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FAITH TIDES



Image by Melody Charlie



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Growing into the new



Photo by [Jennifer Delmarre](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

November marks the end of one church year and the beginning of the next. On Nov. 23, we finish the church year celebrating Christ the King, and on Nov. 30, we begin again with the great season of Advent. We do all of this in the year of our Lord 2025, the mid-point of an extremely turbulent decade in salvation history.

As a bishop of the church in these turbulent 2020s, I am focused on increasing the adaptive capacity of the whole system, or diocese. This language around the importance of leaders focusing on increasing the adaptive capacity of the system as a whole comes from the work of Harvard professor Ronald Heifetz. He emphasizes that long-lasting transformative change never comes from the work of a leader alone, but rather from the system as a whole learning, adapting, getting manageably uncomfortable and stretching and growing into the new.

The bible is full of stories illustrating Heifetz's point: the 40 years in the wilderness, where the people had to learn how to stop whining and complaining and start living as God's people; Jesus telling the disciples that they had to stop arguing amongst each other about who was the greatest and instead go out two by two to share the good news; and the early church being ushered out of the fear and paralysis of the upper room and out into the world. The history of our faith has always been about God working in and through not just one of us, but all of us together.

As I look around this diocese I see so many of our parishes and people wrestling with the challenges and opportunities of our times and asking God and one another how we are being called to change and adapt. Three examples among many:

- The good people of St. Dunstan's and Two Saints. In this past year we deconsecrated the St. Dunstan's building, and the parishioners began worshipping with the Two Saints congregation. It has been a joy to watch how well those two congregations have become friends and companions on the journey. In October they voted unanimously to ask the diocese to amalgamate the two parishes. Every single person in each of those churches has adapted, has given up something of the old and familiar in order to embrace the new. I am grateful for their faith and witness.
- Wardens and treasurers of the Oceanside area (Lantzville, Nanoose Bay, Parksville, Port Alberni and Qualicum Beach) have been meeting with one another to discuss possibilities for shared ministry in the area.

- The North Island had a regional meeting in October to continue to talk about ways that they could support one another in ministry. This part of our diocese is often way ahead of the rest of the diocese in sharing resources, raising up lay leaders and responding to the needs of their communities. We all have a lot to learn from the faith and resiliency of the folks in the North Island.

Adapting to our ever-changing times is going to involve building relationships of trust, discerning what we need to hold on to and what we need to let go of and daring to iterate new ways of being. All of this is going to feel new and strange to the church. None of this is going to feel new and strange to the church.

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the church and in Christ Jesus.

St. Dunstan's holds final service at church in Gordon Head



St Dunstan's Anglican Church, Gordon Head. Image copyright: Anglican Diocese of British Columbia.

By Naomi Racz

For decades, St. Dunstan's Anglican Church provided a venue for worship and community service in the Greater Victoria neighbourhood of Gordon Head — pursuing its motto to be “a family of Christ walking with our community.” That legacy was remembered and celebrated at a final service earlier this year.

On February 6, 1966, the parish of St. Dunstan's held its first service in a newly constructed church. The parish was the consolidation of the parishes of St. Richard's and St. Chad's, both mission churches of the parish of St. Luke's, Cedar Hill. The church was dedicated one month later by then-metropolitan

Harold Sexton.

The wood frame church building sits on a large “meadow” on a corner lot. Inside, the sanctuary is simple but striking, with a soaring wood-beamed ceiling. On sunny days, the many windows cast a golden glow on the wooden pews.



*The St. Dunstan's sanctuary and altar.
Image by Debra Brown.*

Over the years, the church and its hall became a focal point for the community. The sanctuary's amazing acoustics made it a highly sought out venue for choirs and other musical performances. The hall was used by multiple community groups, particularly those that couldn't afford the high rental fees at other venues. The meadow has been used by after school groups, Guides and Scouts and Cathedral School students (St Dunstan's houses a Junior Kindergarten program for the school) — as well as many generations of deer.

St. Dunstan's enjoyed a long period of growth and stability under the leadership of John Steele, who served as incumbent from 1996 until 2017. During that time the congregation rose to over 70 and the church had a thriving Sunday school, a youth choir, a senior choir, two Sunday morning services, two weekly Bible study groups and gardening and craft groups.

John Steele resigned in October 2017 to make the move to St. John the Baptist, Cobble Hill. Debra Brown, a St Dunstan's warden for many years to the present day, notes that John Steele's resignation marked the beginning of a long period of transition for the church. St. Dunstan's was served by an interim clergy, Bruce Bryant-Scott, until Jeremy Carr filled the position of incumbent in October 2018.

Attendance had begun to decline, and this was only exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Jeremy Carr left in 2022, and Heather Robinson was appointed as interim clergy to help the congregation determine its ongoing viability.

“Over the next two years we worked very hard to generate sufficient rental income to meet our financial commitments, repair and maintain the buildings and care for our very large lawn and gardens,” Debra Brown told *Faith Tides* via email. “We achieved considerable success in those efforts, but a lot of volunteer commitment was required. At a certain point, it became clear that our parish resources of time, talent and treasure were increasingly limited, and not sustainable. It was time to look for an alternate path forward.”

That path involved working with the diocese to find a property developer who could revitalize the St. Dunstan's property into a community hub with housing, a daycare centre, retail space and a worship and meeting space for the parish and community groups. Ultimately, that path was abandoned as they could not secure a developer. Meanwhile, the number of volunteers available to maintain and administer the parish was dwindling.

Despite its beautiful, naturally light-filled sanctuary

and useful community spaces, the construction of the church continued to present challenges. The exterior wood frame had not weathered well, a new roof was needed, there had been longstanding issues with leaks in the ceilings, many of the windows needed replacing and the bathrooms in the lower hall needed upgrading to be fully accessible.

Heather Robinson and Bishop Anna began to discuss the possibility of having the St. Dunstan's parish worship at St Peter, Lakehill, which is part of the Two Saints Ministry where Heather



Heather Robinson (front) giving communion. Image by Debra Brown.

is now the incumbent. They approached the wardens and then parish councils of both parishes, to consider the possibility. Debra Brown writes that at first the notion of letting go of St. Dunstan's came as a shock, but over time, and in consultation with the parish council and the congregation, it came to be seen as a "sensible solution."

In January 2025, the Two Saints Ministry parish and the parish of St. Dunstan's began worshipping together every Sunday at St. Peter's, and the two parishes have continued to worship together since. Debra Brown writes that there have been many positive aspects to the arrangement and that joint parish meetings have

allowed them to work through any "pinch points."

Meanwhile, in December 2024, Bishop Anna wrote a pastoral letter to inform the diocese of the parish's decision to "let go of their large and aging facility." On June 7, 2025, St. Dunstan's held a final service of celebration and thanksgiving, led by Bishop Anna. The service was the first time the parish members had worshipped at St. Dunstan's this year.

The St. Dunstan's leadership worked hard to make it a memorable and meaningful service. There was freshly baked bread for communion and a hymn written especially for the St. Dunstan's parish by Marnie Barrell, who was recently appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to hymn writing.



St. Dunstan's music director Fran Pollet (seated), assisted by Trisha Daniel. Image by Debra Brown.

There were over 100 participants, including clergy from around the diocese. "It was an emotional day for everyone," writes Debra. "Former parishioners attended to honour and celebrate the years of

fellowship and community service. It was a bittersweet mix of grieving and celebration, with many tears as well as happy reunions and laughter."

What does the future hold for St. Dunstan's? The diocese is in the process of finalizing the sale of the church building. But as the rite of deconsecration states: "the presence of God is not tied to any place or building."

"We've been exploring ways to worship and work together with the members of the Two Saints Ministry since January," writes Debra. "Our parish families are forging connections around fellowship and community service. In October, the two parishes voted on whether to amalgamate into one parish. The vote was unanimously in favour."

Debra Brown hopes that the spirit of the parish of St. Dunstan's will live on. "We sincerely hope that the core elements of what has made St. Dunstan's such a strong parish family over the decades will live on in our expressions of love of music, our connection to the beauty of God's creation and our commitment to caring for each other and to serving our neighbours in need."

Final women's retreat explores faith in the turbulent 2020s



Attendees at the fall 2025 women's retreat. Photo courtesy of Trish Vollmann Stock.

By Trish Vollmann Stock

On Sept. 27, 2025, women from across the diocese gathered for the final women's retreat. Attendance at the retreat has declined in recent years, reflecting broader trends of diminishing stability and participation within Western church communities — an issue resonant with the theme of the conference, "Keeping the Faith in the Turbulent 2020s."

The fall 2025 retreat was held at Camp Pringle, where we have been meeting since Camp Columbia's closure in 2011.

Bishop Anna and Christine Conkin, incumbent at St.

George, Cadboro Bay, served as retreat leaders, bringing a constructive and thoughtful approach to the topic of turbulence. Each participant had encountered periods of turbulence in their personal lives, and the Bible offers numerous narratives on navigating challenging times.

We talked about how our lives take place within the boundaries of an empire, recognising that all empires eventually collapse, which means we must work together to rebuild and persevere through hardship.

We also explored the role of prophets as catalysts for change, bearers of truth and conveyors of divine messages, who play a vital part in challenging and dismantling existing structures of power.

We are called to return to principles of justice and recognize that the challenges we face are shared by all, necessitating collaborative solutions. Contemporary society is marked by pronounced individualism and a culture of exclusion. From a Christian perspective, it is important to adhere to the teachings of the prophets, who emphasised collective responsibility rather than individual pursuits. We do not navigate these issues in isolation; success depends on our willingness to work together as a unified community.

Over the years, the women's retreat has been led by an amazing community of women. Brenda Dhaene, lay canon, is retiring after 18 years of dedicated leadership. Indeed, Brenda has spent most of her life in service to women. As a schoolgirl in Ireland, she was part of the Legion of Mary, which provided care to elderly, bedridden women. Upon immigrating to Canada in 1962, she volunteered at Madonna House, a halfway house supporting women recently released from prison, and assisted at the Mercer Reformatory for

Women in Toronto by playing music for Sunday mass.

Many others contributed to the women's retreat over the years, including Carol Ann Zenger, Julie Foster, Diane Hutchinson, Barb Coleman, Diane Bell, Cathy Beise and Nancy Ford, among others.

Anglicans support the revitalization of Indigenous languages



Drum in sunlight. Taken in Nlaka'pamux and Syilx First Nations traditional territory, Merritt, BC. Image by Melody Charlie.

By Sarah Kell

How do we learn a language? We all need to hear our mother tongue spoken to learn who we are and how we relate to others and to the world. In 2015, members of Aboriginal Neighbours set out to raise \$45,000 to

sponsor Indigenous language learning, and to raise public awareness of the urgent need for Indigenous language revitalization on Vancouver Island and beyond.

Initiated by our diocese in 1996, Aboriginal Neighbours worked to build respect and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. By raising funds for the [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#)'s mentor-apprentice program, the Revitalizing Indigenous Living Languages project supported young Indigenous adults to learn and become fluent in their mother tongue and assisted Elders to pass along knowledge of their language, culture and spirituality to the next generation.

A mentor-apprentice team is made up of a fluent speaker of an Indigenous language, and an apprentice learner; they commit to spending 300 hours a year working together, fully immersed in the Indigenous language. For learners, the program measurably increases language proficiency. It is also transformational: learning their Indigenous languages often opens new ways of seeing the world, as well as a deeper understanding of their personal, family and community histories, leading to a positive sense of self-worth. In the last few years, apprentices who have completed the program have even become mentors themselves.

For the mentors, who are Elders, the program also provides healing, as they gain opportunities to speak their languages in their communities, with positive recognition for their knowledge and ability. Those who are Residential School Survivors gain practice and confidence in speaking their languages again. Many mentors find a sense of pride, wholeness and hope as

they teach their apprentices. (For more on the positive impacts of the mentor-apprentice program, please see [this blog](#).)

The Revitalizing Indigenous Living Languages project was developed in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #61, which calls on churches to provide funding for Indigenous community-controlled culture and language revitalization projects. With the support of the Anglican Healing Fund, the Anglican Foundation, the diocese's Vision Fund, the Victoria Foundation and the Vancouver Foundation, and fundraising by parishes, ecumenical partners and individuals, Aboriginal Neighbours exceeded their original goal of sponsoring one mentor-apprentice team for three years.

The project raised a total of \$297,550 from 2015 to 2024, thanks to ongoing support from parishes, the grantors listed above and a major grant from the United Church Healing Fund. These contributions partially funded a further 15 mentor-apprentice teams within the diocesan region. Indigenous languages supported include Kwakwaka'wakw, Hul'q'umi'num', Diitid'aa'tx, Nuuchaanul and SENĆOŦEN.

Thanks to tireless advocacy by the First Peoples' Cultural Council, along with Indigenous language activists in BC and across the country, the mentor-apprentice program is now fully supported by government funding partners. As the Revitalizing Indigenous Living Languages project wraps up, and Aboriginal Neighbours' work winds down, the First Peoples' Cultural Council has invited our diocese to support Indigenous arts and music grants through its sister organization, the [First Peoples' Cultural Foundation](#). So far, two Victoria parishes have taken up this call. If you or your parish would like to be part of

this fundraising effort, please see the [June issue of Faith Tides](#), or contact Gerry Lawson (glawson@board.fpcf.ca) at First Peoples' Cultural Foundation.

You can also donate directly to the Foundation online [via Canada Helps](#).

So much has been accomplished. The reconciling work continues, unabated, in faith, hope and love.

106th Archbishop of Canterbury announced



Archbishop-elect of Canterbury Bishop Sarah Mullally. Image copyright: Lambeth Palace.

By Naomi Racz

On Oct. 3, 2025, the British government announced that King Charles III had approved the nomination of Sarah Mullally as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. She will be the first woman to hold this

office.

Bishop Sarah is no stranger to firsts. Before being ordained, she worked as a nurse for the NHS, eventually working her way up to the role of Chief Nursing Officer for England. At the age of 37, she was the youngest person ever to hold this role. In 2005, Bishop Sarah was appointed a Dame of the British Empire for her service to nursing.

Bishop Sarah became a Christian at the age of 16 and in 2001, she began training on a part-time basis for ordained ministry. After almost a decade serving in parish ministry, in 2015, Bishop Sarah was elected Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter. She was consecrated a bishop by then-Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby at Canterbury Cathedral, becoming one of the first women to be consecrated as a bishop in that cathedral.

In 2017, she became the first woman to be elected Bishop of London. The Bishop of London is the third most senior bishop in the Church of England, after the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

In a new release on Oct. 3, Sarah Mullally said: “I look forward to sharing this journey of faith with the millions of people serving God and their communities in parishes all over the country and across the global Anglican Communion.”

Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, sent a message to Bishop Sarah the same day: “Be certain of the steadfast prayers of Canadian Anglicans from coast to coast to coast and know that our friendship is solid and hearty — in all good spiritual and practical ways.”

In an article published in the *Anglican Journal*, also on Oct. 3, Archbishop Shane commented: “I think the selection of Archbishop-designate Sarah Mullally is timely and inspired... Archbishop-designate Mullally personifies the thoughtful Christianity that is at the heart of the Anglican tradition. Her public comments about a number of matters reflect balance and careful consideration of the need to acknowledge differences, with a view to maintaining unity rather than feeding division.”

In a message to the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee commented on Bishop Sarah’s appointment: “I am rejoicing that the church has raised up a loving, prophetic and discerning sister in Christ. Blessings on your ministry, Bishop Sarah.”

Bishop Sarah will be installed at Canterbury Cathedral in March 2026. [Watch an interview with Sarah Mullally](#), discussing her appointment as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury.

Rethinking the Anglican divide



Photo by [Alexander Andrews](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By Vernon Foster

The Anglican Communion is experiencing a profound realignment. GAFCON is now increasingly framing itself as an alternative to the historic instruments of communion. This signals more than doctrinal disagreement; it reflects a challenge to long-standing colonial patterns of authority. Many provinces aligned with GAFCON are in Africa, Asia and Latin America — all former colonial territories. Their insistence on autonomy can be seen as reclaiming agency over theological and moral life.

Recent communiqués make this shift explicit. GAFCON has rejected the Archbishop of Canterbury’s role as the central arbiter of Anglican unity. It cites the office’s failure to uphold doctrinal standards, [particularly with the appointment of Sarah Mullally, the first female Archbishop of Canterbury](#). They have also called a global bishops’ assembly, establishing alternative structures of governance. These steps illustrate that the struggle is not merely about doctrine, but about *who decides and whose voice is recognised*.

Meanwhile, liberal Anglicanism in the Global North celebrates inclusion. Ordaining women, affirming queer clergy and blessing same-sex unions are vital advances. Yet they can inadvertently replicate colonial dynamics, positioning northern provinces as moral educators and the Global South as followers. The irony is that even progressive inclusion can carry a civilising discourse reminiscent of empire.

In *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Biblical scholar Musa W. Dube cautions that “texts of liberation can easily become texts of domination when

read through colonial eyes.” Similarly, inclusion imposed from a distance can mirror the hierarchies it seeks to dismantle. Decolonising belonging means recognising that authority, inclusion and morality must emerge through dialogue.

This is particularly evident when considering gender and sexuality. The appointment of Mullally, while historic, becomes a flashpoint: it is celebrated in one context as liberation but contested in another as an assertion of northern authority. True decolonisation happens when we stop assuming that what works in one church should work everywhere and instead learn from each other’s stories. A decolonised Anglicanism reframes communion as shared responsibility rather than hierarchical conformity. Disagreement and dissent do not signify schism but spaces for mutual learning. Belonging is less about alignment with a centre of power and more about honouring diverse histories, theologies and moral sensibilities.

In this light, the fractures within Anglicanism are opportunities. They invite the Communion to reconsider how authority is distributed, how inclusion is enacted and how belonging is experienced. The challenge is not merely doctrinal correctness but cultivating a communion in which former centres and former peripheries can coexist without replicating colonial hierarchies, and where difference itself becomes a sacred space of encounter.

Ripples: November 2025

By Faith Tides



Community harvest dance

On Sept. 19, Holy Trinity, North Saanich held a community harvest dance in the parish hall to say thank you to the local farmers and give them a fun way

to gather. The Chick Wagon Band performed, and line dancing instruction was provided by Sidney Line Dancing. Delicious food was provided by the Al Ibrahim family and the Greek on The Street food truck. Seventy-five people attended from the parish and surrounding community, and Holy Trinity hopes to make this an annual event.

Silver and Sage seniors program



This seniors program was launched on Sept. 25 at St. Luke, Cedar Hill. The program kicked off with a short radio play performed by the Langham Court's Readers' Theatre. Curiosity and a play

brought many to the first meeting, but at the following meetings there was still a healthy attendance of around 30 seniors.

St. Luke's welcomes all seniors who want to connect, learn, laugh and make new friends. A holistic approach to well-being underpins the program. The objectives are to encourage connection, bring joy, stimulate the intellect, reduce anxiety and support good health. Seniors can enjoy an entertainment, a talk or an activity, refreshments and camaraderie. It's free, but donations are welcome. This program runs on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at St. Luke's Anglican Church.

Sold out pasta dinner and silent auction at St. Andrew's

A crowd of 80 diners filled the hall to capacity at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Sidney for the first annual pasta dinner. The silent auction, with around 80

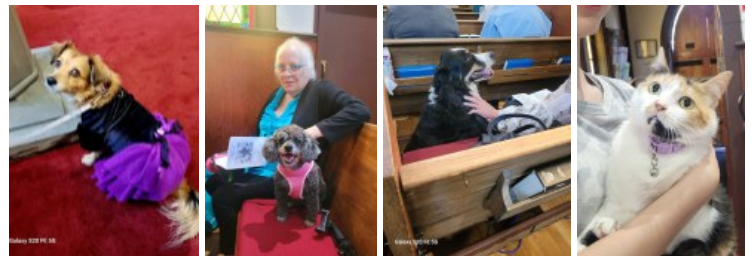
items, raised \$4,660 for the parish's programs.

Vintage market a fun way to bring in the community and funds

St. Luke, Cedar Hill held a very successful Attic Treasures Vintage Market on Saturday, Sept. 20, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Twelve spaces and tables were rented to vintage vendors, for between \$100 – \$150. There were 53 early birds who paid \$10 for entry during the first hour. From 10 a.m. the entry fee was \$3. A total of 348 people attended. Vendors and St. Luke's volunteers dressed in vintage attire, which added to the fun of the day. The Vintage Market has proved to be a good way to reach out to the community and bring in funds for activities at St. Luke's, and for outreach in the neighbourhood. The next Attic Treasures Vintage Market will be held on Feb. 28, 2026.

Pet blessings held across the diocese

St. Francis Day is celebrated annually on Oct. 4. Churches across the diocese held pet blessings on Sunday, Oct. 5. Among them was St. Michael's and All Angels in Chemainus, where over a dozen pets joined in a special Celtic service. Norman Knowles, incumbent at St. Michael's and All Angels, blessed all the pets and their owners. Apparently, there was no barking or fuss, but lots of curiosity, cuteness and cuddles! See some of the pets blessed at St. Michael's below. Images courtesy of Jodie Greis.



Norman Knowles inducted as incumbent of two parishes

On Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025, Norman Knowles was inducted as the incumbent of both St. John's in Duncan and St. Michael's and All Angels in Chemainus. Bishop

Anna, along with Jenny Replogle and other diocesan clergy, presented the service. St. Michael's hosted the celebration. Norman was touched by the love and support from both parishes and those who attended found the service special and memorable. St. John's bakers joined St. Michael's chefs in serving up a pot luck dinner that stretched as far as the eye could see!
