



THE MESSENGER



www.athdio.ca

JUNE 2026

www.edmonton.anglican.ca



The Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambare (back row centre) and friends join members of the Mother's Union to lead a celebration song from Zimbabwe. His induction as Rector of St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton, took place on May 1. Photos: Sue Phillips; below centre: Stephanie London



New Shared Training Program Builds Strong Lay Leadership

The Rev. NICK TRUSSELL
Coordinator for Missional Renewal

The Dioceses of Edmonton and Athabasca have just concluded their first combined Education for Lay Readers. Lay readers are spiritual leaders who take up liturgical leadership according to their gifts and the needs of their community, together with the other leaders in their parish. Spiritual leadership is about more than reading words off a page; it is about bringing faithful insight, direction and hope to the common life of the community, and gathering individual neighbours to know one another as God's people together. The Rev. Nick Trussell (Diocese of Edmonton) and the Rev. Dr. Maryann Amor (Diocese of Athabasca) taught the twenty-eight participants together. Participants learned the basics of what a lay reader is, how to lead worship, how to lead the Prayers of the People, and how to preach a sermon. For some, this refreshed their years of practice as spiritual leaders in many communities. For others, it was careful preparation before they preached their first sermon. For all who gathered, it was an encouragement to trust that God who had called them to this ministry would equip them

by the grace of the Holy Spirit to carry it out, as who they are and where they are. Relationships are especially important to effective lay ministry. While clergy can get wrapped up in debating theological details, the ministry of lay people is often grounded in direct personal stories and relationships. They can speak of the hope of faith in word and action in unique ways. The liturgy of our Anglican tradition is more than the rite on a Sunday morning or within the walls of the sanctuary; it is also the daily and constant prayer that calls us to hope, to justice, and to life together. Lay readers carry that spiritual leadership with them into many different aspects of their lives, breakrooms, living rooms and conversations on the way. As lay spiritual leaders from our two dioceses gathered, it was a profound joy to see the incredible diversity of backgrounds and experiences that allows them to bring a unique voice of prayer to their Christian communities. Strong lay leadership is the critical foundation of vibrant and vital Christian communities. Every blessing of God's wisdom and courage to the dozens of lay leaders who said yes to the call God has placed on their hearts to be spiritual leaders in their communities.



Join a Summer Camp p. 2, 7



Summer Activities p. 4-5



Grimshaw Way of the Cross p. 8



Register for the Diocese of Athabasca's 2026 Family Camp!

July 30 - August 2

At Camp Artaban (Lac Cardinal, 30 km west of Peace River)

Guest Speaker: Robin Abrol, Executive Director, On Eagle's Wings
Leading Worship Services: The Rt. Rev. David Greenwood, Diocese of Athabasca
& The Most Rev. Chris Harper, National Indigenous Archbishop
Tracks for Adults, Youth, and Children

The Diocese of Athabasca is excited to participate in Say Yes! to Kids 2026, raising funds to support youth and family ministry across our diocese—especially our annual diocesan family camp.

This year’s camp theme, BUILD (*Built Upon Incredible Love Daily*), invites children, youth, and families to grow together in faith, confidence, and community. Rooted in the promise that “those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength,” the camp creates a space where participants can worship, learn, laugh, and build lasting relationships grounded in Christ.

In our diocese where communities are often small and geographically spread out, this gathering is more than a camp—it is a vital

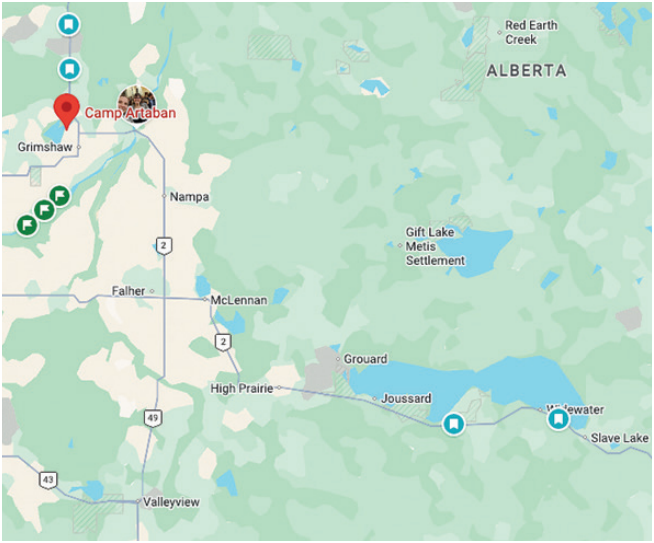
opportunity to come together as one family of faith, strengthening connections and creating memories that last a lifetime.

Your support helps us continue to build faith, build community, and build a future full of hope for young people in the Diocese of Athabasca.

For further information, email dioath@telusplanet.net or access www.athdio.ca

To donate to this or other Say Yes to Kids initiatives, go to <https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytkdonate/>.

Thank you!



Discussing liturgy at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.
Photo: Stephanie London

Baptism Resource Renewal Project Inspires Hope for the Church

With files from the Ven. JORDAN WARE
Archdeacon for Justice

At the end of April, eleven clergy and lay members of the Anglican Church of Canada gathered at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane. We considered proposals for renewal of the Anglican Church of Canada’s baptism materials to meet the needs of the 21st century church.

The project is funded by a grant from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. The audience for our work includes parents and sponsors who are new to the Anglican Church of Canada, whether they come from other countries or from ecclesial traditions with different practices and understandings of baptism. The need for updated resources has emerged as many of our churches welcome Christians from diverse backgrounds.

Participants in the working group represent six dioceses and all four ecclesiastical provinces; the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP); the Council of the North; the Francophone community in Québec; and The Episcopal Church (USA). Six of the eleven members who were born outside of Canada bring perspectives from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States.

The team reviewed and provided feedback on draft liturgies, including a Cree Anglican Baptismal Liturgy with a decolonizing Thanksgiving over the Water, and a Rite of Acknowledgment of Baptism for a Stillborn Child. Once they are finalized, these liturgies will be brought forward for approval. The Rite of Acknowledgment will go to the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee for recommendation to the November meeting of the Council of General Synod. The Cree liturgy will be presented to ACIP at their meeting in October.

The team also co-created an annotated Book of Alternative Services (BAS) baptism document and is exploring publication opportunities to provide pamphlets containing this information for parishes. We anticipate that this work will both be translated into French and adapted for The Episcopal Church's BCP (1979) baptismal rite.

It was a joy to engage in creative conversations and discover ways diverse cultures converge in their understanding of what it means to be human beings in relationship with God, our shared stories, and our communities of faith.

Charting a Way Forward

In October, the Diocese of Edmonton will gather for our 70th Synod. I know it's a bit early, but I wanted to give you a little bit of background to the work we are going to do. The theme for the Synod is *Now It Springs Forth*. The reference is from Isaiah 43:19. It follows directly from the theme of our current Diocesan Workplan, *A Way Through the Wilderness*, and comes from the same verse.

All of this emerges from conversations we were having in the Diocese back in 2022, soon after I was elected Bishop. At that time, we had just come out of Covid. We had to answer some hard questions about our future as a diocese. We had a Synod scheduled for the end of that year. In preparation, we asked individuals and parishes about what our priorities should be in the next chapter of our life together. The result was the document called *Finding Our Way*, which articulated twelve goals that we wanted to achieve as a diocese. This guided us through 2023.



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

Then in 2024, with another Synod coming, we knew we needed to see where we were as a diocese in a more robust way. We hired Anna Bubel as our consultant. She went to every parish to find out where parishes were flourishing and where they were struggling. It was eye-opening to receive her report, *Listening in Spirit*. We brought this report to the 2024 Synod to spark a deep conversation about what it meant for our life in the Diocese. We gathered all of the notes from these conversations, and the Executive Council used them to create our current workplan, *A Way Through the Wilderness*. This brings us from 2024 to this coming Synod in 2026. (Note: you can find all of these documents on our website edmonton.anglican.ca) The purpose of the workplan was to stabilize the Diocese after Covid and set us up in a good way for the next chapter in our life together.

I believe we have been successful in this project. The feeling in the Diocese in 2026 is profoundly different in a good way than it was in 2022. On the whole, our attendance and financial numbers are returning to pre-Covid levels. I feel the Diocese has been stabilized and positioned in a good way. There are still significant challenges, to be sure, but now our conversations are about growth and not just survival. At the 70th Synod on October 18-19, we are going to give an accounting of our workplan: we will list what we were able to accomplish, and the items we haven't yet been able to do. This will set us up for another conversation about a new workplan covering the next two years. As long as I am bishop, we will continue to move the Diocese forward in these two year plans. It is a good length of time to commit to actions and then account for what we have done. I am excited about having these conversation with your Synod Delegates in October. We are a family of churches working together to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your service. I am deeply grateful to be a part of it with you.

+ Stephen

We Become What We Choose to See

Turmoil. I think that is a good summation of our world today. Every day, I find myself looking for updates on which nation has attacked whom (socially, economically, or physically), on who is fighting, on the economic turmoil, on how old assumptions and trusts are true no more. It seems as though we are going through the birth-pangs of a new age. However, what we are going through is very predictable.

Historical analysis indicates a strong correlation between resource scarcity and the outbreak of violent conflict, particularly in developing regions where livelihoods are tied to the environment. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that since the 1950s, roughly 40 percent of all intrastate conflicts have been linked to natural resources, while the World Bank found that 50 of the armed conflicts between 2001 and 2009 were connected to resource possession¹. This looks like it has been true since the dawn of time².

We are moving from a time of extreme abundance of almost every resource we needed or wanted, to a time of constrained resources where countries, companies, and cities compete for what appears to be a shrinking pie³.

As Cain and Abel show, humans have a predilection to fight each other—especially when we are envious or greedy or fearful.



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

This is the basic theme of William Golding's classic novel, *Lord of the Flies*. This is the theme of the countless "reality" tv shows. Yet, it doesn't have to be this way. In June 1965, six students from St. Andrew's Catholic boarding school in Tonga were stranded on a small rocky island. These boys prayed daily for rescue, cooperated with chores, grew a garden, built huts, a kitchen, a gymnasium area with badminton court, and even had a protocol for how to handle arguments. Their days began and ended with song and prayer. After fifteen months, when they were rescued by a passing fisherman, they were found to be healthy physically, socially, and spiritually⁴. George Gerbner, a Hungarian-born American media scholar and pioneer of cultivation theory, stated: "You know, who tells the stories of a culture really governs human behavior."⁵ Or as Jesus put it, "Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is diseased, your body is full of darkness. Therefore, see to it that the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part in the dark, it will be as full of light as when the light of a lamp shines on you." (Luke 11:34-36)

We govern what we look at. What we look at influences what we think about and how we act. We govern what stories we watch and listen to, and what stories we tell. We can absorb and spread light, or darkness. Christ is risen and walking with you. Christ guides you on the Holy Path, where you ask, "What is most pleasing to God? What is healthiest for my neighbour and myself?" The boys in the fictional *Lord of the Flies* knew stories of fighting, despair, and hatred, and so their society led to death. The six boys from Tonga knew the stories of Christ, and so they created a culture built around acting how Christ would have them act—worshiping, praying, helping each other. In this time of turmoil, we choose what society we will live in. We choose how we will act towards God and towards each other. Even when resources are getting scarce (perhaps especially then), we can reach out to each other in love and compassion. In a way, it's as if we are going through the birth-pangs of a new age (Galatians 4:19). May you see the light of Christ in and around you, now and always. May you be filled with His light, for your salvation and for all our salvation.

+ David

1 <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/science/resources-source-international-conflict>
2 <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/can-resource-scarcity-explain-a-history-of-human-violence-180960832/>
3 <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2011-04-29/time-wake-days-abundant-resources-and-falling-prices-are-over-forever/>
4 <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2021/11/the-real-lord-of-the-flies/>
5 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-dec-29-me-gerbner29-story.html>

We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 1 MB, 200 dpi)

Submissions are due one month prior to the issue for which they are intended, for example: August 10 for September 2026.

There are no issues in July and August.

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The publishers and editorial staff of The Messenger value honest, transparent and respectful communication. We seek to provide encouragement and inspiration to all who are building loving, inclusive, Christ-centered communities. We respect the dignity of every human being, endeavouring to lift the voices of people who are marginalised. We are committed to the quality of our content, reserving the right to edit all contributed material. We immediately correct factual errors. To report an error, please email anglicanmessenger@gmail.com.

SUMMER DAYS

JUNE 20

**An Evening of Music
with Doug Mitchell**
(guitar and song)

Saturday, June 20, at 7 pm
at Good Shepherd, Edmonton
goodshepanglican.org

JULY 8 - AUGUST 26 EVERY WEDNESDAY



The Anglican Parish of Christ Church (12116 102 Ave NW) has recruited a stellar lineup of musicians for the sixth iteration of the **Garden Concert Series!**

Held on Wednesday evenings in July (except July 1) and August from 7-8 pm, this series attracts audience members from the neighbourhood of Wîhkwêntôwin (Oliver) and from all over Edmonton to enjoy music in the lovely and vibrant garden at Church Church.

Drawing on musicians of many different genres, this lineup will bring the sunshine into the garden outside Christ Church and get your toes tapping or your feet dancing! From jazz to world music, folk and roots, and Indigenous to classical, the series will showcase both seasoned professionals and up-and-coming musicians. In inclement weather, the concert moves indoors. Free admission.

JULY 30-AUGUST 2

Diocese of Athabasca
2026 Diocesan Family Camp
at Camp Arbatan (see page 2 for map)

This year's camp theme, BUILD (Built Upon Incredible Love Daily), invites children, youth, and families to grow together in faith, confidence, and community. Rooted in the promise that "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength," the camp creates a space where participants can worship, learn, laugh, and build lasting relationships grounded in Christ. Activities for adults, youth, and children. All welcome! <https://athdio.ca>

JULY 30-AUGUST 27 EVERY THURSDAY



Just Like Me Vacation Bible School
at Good Shepherd, Edmonton

Come join us in the garden! We're celebrating who we are, learning how to use our voice, and sharing our gifts with our community. Visiting gardeners will explore a series of Old and New Testament stories and learn that people in the Bible are just like us! Join us as we wonder, shout, share, build community, and help others. Expect an all-ages dinner and stations for the whole family to enjoy. Scholarships are available. family@goodshepanglican.org
goodshepanglican.org

AUGUST 4-7



**Summer Day Camp
with Hastings Lake Bible Camp**
at St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

Hastings Lake is partnering with St. Thomas to bring you camp-style activities, skits, songs, Bible studies, silly games, and all the wacky excitement you expect from Summer Camp!
www.hastingslake.com/day-camps
or sttomsherwoodpark@gmail.com
\$65/camper

AUGUST 10-14



Vacation Bible School 2026
at St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

Registration Open!
Get ready to step into a vibrant rainforest at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church this summer as we put on Rainforest Falls:
Exploring the Nature of God!
Vacation Bible School will be held August 10th-14th from 9:30am-12:30pm each day, for kids ages 4-12. To register a participant or as a volunteer, please do so here:
<https://vbspro.events/p/e7f0b6>
If you have any questions, please contact Abby at childrensministry@sjchurch.ca.

Photo by Ashton Bingham on Unsplash

AUGUST 13-23

**Edmonton International Fringe
Theatre Festival**
at Holy Trinity, Edmonton

Holy Trinity is once again hosting over fifteen shows on three stages as part of the 2026 Fringe Theatre Festival.

Enjoy excellent theatre, indulge in scones and tea at Holy Trinity's pop-up café, and celebrate the arts!
For more information, visit fringetheatre.ca and holytrinity.ab.ca



**What is your church
doing this summer?**

**Send stories and photos to
anglicanmessenger@gmail.com
by August 10 (September issue)
or September 8 (October issue)**

Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir Creates Community and Enhances Worship

Tammy-Jo Mortensen
Christ Church, Edmonton

The Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir (DECC) has been in existence for almost four years. This is a cooperative effort between the Diocese and many parishes in the Diocese. The Anglican Parish of Christ Church, Edmonton, is the host for the choir's weekly rehearsal, providing rehearsal space, library space, and a keyboard. The Diocesan office oversees the choir and its finances.

We have witnessed many amazing outcomes! These kids are both the *now* and the future of the church and especially the future of church music. They are establishing strong faith and music formation during a very important and influential time of their lives.

"Over the past year, my kids have been welcomed with open arms to the Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir. The quality of instruction has been beyond anything that I would have expected from a free choir. Laura consistently captures my kid's attention and uses creative ways to teach them new techniques. Choir has definitely become a highlight of our week!"

"My daughter has had a very positive experience during her time in the Diocesan of Edmonton's Children's Choir. She has been able to form friendships with other choristers, learn the basics of singing and reading music, and deepen her faith by way of singing songs of praise. It is wonderful that the choir is able to share its gift when performing for different churches within the Diocese. The children are very proud of their performances and are fortunate to be led by a Choir director who is very experienced in sacred repertoire."

This choir has drawn in many children from across the Diocese, from various parishes, as well as children who have no church affiliation at all. The choir has shared its music with a number of parishes throughout the city in the past four years. Many of those parishes have no choir or sometimes no music leadership on a regular basis and the children's singing has been a real gift. The parishes see and hear the children's leadership as they share their faith through song. They have sung in a variety of contexts: everything from regular Sunday services, to participating in the Advent Lessons and Carols service at the Cathedral, at the opening of Synod, and at seniors' homes.

Free membership in the children's choir has been very significant for several of the families. There are many community choir programs in the city of Edmonton, but very few are free! (We are only aware of one under the YONA-Sistema program.) Most are quite costly, even with bursaries, and this creates a financial barrier for some families.

How does a child benefit from membership in the DECC?

- **Musical education:** The children are introduced to notation, time signatures, rhythm, pitch, etc. Musical games make these concepts fun and easy to learn.
- **Deepening of their faith** through the choice of repertoire. Our very experienced conductor, Laura Hawley, is committed to selecting music suitable for the children, but with a strong emphasis on faith, and with focus on the various liturgical seasons. The rector of Christ Church, the Rev. Sue Oliver, is sometimes invited to come and explain the meaning behind the pieces in a child-friendly way. Tammy-Jo Mortensen, accompanist and administrator, has 35 years of experience in many denominations.
- **Meeting new friends** and experiencing deep bonds from other parishes and within their own parish in a collaborative, creative setting.

SUPPORT
THE CHOIR!

Purposeful
Discipleship

"Tonight, I went to Evensong at the cathedral with my daughter. When it came time for the first hymn, she confidently picked up the hymn book in front of her, found the right page and began to sing. She followed all the words and tunes (sort of!) for all the hymns. I was astounded as she would never have been able to do this a year ago. She knew how to follow the music and words and her singing was so confident. As I observed this tonight, I knew immediately that it was because of the training she has received in choir. I can't thank you enough for teaching her and being patient with her and making space for her and all the kids in choir. It is working and she is doing great!"

Making music together is powerful! We have watched some strong friendships develop, and some very shy children really come out of their shells and find choir a safe space.

- **Making space for children of different abilities.** We accept children of all abilities and those who are neurodivergent, some of whom may not have been able to function in an auditioned choir, which requires strict discipline and musical ability.

The ripples of impact in the community are also substantial. Parents who bring their children to choir often stay and form relationships with one another, offering rides, support, and assistance when going to participate at different parishes. This is a considerable small group ministry!

The next season of the DECC program will run from the beginning of September 2026 until the end of April 2027. If you know of a child who would enjoy this program, or you would like to support the program financially, please contact us:



<https://edmonton.anglican.ca/what-we-do/children-family-and-youth-ministries/pages/diocesan-childrens-choir>

Photo by Julia Taubitz on Unsplash





Sunset over Pigeon Lake. Photo: Mulhurst Camp

Plan an Exciting Summer Adventure

Pastor Matt Lyseng (Lutheran)
Mulhurst Camp Executive Director

Mulhurst Camp was established 81 years ago on the banks of Pigeon Lake. Over that time, the camp has been a place where campers of all ages have experienced a safe, inclusive community where they came to know God’s love and the love of community. We continue in this legacy, working to fashion a place that lives into our mission statement “Your Place in the Son”.

This takes place in a number of ways. There is our summer program, which runs between July and mid-August. Our camps include kids’ camps, youth camp, LIT (Leaders in Training) camp, family camp, Mini-camp (for the young campers who are not yet ready for a full camp), and MADD Camp, which stands for Music, Art, Drama, and Dance.

We also provide rental space for a variety of groups over the course of the year, such as quilting groups, church groups, etc.

The glorious sunset that graces the shoreline of Pigeon lake graces us each night. With a beautiful white cross set in the foreground, it is a reminder of God’s presence in our midst as we try and follow the ministry of the camp. Even as we seek to offer a place in the Son, we have been touched by the many ways that God has been present with us. When kids, who are nervous about being at camp end up wanting to stay and not go home at the end of the week, or when campers begin to ask questions surrounding faith, even when faith has not been a part of their background, it feels like God is truly present. When campers who are too shy to sing the campfire songs are singing at the top of their lungs, laughing and enjoying themselves, we can feel God present. This is the ministry that Mulhurst has lived into for over 80 years and we hope we continue living into it for another 80 years. Mulhurst truly is a community of love, beauty and inclusion, a place in the Son.

MULHURST SUMMER CAMPS

- Overnight and Day Camps
- Faith-Centered Community
- Games, Crafts, and Campfires
- Canoeing and Kayaking
- Giant 60-Foot Slip 'N Slide
- Youth Leadership Program

Get ready for an unforgettable kids’ camp experience! Join us for exciting summer adventures at our beautiful property, nestled along the shores of Pigeon Lake.

Phone:
780-984-0351

Email:
executivedirector@mulhurstcamp.ca

@mulhurstcamp

Pray for Our Diocesan Synods

Athabasca
October 15-18

Edmonton
October 18-19

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Good Friday Way of the Cross in Grimshaw

THE REV. PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

On Good Friday, April 3, 2026, Bishop David Greenwood was invited by the congregation of St. Bartholomew's to take part in the annual Good Friday walk in Grimshaw. Participants took turns carrying a wooden cross through the community, symbolizing the cross on which Jesus died. Along the route, prayers were offered at various community services and outreach locations, asking God's blessing upon the town and its people. This meaningful ecumenical event began on a foggy morning with almost no visibility at the town library and concluded at St. Bartholomew's. Despite the weather, the spirit of prayer and unity remained strong throughout the walk. Following the procession, participants gathered to warm themselves with hot cross buns and hot chocolate, sharing fellowship after this solemn and prayerful observance



In Christ,
all the fullness of God
was pleased to dwell,
and through him
God was pleased
to reconcile to himself
all things,
whether on earth
or in heaven,
by making peace
through the blood
of his cross.

Colossians 1:19-20 (NRSVUE)



Bishop David Greenwood and members of St. Bartholomew's participate in the Good Friday Walk in Grimshaw. Photos: Benita Greenwood