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PHOTO Henry Perks (Unsplash)

The Fish, The Pan, & The Power of Asking Why

THE REVEREND BILL MOK

There is a story that has been quietly making waves across social media—appearing in various forms from viral TikTok animations to LinkedIn leadership posts. It isn't popular because of flashy visuals or dramatic music, but because of a deceptively simple question it forces us to ask: *Why do we do what we do?* This modern fable, often referred to by psychologists and educators as the "Pot Roast Principle," has resurfaced lately as a powerful reminder of

how easily we fall into "generational autopilot."

In the most recent version of this story, a woman is preparing a fish for dinner. Before placing it in the steamer, she performs a ritual she has observed her entire life: she cuts off both the head and the tail.

This time, however, a spark of curiosity catches. She pauses and wonders, "Why am I doing this?" Finding no answer in her own logic, she calls her mother, who sim-

ply replies, "That's just how my mom always did it." The response still leaves her curious. She reaches out to her grandmother, only to receive the same shrug of inherited habit. Finally, she speaks to her great-grandmother. The elderly woman chuckles and explains, "Oh, honey, back then our pan was far too small. We had to cut the fish just to make it fit."

Tradition Without Context

This story is far more than a culinary anecdote; it is a profound metaphor for the "invisible pans" that constrain our modern lives. It illustrates how easily a practical solution to a physical limitation can morph into an unquestioned tradition. We often find ourselves repeating rituals, defending ideologies, or following social scripts—not because they serve a purpose today, but because they solved a problem for someone else, somewhere else, decades ago.

This phenomenon permeates every layer of society:

- IN CULTURE | We adhere to social norms and etiquette shaped by historical circumstances that may no longer exist, sometimes clinging to the "how" while completely forgetting the "why."
- IN RELIGION | Sacred rituals and ancient doctrines are often preserved with rigid precision. While they provide a sense of continuity, they can become hollow if we stop investigating the spiritual or communal needs they were originally meant to address.
- IN POLITICS | Party loyalties and policy stances are frequently inherited, like family heirlooms. We defend them out of a sense of identity rather than analyzing their relevance to the current world.

The Courage to Question

Asking "why" is often mistaken for rebellion or a lack of respect for the past. In reality, it is the highest form of reflection. It is the beginning of wisdom. To ask "why" does not mean we must discard our heritage; it means we choose to honour the past without being bound by its limitations.

In our personal lives, especially in parenting and family dynamics, this is where the real work happens. It is easy to fall into the trap of "saying no" or enforcing rules simply because that was our own upbringing. However, as we examine our interactions, we realize that a healthy relationship with our children is more important than a blind adherence to old-fashioned discipline. When we understand the context of our actions, we move from being "on autopilot" to being intentional.

What's Your Fish?

The woman in the story didn't stop steaming fish; she simply stopped cutting it unnecessarily. That is the essence of intentional living. It isn't about the dramatic destruction of the old, but about the thoughtful refinement of our habits.

We all have our own "fish"—routines, beliefs, or methods of raising our children that we follow without a second thought. Perhaps it's a career path you're on, a way you handle conflict, or a prejudice you've never examined.

So, here is the challenge: What are you cutting the head and tail off of today—and does the pan still need to be that small? ♣

The Rev. Bill Mok is Rector of St. Alban's, Richmond. He also has a blog where he offers reflections on a variety of topics related to current affairs, social justice, and the various aspects of life in British Columbia.

Check out his blog at 360communitystory.news.blog/



EDITORIAL

Eternal Life Starts Now

ARCHBISHOP JOHN STEPHENS

*“For God so loved the world
that God gave God’s only Son,
so that everyone
who believes in him
may not perish
but may have eternal life.”*

On Shrove Tuesday — the day before Ash Wednesday — in many parts of the Diocese of New Westminster, the country, and even different corners of the world, gatherings were held to mark the last day of the season of Epiphany and to recognize that the season of Lent was about to begin.

There are a number of traditions that are upheld on Shrove Tuesday. Often it involves pancakes and lots of maple syrup... and usually a sticky mess to clean up! But the tradition, of course, is to mark the end of one season and prepare for the fasting integral to the season of Lent. For it is not long after the syrupy tables have been wiped down that the solemnity of Ash Wednesday begins. And it begins with words that can trip us up if we are not expecting them.

*“Remember you are dust
and to dust you shall return.”*

These are words that should stop us in our tracks as we consider more carefully this complicated life of ours and check the direction we are heading. It is a reminder found in ashes, that our lives are in God’s hands, and often we seem to forget that. We can get pulled and pushed in all sorts of directions. This push and pull distracts us from the Gospel message that Jesus preached on a mountainside long ago. For he said:

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek
for they will inherit the earth.”*

The list that Jesus recited of those who are blessed went on for a while longer. His point was that we often seem to ignore who God sees as blessed, and we make up our own lists. And maybe in Lent it is time to revisit that list.

On the first Sunday in March, the second Sunday of Lent, one option for the gospel reading contains these words:

*“For God so loved the world
that God gave God’s only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.”*

“For God so loved the world...” It is this love that changes everything. It invites us to walk a different path and a different calling. It invites us to walk a pilgrimage in this world that focuses on eternal life. But eternal life that starts now. This changes how we view this time of Lent, our daily living, our trust in God’s grace, and our priorities each and every day. As you walk through the season of Lent, giving up or taking on something new, may those ashes of Ash Wednesday linger on our foreheads longer than they are visible and guide us to live into this gospel. For we are dust and to dust shall we return. ✠

PHOTO Ahna Ziegler (Unsplash)

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



Published eight times a year as a section of the *Anglican Journal* by the Archbishop and Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster.

Editor Alicia Ambrosio
aambrosio@vancouver.anglican.ca

Designer Jennifer Ewing, BDes

Issue This is the 2nd issue in the 57th year of publication

Submission Information

Contact Alicia Ambrosio by phone at 604.684.6306, or by email at communications@vancouver.anglican.ca

Subscriptions Please subscribe online at www.anglicanjournal.com/newssubscription/

Address changes in writing to
Topic c/o Anglican Journal,
80 Hayden Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 3G2

Printed By KT Web Printing, Toronto, Ontario

Mailed By Elite Bindery & Mailing Services,
Scarborough, Ontario

Circulation 1,704

The Anglican Church & The Anglican Communion

A global community of 80 million Anglicans in 64,000 congregations in 165 countries.

Website For the latest news and events go to www.vancouver.anglican.ca

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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.

Contributors & Helpers for this issue

Laurel Dykstra, Lorie Martin, Bill Mok, Nong (Unsplash), Henry Perks (Unsplash), Jessica Schaap, Archbishop John Stephens, and Ahna Ziegler (Unsplash)



The Archbishop of New Westminster & Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia & Yukon

The Most Reverend John Stephens

Address

Diocese of New Westminster
1410 Nanton Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V6H 2E2

Phone

604.684.6306

Thank you!



Elder Kelvin Bee looks at the traditional blanket about to be presented to Mtr. Amanda Ruston.
PHOTOS Alicia Ambrosio



Elder Kelvin Bee turns his own blanket, a symbolic gesture that indicates the community's leader has arrived and taken up their rightful position.



Hank Bee places a traditional blanket over the shoulders of Mtr. Amanda Ruston as a sign of welcome.



Mtr. Amanda Ruston kneels on the steps of the chancel during the service of induction to pray the priest's prayer.

Clergy News

The **Rev. Lorne Manweiler** has left active ministry in the Diocese of New Westminster and no longer has permission to officiate. He had been serving as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul's. ✠

The **Rev. Mark Munn** has left active ministry in the Diocese of New Westminster and no longer has permission to officiate. He had been serving as Rector of St. Helen's, Point Grey and Regional Dean of Point Grey. ✠

Archbishop John Stephens has appointed the **Rev. Alpha John** as Rector of Church of the Epiphany, Surrey. He is expected to arrive in the diocese in late 2026. ✠

Archbishop John Stephens has appointed the **Rev. Rob James** as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul's. The new Rector of St. Paul's, the **Rev. Ron Culmer**, is scheduled to arrive May 1. ✠

The **Rev. Emilie Smith** has informed Archbishop John Stephens of her intention to retire. The exact date of her retirement will be announced once it is confirmed. ✠

Archbishop John Stephens has appointed **Mtr. Amanda Ruston** as Regional Dean of the Deanery of Kingsway. ✠

First Woman Inducted as Rector of St. James Mother Amanda Ruston is the New Rector of St. James

ALICIA AMBROSIO

When Rev. Mtr. Amanda Ruston took vows as a Benedictine, she took on the name Magdalene, the name of her patron saint Mary Magdalene—the first woman to exercise influence in the earliest iteration of the church. That link can be seen as fitting given that as of December 1, 2025, Mtr. Ruston became the first woman to serve as Rector of St. James Anglican Church.

A formal service of induction was held on December 1. Elder Kelvin Bee and his son Hank Bee “blanketed” Mtr. Ruston with a traditional blanket, a sign of welcoming her as a spiritual leader. Kelvin Bee also turned his own blanket over, to show that the community was no longer without a leader.

Archbishop John Stephens presided at the Eucharist service, and the Rev. Matthew Johnson preached.

In his sermon, Fr. Johnson said the biggest risk for any priest is believing they can handle everything their ministry throws at them on their own. “Every priest’s ministry depends on the interplay between God’s leading and that priest’s best efforts. Yet how does a rector respond when God calls them to what seems impossible?” said Fr. Johnson.

Fr. Johnson added:

“Any rector of St. James will need God’s ongoing involvement in her life to guide and uphold their efforts. At times, they may even require God’s out-and-out intervention. As a busy priest in Rome in the 16th century, Father Philip Neri was run off his feet with God’s work. And the clergy here and our bishop of course, will understand this from his own life. He well understood the clergy’s inclination to rely on ourselves. So,

at the outset of a day crammed full of God’s work, Father Neri offered this prayer:

*“Watch me, O Lord, this day,
for abandoned to myself,
I shall surely betray thee.”*

Father Neri knew that it is easy, tempting even, for we clergy to depend on ourselves, our training, our skills, our expertise, and our wisdom, all of those important. But he also knew that to depend on these things was a dangerous delusion.”

In part, the tendency to rely on one’s own skill and expertise in ministry is folly because of the wide range of tasks and roles a priest must fill in their ministry. Fr. Johnson said those roles and duties “including but not limited to pastor, celebrant, preacher, cantor, team leader, counsellor, storyteller, crisis intervenor, church historian, emergency room visitor, conflict mediator, community advocate, scripture teacher, liturgy planner, businessperson, fisher of people, and diplomat. And you thought the clergy only worked on Sunday mornings.”

He added, “Mother Amanda has proven herself in each of these roles. In fact, she’s pretty darn good at this stuff.”

Following the sermon, Mtr. Amanda read and signed the oaths and subscriptions and was presented with symbols of ministry by members of the congregation.

The St. James community gathered after the service for fellowship and celebration of this new chapter in the life of their church. ✠

A recording of the livestream of the induction service is available online at stjames.bc.ca/2026/01/archive-of-live-streams-available-now

A photo album with photos from the service can be found by visiting vancouver.anglican.ca/news/induction-of-mtr-amanda-ruston-as-rector-of-st-james



A first edition of the *Authorized Version* (aka the *King James Bible*) printed in 1611 sits on a table in the archives of the Diocese of New Westminster. PHOTOS Alicia Ambrosio

FORMATION

Can Christian Formation Come from Things?

THE REVEREND JESSICA SCHAAP

Can Christian Formation Come from Things?

What an odd question. Doesn't Christian formation in its essence need human interaction? Isn't the Word becoming flesh the foundation of our faith? The answer to these questions is yes. And yet the things we use and make to foster our Christian lives are instances of human thought, design, and conviction poured into concrete material objects. Just think of church buildings, vestments, and candles. And a very significant object for our development as Anglicans has also been books. Many Anglicans I know are great readers and lovers of books.

In this article, I want to explore a very particular book: a first edition of the *Authorized Version* (aka the *King James Bible*) printed in 1611. I don't want to talk about the text as such; oceans of ink have been written about it. I want to talk about the very artifact itself and the experience of its size, design, inclusions, and other aspects of its physical nature. It caused me to wonder how the Bibles we may use today, whether in paper or digital form, cause us to have quite distinct experiences of the Bible and by extension our Christian spirituality from our ancestors in the faith. At the same time, this artifact offered ways of reading and encountering the Bible which persist to this day.

Significantly, this edition of the Bible was not encountered in some faraway library while on a study leave. It currently resides in the Synod office in the Archives of the Diocese of New Westminster and the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon. The archives accepted it for safekeeping from Holy Trinity Cathedral, New Westminster, which was gifted the Bible from former parishioner Emily Patricia Allen. You can also see a complete scanned copy of a first edition online.¹

First, it is huge. It weighs 30 LBS (13KG) and is 17.5 IN (44CM) tall by 12 IN (30CM) wide. It was printed to be placed on the altar of every parish in England. It's a lectern Bible from which people would read the lessons of the day at the daily office or a celebration of holy communion. They could also come in and read it aloud throughout the week. Because it was made so accessible, it also needed to be chained so that it couldn't be stolen. Its sheer size, and the thickness and softness of the paper does inspire awe and

a sense of the visibly transcendent. Some of our own pulpit Bibles give this sense, and I don't think it's something we want to lose. If you don't have one in your parish church, it might be a good idea to get one. Practically, it's much easier to read from. Spiritually, there's something edifying and dignified that it communicates.

The opening pages were also a real surprise. (A quick note to say that many of the original opening pages are missing, including a dedication to King James I and a long preface to the reader). There are dozens of pages that prepare us to read. Among them is a complete calendar of lectionary readings for morning and evening prayer, including each month's sunrise and sunset times! As well, there is a beautiful page *To finde Easter for ever* with careful instructions on how to find the date in any year. The design of the book imparts a strong message of accessibility and usability for the reader and community. Headlines at the top of the page give you a sense of what biblical story you are in. Each chapter has a summary preceding it. There is an abundance of cross-references and notes on alternative ways to translate the Hebrew. The desire to educate, form, and help the reader is paramount. I loved how the rhythm of days was wrapped up with Scripture reading, as our daily offices still do today, and that the natural rhythms of the year were important to notice.

But perhaps the most surprising thing was the 34 pages of genealogical charts that make up the bulk of the opening pages. They purport to trace all the ancestors of Jesus, and everyone named in the *Old Testament*, their nation and place in Scripture. Apparently, this kind of chronological and genealogical study was very important to the times, plus it was a huge hit! These pages were so popular that they sold them separately to people. These charts gave a visual overview of the sweep of biblical history and also the lineages of Jesus, which yields an image of both scholarship, beauty, history, and sense-making. They're not entirely accurate, but they sure look good. For a mostly non-literate population it may have given a sense of belonging and a visual connection to the Scriptures, and the people named therein. Considering how we're moving into a predominantly visual culture again, thinking and

presenting visually could become increasingly important for our Christian formation.

The genealogies were designed by a cartographer and a Hebraist. This work coincides with the "age of exploration," and I wonder if these charts also gave a sense of the cutting edge of science and scholarship being brought to bear on the scriptures. It also suggests that the project of exploration and colonisation is not perhaps that far away from this volume either. Still, this love of study continues in our tradition today, and we can humbly recognize that our prefaces and introductions mark our preoccupations just as much now as it did then. Indeed, I was overwhelmed by what a technologically dense artifact it was—filled with guides, designs, notes, and organization. That has not changed, if its expression has, in our Bibles today—be they print or digital.

I think what was most striking was the sense of care for the reader, the desire that this book be available to anyone to hear and to see, even if they could not read or if their eyesight was impaired. Touching and seeing the beauty of the charts, the headline scripts, the title pages, the enduring paper and ink imparts a surprising sense of the holy. And knowing it wasn't for a person's library but for the parish community to hear and meditate and discuss together is a moving picture of how the Bible was intended for collective well-being before it was focused on individual piety. Our tradition maintains this collective journeying in our lections every day. This book's presence, the intent for its use, inspires one to keep that practice alive. Although it can't be brought back for daily use, the encounter with this book fired a new appreciation for how old things brought out of the storeroom of our faith can still have the power to form us in Christian life. They can even raise renewed possibilities for how we want and even need to practice it today. ✠

To view the first edition of the *Authorized Version* (aka the *King James Bible*) printed in 1611 online go to archive.org/details/1611-the-authorized-king-james-bible_202007



One of the first pages of the Bible illustrates *The Genealogy of Christ*, beginning with God, Adam, and Eve.



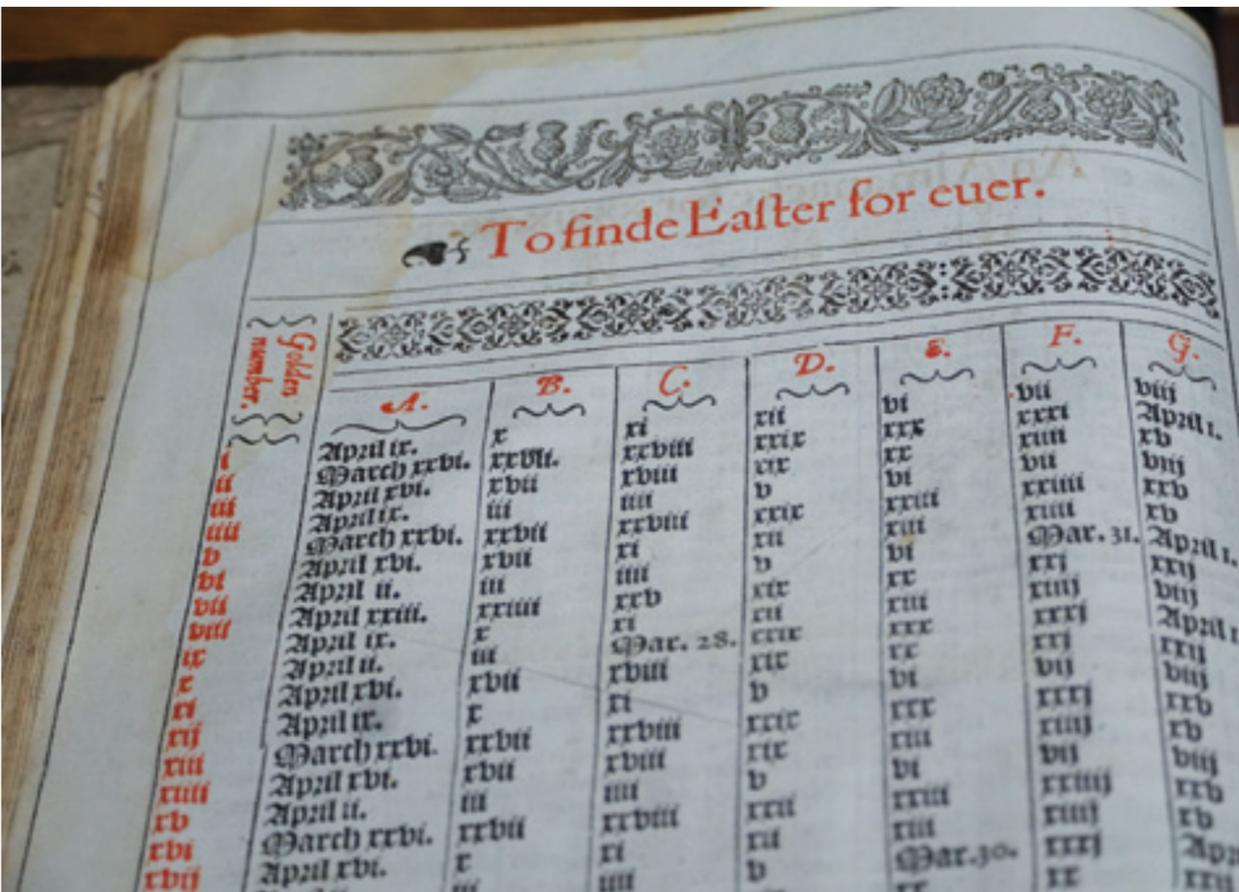
A detail of the final page of *The Genealogy of Christ*.



Pages in the Bible printed in 1611 that show how many days are in each month, and the phases of the moon.



A page that lists which readings should be used at morning and evening prayer throughout the liturgical year.



A page that shows how to find the date of Easter in any year.



The first page of the *Book of Genesis*, referred to in this Bible as *The First Book of Moses: Genesis*.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Practicing the Presence of God

Holding Your Cup

THE REVEREND LORIE MARTIN



PHOTO Nong (Unsplash)

As we have now entered 2026, likely those who had interest or a bit of time to reflect, have taken a few minutes to listen and discern what to focus on, let go of, or take hold of, for the months ahead. Perhaps you listen for a “word for the year.” Whatever you have done or if this hasn’t happened for you yet, here is a simple prayer practice you can do in solitude or in community. You simply need this meditation guide, a chair, a cup, and to notice your longing to intentionally be with God. Have a look around your home, or office space to choose a cup for this practice. It can be a simple paper cup, a chalice, a coffee mug, or a cup that is meaningful to you in some way. Sit in stillness and silence to settle into the sacred space you and your cup have now entered. Feel the ground beneath you, intentionally relax your whole self, and take a few deep breaths. Resume regular breathing and notice your cup.

HOLD THE CUP
in your hand:

RECOGNIZE THIS CUP
as a container that symbolizes your life.
What do you notice?

LIFT UP YOUR CUP
and acknowledge any thirsting
you may hold.

*O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you,
my body longs for you.
(Psalm 63:1)*

ALLOW YOURSELF
to be attentive to God’s presence
becoming aware of your “yes.”

SLOWLY READ OR LISTEN
as someone reads the *Generous God* prayer.
Pause often to listen deeply.

ENGAGE & RESPOND
to any invitations or promptings
of the Divine Spirit
as we enter more deeply into 2026.

Generous God

by Joyce Rupp

*Generous God,
so many times, I’ve come with my empty cup,
a beggar of the heart,
devoid of nourishment,
depleted of energy,
and you have filled.*

*Generous God,
so many times, I’ve come afraid of unknowns,
full of negatives and nos,
fighting the challenges,
closed and resistant to growth,
and you have opened.*

*Generous God,
so many times, I’ve come,
a stranger to my spirit,
crammed with cultural noise,
caught in endless clutter
crowding my inner space,
and you have emptied.*

*Generous God,
I come to you again,
holding out my waiting cup,
begging that it first be emptied
of all that blocks the way
then asking for its filling
with love that tastes like you.*

AFTER THE PRAYER

SET YOUR CUP DOWN
in front of you

PAUSE & PRAY
this or another breath prayer:

*God, you are enough for me.
(Psalm 63:5) ✠*

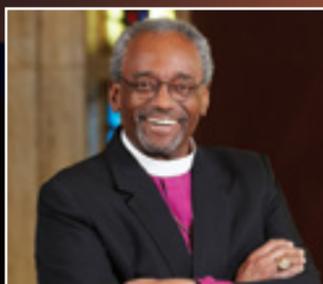
.....
*The Rev. Lorie Martin is the Director of
Inter-Parish Ministries at the Centre for
Spiritual Renewal. She is also Vicar of
St. Thomas, Chilliwack.*
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mission
CONFERENCE

MAY
30
2026

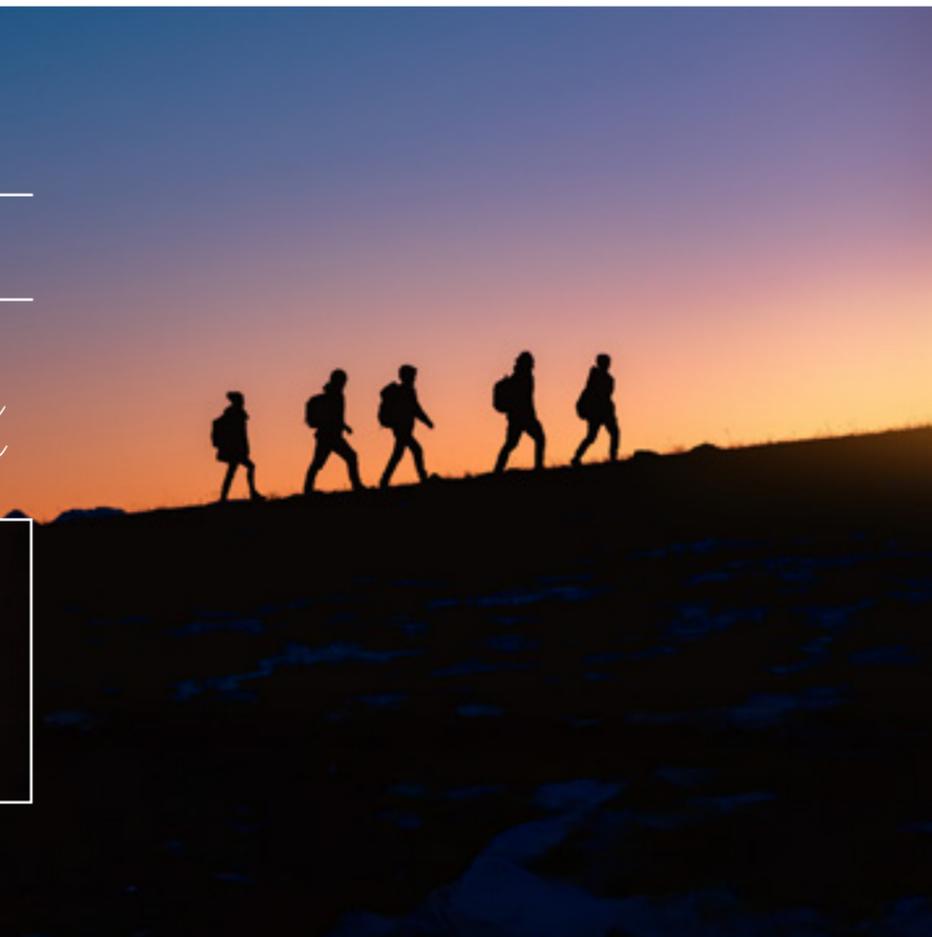
*Moving in Mission,
Guided by Spirit*

*More
information
coming soon*



Keynote Speaker
Archbishop Michael Curry

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The Rev. Laurel Dykstra holding a plant while standing in nature. PHOTOS Submitted by Laurel Dykstra



Two people hold pinecones in their hands.

*To plant is to hope
To restore is to heal
To protect is to love*

The Motto of the Communion Forest

Anglican Communion Forest

THE REVEREND LAUREL DYKSTRA

The Bible is full of trees. In *Genesis*, there is the tree of knowledge and in *Revelation*, there is the tree of life for the healing of the nations. In the pages between prophets and ancestors, entertain divine visitors, hear holy messages and lead the people from beneath special trees, often trees with names.

On the island of Ambae, in Vanuatu, Melanesian Brothers tend a palm grove conservation area that is home to plants, animals, fish, birds, and flying foxes. The chaplain, Rev. Henry Butu says living out their responsibility to care for the environment enables the Brothers “to see the environment as a Holy Altar to God.”

About 13,000KM away on the coast of Mozambique, church members and young adults have built a protective barricade of discarded tires and planted more than 500 mangrove seedlings in its shelter. These trees play a vital role in protecting tropical and subtropical coastlines from erosion and storm surges. They also provide habitat and nursery grounds for many fish species and other marine life, including endangered species.

Both projects are part of the Anglican Communion Forest where parishes, dioceses, and ecclesial provinces have joined together in tree growing and ecosystem conservation throughout the world. But it resonates with ways that Anglicans are planting trees and protecting ecosystems here in the Diocese of New Westminster, in a province that is home to some of the world’s last intact old-growth forests.

Roy and Sue Cline, work with the Fraser Valley Conservancy to protect and enhance wildlife habitat on Sparrow Creek Farm, a small acreage in Langley. They eschew chemical pesticides and herbicides and have planted hundreds of native trees and shrubs along the shore and the slope above their pond. This has created habitat for amphibians, salmon, turtles and birds. In 2022, supported by the Social and Eco-justice working group of the Ecclesial province of BC and Yukon, they began offering eco-pilgrimages, a chance for church and secular pilgrims to walk contemplatively on the land and connect with nature. Roy beams as he welcomes guests to the land, “Being Nature Stewards has given us the opportunity to offer a place of peace and tranquility, and a place to connect with our Creator.”

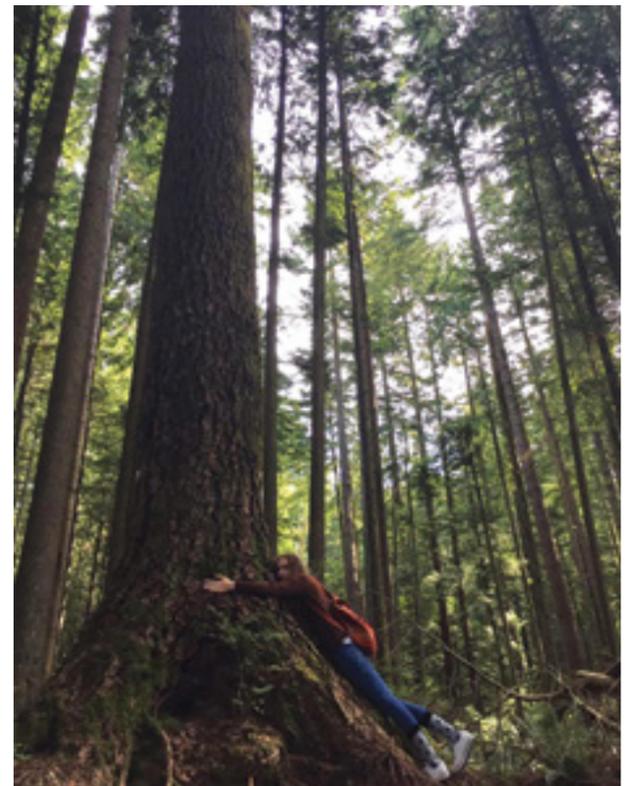
For ten years members of St. Clement’s parish, along with Girl Guides, international students, and summer campers, have been re-establishing indigenous vegetation on the banks of Coleman Creek where it runs through the church’s North Vancouver property. Deacon Elizabeth Mathers, the project’s chief steward, characterizes this work as following the example of Indigenous peoples of the watershed and the ancient European custom of “commons,” making land available to community for common good. Creekside Commons has become a place of respite and restoration in the middle of a busy suburb, a quiet oasis for humans and wildlife. Rev. Mathers calls caring for the land a practical incarnational theology, affirming the goodness of Creation. And in terms of how it relates to the Anglican Communion Forest, she says, “It will need a worldwide movement to remediate the damage done to the planet.”



Archbishop John Stephens with volunteers at St. Aiden’s and St. Bartholomew’s, Gibsons. The volunteers work to reindigenize the parish gardens.

On the Sunshine Coast, where residents experience annual droughts in the summer and fall, Penny Connell heads up a unique project at the parish of St. Aidan and St. Bartholomew. At St. Bart’s—as it is affectionately known—the original plan to Indigenize the weedy, neglected garden beds at the church entrance and parking lot grew into a project that is equal parts reconciliation and climate response. A small, hard-working team of seniors has cleared away what they call “settler plants” or introduced species, established Fire Smart, drought resistant Hügelkultur Beds by burying fast-decaying logs that absorb rain in winter, and covering these mounds with coastal plants that the *skwxwú7mesh* and *shishálh* nations have used through their history.

Penny does this work to honour her own settler heritage and her grandparents’ work on the land. She has found the process, and the congregation’s responses to their garden transforming back to something much closer to woodland, fascinating, rating, and thrilling. But one high point she notes was sourcing Indigenous strawberries, “They turn out to be a sign of hope for the *shishálh* people in their culture. They are proliferating wonderfully we have a new ground cover.” Penny says, “If people of faith actually mean to reconcile this is almost the best thing we can do, because we are ceding what we used to call our right, recognizing that we need to steward the land in balance with one another.” After learning about the Communion Forest, Penny said, “It’s really empowering to know what Anglicans are doing



A person hugs a tree in a forest.

around the world. I think Anglican unity is really important now. We have this idea that we’ve disintegrated. But it’s a matter of taking up part of the burden and doing our work in company with our fellows.”

In the years preceding the 2022 meeting of Anglican Bishops at Lambeth, an international eco-group with significant African leadership suggested planting trees as a concrete living legacy of gathering. It was seen as a practical, spiritual, and symbolic response to the environmental crisis, and an act of Christian hope for the well-being of humanity and all God’s creation. This formed the basis for the current Communion Forest initiative.

The Most Rev. Dr. Jackson Ole Sapit, Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya, said the Communion Forest is not just a physical forest. It is a spiritual act of worship, where every seedling planted symbolizes a step toward reconciliation with the earth. The Anglican Communion, through this initiative, is sending a clear message to the world: we have a duty to undo the damage we have caused. Caring for creation is not an optional act of charity, but a core part of our faith. It is our response to God’s love, a love that extends not only to humanity but to all of creation. ✠

.....
The Rev. Laurel Dykstra is Vicar of St. George’s, Ft. Langley and the priest for Salal and Cedar, a ministry of the Diocese of New Westminster that aims to re-connect Christians to creation-values and land covenants. Salal and Cedar meets regularly for worship outdoors, education and action. Learn more at salalandcedar.com



THE SISTERHOOD OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

The Companions Programs

SEPTEMBER 2026 – JUNE 2027

Residential Companions

The **Residential Companions** program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women age 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion's own gifts with the sisters and their ministries.

They will:

- Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- Develop a personal path of ongoing spiritual growth

Applications Start & End (both programs)

January 1, 2026 – May 1, 2026

Cost

Residential Companions
suggested \$150 per month

Companions Online
suggested \$100 per month

*If cost is a hindrance,
assistance is available*

Companions Online

Open to women of all Christian expressions, **Companions Online** is an opportunity to become “monastics in the world,” living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation. Online companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from the comfort of their homes.

They meet regularly for classes and discussion groups, and commit to times of personal prayer at home. They share in book studies, participate in online worship, and sometimes screen a film relevant to spiritual growth and self-understanding. Online companions also developed spiritual disciplines that follow the liturgical year.

To Learn More
about either program,
or to apply, contact

Canon Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, SSJD
at companions@ssjd.ca
or phone St. John's Convent
416-226-2201, ext. 304

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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