



St. Luke Cedar Hill

www.stlukesvictoria.ca

"a beacon in the community, Illuminating
many ways to encounter God"

The Prescription



Christmas 2023

St. Luke's Rector: The Reverend Daniel Fournier

Editors: Sharon McMillan and Barb Prescott

Cover photo created by Sharon McMillan using Bing AI.

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We embrace the knowledge that the Łək'wəŋən (Lkwungen) peoples are the original custodians of the lands on which we gather. Their traditions are a blessing that can open our hearts and minds, and they are bearers of ancient wisdom that can give us hope.

From the Editors

Sharon McMillan and Barb Prescott

Welcome to this Christmas 2023 issue of **St. Luke's Prescription**. Thank you to everyone who sent in pictures and articles for this issue. We are always happy to receive your contributions! We also appreciate feedback and suggestions as to what you would like to see included in **The Prescription**.

The submission deadline for the Easter edition of **The Prescription** is **Friday, March 8th**. Please keep sending us (Sharon and Barb) your articles, photos, poems, and other creative endeavours at prescription@stlukecedarhill.ca or communications@stlukecedarhill.ca.

Endings and Beginnings

"Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end..." I often think of those lyrics, from a song popular a number of years ago, at a time like this when one year is ending and another year is starting. This **Prescription** too looks at endings and beginnings, featuring pictures and articles about events that happened in 2023 while looking forward to 2024.

At this time of year, some magazines feature "The Year in Pictures". This issue of the **Prescription** highlights the "Last Four Months in Pictures". It includes pictures from the **Crowd Pleasers Only Concert** and the **Vintage Fashion Show and Tea** at the end of September; our **Service of Remembrance**, the **No Stone Left Alone** event (when the grade eight students from Cedar Hill Middle School visited St. Luke's cemetery to honour the veterans), and the **Christmas Bazaar** in November; and finally pictures from the **Christmas Pageant** in December. Pictures from the **Blessing of the Animals Service** in October were included in the Fall issue of the **Prescription**. We hope you enjoy all of these photo collages. Thanks to Sharon McMillan for creating the collages and to everyone who contributed the pictures used in them.

We also look back on our **Celebration Sunday**, which was held October 29th. No pictures unfortunately but it was good to celebrate St. Luke's Day and thank everyone for their offerings of time, talents, and treasures. Please see the article on page 6.

As we look to 2024, please read about our monthly Reflections Service (see page 7). The first **Reflections Service** of 2024 will be on Sunday, January 14th at 4:30 pm. Please plan to come and take in this special service. The **Attic Treasures Vintage Market** on Saturday, February 17th (see page 23) is something new for St. Luke's. We invite you to come to look for some treasures at this market. Upcoming Dates to Note on page 4 and information about our **Annual Vestry Meeting** on page 6 provide further information about upcoming events in 2024.

Meanwhile, take some time over Christmas to enjoy the peace and hope the Christ Child brings.

May God's Blessings be with you and yours at Christmas and as we end this year and start the next.

Barb



From the Rector's Desk – Christmas 2023

by the Rev. Daniel Fournier



Dear Friends,

Once again, the holy season of Christmas is before us as we celebrate the coming of the child in the manger, the Messiah, Emmanuel, God with us.

What joy it is to pause and behold this child before us. As we celebrate this, hopefully, it also causes for us a sense of renewal, a time to refocus, a time to share in what is most important. Love of family, friends, perhaps a new love that we discover, or a rekindled love.

This season is also a time to experience renewal in some of the things that we do in church. Yes, we have seen this in some of the reconfigurations of our sanctuary over the summer.

Another part of this reconfiguration will be the placement of the crèche. We know historically over a good number of years it has been inside the altar with the altar turned around. This year it will be placed so that you may experience the scene from a far closer perspective. This scene will be placed right before you in front of the pulpit. From this perspective, it will be much easier to approach, and you might even take a minute or two to stand before it and reflect on the importance of the nativity, the incarnation to the life of the church and your own personal faith life.

It is my prayer that this Christmas season will be a particularly special one for each one of you. May this Christmas, as well as the year to come, be a new time for you - a renewed time for what is the passion of God's heart: love, peace, joy, and hope.

A blessed Christmas to each one of you.

Daniel +

Cards for the Community

We made these big cards at the December 1st Fantastic Friday. Parishioners signed them during coffee times on Sunday, and then they were delivered to our neighbours at Highgate Lodge, the Cedars, the Shelbourne Community Kitchen, Cedar Hill Middle School, Lutheran Church of the Cross, and Fig Deli.



Photo by Heather Simpson

Words from the Wardens

Giving: A Most Important Word at Christmas *by Brenda Morgan*

As usual, St. Luke's has been bustling with activity during the fall months. It's quite remarkable what we accomplish here, and we must take time to acknowledge and congratulate all those who give so much of themselves to our parish.

We had a wonderful concert in September with a joyful repertoire of crowd-pleasing music. We are grateful to Susanne Reul-Zastre for organizing the event and helping to raise money towards fixing our beautiful heritage church. We were privileged to host incredible musicians: David Palmer and Rosemary Laing (organ), Ben Parker (trumpet), Erika Pryer (voice), Elena Antontceva (cello), Neala St. Hilaire and Naomi Barclay (piano), and Susanne Reul-Zastre (organ and piano). We cannot thank them enough for giving us their time and their talent. Weren't they superb!

Later in the fall, we came together to celebrate our patron, St. Luke. This patronal feast is a tradition, and this year we thank the Scouts for helping to make this such a well-run event. Kudos also to Yasser Youssef, owner of Fig Deli, who provided the delicious food for our lunch. For those of you who haven't yet discovered this wonderful delicatessen/specialty food store/café further down Cedar Hill Cross Road, you really should treat yourselves.

Most recently, we came together, so many of us, to help with the Christmas Bazaar. What a monumental job it is to put on an event like that. Pull it off, we did. Hundreds attended and, as a fundraiser, it was exceptionally successful. Thank you to Carol Turnham for being our champion convenor. And thank you to all who helped.

You may have noticed a new face in our office. Neil Patterson, whom you usually see in church streaming our online services, is now our new Parish Administrator. We are delighted to welcome him aboard. If you haven't already met Neil, drop by the office to say 'hi'.

Christmas is a time of giving, and nothing is more important than the time and personal effort you give to make St. Luke's the vibrant place it is. This is the most important type of giving, and Heather and I, your wardens, thank you.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very blessed Christmas.



Photo from Internet

"All of us, at some time or other, need help. Whether we're giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbours - in our own way, each one of us is a giver and a receiver."

Mr. Rogers



Dates to Note: January through March 2024

Date	Event
Friday, January 5 th	Fantastic Friday (aka Messy Church) – 4:30 - 6:30 pm
Sunday, January 7 th – Sunday, February 18 th	Communion Services at 8 am and 10 am Coffee Time in the Hall after the 10 am services.
Sunday, January 14 th	Reflections Service – 4:30 pm
Friday, February 2 nd	Fantastic Friday (aka Messy Church) – 4:30 - 6:30 pm
Sunday, February 11 th	Reflections Service – 4:30 pm
Tuesday, February 13 th	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – Time TBA
Wednesday, February 14 th	Ash Wednesday Service – Time TBA
Saturday, February 17 th	Attic Treasures Vintage Market – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Sunday, February 25 th	One Morning Service only this Sunday , at 10 am followed by lunch and the Annual Vestry Meeting
Friday, March 1 st	Fantastic Friday (aka Messy Church) – 4:30 - 6:30 pm
Sunday, March 3 rd – Sunday, March 17 th	Communion Services at 8 am and 10 am Coffee Time in the Hall after the 10 am services.
Sunday, March 10 th	Reflections Service – 4:30 pm
Sunday, March 24 th	Palm Sunday – Communion Services at 8 am and 10 am Coffee Time in the Hall after the 10 am service.
Monday, March 25 th – Saturday, March 30 th	Holy Week – Services TBA
Sunday, March 31 st	Easter Sunday – Services at 8 am, 10 am, and 2 pm

Further information about services for Holy Week will be posted later.

A Reminder...Your Support is Always Needed... and gratefully received in the following areas:

- **As Readers and Liturgical Assistants:** Leave a message at the office for Daniel or Sean Tiernay
 - **Help to keep the grounds tidy:** Contact the Parish Office
 - **Donate to the Altar Guild Flower Fund:** Contact Ann Séguin via the Parish Office
 - **Financial support of St. Luke's:** Make an extra financial donation to St. Luke's by:
 - **Cheque or Cash** (put your cheque or cash in your envelope and put it into the collection plate on Sunday, mail it, drop it off at the hall, or have it picked up)
 - **E-Transfer** (from your bank account)
 - **Credit Card** (Canada Helps)
 - **PAR** (Pre-Authorized Remittance Program, also called automatic debit)
- Visit the **Donate** page at the website (<https://www.stlukesvictoria.ca/programs/ways-to-donate-to-st-lukes>) for more information about making financial donations.

Light

by Joan Jolson*

In darkness there is light
It is around us and within us
Yet we cannot see or feel it
Until our eyes are opened
To the love that is around us
And to the door that will take
Us from darkness to light

Who has the key to open this door
And let the light in
Is it a friend or our family or someone
We have not yet met
Or will it magically appear to us
When we least expect it
To open up our hearts and lives to
The magic of our road and place
In life with our families and community
That will give us the strength and chance
To remove the hurts and failures
That we have experienced on our travels
Through our lives

What is the answer and who do we turn to
In pain and sorrow there seems to be
Despair-there is no hope seen
Who or what will guide us through this
Family, friends or faith
Or ourselves, finding a new path to follow
One of Hope and love that remove the despair and hurts
One of faith in ourselves and in those around us
In a family of love, trust and hope
That will surround us all

**Joanne Jolson's mother, Joan Jolson, wrote poetry throughout her life. We shared one of her poems in the Summer 2023 Prescription and we are pleased to share another one here.*

Celebration Sunday and Looking Ahead to 2024

by Barb Prescott



Thank you for your pledges of your gifts - whether financial and of your time and talents - which you offered through the Pledge Forms and the Volunteer Forms you filled out on Celebration Sunday. Your pledges help us to plan and look ahead to a future where we aren't scrambling for every penny and are able to budget for the future. Here are a few

statistics from Celebration Sunday: 37 individuals/households made pledges on Celebration Sunday this year (33 on Celebration Sunday last year) with a total of 42 people who made pledges this year including the five who made pledges after Celebration Sunday. Fourteen people said they would increase their offerings next year while sixteen people made pledges this year who hadn't pledged last year. We are very thankful for those who are able to give faithfully each week or on a monthly basis, and for those who plan to increase their givings in 2024.

As we look to the New Year and our own roles in 2024, please mark on your calendars our AGM (also called our Annual Vestry Meeting) on February 25th. Please consider if you could be a Parish Council member in 2024. If you would

like to learn more about being on Parish Council, please talk to the Nominating Committee Members, Rick Saville, Heather Simpson, and Brenda Morgan.

ANNUAL VESTRY MEETING SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25th

The Annual Vestry meeting will include reports from 2023 and the election of new Parish Council members. Mark this date on your 2024 calendars and plan to attend this meeting.

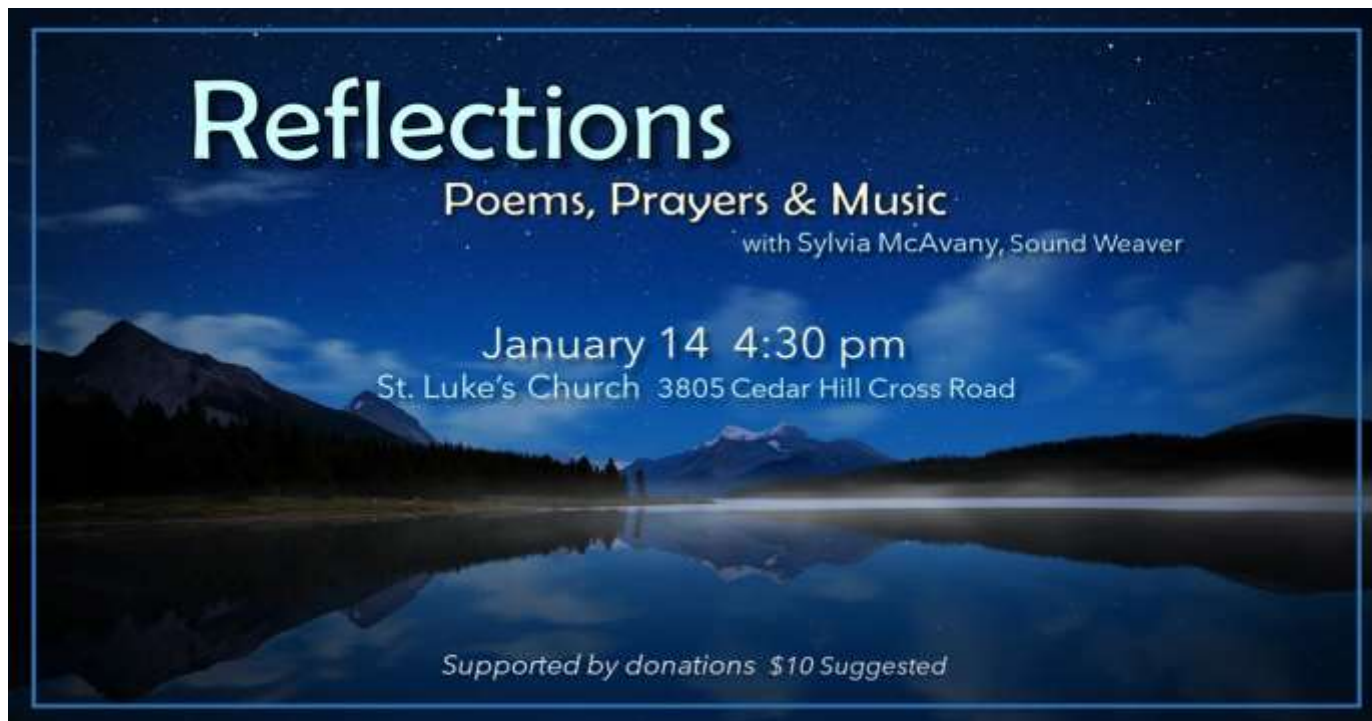
The Parish of St. Luke Cedar Hill is all of us.

A Few Smiles

submitted by Harry Felsing

Two little boys were at a wedding when one leaned over to the other and asked, "How many wives can a man have?" His friend answered, "Sixteen... four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer."





Reflections

Words and Music to Calm the Spirit

by Barb Prescott and Brenda Morgan

Enjoy music in the beautiful candlelit ambiance of St. Luke's Church in the late afternoon. The readings, prayers, and music of this special Reflection Time will calm your spirit and soothe your soul.

The January 14th Reflections will feature Hang Drums. Have you ever heard the music of a Hang Drum? Enjoy the melodic sound of this instrument played by Sylvia McAvany, while soaking in the beautiful candlelit ambiance of St. Luke's at dusk.

The Hang Drum is a rare and relatively new percussion instrument with only a handful of musicians in BC who play it. We are proud and privileged to be able to feature this artist as part of our service.

In 2024 , Reflections will be on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Upcoming dates for 2024 are February 11th, March 10th, April 14th, May 12th, June 9th, September 8th, October 13th, and November 10th.

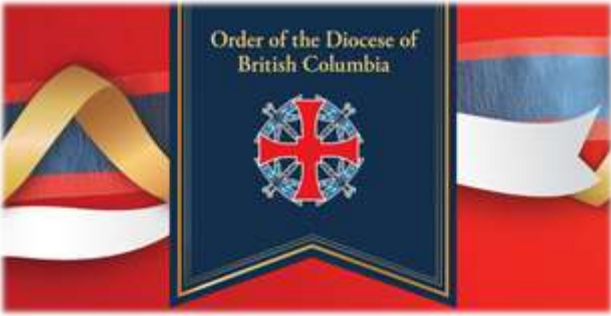
About This Service - Offering a combination of inspirational poems, thoughtful prose passages, untraditional prayers, interspersed with complementary music, St. Luke's **Reflections Service** focuses on spirituality. Drawing on the tradition of evensong, the service recognizes our need for stillness and connection to the soul at the end of the day.

Referencing the seasons, the service acknowledges the liturgical calendar through both the words and the music. The theme, introduced through the words, is given added depth through the music. The gorgeous ambiance of the softly lit church adds to the contemplative atmosphere that places us in a state of prayer. **Reflections** provides another way to encounter the Divine. Please come and be a part of this unique experience.

Donations to support and continue this innovative venture will be gratefully received at the door.

The Investiture of Harry Felsing

To the Order of the Diocese of BC



This year the Parish of St. Luke Cedar Hill nominated Harry Felsing to the rank of Member of the Order of the Diocese of BC. The rank of member is conferred on a lay person in recognition of their outstanding voluntary service in the parish for a significant period of time.

Harry was nominated to recognize his many years of faithful service to St. Luke's and to the Diocese. He has demonstrated parish leadership by accepting duties as varied as sidesperson, reader, liturgical assistant, warden, treasurer, and the lead on the Buildings and Grounds Team. He continues to assist in many of these roles today. He has also served as the Diocesan Finance Officer.

The investiture took place on Saturday, October 21, 2023 at 10:30 am, at Christ Church Cathedral. At the ceremony, Harry was recognized and given the following symbols of recognition:

Neck medal - This medal is a replica of the insignia of the Order, which itself is the new diocesan badge that was granted by the chief herald of Canada in 2017.

Lapel pin - As the neck medal should only be worn on specific occasions, each recipient also receives a lapel pin intended for everyday use.

Letters patent - Each recipient also receives an official letter attesting to their appointment to the Order. It is signed by the registrar and secretary of the Order and affixed with the seal of the Order.

The motto "Faithfulness" is the single word used to honour the faithful service over a considerable time by the members of the Order to their parish family, the Diocese of British Columbia, and the wider church and community. It also highlights that this is service that is rooted in faithful adherence to the teachings of Christ.

Congratulations Harry!

Your faithfulness and service to St. Luke's and the Diocese have been outstanding and we hope you know how much you are loved and appreciated!



Photo credits: Heather Simpson

A Vintage Fashion Show and Tea

Photo credits: Sharon McMillan

In September, Vintage Fashion Showcase presented a Fall Fashion Show, featuring fashions from 1860 to 1980. Afternoon Tea was served while models showed off the gorgeous fashions from history. The event was enjoyed by all!



Service of Remembrance

Photo credits: Gillian Klassen and Barb Prescott



No Stone Left Alone

Photo credits: Tanis Masson and Cedar Hill Middle School Staff Members



See more pictures and read about No Stone Left Alone at the News page of St. Luke's website:
<https://www.stlukesvictoria.ca/news/pictures-from-no-stone-left-alone>

Crowd Pleasers Only Concert

This FUNdraiser was a huge success thanks to the tremendous efforts of St. Luke's Music Director, **Susanne Reul-Zastre!** It was an enjoyable afternoon filled with a wonderful variety of truly crowd-pleasing music!

Photo credits: Brenda Morgan and Sharon Hallsor



The Christmas Pageant

Photo credits: Barb Prescott and Roni Sousa



St. Luke's Christmas Bazaar 2023

by Carol Turnham, Convenor



*Christmas Bazaar
convenor,
Carol Turnham*

A very successful Christmas Bazaar was held on November 18, from 10 am-2 pm, which raised \$10,266.10 on the day, more than we have ever raised in recent years. More money from the Silent Auction and online sales will soon be coming in as well. We thank you for all the very generous donations.

The usual publicity was carried out, and long line-ups awaited the opening. The weather was fine and customers kept arriving on a steady basis.

Our thanks to all who contributed to this successful outcome. I appreciated being able to organize the Vintage Room in the lounge on the Thursday afternoon. A good crowd of workers arrived on Thursday evening to set up tables and bring up the items to sell from the basement. Many volunteers from other groups who rent the hall arrived to organize stalls on Friday and to sell on Saturday. We could not have managed without them!

Jane Grant kindly provided soup and fruit crumble to all the workers on Friday, and even provided more soup on Saturday to augment the bagged lunches the workers were asked to bring.

Everything went very smoothly at the sale. Customers were thanking me for the fact that they could look forward to coming to St. Luke's sales every year. It is nice to know we are appreciated in the community.

Our thanks to the Métis group, Baron's Organization International, who arrived to help put away everything at 2:30 pm. Leftovers were donated to the Compassionate Resource Warehouse, the Salvation Army, and to Diabetes Canada.

I decided we should have a meeting to discuss the Bazaar and future sales. Many parishioners attended the brief session during Coffee Hour after church on November 26. I felt this was very useful. Some of the concerns addressed were:

The possibility of arranging for a food truck to rent space from us to provide food and drink to our customers during the sale. Claire offered to investigate this possibility for us.

The use of the "Square" was invaluable so that customers could pay by credit card. We hope to have someone stationed at the welcome desk in the hall who could provide this service. Our thanks to Heather for looking into this.

I will be looking for someone to help me with advance online, TV, and radio press releases about our upcoming sales.

It was appreciated that the bright blue room in the basement could be used to securely lock away particularly valuable donations, and donations from estates that had to be stored until the sale. We would appreciate the help of someone who could appraise valuable donations of jewellery, antiques, etc. These could be more profitably sold online, or at an auction, as was arranged for the large painting. Thank you, Linda!

We canvassed the stall convenors for their ideas and concerns, which was productive. We will probably have a section for Linens and Cottage Crafts along the Needlework wall. Bric-a-Brac will become an extension of the Antiques and Collectibles Stall. On the stage for our Spring Fair will be Florals and Garden Art. The Vintage room will feature Vintage and Specialty Clothing and Accessories. It was suggested that we extend our sale until 3 pm, to increase sales, after all our hard work. Other fundraising ideas were discussed. One that we will present is our "Attic Treasures Vintage Market", similar to the one that had to be cancelled three years ago due to the COVID pandemic. This time, we will keep it simple, by renting space to vendors in the hall, with St. Luke's vintage articles being sold on the stage, and Vintage Fashion Showcase (VFS) selling their goods in the lounge. VFS will organize this. St. Luke's will get the rentals income and door admission. Mark your calendars for this on Saturday, February 17, and watch for more details soon.

My thanks again to all of you. We are fortunate to belong to the family of St. Luke's. I look forward to working with you again soon.

Christmas Bazaar Photos

Photo credits: Sharon McMillan





A Step Towards Reconciliation

by Ray Lett

Photos provided by Ray Lett

Staking mineral claims was among the many tasks I carried out when I worked for mining companies in the 1970's. It could be hard work for me and an assistant scrambling through bush, often in pouring rain. I would generally lead our team of two carrying a compass while my assistant held a 500-meter measuring rope. At the start of the work we would cut 1.5 meter tall square wood from a tree to mark the beginning of the claim. Using my compass, I would then sight along a predetermined bearing (often north-south) and walk into the bush carrying one end of the rope. My assistant would watch the rope as it disappeared into the bush and wait patiently, listening with interest to my creative, caustic comments as I tried to follow the compass direction while scrambling over sharp rocks or through thorny Devil's Club (*Oplopanax horridus*). When the end of the rope appeared, my assistant would grab it and yell "stop", sometimes causing me to fall into Devil's Club or a swamp. My assistant would then join me, recording his or her progress through the bush by marking trees or tying coloured tape to branches. Sometimes there would be an acrimonious debate about not grabbing the rope so hard when calling stop. Then, the process would be repeated until 1500 meters of a path through the bush had been marked and a second post, generally a small tree cut at 1.5 meters length, set up.



Surviving Devil's Club in BC



Claim staking, Yukon, 1977

A metal tag, attached near the top of the post, stated the claim name with distances and directions to adjacent claims. When all of the staking was finished, we would drive, often several 100 km, to the nearest government office to register the claims and pay the necessary fees. Claim staking practice varied in different parts of Canada. Where there were few trees such as in the Yukon Territory pre-cut claim posts were often dropped from a helicopter onto surveyed sites and installed later.

Having staked a claim the holder had the exclusive right to carry out work such as prospecting and sampling for a year before submitting a report to government demonstrating that work (with costs) had been carried out. Except for cities, municipalities, private property, parks

and certain other restricted areas, mineral claims can be staked in Canada on what is termed "Crown Land". Over time, "Crown Land" has become controversial among the First Nations people who have lived in Canada for many thousand years before colonization and who have become increasing vocal about mining companies working indiscriminately on land regarded as being traditional territory. Recently, the BC government recognized First Nations concerns about land access by changing Mineral Titles law to require that prospectors and mining companies consult with First Nations before staking claims on their traditional territory. True, mining companies will likely now spend more time negotiating approval from First Nation Bands before working in an area and there is a feeling among indigenous groups that this change is another step towards reconciliation.

A Place of Miracles

by Brenda Morgan

Boxing Day 2003, twenty years ago now, was the day I went back to the place of miracles. I had left India, my birthplace, forty years earlier and now was going back to retrace certain events in my childhood. My mother was with me. I had made it a condition of our journey that though we would tour India as any tourist might, we would also go back to where we had lived. It would be our personal pilgrimage.

If you look carefully, you'll see it on a map, a place called Bandel on the Hooghly River, part of the Ganges delta, just north of Kolkata (Calcutta, as we knew it). We lived on the banks of the enormous river, on a company estate, at a time when the whole area was rural and quiet with the river on one side and rice paddies on the other. The dinghies would sail out at dawn for the catch of the day; and you'd see the paddy workers, silhouetted against the sunset, walking home at night. There were probably thousands and thousands living there, but for India it was quiet—and green, and lush with banana and mango trees, gulmohars, and coconut palms.

Almost nobody had a car, so the roads were used by tricycle rickshaws, oxcarts, bicycles, and ramshackle buses. In the centre of Bandel, there was a small open area, a sort of gathering space, where grew an old banyan tree. A low wall encircled the tree to protect it, and that was where the elderly men came to sit and chat. Bandel was lucky because it had a railway station with a direct line into Calcutta, which was one of the reasons it was on the map.



Bandel Church (open source photo)

The other reason was Bandel Church, and that was where we were going. Officially, it's called the Church of the Holy Rosary; in fact, now it's the Basilica of the Holy Rosary since Pope John Paul II elevated it to Basilica in 1988. This was the church where my parents got married, the place where my siblings and I were baptized, the place we went every Sunday, and the place where my father was buried. I felt comforted all these years knowing he lay in a quiet, beautiful setting on the banks of the great river.

Imagine then my shock, when on Boxing Day, 2003, as we neared Bandel Church in our taxi, we were met by traffic gridlock and a cacophony of dozens of car horns blaring, people shouting above the horns, babies crying, women laughing, Indian music blaring, girls screaming with delight on a nearby Ferris wheel, and all manner of unexpected sound.

Throngs of people, vehicles, cars, and motorized rickshaws were jostling for space, some moving towards us and others pushing forward. The taxi driver told us he couldn't go further and suggested we walk the rest of the way while he found a space to park. We agreed. As we moved through the crowd, I recognized the old landmarks. The banyan tree was still there, and in spite of the bustle, there were elderly men sitting under it. The wall around the church grounds was the same wall. It used to be painted ivory; now it was yellow with posts in rose pink. The wrought iron gates were as I remembered. And looking through the gates, the church that had once been white was now a rust red and seemed to have a large extension. Across the street, a funfair was in full swing, what in India we would call a "mela", and all of it in a riot of colour and noise.

We fought our way to the entrance we had always used, the one that faced the river. The long maidaan (field) that ran from the church down to the river was still there, now covered with a proliferation of picnic goers, all brightly dressed. Before we got to the wide stairs that would lead to the church, we passed a garden of massive installations, a bizarre, mind-boggling depiction of the life of Jesus in life-sized statues. The Nativity, the Stations of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection—it was all there. They were biblical scenes, but it was unmistakably Indian.

We got to the stairs and found them covered in hundreds of shoes and sandals, reminiscent of what you'd see outside a Hindu temple. Streams of people were coming out of the church and retrieving their footwear on their way out.

"I'm not taking off my shoes", announced my mother indignantly. "We never used to." We made our way up the stairs, picking our way through the shoes, till we got to the main door. The attendant said, "No more can come in today. We are closing soon."

My mother was apoplectic. She had come ten thousand miles to see her husband's grave and was determined to see it.

"Oh! I see, madam, your husband is buried here. Let me clear the place of all these visitors, and then you will have the place to yourself. I will call the priest."

When the priest arrived, he asked us who we were. He recognized the family name, and asked about my father who was buried there. He told us that in my father's time, the parish was small and had only about thirty Christian families. Of course, we knew that; we were one of them. We knew the families.

I commented that the church I remembered had been painted white. He said that with so many people coming through, and all of them touching the walls, the walls had started to crumble. So, they decided to clad the building in red granite to preserve it.

I asked him what was going on and why there were so many people. He told me word had got out about the miracles, so they came now in their thousands. Fifty thousand came just over the Christmas holiday. Apparently, they got well over a million visitors a year. It was a stunning statistic. In the past, I remember a few hundred would come on certain feast days to offer prayers in return for miracles of health or fertility. But nothing like this. "Were there really so many Christians in this area now?" I asked incredulously.

"Oh no, no. These are not Christians. These are mostly Hindus. They want a miracle just the same. Some, of course, are just tourists."

The innumerable visitors all left donations, so they had lots of money for the expensive repairs. What a miracle for the church, I thought.

What is this place of miracles, you may ask. Why is it a tourist site? The story is quite fascinating and has a long history. Let me take you back about 500 years.

The Portuguese had sailed up the Hooghly in the mid-1500s and had established a trading post on the banks of the river. By the end of that century, they had what was in essence a fort, and in 1599, with the permission of the Mughal Emperor, they built a church on the grounds. Before long, there were 5000 Christians in the area. For a time, the Portuguese were allowed this trading post, but when it came to be known that they were taking slaves from among the locals, the emperor was swift with his wrath. In 1632, the fort was razed to the ground, as was the church. One of the priests tried to save the statue of Mary from the church, and ran towards the river with it, but he was killed, and both he

and the statue were lost in the river. All but one of the priests were killed in the skirmish, Fr. Joan da Cruz, who was taken prisoner with some other Portuguese.

They were brought before the grand Mughal, Shah Jahan (of Taj Mahal fame), who sentenced them to be trampled by elephants. When the great elephant came to the priest, he didn't trample him, but instead picked him up with his trunk and placed him on his back. The emperor was amazed and took it as an omen that the priest should be saved. He gave the Church land, over 300 acres, on the banks of the Hooghly and allowed them to rebuild their church. This was considered by many to be the first miracle associated with the church. The church was rebuilt in 1660 on the site of the old church.



Photo credit: Wikipedia

After the church was rebuilt, the priest heard the voice of his dead friend who had been lost in the river, telling him that Mary was returning. The next day, the lost statue of Mary was found washed up on the bank of the river, outside the church. This was considered the second miracle. The statue of Mary still stands in pride of place in the church.

The third miracle was when a Portuguese ship was caught in a cyclone off the Bay of Bengal. Sailors who fell overboard were inexplicably saved. The ship too was saved. The captain was convinced it was because of Mary to whom he prayed to intercede for them. He vowed he would give the mast of the ship to the first church he saw. The ship came up the Hooghly and he saw the Church of the Holy Rosary, to whom he gave the mast. Because of this story, the statue of Mary was given the name Our Lady of Happy Voyage. Though, she is most commonly referred to as Our Lady of Bandel.

Pilgrims who heard about the miracles came to pray before the statue of Mary to ask her to intercede for them, and they found that their prayers were granted. The myth of the place of miracles was given life. Word of the miracles spread, and Bandel Church became a place of pilgrimage especially for those seeking a cure. The crippled were able to walk again; the deaf got hearing, and so on. Women seeking fertility, in particular, seemed to come. The testimonies of these people began to spread.

In the years we lived there, the pilgrims - almost exclusively Christian - numbered in the hundreds, which at the time we thought was many. The increase to the staggering hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, has happened in more recent times. Perhaps the internet was responsible for spreading the word, or the improvement in the economy which now boasts a huge middle-class able to travel; perhaps it was the increased literacy rate, or even the accessibility to television. Whatever the reason, Bandel Church has become famous; it has become part of the wider religious fabric of India. The fervent pilgrims come from all over India and from all religious backgrounds, and that is perhaps the greatest miracle of all.

Bandel Church on the banks of the Hooghly in many ways epitomizes the story of Independent Post-Colonial India. The European white church is now clad in Indian red granite; the priests, during special services, now wear flower garlands over their vestments; the female assistants and readers wear the tika (the dot of colour on their foreheads, at the third-eye chakra); shoes and sandals are left on the stairs outside; and the hymns are sung in Bengali. The hordes of visitors and miracle-seekers are mostly Hindu. My father's grave in the churchyard has witnessed this incredible transformation, this Indianizing of Christian worship. No longer European, but no less Christian, the Basilica of the Holy Rosary has become assumed into the religious fabric of India.

What an example it is of survival and change! What a testament to faith, to inclusion, and to acceptance!

Ultimately, we need to examine the essence of our religion and separate that from what is merely cultural preference and tradition. The Hindu pilgrims who come to Bandel have a fervent belief that God has the ultimate power, and only He can fulfil their impossible requests. They also believe he will hear their prayers through the intercession of Our Lady of Bandel. It matters not to them that it is a Christian church. And as it turns out, it matters not to Bandel Church that they are not Christian. A happy symbiosis!

As for my father, Camil D'Cruz, linked by name and heritage to the history of Bandel Church, who I thought was resting peacefully on a sleepy bank of the Hooghly, he is now part of a living phenomenon, in a place of colour and clamour, a place teeming with the verve of life - a place of miracles.

And that is as it should be.

For those reading this online, here is [A YouTube VIDEO](#) of the basilica and a [Christmas Wish](#).

All Creatures Great And Small

by Claire White

Saint Francis first blessed animals early in his ministry sometime between 1210–1215. The story goes that he was wandering around outdoors one warm afternoon, full of self-doubt, when he noticed a flock of birds in his path. He immediately felt the need to first talk to them as though they were his equals and then preach to them about God's glories and the reasons why men and animals should be grateful for these blessings. One might say that this was also the beginning of the environmental movement since Francis recognized that human beings are intrinsically connected to all of creation.

A few Anglican Churches hold the Blessing of the Animals Service and we were lucky enough, when we lived in Calgary, to find a church that offered this form of service. So we were delighted to find out, when we moved to Victoria, that St. Luke's also holds this service every year in October.

We attended the Blessing of the Animals Service on Sunday October 1st and brought our Tuxedo cat "Jenny-any-Dots" with us. Aanika took her up for her blessing from Rev. Daniel and we are very blessed that Jenny, as she is known, has celebrated her 20th human year (140 cat years), with many more to come, we hope. She still trains herself for the "Cat Olympics" now and again, so can be very active for her age!

Another special animal that Aanika has gotten to know over the past year is Dexter, who has celebrated 14 human years but unfortunately has not been as lucky as Jenny. He was diagnosed around the end of August with a potentially terminal condition when he was taken for examination in Vancouver. Laura, his owner, advised everyone connected to Dexter to prepare for Dexter not to return to the Island.

But come back to the Island he did, after spending a few days in hospital. He is a survivor!!

We were not in the position to bring Dexter to St. Luke's for a blessing as he is a Percheron/ Thoroughbred/ Quarter-horse; 16.2 hands (approx. 1.65 m or 5'6") and therefore not so easy to transport! Can you imagine a horse coming inside St. Luke's!! Dexter had done just about everything a

horse can do - been ridden, jumping, cross-country, trail riding and even going camping. He is a well-loved member of the Stables and Laura's family.

We did think of bringing a photo to church to the service, but Dexter deserved more than just being on a piece of paper. So we approached Rev. Daniel and asked if he would come to the stables to give Dexter a proper blessing and Rev. Daniel jumped at the opportunity. (Well, he didn't actually jump but you know what I mean!) Daniel mentioned he loves horses and enjoys being around them, so he would be very comfortable performing the blessing.



Daniel and Joan with Dexter



Joan blessing Dexter

After the Blessing of the Animals Service at St. Luke's, Rev. Daniel, Rev. Joan, Martin, Aanika, and I drove to Echo Ridge Stables, off West Saanich Road. It was a beautiful warm, for October, sunny day. As we drove in and closed the gates behind us, we were met with a collection of free-range chickens of various colours and types. The stables is also home for ducks, goats, miniature horses, as well as the ponies and larger horses.



Daniel blessing Dexter

Photo credits: Claire White

We introduced Rev. Daniel and Rev. Joan to the various animals and then came the time for them to meet Dexter. He immediately came over and formed a connection with both Daniel and Joan. They both blessed him and he spent some time enjoying having his face rubbed and stroked. Dexter shares his paddock with Lady Luck and she came over to see what was going on, so she received a blessing as well. Daniel and Joan then walked around the various paddocks and met all the horses, who all received a blessing! Joan commented on what a lovely, calming and tranquil place Echo Ridge Stables is, and how lucky we are to have stables like this one to look after such magnificent animals.

We thanked Laura Fanning, the owner of the stables, and left feeling uplifted by the wonders of God's creation and by the beauty and wonderment of these gentle giants, and feeling hopeful that the blessings given would be granted.

So here we are 2 months later and I hear you ask, how is Dexter now? Well, he has his good days and bad days. The good news is he is eating, peeing and pooping. The bad news is he still has tummy

troubles and has sleeping issues, which causes him to fall in his sleep. To ease the fall, he now sleeps in the big ring, as it has softer sand in it. There have been days when Laura thinks this is it and then he rallies again and appears to be happy with his lot.



Dexter and Lady Luck at Echo Ridge Stables with Daniel and Martin

I believe that the blessings he received from both Daniel and Joan have given Dexter some extra time to be with us on this earth. How much time we do not know. But enough to bring joy and happiness to those who are around him and for Dexter to feel the love he receives from all.

The Youth Group will be arranging a trip to Echo Ridge Stables next spring, to hopefully meet Dexter and have the opportunity to ride some of the horses at the stables. If you would like to help support Laura at Echo Ridge Stables for the upkeep of Dexter and the other horses, please let me know.

An Attic Treasures Adventure

Save the Date – Saturday, February 17

St. Luke's and the Vintage Fashion Showcase team are organizing another fabulous vintage event in the form of a marketplace to brighten up the dark days of February. It will be absolutely marvellous! Interested vendors should contact Carol Turnham (contact info below).



ATTIC TREASURES

Vintage Market

Saturday, Feb 17 9:00 - 4:00
St. Luke's Community Hall, 3821 Cedar Hill Cross Rd.

Tickets at the door

Admission: 10am - 4pm	\$3
9am - 10am	\$10

For further information call
Carol at 250 592-2842 or 778 587-7156



What's Cooking at The Kitchen

by Ray Lett and Clarice Dillman

Bring Home the Kitchen Campaign

On Friday, November 17th, the Kitchen officially reached its Bring Home the Kitchen Capital Campaign goal and raised \$387,000 for phase 2 renovations! While the Bring Home the Kitchen Capital Campaign officially launched in October, it was a project that had been in development for quite some time. When the Kitchen first moved to its new location, they could not afford all the renovations at once. For the last two years, they have been a community kitchen without a commercial kitchen of their own!

An interior design team is reviewing the colour, lighting, furnishings and outlet numbers needed for the new Kitchen in preparation for the Phase 2 renovations, scheduled to start in January 2024. Equipment and furnishings to be moved from the Kitchen space during the renovation have been identified and an alternative space for delivery of the Pantry Program during the renovations is to be considered. A Food Premises application is being prepared and ordering of small equipment items for the new kitchen is in progress.

Donate and Double Your Impact Campaign

Fundraising concerts on Sunday, November 26th at St George's Church, Cadboro Bay, and at Lutheran Church of the Cross on December 10th featuring Stephanie Greaves, Edie Daponte, the Bob Watts trio and several other guest musicians were very well attended. The concerts each raised several thousand dollars towards the Donate and Double Your Impact campaign, which is raising funds for the Kitchen's ongoing programs and services. Every ticket purchased turned into \$50 of support for food security programs in our community!

Thanks

Thanks to everyone who brought food donations as their gifts during the Christmas Tree Pageant at St. Luke's on December 10th. Thanks as well to those who continue to drop off food items in the baskets in the church and the hall at St. Luke's.

Holiday Closure

The last day of operations in December will be Thursday, December 21st. Renovations are planned to begin in January. Information about the programs and services that will be available during renovations will be shared with our membership soon.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Everyone at the Shelbourne Community Kitchen!

Word Search Puzzle

Twas in the Moon of Wintertime



ARCTIC	JESUS	SWEATER
BETHLEHEM	JOSEPH	WIND
BLIZZARD	MARCH	WISEMEN
BOOTS	MARY	
CHILLY	MITTENS	
DECEMBER	SCARF	
FIRE	SHEPHERD	
FROZEN	SHIVER	
GLOVES	SLED	
GUST	SNOWFLAKE	
HIBERNATE	STABLE	
ICICLE	STAR	

Guess Who?



The answer will be in the next issue of the Prescription.

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**Contact Barb Prescott
for rates**

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Word Search Solution

Q	W	A	H	E	W	D	B	L	I	C	I	C	L	E
S	I	I	I	O	K	S	R	M	U	Q	G	W	W	P
K	C	M	S	G	A	A	E	A	R	C	T	I	C	F
S	T	A	R	E	C	O	L	V	Z	K	U	N	U	E
M	Z	R	R	O	M	J	R	F	O	Z	W	D	G	Z
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A	L	Y	I	M	G	S	S	B	O	O	T	S	N	M
R	B	T	C	H	I	B	E	R	N	A	T	E	S	J
M	R	R	S	Z	S	R	E	T	A	E	W	S	B	X