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Expanding Licensed Lay Ministry

THE REVEREND JESSICA SCHAAP
Diocesan Missioner for Formation

Forty years ago, the *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) envisioned a strong role for the laity in the mission and ministrations of the Church. In the introductory essay to the book, the Doctrine and Worship committee wrote:

Today there is recognition that the Church not only contains but needs many roles and functions in its administration, witness, and service as well as in its liturgy. The purpose of presiding leadership is not to dominate but to call, encourage, and support a community of people in all their work. (11)

Since then, many of the changes ushered in by the adoption of the BAS have become “old hat”, and many dioceses with the Anglican Church of Canada have developed specific forms of baptismal ministry under the umbrella term *Licensed Lay Ministry*. Often this has been in response to a lack of clergy or limited resources, but it has taken root in many places such that parishes in several dioceses depend almost exclusively on the commitment and work of lay ministers. This year Bishop John Stephens has signaled his intention to authorize a number of Licensed Lay Ministry roles in the Diocese of New Westminster. These roles include Communion Administrator, Eucharistic Visitor, Lay Healing Minister, Lay Worship Leader, and Lay Preacher.

However, the diocese is not facing a shortage of clergy and is blessed with abundant resources in its people, financial resources, and facilities. So why Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) and why now?

First, there are people in our diocese who have the gifts, capacity, and sense of call to these ministries. Some lay people find that in addition to their Baptismal ministry in the world, they are called to exercise a specific lay vocation within the Church. It is a way to bring their gifts and energy to the transformative capacity of a congregation. What’s more, the diocese has many experienced practitioners, lay and ordained, who can offer their teaching and mentoring gifts to those preparing for these ministries. Diocesan leadership has discerned we are in a time of openness to new models of ministry, and to equipping the laity in new ways.

Since ministries are not individual undertakings but communally discerned and offered, there is also a need for training and support in lay ministries that have significant responsibility. Since many of these ministries are with vulnerable persons, standards of practice need to be known and upheld. Licensing is a way to promote and have accountability to these standards. It also offers a clear pathway for people and boosts confidence and skills in the ministries to which they are called. To aid this, training modules for LLM are being developed for the Learning Centre for Mission and Formation and parishes, deaneries, and archdeaconries can create and host their own training sessions as well. Those called to ministries of pastoral care and preaching are invited to consider the certificate program at Vancouver School of Theology (VST) in partnership with the Learning Centre, which offers a comprehensive foundation and preparation for licensing.

Finally, three of these LLMs are those the BAS had envisioned as requiring a bishop’s authorization four decades ago but only one—communion administration—had been fully implemented. The other two—lay anointing and eucharistic visiting—will now be fully authorized ministries. In a time when many are sick, lonely, and isolated, extending these ministries through LLM will be a huge gift to our neighbourhoods and communities. Lay worship leaders who will be empowered as officiants of the



PHOTO jcl888 (pixabay)

daily office have never required licensing, but lay leaders are rare. The hope is that offering a licensed pathway will equip and empower more lay leaders and increase the core work of prayer, praise, and worship. Lay preaching is more of an innovation—yet the diocese is seeking to respond to the clear gifts some people can have in this ministry while not necessarily being called to the diaconate or priesthood. The

certificate program with VST also ensures that a standard of preparation and study will be upheld in this ministry. While there will no doubt be learnings and adaptations along the way, LLM at this time is a promising initiative to energize and encourage people in our parishes and those we may encounter in all parts of life who need welcome, healing, and words of hope. ✠

For a Good Time — Consider — Diocese Committees!

THE REVEREND ALECIA GREENFIELD
Rector of St. Anselm, Point Grey

This year is a Synod year, and the diocese is calling all Synod delegates to consider standing for election to Diocese roles and responsibilities. Alright, so maybe your first thought is “More committees, no way!” Hear me out...

Diocese committees are a great way to connect with new people and build community with clergy and lay people across our diocese and across Canada. These committees are the seeds and growing medium for the future of our church. These roles can be richly rewarding ministries. Here are the experiences of three people who are currently serving on Diocese committees and enjoy it.

Ann Turner

“I am currently in my second term as Lay Delegate—Archdeaconry of Lougheed. I began my role on Diocesan Council when the complexity of issues within each of our communities became ever apparent as the diocese transitioned out of COVID 19. In my role I strive to demonstrate faith-based collaboration within my own parish and other parishes in the community. The diocesan focus on property management although seemingly removed from my tiny parish heightened my awareness on ways to utilize our building in service to the community. The knowledge I have gained about the structures, and work of the standing committees together with grant applications has allowed St. George’s to move forward with major repairs and thereby continue to be a vibrant and living presence in the community of Fort Langley. Most importantly, the learning, partnering, and new and lasting friendships that have

evolved from my role as a member of Diocesan Council cannot be understated.”

The Ven. Andrew Halliday

“I serve as the chair of the Mission and Ministry Development Committee and as the Clerical Secretary of Synod. I’m very interested in learning more about how the church is governed, and about how we are going to solve the pressing issues of our time, issues like relevance to our neighbourhoods and broader communities, property management and development, inter-faith interaction, etc. I’m motivated to do these jobs because I think the church has something very special to contribute to the world: the inclusive and all-encompassing love of God, the pursuit of justice outside of the halls of power, and the bright hope for the future when God’s kingdom will burst through into our lives. The world needs the love, justice, and hope that we have to share.”

Sharon Grove

“I was elected at Synod in 2017 to serve as the Lay Representative for the Granville Archdeaconry. As a part of the governance of the Diocese working with the diverse fabric that is the Diocese of New Westminster, I found the job to be enlightening and rewarding. I was appointed to the Canons and Constitutions sub-committee, revising and modernizing the canons resulting in the new Diocesan Handbook. Now, I also sit on the Parish Project Development committee. I have visited many parishes, each different—always enthusiastic about their parish, its

vision, and the future. I recommend taking a risk and putting your name forward. You will be amazed.”

As a reminder, here is a list of all the Diocese roles:

Archdeaconry Representatives to Diocesan Council

- 1 Lay and 1 Clergy from each Archdeaconry

Youth Representatives to Diocesan Council

- 2 Youth, age 15 to 25 on first day of Diocesan Synod

Delegates to Provincial Synod

- 3 Lay & 3 Lay Alternates
- 2 Clergy & 2 Clergy Alternates
- 10 total

Delegates to General Synod

- 3 Lay & 3 Lay Alternates
- 3 Clergy & 3 Clergy Alternates
- 1 Youth & 1 Youth Alternate
- 14 total

Secretaries to Synod

- 1 Lay and 1 Clergy

Bishop’s Advisory Committee on Appointments

- 3 Lay and 3 Clergy for two-year term

The Court of the Diocese of New Westminster

- 3 Lay and 3 Clergy

The Anglican Initiatives Fund Administrators

- 2 Lay and 2 Clergy

Treasurer

Wondering if any of these roles might be a good fit for you? There is a series of helpful videos that outline the roles and responsibilities.¹

How do you prepare for this amazing opportunity? Start by being a Synod delegate for your local parish. ✚

“...I think the church has something very special to contribute to the world: the inclusive and all-encompassing love of God, the pursuit of justice outside of the halls of power, and the bright hope for the future when God’s kingdom will burst through into our lives.”

The Venerable Andrew Halliday

1 To watch this series that outline the roles and responsibilities go to <https://bit.ly/synodroles>



A diocesan committee during a business meeting. PHOTO Diocesan archives

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



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Editor Alicia Ambrosio
aambrosio@vancouver.anglican.ca

Designer Jennifer Ewing, BDes

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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 62 parishes and 4 worshipping communities.



The Bishop of New Westminster

The Right Reverend John Stephens

Address Diocese of New Westminster

1410 Nanton Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6H 2E2

Phone 604.684.6306

Contributors & Helpers for this issue

Dara Crandall, Laurel Dykstra, Alecia Greenfield, Rob James, Jeffrey Mackie-Deernsted, Nick Pang, Jessica Schaa, and Dave Walker

Thank you!

WILD LECTIONARY

A Preacher's Environmental Resource

Salal + Cedar, Punching Above Our Weight Diocesan Climate Ministry, Inspires International Audience

THE REVEREND LAUREL DYKSTRA
Priest for Salal + Cedar Ministry & Vicar, St. George

In August 2015 a handful of people gathered around a stone altar in Pacific Spirit Park. Nine years later Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship Community continues to celebrate changes in the church year, changes in the natural year, and non-traditional observances, like our Blessing of the Bicycles. We have only cancelled services twice for bad weather: one windstorm and one snowstorm.

Salal + Cedar's mission "to grow Christians' capacity to respond faithfully to the climate crisis," has been expressed in different ways: a youth camp, support for Indigenous land protectors, habitat restoration, and visits to local parishes. We have helped churches in our diocese find a shared language to talk and pray about climate justice. Although our focus is on the lower Fraser watershed, and our community is small, Salal + Cedar's influence has spread beyond our region and denomination.

*"Together with
angels and ancestors,
orca and salmon,
bear and raven,
salal and cedar
we join our voices with all creation
in this ancient honour song..."*

"Together with angels and ancestors, orca and salmon, bear and raven, salal and cedar we join our voices with all creation in this ancient honour song..."

Diocesan congregations know our beautiful, land-based eucharistic prayer, but even before the bishop authorized it for regular use, people would contact us from Edmonton, Phoenix, San Francisco asking to modify it for their bioregion.

Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat, chair of Toronto's Diocesan Climate Committee says, "There is a tremendous thirst to address climate justice biblically, but many preachers just don't have the knowledge or background." In Advent of 2022, with support from the diocese, the Anglican Foundation,

and scholars who believed in the project, we responded to that need by launching *Wild Lectionary*. On our website preachers and teachers freely access scholarly material on ecological themes in the coming Sunday's scripture readings: like Dong Hyeon Jeong exploring the vegetal wisdom of Jesus' parables, or Ched Myers imagining the valorous woman of *Proverbs 31* as Mother Nature. In September the website had 931 visits, with the most popular posts, like Ched's and our own Peter Elliott's, attracting nearly 200 unique preachers. Most users are North American, some regulars are from Australia, South Africa, and China, and even occasional visits from Iceland and Bangladesh.

In spring of 2024, the Episcopal Church included Salal + Cedar's Eucharistic Prayer, and Tips for Eco-Preachers in

their national resource on the Season of Creation. When our liturgy and climate webinar drew worship leaders from seven denominations, the deep desire for the kind of sacramental, creation-focused liturgical material that Salal + Cedar team members create was clear. With a diocesan parish development grant, in Advent 2024 we launched a Liturgical Resource Library to meet that desire, and the use of our children's curriculum, contemplative practices, and rich store of resources our community has created has increased tremendously. We look forward to the engagement possibilities this resource library will enable with communities across the globe. At a time when North American Christians are some of the most fervent climate deniers, it is vitally important to have a church in the public eye speaking boldly for God's creation. As Deacon Maylaine Maybe of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Ministry, says, "Salal + Cedar punches above their weight." ✠

Want to learn more or explore the Wild Lectionary?

Visit www.salalandcedar.com/resources
and www.salalandcedar.com/wildlectionary

Clergy News

Bishop John Stephens has appointed the Rev. Anne Privett as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Phillip's, Dunbar, effective December 15, 2024. Rev. Privett comes from St. Andrew's Mission, Kelowna in the Diocese of Kootenay.

The Rev. James Duckett has been appointed Associate Incumbent at St. Helen's church in the Diocese of Ottawa. The appointment takes effect August 1, 2025. He will continue his ministry at St. Timothy's church in Burnaby until then.

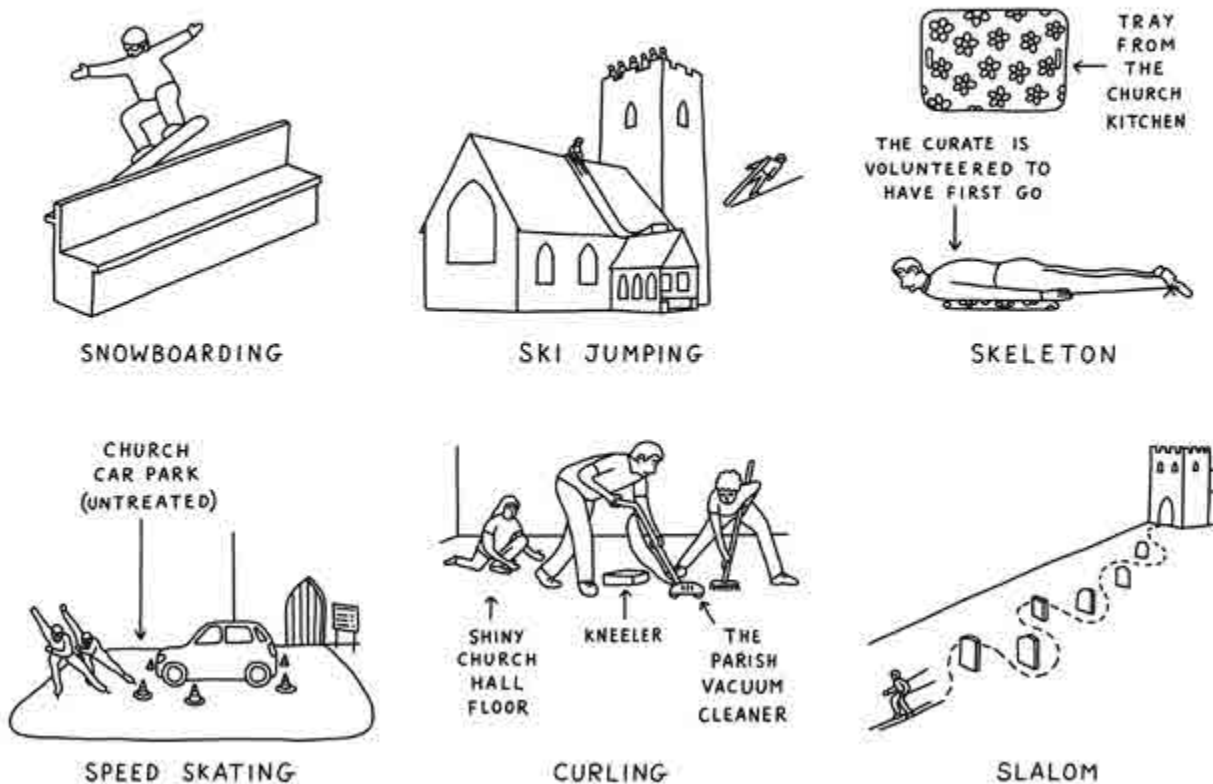
Bishop John Stephens has appointed the Rev. Laurel Dykstra as Vicar of St. George church in Fort Langley, effective December 1, 2024.

Bishop John Stephens has appointed the Rev. Steve Black as Rector of St. Thomas, Vancouver, effective February 1, 2025. Rev. Black has been serving as Rector of St. Hilda's.

Bishop John Stephens has appointed a Director of Diaconal Formation, restoring a position that has been dormant for the past several years. The Ven. Bruce Morris has accepted the position of Director of Diaconal Formation and will bring his previous experience as Archdeacon for Deacons into his new work with those seeking ordination as a deacon. ✠

THE WINTER GAMES

AT YOUR LOCAL CHURCH



CartoonChurch.com



LEFT During his sermon, the Rev. Jonathan Pinkney holds up icons of St. Stephen and St. Christopher which were gifted to the St. Stephen's community to mark this new chapter in their life as a worshipping community.



RIGHT During the service giving thanks for the ministry of St. Stephen's parish, Bishop John Stephens says a prayer of thanks over the baptismal font. PHOTOS Alicia Ambrosio

Giving Thanks for St. Stephen's

St. Stephen's church in West Vancouver was created in 1913 when Bishop Adam de Pencier held a worship service for 43 West Vancouverites at what was then Dundarave Hall. Over the 113 years of the church's existence, it has responded to the signs of the times and the needs of the community, relocating, rebuilding, and this year, deciding to shutter the building and ask the Diocese for an alternative governance structure for the parish.

At a service of thanksgiving for the ministry of St. Stephens, Bishop John Stephens—who presided at the service—said anytime a church is closed it is a moment of pain, even if that decision also opens doors to new possibilities.

The St. Stephen's building is being overseen by diocesan-appointed trustees. For several years the church had been involved in a redevelopment proposal for the building. The diocesan-appointed trustees will now oversee the proposed redevelopment. The congregation has been invited to join the worshipping community at nearby St. Christopher's church, where the Rev. Jonathan Pinkney is Rector.

Rev. Pinkney, who preached during the service, said any time "a chapter closes in the life of the church, it is natural to ask, 'did this matter?' or 'has the world evolved past my relevance?'" While it can be easy to feel as though the modern world has left us behind, the lens of faith gives us the gift of being able to see things differently. The example of St. Stephen provides one way to see things differently, he said.

"St. Stephen, who fed the poor, gave the church the consciousness to pay attention to the world around it," Rev. Pinkney said. As the church grapples with how it can be relevant to the world of today, it looks inward. "What if the answer is outside the church? What if the world of today is asking questions, we have answers for?" he said. The church still provides those answers, be a place of belonging, and continue following Jesus, even if that way that happens look different than it used to.

"We trust that God is with us today and God will go with us wherever we go," Rev. Pinkney said.

After the sermon, several parishioners shared personal reflections about what belonging to St. Stephen's church has meant for them during their lives. Parishioner Margaret Rolfe who saw eight rectors during her time at the parish, said "In the end, the church is about the people." She paraphrased from the poem *Train of Life* by James S. Tippet, "We have been happy passengers on the train of St. Stephens. I can see the faces of all of those who have left us too soon and give thanks for the time we had together. The train has run out of steam, for now. Those of us passengers who are left have now crossed the bridge to that other platform over there where the folks on the train St. Christopher's have shuffled over to make room for us. Together we continue our journey, full steam ahead."

At the end of the service Bishop Stephens blessed two icons, one of St. Stephen and one of St. Christopher. The icons were a gift to the church from the Rev. Dr. David de Pomerai—Rev. Pinkney's father-in-law—who upon hearing of the changes the St. Stephens parish was facing, purchased the icons during a visit to Greece and sent them to the church as symbol of the new chapter in its life. The two icons will be taken by the parish community to St. Christopher's. ♦



The Rev. Jonathan Pinkney looks on as Bishop John Stephens holds up the eucharistic bread during the eucharistic prayer.



Bishop John Stephens blesses icons of St. Stephen and St. Christopher, held up by the Rev. Jonathan Pinkney. The icons will be taken by St. Stephen's community to St. Christopher's where they will now worship.



Better Hold On

The Reverend Clarence Li Induction

St. Dunstan's church in Aldergrove has gained a reputation for being an active community, unafraid to innovate and find new ways to welcome people wherever they are on their faith journey. Thankfully, the parish's new Rector has a similar reputation. The combination of the two has sparked an air of excitement in the parish community.

The Rev. Clarence Li was inducted as Rector of St. Dunstan's on Monday, November 18. Bishop John Stephens presided at the service and the Ven. Bruce Morris preached.

In his sermon Archdeacon Morris recalled the *Beatitudes* and Jesus's invitation to his followers, which were the focus of the Gospel reading. He said while it's easy to see the afflicted, weak, and marginalized as negative side effects of the way the world works, Jesus sees them as God's promise for a new world. "He says, 'this is what my ministry is all about.' Then he says 'come on! Join me!'" said the Archdeacon.

The *Beatitudes*, he said, lay out how the marginalized, weak, or afflicted are God's promise for a new world. Archdeacon Morris related each of the beatitudes to the various ministries already active at St. Dunstan's.

Speaking about Rev. Li becoming the rector of St. Dunstan's, the Archdeacon said, "Better hold on. Things

will get more interesting!" He reminisced about Rev. Li's time at St. Hilda's church in Sechtelt saying Clarence has a deeply held sense of social justice and a track record for mobilizing the community to go further and find new ways to welcome those in need and make God's love present. One example was Rev. Li convincing St. Hilda's to become a cold weather shelter. Archdeacon Morris said, "It was not without challenges, but no good ministry is without them," and the Rev. Li is not afraid of challenges.

While presenting Rev. Li with his license, Executive Archdeacon Nick Pang said the parish profile for St. Dunstan's was one of the first he had a chance to review when he joined the diocese in 2024. He said he found it exciting because it showcased a vibrant, active, responsive faith community. Archdeacon Pang said, "I was so pleased when it was decided you would be the rector," because he saw in Rev. Li's ministry the same vibrance and openness to the Spirit.

During the service Rev. Li was presented with the symbols of ministry. The community decided to add an orange t-shirt to the usual symbols, to signify their intent to better live into the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and build right relations with First Nations. ✚

The congregation at St. Dunstan's applauds after the Rev. Clarence Li is officially installed as the Rector of the parish. PHOTOS Alicia Ambrosio



LEFT The Rev. Clarence Li holds up an orange t-shirt given to him during the presentation of the symbols of ministry. The t-shirt represents the parish of St. Dunstan's commitment to building right relations with First Nations. RIGHT The Rev. Clarence Li and Bishop John Stephens stand together before the congregation to introduce the Prayers of the People.



Bishop John Stephens prays over the gifts during the induction of the Rev. Clarence Li.



Rev. Clarence Li administers communion during the service installing him as the Rector of St. Dunstan's.



Bishop John Stephens gives the final blessing.



The offerings of the St. Dunstan's community are presented at the altar.

NORTH FACING

A Priest's Formation Journey in the North

THE VENERABLE JEFFREY MACKIE-DEERNSTED

Archdeacon of the Klondike, Diocese of Yukon

North Facing is a new column that will appear in Topic several times a year. It will feature guest writers from Canada's north, sharing their experiences being church in the north.

I thought I would begin by introducing myself. I am currently the Archdeacon of the Klondike; I live in Dawson City and serve two other parishes besides the one in Dawson City. The three parishes I serve are in three different First Nations located in the North of the Yukon. They are the Na-cho Nyak Dun, Vuntut Gwitchin, and Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nations. Their governments all have agreements with the Yukon government which were signed in the 1990s.

All three First Nations have different languages, but there are similarities and the word for priest is the same in each language — Giiikhii. Local Indigenous languages are integrated into the church services. Serving these three communities requires a lot of travel on my part, as well as reliance on lay persons to help in each community. The Vuntut Gwitchin community in Old Crow is a fly-in community — no roads to it — in the Arctic Circle, and I go up by plane once a month.

Sometimes while travelling I reflect upon the fact that five years ago while studying in Montreal, I didn't even know these communities existed. Now they are where I do my ministry. I initially came up to the Yukon as a seminarian and worked in Mayo (Na-Cho Nyak Dun) for a summer. Mayo is a small community north of Whitehorse of about 235 people. There is one road that goes up to the village. I initially didn't know any of the history of the First Nations, or even what were any of the First Nations in the Yukon. Like many southerners, what I



Old Crow. PHOTO Murray Dewing (Flickr)

knew of the Yukon was limited to the Gold Rush. I remember passing Lake Laberge along the North Klondike Highway, and realizing it was a real place. So, that initial summer was a real immersion in communities that are not just rural... they are defined as remote. For example, while there is a nursing station in Mayo, for complex medical and dental services one must go to Whitehorse or Vancouver.

Coming from the southern Anglican Church I entered a new Canadian reality, and a new Anglican reality. I had grown up

in the suburbs of central Canada and then lived in Montreal. I have also reflected that as my life and experience has grown here, I am far from my suburban background. However, I am still in Canada, and there are similar interests and pastimes such as hockey and curling. There are also ways of life that are quite different from my background. Life on the land is an essential part of being in the north: hunting and fishing are integral.

All of the First Nation people who are part of the Anglican Church in the Yukon

have been affected by the residential schools. Full disclosure, before I came up here, I was naïve about the effects of the residential schools on First Nations. I now see it as a wilful naivety, though I had the information I didn't want to believe that my church had participated or that it been that bad. I now realize that, as I was training to be ordained in the Anglican Church, I found the information destabilizing as I went through my formation. I now refer to my experience in the Yukon as a full-scale conversion — there is in my eyes no other word for it. I believe God took this ordinand from suburbia and placed him here for a purpose. It has been destabilizing at times, as I learned and experienced new cultures, and continue to learn about the life here in the North. I now better know the extent of the effects of the residential schools. That is the reality of ministry here. At the same time, I have become immersed and welcomed into the communities and the culture. At times I have found it so beautiful that I have been moved to tears in public.

I hope to continue to give readers a glimpse into the life of Anglican ministry here in the Yukon. There is still much that I have not spoken about, and I will follow this with a piece about my early time here. I want to write truthfully about life here, but to also push against what I perceive as misunderstandings in the southern Church. I have begun with this piece to set the foundation of where I am coming from as I write. ✠

POSTULANT PONDERINGS

Epiphany | God Walks In

DARA CRANDALL

Postulant, Vancouver School of Theology

Postulants Ponderings is a new column where students studying at the diocesan seminary, Vancouver School of Theology, share brief reflections on themes that emerge during the liturgical year and their various studies.

My favourite part of January is when we celebrate Epiphany. Epiphany is a quirky

little holiday at the end of the feast days of Christmas. The general gist of the holiday

is the celebration of when the Magi found the Messiah and Jesus was presented to the

Gentiles. In Matthew's gospel, the Magi find Jesus in his mother's house. As a result, Christians throughout the centuries have used this as a day to perform house blessings.

A house blessing invites the living God to come into our dwellings and be with us. I love Epiphany because it blends the Divine and the domestic sphere. For much of Western history, domestic work has been women's work and has been chronically undervalued. Traditionally, men did not marry until they could afford to buy a house and "keep a wife." Throughout history, the rhythms of men and women have differed in that the man gets up and attends to his work by leaving the house, and the woman gets up and attends to her work by staying in the house, ensuring it is ordered and well-kept. This disparity made it hard for women, children, and servants to move freely about the world and find refuge in places of rest, worship, and nourishment. And so, God, instead of staying in lofty places to which often only the wealthy and the powerful have access, comes to dwell in the houses of those who do not have the luxury of going and dwelling with God.

Epiphany is the celebration of a God with us, and it also a celebration of a God who uses power and strength in a radically different way than we do. ✠



Chalk markings on a door. Chalking a household's doorway on the feast of Epiphany is a traditional way of blessing a house for the new year. PHOTO A. Davey (Flickr)

OPINION

Resolution vs. Disruption

THE VENERABLE DR. ROB JAMES

Archdeacon of Burrard; Associate Professor of Anglican Formation, Vancouver School of Theology

Many of us will have made resolutions as the year turned from 2024 to 2025. Usually, they are things we intend to change about how we live our lives. And many of those resolutions will already lie in tatters. Don't get too downhearted about that. But maybe do be curious about it. Take, for example, a resolution to do more exercise. The problem with so many resolutions is that we only state the desired outcome without thinking about how to get there. The reason for a lack of exercise is likely to have something to do with the schedule of one's day. So, a resolution "to do more exercise" is not going to work without also thinking about what needs to shift in the rest of the day to enable this to happen. The desired outcome will not happen unless we can disrupt and change the system we are already within. Resolutions that come to fruition always come with some disruption to the systems we have built.

I was ordained in the Church of England, which for years has struggled to devise and implement truly rigorous safe church practices. The publication in November 2024 of the report by Keith Makin into the horrendous abuse by John Smyth, showed just how far from safe the Church can be and often is. Makin proves beyond any doubt that there was a colossal coverup in the 1980s. And then, when Church leaders were notified again in 2012, when abuse was still going on, nothing concrete was done to stop it. Yet Bishops and the General Synod have, for years said they want to do better. The Church's failure in this has not been because people did not know that better safe Church practices were needed. Rather, there has been no desire to change the overall system of accountability and



PHOTO Tim Mossholder (Unsplash)

power, no real desire to allow safe Church practitioners to be truly independent of the control of bishops. The resolve to do something new failed because too few people were willing to disrupt the system. One of my hopes for 2025 is that the Church of England can learn to live with the necessary disruption.

The other new thing to touch on is the new US President. This certainly will bring new things, because Donald Trump does not mind disrupting systems. Not all disruption is good. It all depends on the ethics behind the activity of disruption. Last term, I was teaching a course on Luke-Acts. In *Luke 4:18-19* Jesus quotes from Isaiah, and we returned to this quotation more times than I had expected because, as the course developed, we all came to see this quote from Isaiah as programmatic for the whole of Jesus' ministry. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." Whether Mr. Trump's disruptive activity, or the disruptive activity of anyone, is good, depends on whether the news is actually good for the poor, and whether the oppressed are freed.

Some of your New Year resolutions might not have survived this far. But how about having another go at making some? What new thing(s) will you do? And what systems will need disrupting? Not for the sake of disruption, but for the sake of those who are oppressed or trapped by the system. Is it good news for the poor? Will the oppressed go free? ✠

EDITORIAL

The Grace of Synodality

THE VENERABLE NICK PANG

Executive Archdeacon, Diocese of New Westminster

One could argue that one of the very first Synods that took place in the life of the post-Easter church began on a dusty trail leading away from the heart of town. Two mysterious disciples on the road to Emmaus, hearts burning within them, having the scriptures broken open upon them and within them, having the bread broken before them. *Syn-hodos*: To walk together.

2025 is a year of Synods. In January, Provincial Synod will be discerning the call of the Spirit for a new Archbishop and Metropolitan for the Province of BC and Yukon. In May we'll be celebrating our own Diocesan Synod, a lively biennial event! And in June the General Synod meets together in London, Ontario, where some major deci-

sions about the life of our national church will have to be made.

For those among us whose geek flag is good policy and procedure, Synod is an exciting puzzle, full of little curiosities to think through and navigate. For those of us on the outskirts who may not make it into the city very often, Synod can be a time of encountering old friends—a chance to catch up and renew past acquaintances. For the youngest among us, so often the only ones in their friend group showing up in church on a Sunday morning, Synod can be a time of solidarity and refreshment—a chance to find others like me. For those who are new to the Anglican world, Synod can be a rich encounter with the wonderful diversity that

comes with being part of a global church. For those among us struggling through the reality of being church in 2025 (which is all of us), Synod is the place where decisions are made that will define the road we walk for years to come.

The point is, Synod can be different things for different people. That's part of the grace of Synod. In its best incarnation, Synod is a sign of hope: a place where we come together, each of us bringing our strengths, passions, dreams, and fears. We lay them upon the altar, entrusting all this and more to the grace of God.

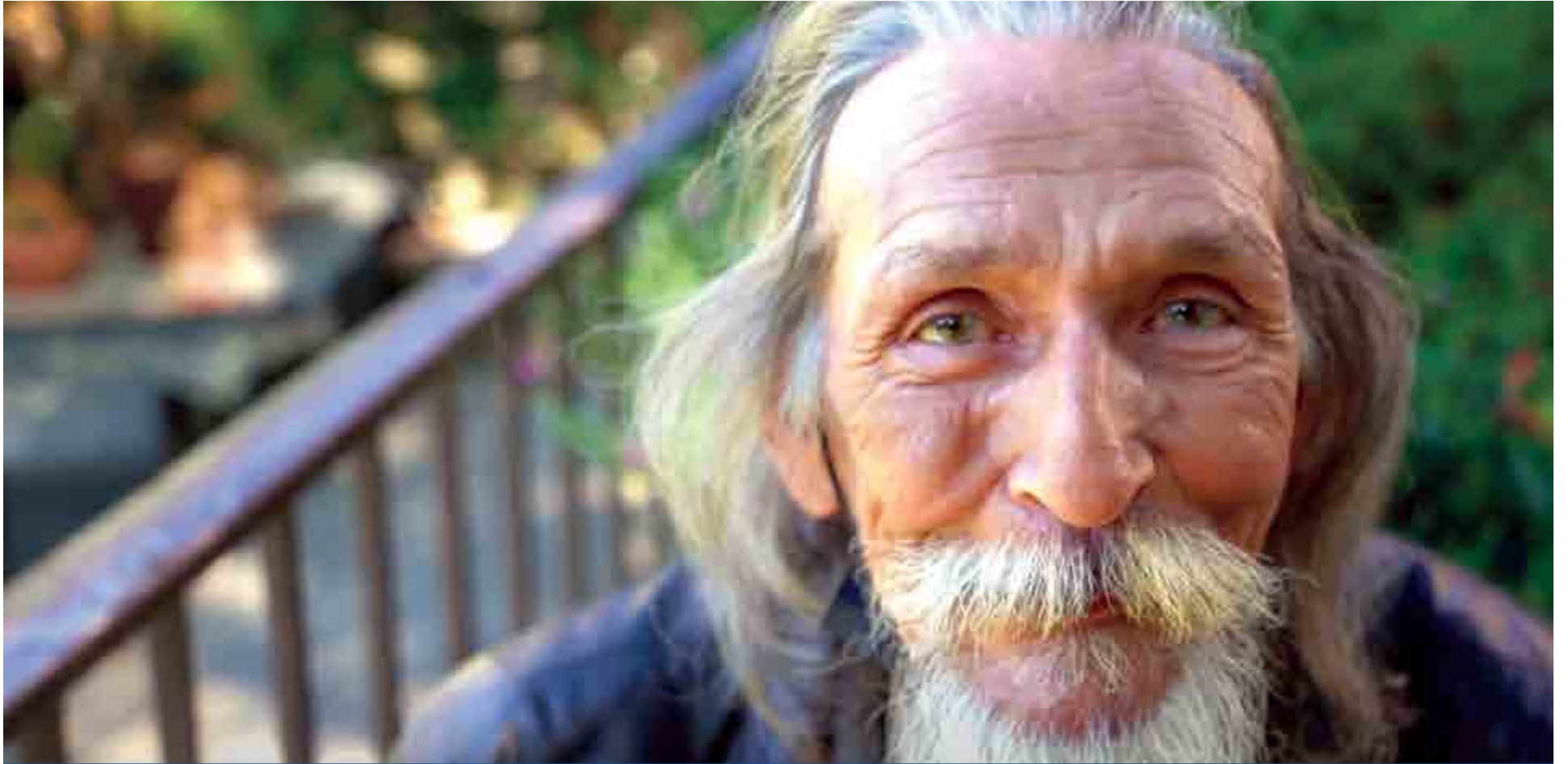
As we anticipate all these gatherings, I wonder if the story of the Road to Emmaus might lend us some wisdom about

the intent and purpose of a Synod. Synod is, above all else, a time to walk together. We go together because there is safety and reassurance in numbers, but along the way what we tend to discover is that it isn't just us walking along. The road we walk into the unknown is precisely the place where we encounter the risen Christ. It's where our hearts burn within us. It's where we meet God in the breaking of the bread. May the grace of the resurrected Christ be with us all. ✠

The Diocese of New Westminster's Synod will take place May 30–31, 2025 at the Italian Cultural Centre in Vancouver

All are encouraged
to submit letters, articles,
reports on parish activities,
opinion pieces, photos, & more
for consideration
to be published in Topic

CONTACT ALICIA AMBROSIO, TOPIC EDITOR
FOR MORE SUBMISSION INFORMATION
PHONE 604.684.6306,
EMAIL communications@vancouver.anglican.ca



SHARING HOPE *Caring Together* SPREADING LOVE

St. Augustine's Food Ministry

St. Augustine's Food Ministry embodies a heartfelt commitment to our Marpole community, serving over 170 households weekly through the *Marpole Community Food Hub* and offering warmth and sustenance to 35+ individuals every week at *Bryn's Neighbourhood Table*, where a hot meal is provided by donation. Our collaborative efforts with esteemed partners like the *Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB)*, *Monte Cristo Bakery*, *Safeway Canada (Marpole)*, *Food Runners*, *Choices*, and *Second Harvest* amplify our impact. Monthly, we supplement our provisions from GVFB by purchasing fresh produce, ensuring a diverse and nutritious supply.

It's about more than just meals—it's about fostering a safe haven for our diverse community members, including seniors, families, students, immigrants, and refugees. Beyond sustenance, we facilitate agency referrals for housing, immigration, and language support, aiming to address the root causes of vulnerability.

As we echo Christ's compassionate outreach to those in need, we humbly appeal for financial support to sustain and expand this vital ministry, ensuring that the heart of our community continues to beat with compassion and care.



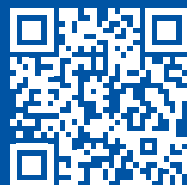
Bryn's Neighbourhood Table provides a hot meal, by donation, for 35+ individuals weekly



The Marpole Community Food Hub serves 170+ households weekly

OUR OVERARCHING GOAL IS AMBITIOUS YET HEARTFELT:

"To render our services unnecessary by eradicating food insecurity."



To give online to Care + Share & St. Augustine's Marpole's Food Hub & Community Meal ministries please go to...

vancouver.anglican.ca/donate or scan the QR Code and follow the Ways to Give instructions

For more information, contact...

Diocese of New Westminster | Attn: Care + Share
1410 Nanton Avenue | Vancouver BC | V6H 2E2

EMAIL info@vancouver.anglican.ca
PHONE 604.684.6306

For more information about St. Augustine's, Marpole please go to...
staugustinesanglican.com/home

Care + Share

Care + Share is the vehicle for our local collective giving in the Diocese of New Westminster. This program applies funds to frontline mission where we live by identifying and nurturing mission-driven projects that respond to the greatest need. Because *Care + Share* overheads and administrative costs are met by the diocese, every cent of every dollar given reaches those who need it most. In our urban centres, families grapple with significant challenges, notably food security. That is why, in an effort to bolster our collective response, the Parish of St. Augustine's, Marpole has been earmarked as the recipient of the 2024-2025 *Care + Share* contributions. Your donations will fuel their essential weekly Food Hub and Community Meal ministries.

