, St. Richard’s was closed in 2009 leaving five parishes remaining.

Beginning in 2007, leaders in the diocese studied these and other issues and came to the conclusion that the best path to pursue would be to bring ordained and lay leaders of parishes from proximate geographical areas to work together using a designed process that might increase the effectiveness of mission and ministry and use diminishing resources more efficiently. This was named the Ministry Assessment Process (MAP).

Approximately 50% of the parishes of the diocese of New Westminster participated in MAP, amongst that group were the North Vancouver clergy and lay leaders who embarked on this multiyear parish renewal program mandated by the Bishop, under the supervision of diocesan staff to work together to create a ministry plan with an outcome that wasn’t particularly clear. However, many involved thought that the likely outcome would be the closing of a number of the churches in the region, contraction, and a subsequent blending of the congregations.

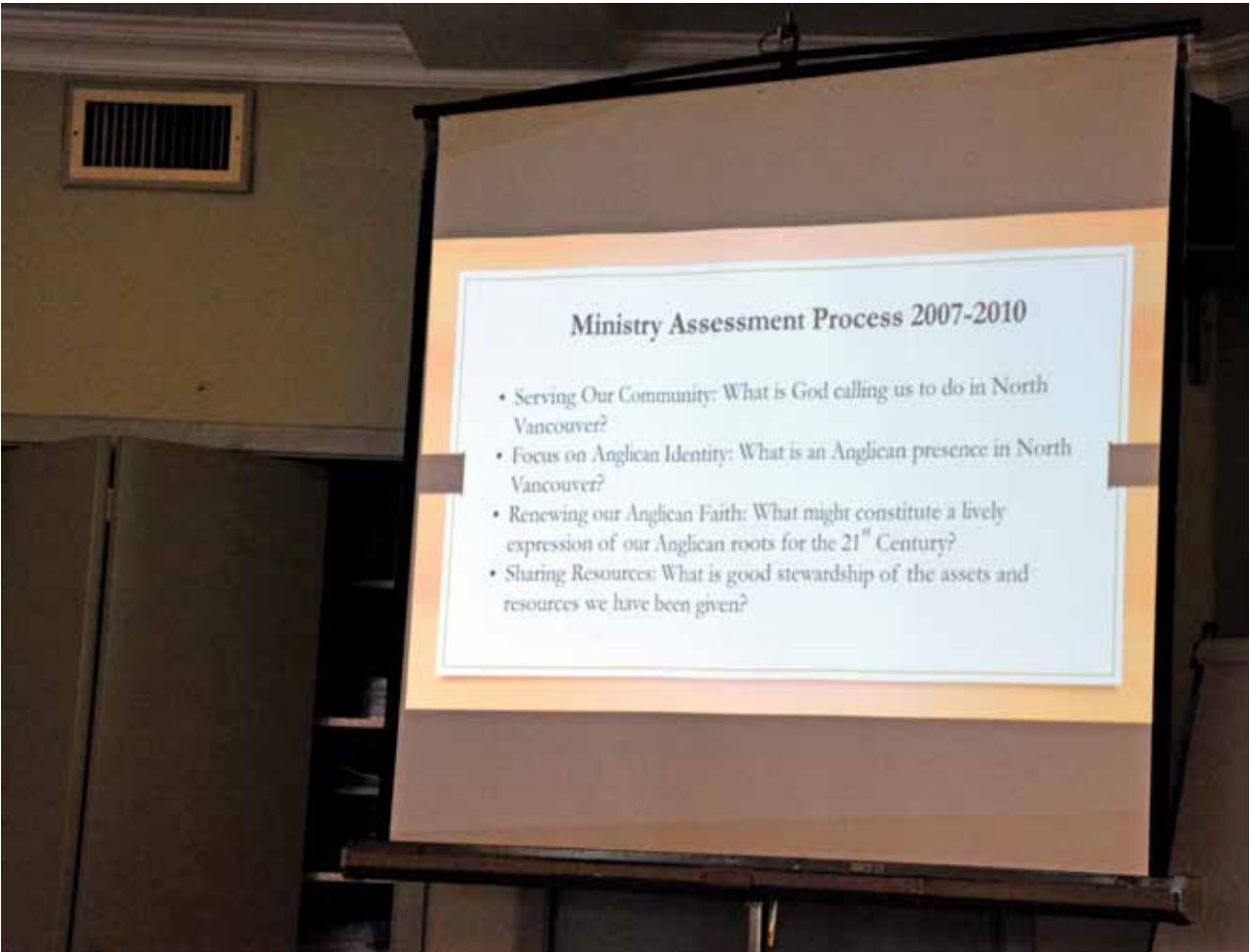
The summary of Archdeacon Muir’s thesis reads:

“Despite several years of often difficult and challenging work, the results were disappointing for most of these leaders. Yet, the lay leaders in particular chose to remain engaged in a process that was entirely voluntary in nature — any of them could have left at any time. Why did they stay? A Focus Group of representative lay church leaders (ten individuals) was assembled and invited to reflect on their experience in leadership, using MAP as a common point of reference. The data, generated by a multifaceted engagement process involving questionnaires, interviews and group conversation, is contextualized using historical, sociological and theological methodologies. An ecclesiological hermeneutic is developed and applied to provide a framework for qualitative analysis.”

In his presentation at St. John’s, Muir spoke about MAP, “the process was overly ambitious, members of the five churches attended countless meetings. MAP was very upsetting for lay participants... many reported sleepless nights and rising anxiety.” A key element of his presentation was the section where he shared with the audience three profiles chosen from the ten focus group participants and details regarding their reactions to the experience. Using pseudonyms to protect their identities Muir introduced



LEFT There was a very good crowd on hand early last fall for the presentation. RIGHT Rector of St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver, the Rev. Patrick Blaney welcomes the audience and the guest presenter, Archdeacon Muir. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Outcome goals for MAP. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Archdeacon Muir began the presentation at 10 am. RIGHT The components of a Mission-shaped Church. PHOTOS Randy Murray

the group to:

- Lydia**, a middle-aged woman described as a contemplative, practicing theological reflection through spiritual practice.
- Silas**, the father of a young family, a member of his church from an early age with a high degree of commitment and desire to have his children experience Christian formation in a Church School environment.
- Sarah** in her late 70s who had been attracted to the small parish she joined initially because the priest was a woman. Sarah had a natural inclination toward volunteerism and worked hard during

the protracted period of MAP although relatively new to the church.

In his thesis Archdeacon Muir created a profile for each of the ten focus group members, the responses from these people were key to the generation of data that led to Muir’s conclusions.

One of the most telling pieces of information that testifies to the resilience of lay leaders is the fact that as of Muir’s completion of the thesis in 2017, there are no clergy remaining in North Vancouver from the MAP days, however lay leaders were not moved to abandon the process,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

A Sneak Peek at January's Topic

Two feature articles are underway for the January 2018 issue

Our first sneak peak focuses on coverage of the building remediation that is underway at St. Hilda-by-the-Sea, Sechart. Following some renovation work done to the exterior of the north facing wall last summer it was discovered that both of the main walls were beginning to move outward and needed to be stabilized in order to prevent a catastrophic failure of the structure.

The parish worships in the hall while the work continues.

On October 15, 2017, there was a special vestry meeting in order to pass motions to access St. Hilda's funds from the diocesan Consolidated Trust Fund in order to hire contractors to do the work.

The motions passed, and during the two weeks that followed the details of how the remediation will go forward were made public.

More of the story still to come in the January issue of *Topic*. ✦



LEFT St. Hilda's rector, the Rev. Clarence Li stands in the chancel of the sanctuary surrounded by insulation removed to allow access to the building frame. RIGHT An exterior shot of the north-facing wall where the problem was discovered. PHOTOS Randy Murray



The Gradual Hymn is sung in the parish hall, October 15, 2017. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Offertory. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Motion passes. PHOTO Randy Murray

On December 31, 2017, Glen Mitchell, Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving for the Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster will retire after 14 years of service. When he came to the diocese to begin work he brought with him skills in fundraising, campaign management, not-for-profit management and process, financial planning, tax planning, and wills and estate planning, just to mention a few.

Don't miss this in-depth interview with one of the longest serving members of Synod Staff. ✦



Glen at his desk at 1410 Nanton Avenue. PHOTO Randy Murray

When should I make my ANNUAL DONATION?

AFC will remind you every year at Thanksgiving, but you can give an annual gift anytime!

www.anglicanfoundation.org

Doctoral Thesis Deserving of a Larger Audience

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25



At the conclusion of the presentation Archdeacon Muir entertains questions and comments. PHOTO Randy Murray

their churches or their leadership. Admittedly some would take a break, but normally they would return to the fray.

The remainder of Muir's presentation at St. John's consisted of PowerPoint slides, commentary—a general analysis covering how the data was generated and the lenses through which he looked to piece together “why they stay.”

The results are actually very positive. What inspires and motivates people to continue on their spiritual journey within the context of their faith communities is to be part of a worshipping community, to maintain some cherished traditions of the church, but mostly it is to serve others and live into their baptismal covenant. In short, to be part of a Mission-shaped Church.

The five churches that remained and weathered MAP have each found a new sense of identity and vitality. They have continued on their path free to respond

to what God is calling them to do and no longer feel that they are “under the gun.”

Near the conclusion of his presentation Muir screened a slide containing the components of a Mission-shaped Church:

- Focus on people, community
- Contains experimental initiatives
- Willingness to risk and learn from failure
- Stewardship by generosity, sharing and self-giving
- Makes investments in people
- A culture of risk and encouragement
- Priority of baptismal ministry

Participation in faith communities with a focus on these components leads people to long term commitment and provides the confidence that they are a part of something enduring, and with that sense of belonging they find personal fulfillment and connection. ✦



Shiella with summer school tutoring class and teachers. PHOTO Felix Miruka Omondi

Power of Education Africa

An Interview with Shiella Fodchuk, President — Board of Directors, Power of Education Africa (POEA)

LINDA K. ROBERTSON
ODNW, Member of the POEA Board of Directors, St. Catherine, Capilano

“Shiella Fodchuk is a Registered Clinical Counsellor, Spiritual Director and retired educator at the Vancouver School of Theology, where she was Coordinator of Spirituality Programs from 2003 until her retirement in 2010. From 1993 to 2003, Shiella was the Executive Director of Cathedral Centre for Spiritual Direction at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, a Canadian Registered Charity within the Anglican Church. She has served as Chair of the BC Association of Clinical Counsellors’ Ethics Committee; and served on the Task Group for Counsellor Regulation in BC. For many years Shiella and her husband, Bo, have felt anguished about the plight of women suffering gender discrimination in many parts of the world. They both know that the key to greater equality is to educate women. After retirement, Shiella decided to help girls in East Africa to obtain an education.”

Q. Why is education in Africa so important for girls?

A. It is difficult for us in the West to comprehend the enormity of the situation facing many girls in Kenya. Nyanza Province on the shores of Lake Victoria where we work has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence in Kenya. Many children are orphaned and are being raised by elderly, widowed grandmothers who have buried their own sons and daughters, and are struggling to survive themselves.

The Luo men in this rural area of Kenya are polygamous. If a poor family can only afford to educate one child, they give priority to the male. The girl may be forced in to domestic servitude, or adolescent marriage and child bearing, sometimes to an older man with other wives. The cycle of poverty then continues for her and her children.

It has been a custom among the Luo people to practice widow inheritance. When a woman is widowed, a male member of her husband’s family may inherit her, her children and their property. If her husband died of HIV/AIDS, and if the widow was also infected, there is a great possibility she will pass the virus onto her second husband who, in turn, infects his other wives, and sometimes even their unborn children. The whole family of adults is at risk of severe illness and death. One major solution to this sad cycle for women and girls is to educate the girls.

An educated girl can help herself, the women in her community and country to move toward gender equality. She will gain economic strength and self-determination. She will develop critical thinking skills. She will decide whom to marry. She will make wise healthcare decisions. She can protect her children and herself from abuse. She will raise children who will be educated. The Luo say that one educated girl will help ten others. She will be an asset to her community, working to support her mother, or grandmother, and educate her siblings.

Q. Why did you choose to start your charity in this part of Africa?

A. I wanted to go where the need was great. As long as impoverished girls face the risks of HIV/AIDS, and as

long as these inherited cultural practices continue, girls have little control over their lives. Also, as a former British colony, Kenya has a good education system for girls who can access it.

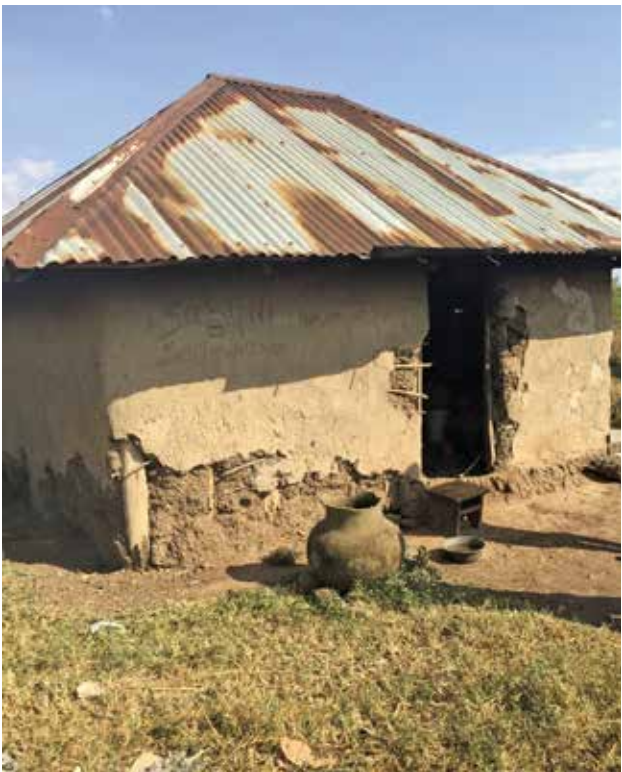
Q. What does Power of Education Africa do differently than some other charities?

A. Other charities raise money to pay for school tuition fees and uniforms, which is what we do. However, this is not enough support for impoverished families who are unable to provide supplies. Students need textbooks, other academic supplies, and personal supplies, as well as a supportive physical and emotional environment.

We put almost all our 87 students into secondary boarding schools for four years, instead of day schools. We provide their school fees, uniform, shoes, academic supplies, as well as personal supplies, such as sanitary napkins, underwear, and bedding. In boarding school, students have clean drinking water, three meals a day, and sometimes access to a medical infirmary. They have time and electric light for their homework. They have a friendship group of peers and teacher mentors. They are free from domestic work—fetching water and firewood, cooking, selling vegetables by the roadside when a parent is unable, caring for young siblings or sick adults. They are safe from the risk of physical and sexual violence, which can occur at home, or when walking alone to school or to fetch firewood. They can focus on their studies and their own life.

Our Kenyan helper, Alice, visits our students, takes them to the doctor, dentist, pharmacy and optometrist. We buy glasses for students whose eyes have suffered from studying by the dim light of a single piece of paraffin at home.

In 2016, we set up a summer tutoring program, designed to give more individual help to struggling students who have missed significant primary school curriculum. Often elementary students are sent home from school,



Mud and dung home of a student. PHOTO Shiella Fodchuk



Students carry the day’s supply of drinking and washing water. PHOTO David Yeung

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Power of Education Africa

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multiple times, for lack of school fees. The month-long tutoring program, which we hope to hold annually, will create a support community for our girls who are in different schools, so they can experience that they are not alone. We also get to know each girl individually, which will help us to support her better. For some, the tutoring program is their first experience of someone really caring whether they succeed in life.

Through our Kenyan helper, we in Vancouver are in communication with our students and their schools, providing comfort when they must leave school to bury a deceased mother or grandmother, or intervening to sort out a school issue.

Q. How do you choose the girls who will be sponsored to go to school?

A. Every January, a volunteer and I go to Kenya for six weeks. With our Kenyan helpers, we interview about 75 girls and select those who are the most impoverished, vulnerable, and those whom we think have the best chance of succeeding in high school. We visit their homes to verify the circumstances of the family. We ask families to provide whatever items they can afford for their daughter. Some cannot afford anything.

The hardest part of this work is having to turn down deserving girls when we have run out of sponsorship money for the year. We have a total of 87 students in 23 different schools. We hope to take another 20 in January 2018, but we will interview 75 or more. We plan to reduce the number of schools going forward, as corresponding with so many different schools is onerous. However, we wanted to determine which schools would perform well, treat our students well, and which are best suited to different educational needs.

We are in our fourth year of operation as a charity; and will have our first 18 graduates this year. A number of our sponsors have made it possible for their student to continue on to post-secondary training or university.

Q. Who works with you at POEA and how do you find the money to support the girls?

A. Power of Education Africa is a Registered Canadian Charity. We are a working board of directors, all volunteers, with the exception of our Kenyan helper who we pay.

We are a religiously diverse group. While most of our board members are Anglican, some have no religious affiliation; our Kenyan advisors and helper are Catholic. While we gratefully receive generous gifts of meeting and event space from Christ Church Cathedral and St. Mary's, Kerrisdale, we are independent of official church structures, and other organizations. We operate out of our homes with no offices. Board members assist in fundraising, communicating with sponsors about their girl's progress and everything else.

Sponsors find us through our website, by attending one of our events, or by word of mouth. Sponsors pay \$100 a month, which covers fees, uniforms, supplies and boarding costs. It's remarkable how far we can make \$100 go. Sponsors include individuals, a class of primary school students, groups of two to four people, from church groups, book clubs, a law office, a fitness group. We also receive general donations from individuals who donate towards extra expenses, such as medical supplies, eyeglasses, or towards our summer tutoring program, or who give in memory of a loved one.

Q. Tell me about some of the girls.

A. There are so many stories.

One student's father was murdered by a mob with a machete in front of her when they were pulled from their beds in the night. Her family spiraled into deep poverty. She would soon be on the street if she could not go to school. She is now about to graduate from a fine school and will go on to college or university. With support and freedom from trauma, she is beginning to heal and believe in life again.

We have one student who had to wait a year before we could take her to school. She ran after our car, begging us to take her to school as we were leaving her island in 2014. It was heartbreaking for me to tell her that we had no more money to sponsor her that year. I was haunted by her all year and prayed that she would wait for us to return. My fitness group committed to sponsoring her. The following January we placed her in boarding school.

One of our students is a deaf-mute young woman with developmental disability, a total orphan of HIV/AIDS, with a child. She never went to school as a child. Cruel



The girl who ran after the car and had to wait a year. PHOTO David Yeung



Shiella visits one of the students and delivers schoolbooks. PHOTO Alice Adalla

"The hardest part of this work is having to turn down deserving girls when we have run out of sponsorship money for the year."



Gladys with Shiella. PHOTO David Yeung



LEFT & RIGHT Shiella and locals watch a seamstress measuring a student for her school uniform. PHOTOS David Yeung

neighbourhood children sometimes beat her because she could not cry for help. As it was not possible for her to learn academically, we placed her in a skills-based school to learn sewing, knitting and crocheting. She has been so happy there, and will finish her program this year. With her skills, and the support of her sponsors to start a business in a town that has a school for the deaf and a community that communicates in sign language, she will be able to earn a living to support herself and her child.

Some of these girls tell me "education is life." With an education, they can hope; they can step into their dignity.

Q. How did you find the courage and know-how to start this work initially on your own — just one woman living half way around the world in Vancouver?

A. Everything starts with one person deciding to act. I had to focus on the one thing that I was called to do. If something has a sense of rightness about it, then once you commit to it, things fall into place. Under a surprising umbrella of divine grace, the right people show up at the right time and things unfold. But I couldn't do this on my own. Our volunteer board, generous volunteers, and

wonderful sponsors all, singly, had to decide to act, too.

Like everyone, I experience days when I feel discouraged by things that occur both here and in Kenya, when I hear from a distressed student, or face unexpected obstacles. But there is joy too. The joy of getting to know our girls, their mothers and grandmothers, their sponsors, and the joy of being among the Luo people and learning from them. It is the joy of having our hearts opened, of supporting our students to create their own hopeful futures.

Each of us can do something to improve the lives of girls who suffer poverty, discrimination and other forms of oppression. I believe what Stephen Lewis has said, "The struggle for gender equality is the single most important struggle on the planet. Nothing comes close to it and nothing approximates it."

Those of us fortunate enough to live in the West can each make a difference to end the suffering of girls and women who have no way of obtaining an education without our help.

For more information please visit our website at www.poea.ca. ☙