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# Ordination in the Holy Church of God

RANDY MURRAY (WITH FILES FROM VIVIAN SEEGER'S)  
 Communications Officer & Topic Editor



Bishop Skelton presents the new deacon, the Rev. Vivian Seegers and encourages the congregation to welcome her. On the right, Bishop's Chaplain for the liturgy, the Rev. Carole Nielsen of Holy Trinity Cathedral. PHOTO Randy Murray

"I look forward to the blessings God has given me in walking in these two worlds and using the spiritual gifts given to me to bring healing and reconciliation, understanding and compassion for us all." These are the words that comprise the first sentence of the closing paragraph written by the Rev. Vivian Seegers when answering some questions that were posed to her two days following her historic ordination to the Transitional Diaconate by the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton at St. John's, Shaughnessy on Sunday, January 21, 2018.

Vivian Seegers is the first Indigenous woman to be ordained in the diocese of New Westminster. Her father was Dene from Fond-du-lac, Saskatchewan and her mother was Cree from Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. They lived on the "trap line" in the northern part of Lake Athabasca and moved to the outskirts of the mining town of Uranium City following her father's death. Vivian was three years old when her father died.

The Ordination Eucharist was a joy and spirit-filled event, a truly prayerful and moving combination of the two ceremonial traditions. In a media release written by Rev. Seegers and circulated the week prior to her ordination she wrote:

"The Bishop of New Westminster, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton has  
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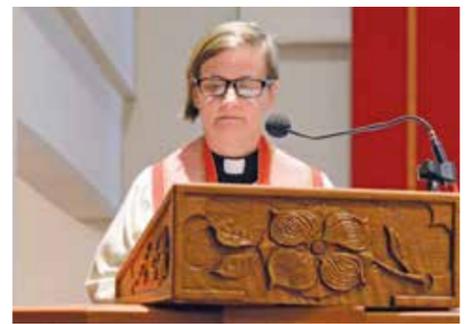


GRAPHIC D3Damon

## Diocesan eNews Newsletter

The first edition of the diocese of New Westminster's eNews Newsletter was distributed on Thursday, January 18. All in the diocese are encouraged to subscribe to this newsletter which is designed to share news and custom messages specific to each week along with recent sermons and posts for events scheduled that week and for the weeks ahead. This newsletter is in addition to the Parish Mail/14TEN, which will go through a format, focus and content renovation as we work to design communications vehicles, which are informative, complimentary and user-friendly.

In order to subscribe please visit the diocesan website at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca). On every page of the website just above the footer you will locate the newsletter subscription banner, follow the prompts and register. ✚



LEFT The smudging ceremony begins at the chancel entrance with singing, drumming and the lighting of braided sweetgrass. MIDDLE The smudging ceremony has concluded at the rear of the nave and the procession is ready to move forward to the Opening Hymn, *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*. RIGHT TOP Jean Senior shares the First Reading, *Colossians 1: 24 – 29*. RIGHT BOTTOM Preacher and presenter, the Rev. Emilie Smith. PHOTOS Randy Murray

## Ordination in the Holy Church of God

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

agreed that my Sundance Chief can present me, a Sundancer, as a candidate for ordination as a transitional deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. This is a significant step in acknowledging the validity of First Nations traditional ways of worship and honouring our spiritual leaders. For most ordinations a priest and a layperson present the person to be ordained.

Consent to the request for participation of the Sundance Chief has already sent ripples of healing and reconciliation to many of our First Nations brothers and sisters who suffered from the devastating teaching that our ways of praying were pagan and not valid and that our Medicine People were devil worshippers. This Wakan (*powerful or sacred*) act represents another significant step in building right relationships between First Nations, the Church and the rest Canada."

When asked to share some information about "Sundancer," Rev. Seegers replied, "I made a commitment to four years as a Sundancer in 2000. Sundancers are special people who are set aside out of the regular population for four days to fast and pray for the spiritual healing of our people. We receive spiritual gifts to share and strengthen others in healing ceremonies throughout the year. Our Sundance Chief takes care of us Sundancers and guides us just like a Bishop does with their priests."

Along with Margaret McAvity and the Rev. Emilie Smith, Chief Sam George, Sundance Chief presented Vivian to Bishop Skelton for ordination.

The Indigenous ceremonial traditions of the drumming circle and smudging with braided sweetgrass, complimented the Ordination Eucharist. According to Vivian, "The drummers and smudgers are all people who have made their commitment to Creator to always go where they are needed to bring spiritual healing with their songs and with their medicines. They make themselves available for sacred ceremonies." (*Many thanks to Lupat Elroy, Russell Cadotte and the other drummers, and also to the singers, Rose L. Sicama and Dianne Champagne.*)

Prior to the procession, drumming circle members and singers sang and drummed as the smudging ceremony took place between the chancel entrance where the drum circle was located and the back of the nave where the procession had formed. Rector of St. John's, Shaughnessy and Archdeacon of Vancouver, the Ven. John Stephens offered

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Deacon of the Word for the liturgy, the Rev. Sharon Smith prepares to proclaim the Gospel, *Luke 12: 4 – 12*. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Signing the oath in the presence of the Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Douglas Fenton. RIGHT The Ordination of Vivian Seegers. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Vivian with her presenters: Rev. Emilie Smith, Margaret McAvity and Chief Sam George. PHOTO Randy Murray



Laying on of hands — The Consecration of a Deacon. PHOTO Randy Murray



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



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### The Anglican Church of Canada

A community of 640,000 members organized into four ecclesiastical provinces, including British Columbia and the Yukon.

### 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 69 worshipping communities.



### The Bishop of New Westminster

The Rt. Rev. Melissa M. Skelton

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**Thank you!**



The newly ordained is vested with the help of her presenters. PHOTO Randy Murray



The Prayer over the Gifts. PHOTO Randy Murray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

some words of welcome and the procession began with the singing of the hymn, *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*.

The preacher for the Eucharist was the Rev. Emilie Smith, rector of St. Barnabas, New Westminster. Emilie was one of Vivian's presenters and the two were classmates together at Vancouver School of Theology (VST). She began by saying that she had been waiting with excitement to preach on these particular readings: *Colossians 1: 24-29*; *Psalms 31: 1-5*; and the Gospel, *Luke 12: 4-12*. She joked that initially she hadn't intended to do any preparation and let the Holy Spirit guide her but thought better of it. In her homily she spoke of the perils that are threatening the planet because of thoughtless and greedy humans who have lost connection to the sacred of God's creation. She also provided some background about Vivian and her journey from her childhood in the northern part of Lake Athabasca to her move to Vancouver in 1983, and meeting her mentor, Downtown Eastside chaplain, the Rev. Monty Bingham in 1988. Through this mentoring relationship Vivian attended the Native Ministries Consortium at VST in 1992. She began studying for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) at VST in 1999 (with instructors like the late beloved Bishop Jim Cruickshank) and received her degree in 2005.

The ordination section of the liturgy was particularly moving: the presentation to Bishop Skelton by the three presenters, the signing of the oath in the presence of the Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Douglas Fenton, the examination by the bishop, the litany (led by the Rev. Liz Hamel), the Prayer of Consecration, the laying on of hands by the bishop, anointing of the ordinand with Holy Oil, the vesting of the new deacon by her presenters, and the presentation of a Bible. This was followed by Bishop Skelton presenting the newly ordained, the Rev. Vivian Seegers to the congregation and inviting their welcome and what a welcome it was! Drumming, singing, cheering and thunderous applause.

The liturgy concluded with the Eucharist, the focus of Anglican worship with the new deacon assuming the role of Deacon of the Table, administering the Blood of Christ during Holy Communion and dismissing the congregation following the Closing Hymn, *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones*. Before the dismissal the Rev. Seegers received another rousing ovation from the congregation.

Vivian will begin this new phase of her ministry as Assistant Curate (½ time) at St. Clement's, Lynn Valley with the guidance of the Rev. Lynne McNaughton and she will continue as ½ time pastor of Urban Aboriginal Ministry at St. Mary Magdalene in Vancouver's VGH neighbourhood. ☩

*"The Bishop of New Westminster, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, has agreed that my Sundance Chief can present me, a Sundancer, as a candidate for ordination as a transitional deacon in the Anglican Church of Canada. This is a significant step in acknowledging the validity of First Nations traditional ways of worship and honouring our spiritual leaders."*

The Rev. Vivian Seegers

The Rev. Emilie Smith's homily is available online at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2018-01-21-vivian-seegers-ordination](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2018-01-21-vivian-seegers-ordination)



LEFT Preparing to administer Holy Communion. RIGHT Administering the Blood of Christ for the first time as an ordained person. PHOTOS Randy Murray



# THE CELEBRITY SPEAKER

THINGS WE WILL NEED TO DO



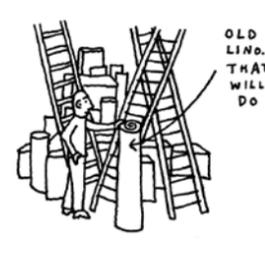
CATER FOR THEIR MEREST WHIM



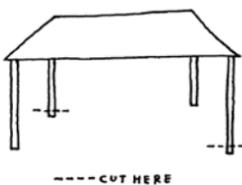
MAKE SURE THE STAR FLOWER ARRANGER IS ON THAT WEEK



SAVE A PARKING SPACE



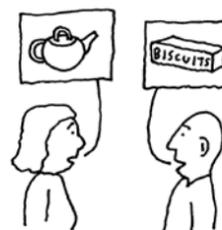
SEE WHETHER THERE IS A RED CARPET IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT



FIND A TABLE WITH EVEN LEGS (FOR THE BOOK SIGNING)



ENTICE PEOPLE IN FROM OTHER CHURCHES



PLAN A POST-EVENT PARTY



CONSIDER CHANGING THE PULPIT WATER

Cartoonchurch.com

## THIS MONTH IN TOPIC HISTORY

From the Diocesan Archives

**20 years • 1998** Diocesan Council approves the use of the "NWnet computer bulletin board system" as an official communications vehicle of the diocese.

**30 years • 1988** Diocese of New Westminster signs refugee resettlement/sponsorship agreement with the Government of Canada.

**50 years • 1968** The Women's Auxiliary is officially renamed Anglican Church Women.



LEFT Deacon, the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss fills the Font with Holy Water. MIDDLE Presiding Minister for Holy Communion, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton gives thanks for the Sacrament of Baptism. RIGHT Deacon Aura Suarez proclaims the Gospel, *Matthew 2: 1 – 12*. PHOTOS Wayne Chose

## Holy Communion for the Epiphany of Our Lord 2018 ELCA/ELCIC Bishop's Academy, Christ Church Cathedral

Christ Church Cathedral (CCC) was the sacred space used for the Holy Communion – Epiphany of Our Lord liturgy that served as a wrap-up for the 2018 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)/ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) Bishops Academy.

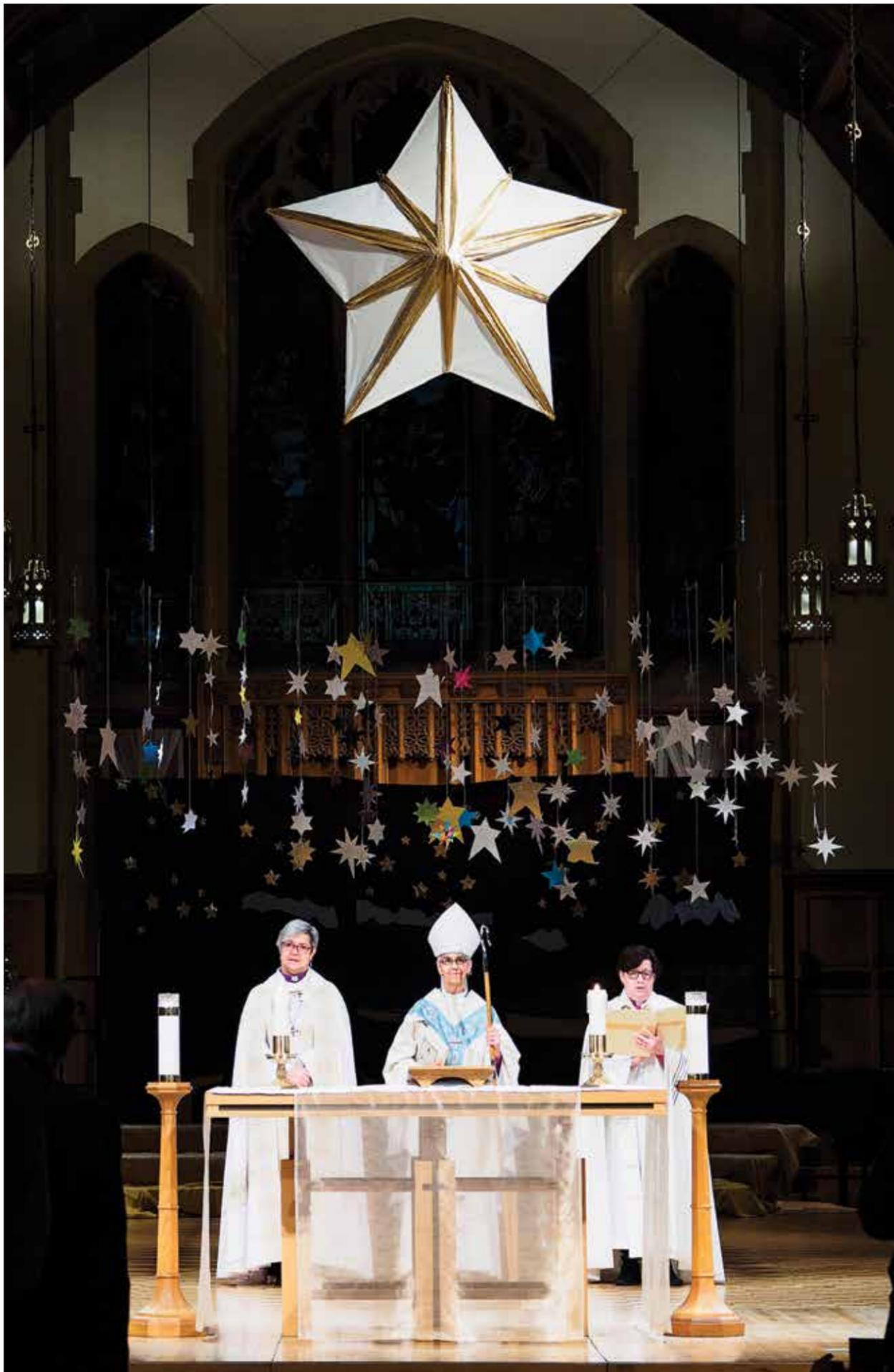
This annual meeting held in January in different locations around North America is an opportunity for Lutheran Bishops to meet and study together. It is similar to what we would call in the Anglican Church of Canada, a “House of Bishops” meeting.

Approximately 100 Lutheran Bishops arrived early in the week following New Year's Day and spent the remainder of the week in Vancouver. The Bishops Academy portion took place at the Pan Pacific Hotel. One of the highlights of their time together was a private concert by Vancouver's acclaimed male voice choir, *Chor Leoni*, which took place on the evening of January 3. Bishop Greg Mohr of the BC Synod of ELCIC is a member of *Chor Leoni* and managed the organization of this special performance.

The Holy Communion for the Epiphany of Our Lord was celebrated, Saturday, January 6, 2018 at Christ Church Cathedral. The ELCA and ELCIC are in full communion with the Anglican Church of Canada. Officiating at this liturgy were: Presiding Minister, the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of ELCA; Preacher, the Rev. Susan Johnson, National Bishop, ELCIC; and Celebrant, the Rt. Rev. Melissa Skelton, Bishop of the diocese of New Westminster.

Between 250 and 300 Lutheran Bishops, spouses, Cathedral parishioners, and visitors attended the Holy Communion liturgy celebrated with text and music from an Evangelical Lutheran Worship order of service.

The Very Rev. Peter Elliott, dean and rector of Christ Church Cathedral participated in the worship as did Cathedral assistant curate, the Rev. Ross Bliss; Cathedral deacon, the Rev. Jeffrey Preiss; and MC, Kerry Baisley, ODNW. ✠



The three Bishops at the altar prior to the Dismissal. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Bishop Greg Mohr of the BC Synod, ELCIC welcomes the congregation. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The National Bishop of the ELCIC, the Rev. Susan Johnson. PHOTO Wayne Chose

# Parish Development Remains a Priority in the Diocese of New Westminster

TASHA CARROTHERS

Missioner for Congregational Development

Have you attended the Diocesan School for Parish Development? Maybe your priest-in-charge participated in the Membership Growth Practitioner Group? Or possibly your parish leaders have worked with a diocesan consultant in parish development?

There is no doubt that parish development is a priority for the diocese of New Westminster. The School for Parish Development has become a fixture in this diocese, but did you know that it is expanding? A couple of leaders from the diocese of Ottawa first learned about the school at the Vital and Healthy Parishes gathering in Winnipeg in 2016. Sponsored by the national church, this gathering brought together Anglicans from across the country to learn from each other about parish development. The then-Director of the School, the Rev. Marnie Peterson, led a session in which she shared a model and explained how the School works. The diocese of Ottawa was ready for a major focus on parish development, and June 2016 saw a team of seven people from Ottawa attend our weeklong session. It must have been a good experience, because in November 2017, Marnie and the Rev. Andrew Halladay (the new director of the School) travelled to Ottawa to run a special weeklong session for their training team. With a bit more coaching from Bishop Melissa in January, the diocese of Ottawa is about to become the first Canadian diocese outside New

Westminster to offer the School for Parish Development. Ottawa ho!

But we're not just about the School. In 2015, Bishop Melissa and I offered an intensive program in membership growth. Designed specifically for clergy—unlike the School, which is for both lay and clergy leaders—this program offered specific and concrete steps to increase parish attendance. An enthusiastic group of 27 clergy worked on preaching, worship, self-awareness, gathering, adult faith formation, and cultural diversity. Each session included a take-home project to reinforce the material. Participants preached to each other and got feedback from their colleagues. The preaching challenge, when it comes to membership growth, is to be meaningful to newcomers and long-time parishioners. They learned about how to make coffee hour better for visitors, how to collect contact information so that they can follow up with newcomers, what to include in the bulletin so that it's easy for new people to follow. Once these daylong sessions were completed, there was enough interest that we offered quarterly short sessions the following year to help clergy maintain this focus amidst the competing pressures of parish life.

But we don't just provide programs. In 2015, I was appointed the first coordinator of the Diocesan Consulting Group. Consisting of talented people who have completed

the School for Parish Development, and have complementary life, church, and professional experience, this group offers low-cost consulting for parishes. Why would a parish use a consultant? Sometimes it can be very helpful to have someone from outside help move a conversation along, even when all the participants are themselves experienced and competent people. Some of the help that consultants have provided over the last few years include goal setting, parish council retreats, town halls, self-assessments, help with preparing for the canonical process (particularly collecting information for the parish profile), conflict resolution, workshops on inviting, workshops discussing Anglican identity, and data gathering. We specialize in highly interactive sessions, where participants get to speak what's on their hearts about matters that matter.

Sometimes this work is hard for everyone involved. Since the group started, I have done three different intensive consultations in parishes experiencing severe conflict. We used a process that invited small groups of people to name what they appreciated about their parish, what their concerns were, and what they wished for. Although hearing about members' grievances and hard times was difficult, it was always a privilege to be trusted with their stories. Some members shared that they experienced a sense of relief in being able to name "unspeakables." And it was moving to witness parishioners' commitment to their church, and hopeful to think that we might be able to help resolve a conflict.

Sometimes the work is just plain fun. The Anglican Identity workshop is always popular, but the most fun was the time I offered it at St. Christopher's, West Vancouver. We combined it with a wine and pizza night, and the enthusiasm to learn about our traditions and what that looks like in the parish was definitely enhanced by the food and drink. I have never had so many compliments on my facilitation, but I don't think that I can take all the credit!

Sometimes the work feels high stakes. In early December 2017, St. Hilda's, Sechelt learned that their building needed significantly more remediation than previously imagined. What was originally anticipated as a repair that would cost the parish in the upper five-figure range is now estimated to be in the neighbourhood of \$900,000. The Rev. Clarence Li reached out for help facilitating a conversation with parish council, and I got to make a daytrip to the Sunshine Coast. Over the course of three hours, members of parish council grappled with the situation, mindful that they needed to engage the whole parish. A week later I returned with Rob Dickson, Director of Finance and Property for the diocese, and the Ven. Stephen Muir, Archdeacon of Capilano, for a town hall meeting with the whole parish. What I didn't quite understand was the interest from the wider community, and the potential for the whole meeting to go sideways. However, thanks to facilitation strategies learned at the School for Parish Development and the marvelous spirit and commitment of the people of St. Hilda's, the meeting was a tremendous success. And it was only when local leaders expressed relief after the meeting that I realized how high the stakes were (thank goodness).

While Bishop Melissa and I focused on membership growth with clergy, we heard a few requests for a similar offering for lay people. So we've just begun the process of imagining a series that will be very hands on, with lots of support, geared to parish teams. Currently topics include items, such as, how to make your website effective. While there's an endless supply out there of helpful hints for better websites, we're imagining taking it a step further—for example, having time for participants to actually revamp their website and providing a photographer to take pictures of parish life. Other topics would include staples such as newcomer follow up and orientation. If that sounds like something your parish needs and you have the energy to commit to this, please contact me.

But why do all this? Are we just fixated on numbers? On bums in seats? I sometimes fall into the mindset that big is beautiful, and that growth is an end in itself. But mostly I do this work because I am convinced that Anglican parishes are a wonderful way to encounter God and Jesus, to learn how to follow the beckoning of the Spirit. To meet others on the road. To figure out what God has in mind for us. To be reminded of the many ways we can serve God and God's people. Parish development is not an end in itself: it is the way that we invite others to join us in this wonderful life as beloved children of God. ✠



Tasha Carrothers 2017. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Training the trainers in the diocese of Ottawa. PHOTO Bishop Melissa Skelton



Bishop Skelton leading a trainer's training session in Ottawa, January 2, 2018, as that diocese prepares their school for new students. PHOTO Kerri Brennan

**Deadline April 1**

Deadline for application submissions to the Anglican Foundation of Canada is April 1. Application forms and information about applying may be found at [www.anglicanfoundation.org](http://www.anglicanfoundation.org)

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

# Renovating to Serve the Community

DON PHELPS  
All Saints, Ladner



The new ramp and automatic door. PHOTO Don Phelps

In December 2017 — after years of planning and fundraising — All Saints, Ladner completed a major reconstruction of its kitchen and also the addition of an accessible washroom, access ramp and automatic door openers.

In 2013, the parish challenged itself with the question, “What is God calling us to do?” The Mission and Ministry (M&M) Committee was formed under the leadership of Peter Bayley and in 2014, the *Just Imagine* program was

launched to respond to the goals in the parish mission statement: to enhance Anglican worship; to engage in more Christian teaching; to serve the pastoral needs of our parishioners, as well as attending to the needs of younger families; and to continue to “feed people” who are hungry (in body, mind and spirit). One of All Saints’ primary community outreach programs was and remains a monthly community meal for people who are isolated and/or trying to make ends meet before payday.

It was clear to all involved that the existing kitchen was woefully inadequate to serve the community. Not only was the mid-1970s kitchen too small for a busy crew preparing a meal, it did not meet current health and building authority standards. A major renovation, or more accurately a *reconstruction* of the kitchen was necessary.

To move the renovations forward, two committees were formed in February 2014: the Resources Committee, chaired by David Bachelor (later Glyn Abraham), tasked with raising funds and identifying human resources; and the Renovations Committee that would plan and oversee construction, chaired by Don Phelps, a semi-retired engineer. Don was also the Project Manager from concept to completion.

The principal church building was constructed in 1879, and consecrated in 1881 by Bishop Acton Sillitoe. An annex adjacent to the sanctuary was built in 1968, and a hall with kitchen, accessible washroom and storage rooms was built in 1978. The church was rebuilt on the site in 1985 during the incumbency of the Rev. Donald Gordon. During the planning process of the current renovation, it became evident that the annex and original church building required roof repairs.

The Renovations Committee completed a consultation process with user groups and then developed a master renovations plan. The master plan, including roof repairs was presented to Vestry 2015 and received unanimous approval. A key element was that work would only be contracted and proceed when sufficient funds were available, therefore ensuring that the project would not create debt for the parish.

To begin sourcing revenue for the project, All Saints’ rector, Elizabeth Northcott proposed a series of *cottage meetings* wherein members of the Resources and Renovations Committees met with small groups of parishioners at the homes of *hosts*, discussed the *Just Imagine* program and solicited support in the form of three year pledges. Over 90% of the congregation took part in the discussions, which led to pledges that would provide the majority of funds needed. One of the first significant financial gifts arrived thanks to the generosity of the Parish of St. David’s in Tsawwassen. There were also numerous fundraising events including: a *Robbie Burns Night*, a gala dinner for friends and the community, and the annual Christmas Poinsettia Bazaar.

Ladner architect, Scott Kemp was hired in October 2014, and worked closely with the Renovations Committee to develop a conceptual master plan. The kitchen design called for a 50% expansion to over 500 square feet, with an above counter commercial grade dishwasher; a commercial grade range hood ventilation system with fresh air make-up; long counters; ample cupboard and storage shelves; walk-in pantry; new appliances; new plumbing; and a grease trap. The existing accessible washroom would be replaced. By early 2017, detailed drawings were prepared for a fully code-compliant rebuild.

In late 2016, the team learned of a federal grant program to assist with accessibility upgrades through contact with the office of Delta’s mayor, Lois Jackson. The parish applied, and in February 2017, Delta MP and Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Carla Qualtrough, notified All Saints’ that the parish had been awarded just over \$30,000.

The parish also applied for a grant from the Anglican Foundation, and was approved for \$10,000 in May 2017.

Following a decision making process, Cambium Contracting of Ladner were awarded the general contract in early 2017. Cambium owner, Doug Haller worked with the All Saints’ team to minimize costs and aid in the selection of quality materials and finishes.

The lengthy building permit process began in March 2017, with submission of drawings to the Fraser Health Unit, followed by submission to the Corporation of Delta in May. A building permit was eventually issued in early July 2017. Construction began immediately with the removal of asbestos insulation and flooring material, and lead paint. Over the summer months and into autumn, the kitchen was reconstructed and by October a first class facility had taken shape with colour-coordinated counters, cabinets



LEFT The old kitchen. 1970s with antiquated dishwasher. RIGHT The new kitchen. Commercial dishwasher. Pantry seen rear right. PHOTOS Don Phelps



Happy parishioners at the dedication of the reconstructed kitchen, November 26, 2017. PHOTO Cliff Caprani



LEFT Dedication of the new accessible washroom. RIGHT Cutting the Celebration Cake: Doug Haller, Cambium Contracting; Scott Kemp, Architect; Archdeacon Elizabeth Northcott; and Don Phelps, Project Manager. PHOTOS Cliff Caprani



The All Saints Dream Team. PHOTO Cliff Caprani



The art for the auction. These pieces all were sold raising almost \$900. PHOTO Randy Murray

## This Changes Everything • Even the Church

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

On Tuesday, January 16 at 6:30 pm in the Bishop's Room of St. James' Anglican Church, located on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a screening of the 2015 Naomi Klein documentary, *This Changes Everything* took place with 40 people in attendance. This event was also attended by the Rev. Dr. Tellison Glover, Director for Mission and Ministry Development of the diocese of New Westminster. Recently arrived from the Turks and Caicos, January 16 was the first day of Rev. Glover's new ministry as part of the diocesan staff leadership team.

The St. James' Justice Group chaired by Pat McSherry in partnership with Our Lady of Guadalupe Tonantzin Community, the Rev. Dr. Victoria Marie, pastor, hosted this dinner and a movie to raise consciousness and also to raise funds for *Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship* the diocese of New Westminster's sponsored community of support and action located on Coast Salish Territory that helps Christians to live out their vocation for environmental justice. Although there was no posted admission price, free-will offerings were encouraged, an auction of First Nations art was presented, as well as the sale of *Salal + Cedar's 40 Birds of Lent* cards, \$10 for a package of five.

The evening began with the official welcome and acknowledgment that all were gathered on Coast Salish ancestral lands by St. James' parishioner and kwakwaka'wakw' elder, Kelvin Bee. St. James' Social Justice Committee chair, Pat McSherry began by saying, "You are all here to see this film because you care about environmental and indigenous justice." She then encouraged the group to have a look at the art and get bidding as the auction was scheduled to close at 7 and the film to begin at 7:15. Next she invited the guests to partake in a gluten free, vegan meal of savoury grains, legumes, herbs and veggies.

*This Changes Everything* is the documentary film companion to Naomi Klein's 2014 award winning nonfiction book of the same name. The media release for the film states, "The film presents seven powerful portraits of communities on the front lines of both fossil fuel extraction and the climate crisis it is driving, from Montana's Powder River Basin to the Alberta Tar Sands, from the coast of South India to Beijing and beyond."

In the promo materials circulated for the January 16 event this quote from the Surrey Interfaith Council was included; "While the movie is not explicitly *faith-based* it is sparking dialogue in faith communities across the country. Could Naomi Klein's movie on climate change prompt Christians to change the way they do church and live out their faith?"

Following the film, the Rev. Laurel Dykstra, gathering priest for *Salal + Cedar* facilitated a discussion. She began with a brief five minute overview of the ministry of *Salal + Cedar* and thanked the two parish locations, St. Anselm's, University of British Columbia (UBC) Endowment Lands and St. Clement's, Lynn Valley where some but not all of *Salal + Cedar's* ministry is based. She reinforced the central messages of the film that we need to be in relationship with creation and that exploitation results in being "out of harmony with the land" which has disastrous consequences. She said, "It is wrong to view the world as a machine."

Laurel outlined her goal for the first small group discussion session prefacing her instructions by saying that there are people in the room with "astonishing skills" and the best way to begin is to take some time for introductions. She asked that people share their first names, their preferred pronouns and something they love related to their faith tradition and how that relates to creation.

She then asked more specifically, "What in your faith or

spiritual tradition is a resource for you and supports your goal for the world you want to see?"

She also asked, what were the resources that were taught to you by your family or that you've received from your culture that prepares you (gives you the skills) for the kind of world of which you want to be a part.

The more than three dozen in attendance gathered in groups of five or six and each discussion was robust and went over the time allotted. At the completion of the discussion component of the evening Laurel asked the group to "look around the room... and see all these agents for change and Kingdom building."



The Rev. Laurel Dykstra facilitates the après-film discussion. PHOTO Randy Murray

*Salal + Cedar* member Lini Hutchings then announced that all the art for sale by auction had been purchased bringing in \$890. The St. James' clergy were not in attendance as they were attending a Parish Clergy Retreat, however, two of the parish's ordained leaders, rector, the Rev. Canon Fr. Kevin Hunt and the Archdeacon of Burrard, the Ven. Philippa Segrave-Pride both purchased a piece of art.

The total amount raised was \$1,410.

More information about *Salal + Cedar* is available on their website at [www.salalandcedar.com](http://www.salalandcedar.com).

*Salal + Cedar* are one of two recipient organizations of the diocesan care+share direct funding program. ✦



Enjoying dinner. PHOTO Randy Murray



Small group discussion. PHOTO Randy Murray

## Renovating to Serve the Community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

and walls. By late October, renovations were substantially completed and the Fraser Health Unit granted conditional approval.

November 26, 2017, was a special day in the life of the parish. That was the day the beautiful new kitchen and washroom were blessed by the Ven. Elizabeth Northcott. Parishioners crowded into the two new rooms as they asked for God's blessing on these facilities to serve the needs of God's people in the parish and greater community for years to come. A celebration complete with cake and goodies followed the Celebration of the Eucharist.

Health Board inspector, Lorraine Thompson granted unconditional approval on December 19 the day before the next community meal was scheduled. That same day the accessibility ramp was opened following installation of the railing.

While the renovations program was successful in every way there were challenges that had to be overcome and a few surprises. One unpleasant surprise was the discovery that a rodent had gnawed through a water pipe in the crawlspace beneath the hall causing water to spray out unchecked for an unknown period of time. The parish had to replace

failing furnaces in September 2017.

The kitchen renovation project inspired a few parishioners to give the hall a facelift. Walls were painted with modern colours, matching the kitchen and updating the '70s look.

The overall cost of: renovations and accessibility upgrades; architects and engineers fees; roofing; three new furnaces; sewer upgrades; permits and incidentals totaled \$400,000. While grants contributed 10%, the vast majority of funds were provided by the generous donations of parishioners.

There were numerous lessons learned by the project and we would be pleased to share these with anyone considering a renovations project. Contact Don Phelps at [donatallsaints@gmail.com](mailto:donatallsaints@gmail.com).

In closing, here are a few words from All Saint's rector, Ven. Elizabeth Northcott: "It has always been about answering God's call to serve the community of Delta—to be able to welcome those who are hungry, to offer a place to gather and to experience God's abundance and grace. We are keen to begin our ministry anew, feeding the hungry, teaching the faith and worshipping God who calls us to serve." ✦

# More Than Just a Line in the Bulletin

RANDY MURRAY

Communications Officer & Topic Editor

The Companion Diocese Committee (CDC) of the diocese of New Westminster consisting of: the Rev. Paul Richards, Clare Urquhart, the Rev. Karen Urquhart, Abby Cline, Carol Tindall, ODNW, and Felly Farinas with Synod staff support from the Ven. Douglas Fenton hosted an information morning on Saturday, January 20 in the Trendell Lounge at the Synod Office

This meeting was an open invitation to all Parish Liaisons who assist in making connections between their parish and partner parish in the Episcopal Diocese of the Philippines (EDNP). Clergy and others connected to their Companion Diocese linked parishes were also invited.

There was a higher than anticipated turnout of more than 30 people representing 21 of the parishes of the diocese.

The Rev. Karen Urquhart facilitated the two-hour meeting.

Although the material presented was broad in scope it was new information to many in attendance but vital to understanding their roles as Parish Liaisons.

Presenters included: Abby Cline, Archdeacon Douglas Fenton, Archbishop Douglas Hambidge, Dean Peter Elliott and Carol Tindall, ODNW. The Rev. Arvin Amayag, vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton and recently arrived in our diocese from EDNP, also offered some helpful information.

Abby Cline, a parishioner at St. George, Fort Langley, who had visited EDNP in the spring of 2017 with Rev. Urquhart, spoke first and offered a brief personal account of her visit and how delighted she was with the complete participation of the EDNP congregations in every phase of church life. As a singer/musician/choral director she was inspired by the enthusiasm and joy expressed by the EDNP Anglicans at the diocesan liturgies she attended.

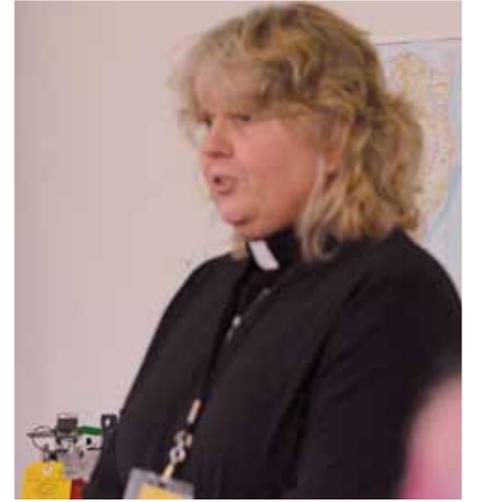
Archdeacon Douglas Fenton reminded the group that the diocese of New Westminster completed a 15-year Companion Diocese relationship with the Episcopal Diocese of Taiwan in 2015. He then shared historical perspectives specific to the area where EDNP is located in Northern Luzon. He spoke of the occupation by the Spanish from 1521 – 1898 that included the arrival of the Roman Catholic Church followed centuries later by Episcopal Church missionary bishop, the Rt. Rev. Charles Brent (a Canadian). Bishop Brent, a true missionary in every sense, built his ministry and mission between 1902 and 1918 leading to the establishment of the Episcopal Church in this part of the Philippines. In response to a question, Archdeacon Douglas pointed out that the percentage of Christians in the Philippines who are Anglicans is small but certainly this region has the most.

Archbishop Douglas Hambidge began his presentation by making reference to The Anglican Congress conference that took place in Toronto in 1963, attended by one bishop, one priest and one lay person from each diocese in the world wide Anglican Church. Michael Ramsay, the Archbishop of Canterbury presided at this historic meeting and Archbishop Douglas was the priest representative from the diocese of Caledonia. This meeting in practical terms developed the principles of “mutual responsibility” and “interdependence” leading to the establishment of *Partners in Mission* and to the 1968 establishment of the *Anglican Consultative Council* as one of the four “Instruments of Communion” of the Anglican Communion. Rich dioceses and poor dioceses would share information and ideas about what they were doing in mission. The Canadian Church joined in with great enthusiasm. The archbishop spoke of the fond memories he has of his experiences in that “new atmosphere of sharing and listening.” During his episcopacy as bishop of the diocese of New Westminster Companion Diocese relationships were established with the diocese of Northern Argentina and with the diocese of Wellington in New Zealand. “One was not very much like us and one was very much like us.” But the important thing to remember is that “when you have partners, you are in this together... Bound by the bonds of affection, we are together because we choose to be together and that is the basis of the Anglican Consultative Council.” The ACC is a body that consults together but does not make decisions. We are “bonded deeply in the love of Christ that doesn’t let us go.” He concluded his address illustrating the opportunities to engage more deeply in the current Companion Diocese relationship by saying, “A line in a bulletin, a line in an intercession isn’t enough. We have to get to know each other.”

Next to speak was the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, dean of the diocese and rector of Christ Church Cathedral. He



LEFT Archbishop Hambidge speaks about the 1963 Anglican Congress. RIGHT The Rev. Karen Urquhart facilitated the two hour session.



Abby Cline of St. George, Fort Langley.



The Ven. Douglas Fenton offered some historic perspective.



Archbishop Hambidge's address was one of highlights.



Carol Tindall, ODNW spoke about practical strategies.

began by saying that he had attended the 1963 Toronto conference and remembered the experience. Dean Elliott's address consisted of a narrated PowerPoint presentation sharing his experience as the priest representative of the Anglican Church of Canada to the 2010 Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Auckland, New Zealand. He said, “our partnership in the Gospel is not about agreeing about theology or about *haves* or *have-nots*... what we want to do is to have more encounters with each other, ‘face-to-face’... Because the diocese of New Westminster has been controversial we are charged with the mission to really connect and not just look for others to agree with us.”

Carol Tindall, ODNW of St. Dunstan's, Aldergrove spoke briefly about the need to establish some “practical strategies.” She and others on the committee are seeking to find out “how we can move forward... the connections



Small Group Discussion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

## Vancouver School of Theology Announces New Chancellor

Vancouver School of Theology (VST) is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Iain Black as its new Chancellor, as of January 1, 2018. Mr. Black will be officially welcomed into the position at VST's annual Convocation, taking place on Monday, May 7, 2018 at Shaughnessy United Church.

Mr. Black brings to VST a blend of both public and private sector leadership over his 28-year career. He currently serves as the President and CEO of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade (GVBOT), a role he has held since October 2011. Under his leadership, the iconic 130-year-old organization has experienced a modern renaissance, with dramatic growth via rediscovered relevancy for 21st century business, government & community thought leaders. Mr. Black came to the GVBOT directly from the elected ranks of the BC Government, where he was elected twice into the provincial legislature as MLA, and served as cabinet minister in three different economic cabinet posts under former premier Gordon Campbell.

Prior to his service in the Legislative Assembly, he spent over 15 years in the technology and new economy sectors leading increasingly complex and high profile "turnaround" assignments across both publicly traded and private companies.

In the community, Iain's volunteer roles have included coaching or managing his children's soccer and hockey teams in Coquitlam. He has also sat on a variety of

*"VST is thrilled with the appointment of Mr. Iain Black as Chancellor of our school. His interest in the public good and outstanding leadership for our time are central values of our school."*

The Reverend Richard Topping, Principal

charity, business and community boards, including the Chair's Council at Science World British Columbia, and many years as a board director of Canuck Place Children's Hospice.

Mr. Black is an Honours graduate from the University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business, as well as the University of Toronto—ICD-Rotman Directors Education Program. He lives in Coquitlam with his wife and three children. ✦



Mr. Iain Black. PHOTO Submitted

## Vancouver School of Theology Announces Recipients of 2018 Doctor of Divinity Honoris Causa: The Reverend James Scott & Dr. Marie Wilson

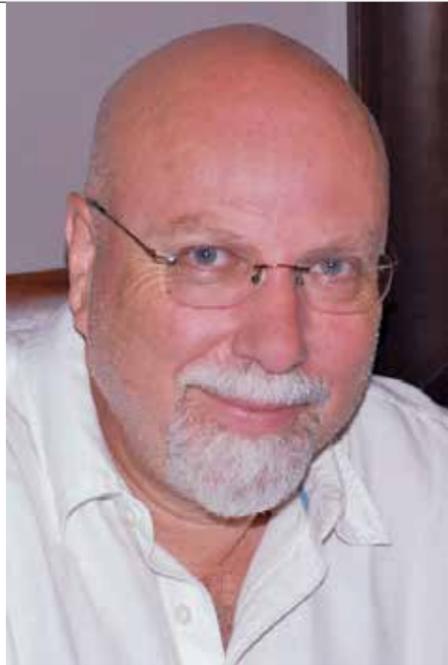
Vancouver School of Theology (VST) is pleased to announce the recipients of VST's 2018 Doctor of Divinity, Honoris Causa, Dr. Marie Wilson and the Rev. James Scott. Both Rev. Scott and Dr. Wilson have played a significant role in the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada.

### Dr. Marie Wilson

Journalist and Commissioner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Dr. Wilson is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster, civic and community activist, senior executive manager, university lecturer, and member of the United Church of Canada. She served as one of three Commissioners to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and recently completed terms as Professor of Practice at McGill University, and Mentor at the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation. As a journalist, Marie Wilson's reports tackled complex issues including the Quebec sovereignty referendum and national unity debates, the national Constitutional talks of the 1980s, the settlement of historic Aboriginal rights agreements, the state of health in First Nations and Inuit communities, Papal visits, and the centennial celebrations of the Riel Rebellion. As a Regional Director for the CBC she launched the first daily television news service for Northern Canada. As a TRC Commissioner, Dr. Wilson played a central role in launching Canada's ongoing efforts in reconciliation. Dr. Wilson holds honorary doctorates and received honorary degrees from five other institutions in various regions of the country. Other prestigious recognitions include the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, the Meritorious Service Cross, and the Order of Canada.

### The Reverend James Scott

United Church General Officer for Implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Raised in Toronto, the Rev. James Scott was ordained by the United Church of Canada in 1976 and served in pastoral ministry in Saskatchewan until 1980 when his focus turned towards social justice, peacemaking and conflict resolution. Among his com-



The Rev. James Scott. PHOTO Submitted

mitments and achievements, Rev. Scott coordinated the national campaign to prevent the return of the death penalty in 1985–1987, was the founding Coordinator of the Collaborative Justice Project in Ottawa, and served to guide the United Church of Canada in living out its Apologies to Indigenous Canadians, including representing the Church in negotiations for the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement in 2006, and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada from 2008–2015. Retiring in December 2015, Rev. Scott continues his commitment to restorative and Indigenous justice through public speaking and volunteerism.

These appointments recognize and affirm VST's long-standing partnership with Indigenous communities through its Indigenous Studies Program. VST has recently received a significant grant of \$400,000 USD from the esteemed Henry Luce Foundation in support of its innovative program, the *Teaching House That Moves Around*. This program delivers theological based community education and healing directly to Indigenous communities empowering participants to heal and build upon their relationships with the

land, with other people groups, with people in their lives, with their spirituality and with themselves. Securing this grant means VST will be able to take another step in the direction of Truth and Reconciliation initiatives and build a better future with Indigenous

communities.

The 2018 Doctor of Divinity, Honoris Causa will be bestowed at the Vancouver School of Theology Convocation on Monday, May 7 at 7 pm at Shaughnessy United Church. ✦

## More Than Just a Line in the Bulletin

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

(between the parishes of the two dioceses) are not happening very quickly." However, Carol was optimistic in large part due to the substantial turnout at the meeting that day. She said, "If we can get this many parish representatives at this event... and those of you here, who are now learning about this can take hold of this information we can certainly create some energy that will flow to the other parishes not represented here today."

Rev. Urquhart then instructed the plenary to form small groups, each group containing a person originally from EDNP or who had spent time there and discuss some strategies for 20–30 minutes.

After the discussion session ended, Rev. Amayag said that he would be pleased to supply contact information for EDNP staff and volunteers who would be excellent

connections as the Companion Diocese relationship moves forward.

Archdeacon Fenton reminded the group that WiFi access is very limited so it is difficult to be in social media contact outside of a major centre like Bontoc. He also suggested that face-to-face visits are definitely worth pursuing, advising that two or three people per visit would be a good plan.

Those who attended this session were informed and inspired and will go back to their parishes with more information that will lead to increased connections between parishes. The meeting was a positive move forward to ensuring that this Companion Diocese relationship will grow into something significantly more than—in the words of Archbishop Hambidge—"a line in the service bulletin or a line in the intercession." ✦



Dean Peter Elliott spoke about his experiences at the 2010 Anglican Consultative Council in New Zealand.

# Epiphany 2018 at 'Epiphany'

RANDY MURRAY (WITH FILES FROM STEPHEN ROWE)  
 Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Sunday morning, January 7, diocesan communications visited the Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany, Surrey or 'Epiphany' (for short) to experience with the members of that faith community their patronal Sunday.

This has been a very difficult time for the parish, four parishioners had died in the previous two weeks and for

some, celebrating this feast day was proving difficult. Epiphany is a closely knit community who are definitely a "parish family," but they are also an open and welcoming family, demonstrated by their warm welcome of dozens of Chaldean Catholics in 2014, many of whom have remained and become members of this Anglican congregation.

During the Children's Talk, Epiphany's rector the Rev. Stephen Rowe was accompanied by some younger members of the community and parishioner Carol Williams to the front the crèche located on the east side of the chancel entrance. Rev. Rowe pointed out that the three Magi have now joined the Holy Family in the scene that was assembled on Christmas Eve. He provided some context to their bringing of gifts and the Feast Day that commemorates The Epiphany. Rev. Rowe finished by saying to the younger ones, "Today is the dedicated festival day of our church."

Before examining the readings for the day in his homily, Rev. Rowe made reference to the recent events in the parish:

"It is no exaggeration to say that it has been a hard ten days for our community. For although we know that death is part of life (as it were), we have had four deaths in quick succession and that isn't at all easy to deal with. Each of those people: Chrissy Williams, Anne Savenye, Barb Smith and Sandy Moon played a distinctive role in the life of our Church and each of them will be missed by their many friends here. All four were part of what this Church community has been over the years and although Barb and Chrissy had moved on from Epiphany, all leave a gap in our life together. In time we will remember each of these people individually but today we want to thank God for having known them and having been part of our lives. And as we offer our prayer today we remember their lives and especially those they leave behind. We especially want to uphold their family and friends in this time of loss."

As Rev. Rowe continued his sermon he gave historical and spiritual context to the story of the Magi from Matthew's gospel and toward the end of his homily he made a connection between the gospel story and the loss experienced by the Epiphany community:

"Though we are sad for the loss of Chrissy, Anne, Barb and Sandy today is a very appropriate occasion to remember them because of their part in the community of Epiphany. In our lives, like the Magi we know deep down that we are on a journey, that we are following a star, our own pathway to Christ and to God. And like the Magi (who after all were supposed to be wise men — if that isn't a contradiction in terms) we have to keep faith, we have to keep following, we have to continue with our journey. Often times we don't know where exactly it will lead, but make no mistake God intends that we each follow our own path — our path to God."

The next section of the liturgy was the Renewal of Baptismal vows, participated in enthusiastically by the congregation, which led into the exchange of the Peace and the Eucharist.

Following worship there was very close to 100% participation by the congregation in the luncheon presented in the parish hall. This parish family wanted to spend some time together, to visit, to share stories, to enjoy the laughter of the children echoing in that cavernous room and perhaps to think about the closing words of Rev. Rowe's Feast of the Epiphany sermon:

"So as we celebrate the life of our Church today let us be clear that God is with us as God is with us all the time in every moment of our lives; the One who promises us joy and prosperity, and salvation. Let us, even in our sadness and grief, still look to the light that comes from God through Christ that we may allow God's salvation light, shine into our hearts." ✠



The Rev. Stephen Rowe with Carol Williams and younger parishioners at the crèche. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Chaldean crèche in the narthex. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The Rev. Stephen Rowe preaching. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The Renewal of Baptismal Vows. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Lunch time. PHOTO Wayne Chose



A great Epiphany outfit. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Processing in to O Come All Ye Faithful. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The search is on for the correct page in the BAS (Book of Alternative Services). PHOTO Wayne Chose



Giving thanks at the Offertory. PHOTO Wayne Chose



Goodies and Coffee. PHOTO Wayne Chose



The Peace. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Bishop Skelton leads the Collect for Purity. RIGHT Children's Talk. PHOTOS Randy Murray



LEFT Preparing the Altar during the Offertory Hymn. MIDDLE LEFT Eucharistic Prayer. MIDDLE RIGHT Holy Communion. RIGHT Bishop Melissa informs the congregation that Rev. Monette's interim ministry at St. Timothy's is concluding. PHOTOS Randy Murray

## The Feast of St. Timothy & St. Titus at St. Timothy's, Burnaby

RANDY MURRAY  
Communications Officer & Topic Editor

Through the early hours of January 21, blustery rainstorms drenched much of the diocese of New Westminster but as often happens, the rain eased off, the wind blew a few degrees warmer and the sun peeked out in time for the main Celebration of Sunday Eucharist at St. Timothy, Burnaby. This was a special day for the parish as they were celebrating their patronal festival (the Feast of St. Timothy and St. Titus transferred from January 26) with worship led by Bishop Melissa Skelton. Visitors in the congregation included Diocesan Comptroller, Shailene Caparas (attending her very first Anglican liturgy in an Anglican church after more than three years on Synod Staff) and Director of Mission and Ministry Development for the diocese of New Westminster, the Rev. Tellison Glover. Tellison had begun in his new position just days earlier on January 16.

There are many children under the age of ten at St. Timothy's and they really enjoy their time together. Following the Processional Hymn, *Here in this Place*, and the Collect for Purity, Bishop Skelton asked the younger members of the parish to join her on the floor in front of the chancel and the area quickly filled up. The first thing she said was "Where did all these children come from?" A question that caused a few of the parish youth to be a bit embarrassed. Bishop Skelton then asked the kids, "What day is this today?" and she received the correct answer, "St. Timothy's Day," which was pretty impressive considering the group were for the most part very young. As is often the case, Bishop Skelton had some visual aids to help illustrate the messages of the Children's Talk. She showed her audience various photographs of shepherds and sheep, including sheep that were in dangerous situations. She made reference to the readings focusing on the love bestowed on



LEFT Reading the Epistle. RIGHT Heather Robertson was the intercessor. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Singing the Closing Hymn. PHOTO Randy Murray

Timothy by his mother and grandmother *Acts 16: 1-15* and the love of Jesus the Good Shepherd from the Gospel, *John 10: 14-18*.

At the conclusion of the worship, interim priest-in-charge, the Rev. Ruth Monette broke the news to the parish that she had been appointed rector of St. Stephen's, Burnaby beginning May 1, 2018 and would be completing her interim ministry appointment at St. Timothy's on April 15. Bishop Skelton stood beside Rev. Monette and told the congregation that she is very optimistic about St. Timothy's future. She commented on the parish's "very interesting and rambunctious past." The parish had been previously known as *Christ the King*. Bishop Skelton added that she is also optimistic about the canonical process and the parish's future saying, "I have interest, hope and energy for this parish."

After worship the community gathered in the hall for cake with ice cream and snacks. The cake was gluten free and purple in colour under the icing. The left side of the cake was bedecked with jelly candies forming a Celtic Cross in blue and on the right *2 Tim 3:17* in orange jelly candies. *2 Timothy 3: 16-17* reads, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

As is her custom during episcopal visitations, Bishop Skelton met with the parish and encouraged them to ask questions, which they did. ✚

An audio and video of the sermon are available online at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/medial2018-01-21-the-utterly-dependable-love-of-god-st-timothy-burnaby](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/medial2018-01-21-the-utterly-dependable-love-of-god-st-timothy-burnaby)



Bev and Owen meet the Rev. Tellison Glover. PHOTO Randy Murray



TOP & BOTTOM The Cake. PHOTOS Randy Murray

# The Lenten Spirit as Experienced Across Diverse Religious Traditions

THOMAS ESAKIN

Co-chair Ecumenical Multifaith Unit of the diocese of New Westminster; St. Paul's, Vancouver

*“...let us never forget...  
all are to be one,  
according to His will.  
This is our mission,  
and we may not be satisfied  
so long as it is unattained...  
At the centre is God...  
At the centre only is perfect unity.  
There alone is our end;  
there only is the full accomplishment...  
until all shall be absorbed  
in the eternal being of God,  
and He shall be all in all.”*

Acton Windeyer Sillitoe,  
First Lord Bishop of New Westminster  
(Voiced at the service of thanksgiving  
following the first General Synod  
of the Anglican Church of Canada,  
September 18, 1893).<sup>1</sup>



Tom Esakin. PHOTO Submitted

Lent. And Interfaith. Over decades our diocese has been active in interfaith initiatives, undertaken to educate Anglicans in, and strengthen our friendly relations with, other religious traditions. Recently, our diocese's Ecumenical and Multifaith Unit (EMU) held the *5 Ways of Engaging the Heart: Experiences in Inter-Spiritual Practices* series of Islamic Sufi, Jewish, Hindu, Zen Buddhist and Christian spiritual practices. Also *United in Compassion*, an evening held at Or Shalom Synagogue, bringing together Metro Vancouver religious communities after the Quebec City mosque murders. Bishop Melissa Skelton initiated our diocese's first *Islam 101 Clergy Day*. And for this Lenten season, *Topic* editor and diocesan communications officer, Randy Murray suggested an article connecting the Christian season of Lent to similar seasons in other religious traditions.

Religious leaders involved in various EMU activities include: Mr. Firdosh Mehta of the Zoroastrian Society of BC (ZSBC); Imam Mohammad Shujaath Ali Nadwi of the Masjidul Haq (Mosque) in Vancouver; and Rev. James Duckett, priest-in-charge at St. Paul's, Vancouver. For this article, these souls kindly shared their personal perspectives on Lent (James), or on how Lent might connect to the Islamic tradition (Shujaath) or to the Zoroastrian faith (Firdosh). One interfaith understanding, as reflected in this article, is that while finding commonality among diverse religious traditions may be a nice idea, it is often in identifying and welcoming our religious differences that deeper understandings are realized.

So, Shrove or Pancake Tuesday ends and Lent begins. *Shrove* coming from *shrive*, meaning to present oneself for confession, penance and absolution; and Lent, an Old English word identifying that days grow longer in spring.<sup>2</sup> Lent is a liturgical season that, according to our Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada), is for: “Praying, paying attention to God; Fasting, reminding ourselves of our hunger for God; and Almsgiving, giving of ourselves to others.”<sup>3</sup>

For some Christians, Lent holds unpleasant connotations as a dour time of fasting and personal denial, whether in relenting of foods or drink, behaviours or habits. And for many Christian contemplatives, Lent is a welcomed season to identify that within us, which separates us from God; so we can actively overcome it to then strengthen and deepen in The Divine.

The Rev. James Duckett, interim priest-in-charge at St. Paul's, guides us that, “Lent is meant to mirror Jesus's 40 days in the desert and so Christians are invited to mimic that time through fasting in some respect.” He shares that, “In Lent, as a way to turn inwards to self-reflection and prayer, we Christians give up something (like sacrificing a food or activity) and repurpose the energy of that activity into reflection. For it is in the sacrifice of something we appreciate that we have a deeper appreciation for that same thing when it is reintroduced in to our lives.” Fr. James does wisely point out, however, that “giving up God” is not in the mix of Lenten considerations!

According to James, a modern twist on Lent is that

instead of giving up something, we Christians “take on something, to add it to our life of prayer and reflection.” This could be our adding a daily scripture reading, Bible study or extra worship services, or praying the Daily Offices during Lent.

For James, Lent deeply connects the physical and spiritual, providing an opportunity for us to explore these connections. “Part of the desert experience is that when one starts with the physical or spiritual, either leads to the other,” he says. Fr. James considers Lent as “a devoted time of prayer, self-reflection, and sacrifice; kind of like going on retreat to refocus and reconnect with God, one's self and scripture. In order to see things in a new light and be energized.”

*“So if anyone is in Christ,  
there is a new creation:  
everything old has passed away;  
see, everything has become new!”*

2 Corinthians 5:17

Zoroastrianism is one of the most ancient religions on earth — and one that few Westerners seem to know about. Its teachings influenced Judaism and so then Christianity and Islam; and are known to have influenced Socratic and Platonic thought. Burnaby, BC holds one of only two Zoroastrian temples in Canada (the other being in Toronto), which serve the approximately 200,000 Zoroastrian adherents on earth. In India, Zoroastrians are known as *Parsis*.

Firdosh Mehta of the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia (ZSBC), when asked to make comparisons between Christianity's Lent and a similar season in the Zoroastrian religious calendar, identified both narrow similarities and wider differences.

Zoroastrianism's Prophet is Zarathustra (also known as Zoroaster). As Firdosh guides, the tradition emphasises its Triad or Trinity or “Humata, Hukhta, and Huvarshata,” meaning “Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.” He instructs that, “In the Zoroastrian way of life, one is totally responsible for one's thoughts, words and deeds and no divine pardon or mercy is available. Ahura Mazda (God) gives humans the mind to discern good and evil, and gives people ‘free choice’ in action. One is free to do what one chooses, so long as it does not harm anybody or anyone else in any way. And if a person does something negative, then they are expected to own their behaviour. Forgiveness is encouraged in human activity, even to your enemies. Zoroastrians must ask direct forgiveness from the person harmed and commit to never do it again. Then the account with them is settled.” For the tradition, he identifies, has the *Law of Asha*, where good begets good and evil begets

evil. And good or bad depend on good or bad thoughts, words and actions.

“There is no concept of eternal damnation in Zoroastrianism” explains Firdosh, “as this suggests evil is always present. Zoroastrianism believes the intent is for humans to keep on doing goodness throughout life, so that the balance sheet of goodness is greater than the balance sheet of evil on Judgement Day. Then on that Day, our spirit will rest in consciousness of understanding about what we did wrong in life to then repair it in our consciousness. So that at the end of this process, we are fully cleansed of our own bad deeds and welcome Oneness with Ahura Mazda. It is essential for us to have faith that we will become good.”

In Zoroastrianism, says Firdosh, the equivalent season to Lent would be the *Days of Fravardeghan*, found in the last ten days of a Zoroastrian calendar. “These are days of prayers to the souls (*Fravashi*) of the departed and prayers of praise offered for all good, righteous souls to memorialize the departed,” he says. “There is NO fasting done. Fasting and gluttony are anathema to Zoroastrian philosophy, as they depart from the principle of the ‘Golden Mean’ (no extreme behaviour).” Prayer ceremonies, including the predawn *Prayer of Hushbaam*, and later-day *Prayer of Jashan* and *Prayer of Baaj*, are held at temples, community centres or homes. Community meals are served and sponsored by donors, where people sit together and eat the same thing. No animal slaughter is undertaken during those days for the community meal is vegetarian.”

On connecting the physical and spiritual dimensions, Firdosh says that in Zoroastrianism: “the physical is part of our earthly body and gives us the ability to practice our spirituality. The more spirituality we practice, the closer we are to Ahura Mazda. So the more spiritual we are in life, then at death we are closer to God by holding less evil within us. The spiritual is a cleaning out of our self so that there is only God. And one only becomes one with God after death.”

*“Righteousness is the highest virtue.  
Enlightened happiness to one  
who follows the Path of Asha.”*

Ashem Vohu, a cardinal prayer.<sup>4</sup>

The Islamic month of *Ramadan* offers a direct similarity to the Christian season of Lent, however it's a *Lent on proverbial steroids*. “The heart of Islam is sincerity,” guides Imam Shujaath, “where one is required to do all in seeking Allah's (God's) pleasure. Fasting plays a significant role in developing this.”

During the 29 or 30 days of the lunar month of *Ramadan* (which falls every twelfth new moon), fasting begins at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

# The Lenten Spirit as Experienced Across Diverse Religious Traditions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

true dawn or approximately 6:05 am and goes to dusk (as soon as the sun sets), at which time fasting hour ends and the fast breaks. The Imam guides that, in Islam, fasting is not just an option or a selection among a buffet of options; that fasting is an obligation for Muslims of and beyond the age of puberty. He instructs that, "In Islam, fasting is to give up food, drink and intimate (sexual) relations with one's spouse" for the whole of *Ramadan*. For health reasons, the obligation is temporarily waived for pregnant, breast-feeding and menstruating women; elderly persons; the chronically ill; and travellers. Unless health prevents them from doing so, people who exercise the waiver must make up the fast later in the same year.

Shujaath shares that, "The Holy Quran decrees fasting to gain and obtain purity." He identifies that, "there are two primary purposes for fasting in Islam:

1. To raise the level of God consciousness
2. To bring spiritual transformation to a believer from living a life of vice to living a life of virtue

He has us consider that "when we think of creator over creation, God needs not food and drink, and so by the creation giving up food and drink we replicate the Divine attitude and become closer to God. By voluntarily giving up food and drink, we also become more compassionate to those who do without due to economic or social situation."

The Imam shares that, according to teachings of the respected medieval Muslim scholar/theologian, Al-Ghazali, fasting is of three levels. The *first* or *base level* is simply a "refraining from." The *second level* is to "train one's every single organ (those we have free will over, such as eyes, ears, hands) against committing sin." The *third level* is to "train our mind to not contradict Divine laws/teachings and to not allow our hearts to entertain any negative feelings."

The last ten days of *Ramadan*, informs Shujaath, are known as *Itikaaf*. This is a time where "Muslims are invited to follow the example of the Prophet Mohammad, PBUH (peace be upon him), and go in to seclusion or retreat by spending these days in a mosque to devote themselves to reading the Holy Quran, praying, reflection, and spiritual enhancement." Over the whole month of *Ramadan*, Muslims can go to mosque and hear the whole Holy Quran recited from memory by a devotee. When *Ramadan* ends, the fasting period concludes with the one-day celebration of Eid, which the Imam says has a "primary focus to thank Allah for the opportunity to fast and become closer to Him, and to thank God for our coming through the month of *Ramadan*." For *Eid*, individual Muslims are asked to give approximately \$10 – \$12 (whether to individuals or a mosque) to help the poor celebrate the festival.

The Imam notes that while "the secular world often sees fasting as suffering, Islam sees its deep benefits," which for Ramada include:

1. A season to get closer to Allah, improve a soul's virtue, and enhance health through detoxification and reducing fat intake.
2. Helping people become empathetic to others in suffering.
3. Depriving ourselves of some of the things we enjoy in our daily life, so we learn to appreciate these things more when they return to us.
4. Increasing patience through bearing challenge and diversity by controlling one's appetites, desires, and

.....  
Endnotes:

1. Grove, Lyndon, 1979. *Pacific Pilgrims*. Vancouver, BC: Fforbez Publications (on behalf of the Centennial Committee of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster) (pps. 192 – 193).
  2. Catholic Online (2018). *FAQS About Lent* [online]. Available from: [www.catholic.org/lent/faq.php#n1](http://www.catholic.org/lent/faq.php#n1) [Accessed: 16 January 2018].
  3. Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada) (2017). *Keeping a Holy Lent – An Invitation* [online]. Available from: [www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/AFP-Lent-Bulletin-Insert\\_2.pdf](http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/AFP-Lent-Bulletin-Insert_2.pdf) [Accessed: 16 January 2018].
  4. Rivetna, Roshan, 2002. *The Legacy of Zarathushtra: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Culture of the Zarathushtris (Zoroastrians)*. Hinsdale, Illinois, USA: Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America (p.12).
  5. The Teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan (no date). *Vol. 8, The Privilege of Being Human - 7. Truth* [online]. Available from: <http://hazrat-inayat-khan.org/php/views.php?h1=29&h2=7> [Accessed: 16 January 2018].
- .....

temperaments (as these make people weak, fasting is Islam's way to discipline these in believers).

5. Developing extreme sincerity and doing so for the sake of Allah, as Allah is what sits in the mind of the faster and is the motivator of the fast.

Lent. And Interfaith. Readers are invited to make their

own general conclusions from this article. And whatever the name of the One Divine—God, Ahura Mazda or Allah—one specific conclusion is that these religious traditions share the belief that a deepening in Divine awareness opens itself to us through intentional practices connecting earthly form and spiritual being. ✦

*“As life unfolds itself to man the first lesson it teaches is humility; the first thing that comes to (a person’s) vision is his own limitedness. The vaster God appears to him, the smaller he finds himself. This goes on and on until the moment comes when he loses himself in the vision of God. In the terms of the Sufis this is called fana, and it is this process that was taught by Christ under the name of self-denial. Often man interprets this teaching wrongly and considers renunciation as self-denial. He thinks that the teaching is to renounce all that is in the world. But although that is a way and an important step which leads to the true self-denial, the self-denial meant is the losing of oneself in God.”*

Hazrat Inayat Khan, Sufi Pir and Murshid <sup>5</sup>



care share

As part of the mission and ministry of the diocese of New Westminster our shared diocesan outreach program *care + share* was established following a resolution at Synod 2011. The ministries included in *care + share* have submitted proposals to the Mission and Ministry Development Committee (MMD), and once their proposals have been approved by that body a resolution is presented to Synod and Synod votes on whether or not to accept the recommended ministries as *care + share* recipients for a two year period.

Ministries included in *care + share* do not receive "funding," instead they receive voluntary contributions made by parishes and individual Anglicans, sent to the Synod Office which forwards funds several times a year to the *care + share* ministry groups.

Donations given by individuals and parishes to *care + share* go 100% to the groups we support. The overhead for fundraising and administration for *care + share* is included in the regular Diocesan Budget, and not taken from donations.

Donations may be directed to both ministries or to individual societies in any combination or amount. You may give to *care + share* via your parish stewardship program or as an individual. Together we as a diocese decide which ministries to support with voluntary dollars. New recipients of *care + share* contributions as of January 1, 2018 and continuing through until December 31, 2019 are:

**The Westside Anglicans Neighbourhood Ministry – Mobile Care Unit**  
**Salal + Cedar Watershed Discipleship**

**Please prayerfully consider your support of care + share and give generously.**

**To make a gift, please email [rtaylor@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:rtaylor@vancouver.anglican.ca) or telephone 604.684.6306, ext. 220.**

An initiative of the Bishop's Fund for Local Mission

## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • Brotherhood of St. Andrew Caroling •



First day of caroling at Mr. and Mrs. Lily Ramillo's residence in Vancouver, BC. Judith Carling and Shirly Baguiwen from St. Michael's gladly came to join in the singing. PHOTO Ceasar Castro



The second day of caroling on December 28, 2017, at the residence of Mr. Edgar Leganso in Surrey, BC. He invited all his in-laws and everybody joined in and enjoyed the carols. PHOTO Ceasar Castro

Members of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew (BSA) many of them members of the parish of St. Mary the Virgin, Sapperton took some time out from their personal Christmas week celebrations to participate in "House-to-House" Caroling.

Now this wasn't just about keeping vocal chords warmed-up, it was an intentional fundraising opportunity for the BSA. According to St. Mary's vicar, the Rev. Arvin Amayag, he had received a letter from the Church Council of St. Andrew's, Patiacan in the Episcopal Diocese of North Philippines (EDNP) asking for some help to build a larger church building for their parish. According to Arvin, "I know for a fact that we at St. Mary's do not have money for this purpose. The BSA agreed to do caroling for it. We called some friends (some who are not Anglicans) and they were happy to accommodate us in their homes for caroling."

The BSA went out and visited a total of seven households on December 27 and



Taken on the third day (January 2, 2018) of caroling at Castro's residence in Port Moody. Brother Ceasar Castro sharing the song as Fr. Arvin plays the guitar. PHOTO Ceasar Castro

28 and then received a request to sing at a home on January 2, which they gladly did. They collected \$1,235.

St. Andrew's, Patiacan is partnered with St. Alban the Martyr in Burnaby as part of the Companion Diocese Ministry between the diocese of New Westminster and EDNP. ✦

### • The Canadian Friends of the Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service •

*"Start where you are... use what you have... do what you can."*

Sheila Johnston, Founding Director, the Canadian Friends of the CCRS

Sheila Johnston is: a published author; Parish Administrator of St. Mark's, Ocean Park; parishioner at Holy Trinity, White Rock; former parishioner of St. Mary's, Kerrisdale; and Founding Director of the Canadian Friends of Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service (Cdn. Friends/CCRS).

Sheila and the board and volunteers of Cdn. Friends/CCRS published their annual report for 2017 in early January 2018, and diocesan communications requested that it be shared through the communications vehicles of the diocese including *Topic*. Sheila was happy to share the report and she also included the following words of context:

"It doesn't take many Canadian dollars to make a huge difference to families who live in the many slum communities in, and around, the vast city of Kolkata, India. One Canadian dollar becomes 50 Rupees.

I discovered this in 2010, when, as a tourist, I dropped into St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral (consecrated in the 1840s) and discovered that the Cathedral's outreach program — Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service (CCRS) — is supported

financially by the diocese of Derbyshire, UK.

I assumed that someone in Canada was sending Canadian dollars to support the women's empowerment programs, the children's free education initiative, and the free health clinics in the slums. Well, I discovered that there was no organized Canadian support for CCRS. After exchanging emails with the CCRS's Executive Director, Mr. Rig David, I made the leap and decided to be that 'someone in Canada,' and so the Cdn. Friends/CCRS was born. The BC government recognizes us as a small, grassroots, non-profit society. And we are proud to say that our wonderful donors support CCRS by collecting small change... because BIG CHANGE in the lives of marginalized people can come from mere coins."

Diocesan communications also plans to be at the Cdn. Friends/CCRS celebratory and fundraising annual event the *Penny Pot Tea*, on Saturday, May 12, at Holy Trinity, White Rock when the very special guests the Bishop of Calcutta, the Rt. Rev. Ashoke Biswar and Mr. Rig David will be present. ✦

.....  
The annual report is available for downloading at <https://tinyurl.com/y7b69b7o>.

### • New! Mystery Worshippers •

SUBMISSION Tasha Carrothers

Ever wonder how a newcomer actually experiences your church? Every church I've worked with thinks of themselves as a friendly place, but it's hard to know what it's actually like for a visitor. Now you can find out, thanks to the Diocesan Consulting Group's new Mystery Worshipper program. Mystery Worshippers provide feedback on what it is like to find the church using the website, their impressions of the building, how they were greeted and welcomed, and how they felt about the worship. Parishes get a short written report and the Mystery Worshipper meets with parish council. Mystery Worshippers make a point of noting what's working as well as areas that can be improved. There is a fee for this service. Interested? Contact Tasha Carrothers, Missioner for Parish Development at [tcarrothers@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:tcarrothers@vancouver.anglican.ca) or 604.684.6306, ext. 227. ✦



PHOTO Randy Murray

### • New Exterior Signage for 1410 Nanton Avenue •

After a few months of planning and going back and forth about the best options for exterior signage at 1410 Nanton Avenue, the Synod Office of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, diocesan staff and TDH Fabricators of Surrey, BC made a final decision and implemented a plan in early November 2017.

The next step was the long wait for the permit to make it through Vancouver City Hall followed by fabrication and construction of the signs, access to electricity at the sign's planned location and installation.

At 12:30 pm on Wednesday, January 10, David and Ryan from TDH arrived in a van equipped with a bucket lift and began the two stage process of installing the back part of the sign on the front cinderblock wall of the building, connecting the electronics and then attaching the front of the sign to

the back section. Unfortunately, the size and weight of the sign was too much for the equipment and personnel that were on site so a call was made for a flatbed truck equipped with a crane. The crane would take about 40–50 minutes to arrive from Surrey so the TDH crew installed the wayfinding sign on the west side of the walkway that leads up to the stairs to the Synod Office main entrance.

The crane arrived within the 40-minute timeframe and two hours later the 6' x 8' LED sign and the accompanying address numerals and letters were successfully installed. ✦

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A short video by Cliff Caprani and Randy Murray commemorating the installation is available on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJHKgmcBGt4&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJHKgmcBGt4&feature=youtu.be)



The wayfinding sign is in place. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Ryan (top) and David installing the sign. RIGHT The new sign. PHOTOS Randy Murray



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

All are encouraged to submit letters, articles, reports on parish activities, opinion pieces, photos, and more for consideration as content for *Topic*.

Please email Randy Murray at [rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca).

All contributions are appreciated • Editor

### Deadline for Topic Submissions

March 16 for the May issue & April 20 for the Summer issue.

#### • Requiem Eucharist for the Reverend Canon Douglas Williams •

A Requiem Eucharist for the repose of the soul of the Rev. Canon Douglas Elliott Williams was celebrated at Christ Church Cathedral the morning of Saturday, January 13.

More than 300 clergy and lay attended the liturgy. In the accompanying photo we see Bishop Skelton receiving the chalice from Canon Williams's spouse of 47 years Helen Williams. Helen was one of the readers. To the left and behind is Sarah Nation a close friend who was also a reader and on the right is the Rev. Canon Kevin Hunt,

rector of St. James' and regional dean of Burrard. Fr. Kevin presided at the Eucharist. The preacher was the Very Rev. Peter Elliott.

On the right is the poem *God*, written by Canon Williams (November 2017), which was printed in the Requiem's Order of Service. ✠

.....  
A recording of Dean Peter Elliott's sermon is available online at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2018-01-13-requiem-eucharist-the-reverend-canon-douglas-elliott-williams](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/media/2018-01-13-requiem-eucharist-the-reverend-canon-douglas-elliott-williams).



PHOTO Cliff Caprani

God.  
God.  
Not like anything or anyone else in the universe.  
Just God  
And the abyss of nonbeing.  
And across the face of nonbeing — just God.

God, say some, cannot cease to exist. But that is to impose upon God an unnecessary constraint — mandatory existence. Is it not more fitting that God is, in spite of the real possibility of ceasing to exist? If existence is not a mandatory condition for God, then God is the continuous overcoming of nonbeing. God is fundamental being.

But would not be alone.

Whatever alone is for one who is simply being. But that must remain one of the many things we will never know about the great reality of which we occupy only a tiny, insignificant corner.

Alone.

But the overcoming of non-being is a fullness uncontainable in itself. It overflows. To where? Or what?

The overcoming of non-being is by the power of being and is therefore a gift to itself. Having received such a gift the impulse to give is almost inescapable. Almost? To give burns in the heart of being.

#### • St. Hilda's Update •

For those of you following the story of the building remediation of St. Hilda's, Secht (main story, centrespread pages of the January issue of *Topic* and the follow-up below the fold on page 10 of the February issue) a Special Vestry Meeting was held at St. Hilda's on Sunday, January 14 about authorizing loans for sanctuary reconstruction and approving visioning and a feasibility study for property redevelopment. At the meeting, a polished and professional presentation was shared with members of vestry by rector, the Rev. Clarence Li and deacon, the Ven. Bruce Morris. The three-part motion to proceed with these goals was overwhelmingly approved with the next step being to take the request to Diocesan Council, the governing body of the diocese of New Westminster.

The matter came before both diocesan standing committees at a joint meeting on January 23. Again the presentation was shown and the result was that the two standing committees: Management Finance and Property (MFP) and Mission and Ministry Development (MMD) unanimously approved a motion to recommend to Diocesan Council that the parish be permitted to proceed with a demand loan of \$300,000 from a private lender and if necessary seek additional financing of up to \$200,000. This recommendation was circulated to the members of Diocesan Council via an email poll with the result being that the Motion was *Carried*.

The cost of the remediation is now estimated to be \$900,000. ✠



The north side of the building exterior where the problems were first discovered. PHOTO Randy Murray

#### • Consecration of the Bishop of Caledonia •

On Thursday, January 18, bishops, clergy and lay gathered at St. Andrew's, Cathedral in Prince Rupert for the Consecration of the 10th Bishop of the diocese of Caledonia, David Lehmann. Bishop Lehmann was elected on the 20th ballot, the full canonical run of an episcopal election on October 25, 2017.

At the time he was elected Bishop, David was regional dean of Upper Mackenzie in the diocese of Arctic and the rector of St. John's in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. According to the *Anglican Journal's* report by Joelle Kidd, on Election Day he said he was "utterly overwhelmed" by the

election result.

All the members of the Provincial House of Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of BC/Yukon were present including Bishop Melissa Skelton of the diocese of New Westminster. Another member of our diocese, the Chancellor of the Ecclesiastical Province, Douglas MacAdams, QC, ODNW was also present. Bishop Logan McNamee and Bishop Melissa served as Bishop David's presenters so they were charged with "vesting" the newly consecrated bishop.

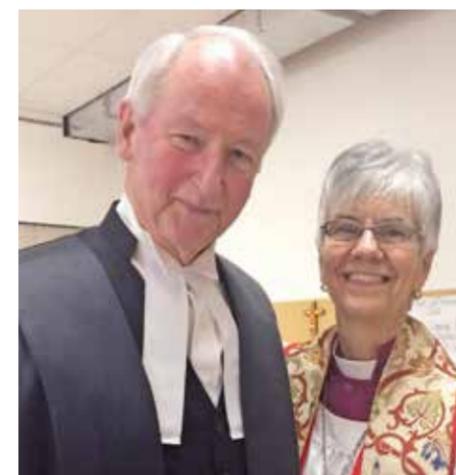
Please remember the diocese of Caledonia, the Rt. Rev. David Lehmann, the clergy and the laity in your prayers. ✠



Bishop Logan McNamee and Bishop Skelton vest the almost ordained Bishop during the dress rehearsal. PHOTO Courtesy of Bishop Melissa Skelton



LEFT The new Bishop, the Rt. Rev. David Lehmann. MIDDLE The Provincial House of Bishops, the Chancellor and the Primate. PHOTOS Matthew Oliver RIGHT Douglas MacAdams, QC, ODNW and Bishop Skelton. PHOTO Courtesy of Bishop Melissa Skelton



The Group photograph of the bishops, clergy, sanctuary party and officers. PHOTO Matthew Oliver

## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • Women's March 2018 •

Bishop Skelton and her spouse Deacon Eric Stroo attended the 2018 Vancouver Women's March with Judy Graves, ODNW and about 2,500 others on a wet and windy Saturday, January 20, at Jack Poole Plaza in Downtown Vancouver. On that day it had been almost a year since the inauguration of US President, Donald Trump and the first Women's Marches that took place in major centres across the United States and

elsewhere.

From media reports and interviews many in attendance were American expatriates or had close connections to the USA. Bishop Melissa and Eric certainly fit into that category.

Judy Graves presented Bishop Skelton with a special purple hat emblazoned with a cross. Most of you probably know that the default colour for the hats is pink. ✠



LEFT Bishop Skelton and Judy Graves. RIGHT The HAT. PHOTOS Courtesy of Judy Graves and Bishop Skelton



The Rev. Eric Stroo and Judy Graves. PHOTO Courtesy of Judy Graves and Bishop Skelton



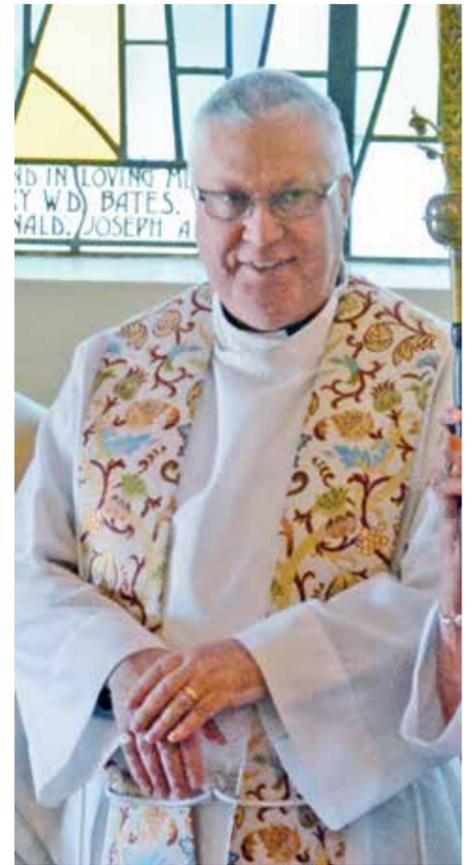
Group Shot. PHOTO Courtesy of Judy Graves and Bishop Skelton

### • Clergy News Around the Diocese •

The Rev. Vivian Seegers ordained on January 21 (see story on page 1) has been appointed by the Bishop as Curate (½ time) at St. Clement, Lynn Valley under the supervision of the Rev. Lynne McNaughton. This appointment begins on February 1. Vivian will continue to provide part time ministry to the urban Indigenous community from St. Mary Magdalene in collaboration with an advisory group.

The Rev. Ruth Monette has been appointed as Rector of St. Stephen the Martyr, Burnaby effective May 1, 2018. Ruth will succeed the Rev. April Stanley who is serving as Interim Priest-in-Charge. Ruth will conclude her appointment as Interim Priest-in-Charge of St. Timothy, Burnaby on April 15.

The Rev. Neil Gray, rector of Holy Trinity, White Rock and a priest in the diocese of New Westminster for a total of 30 years is retiring on April 30, 2018. His last Sunday will be April 8. Diocesan communications had previously reported that Rev. Gray would be moving to the UK to be a "house-for-duty" priest at All Saints, Withycombe Raleigh, however that is no longer his future plan and he will remain with us in the diocese of New Westminster following his retirement. ✠



The Rev. Neil Gray. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT The Rev. Ruth Monette. PHOTO Wayne Chose RIGHT The Rev. Vivian Seegers at her ordination. PHOTO Randy Murray



### • ODNW Information & Nomination Forms for 2018 Now Available •

In May 2016, Diocesan Council passed a motion amending Canon 22, the Canon relating to the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster (ODNW). Beginning in 2016, new members to the ODNW will be nominated and invested every two years. The next Investiture of New Members to the Order of the Diocese of New Westminster will take place Saturday, November 3, 2018, at 10:30 am at the Massey Theatre in New Westminster.

The *Parish Nomination Information for 2018* document and the *ODNW Parish Nomination Form for 2018* are now available on the diocesan website at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/the-odnw](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/the-odnw).

Details regarding eligibility criteria are available in the documents and nominations may be made by any member in good standing of a parish to the rector or priest-in-charge. All nominations are reviewed and approved by the rector or priest-in-charge who, in consultation with the wardens, will choose **not more than one nominee**, and forward that name to the Bishop. The nomination form must be completed in full, and must be accompanied by the \$35 processing fee and a photograph of the nominee. The completed form, fee and photo must be received in the Bishop's Office not later than

April 30, 2018. Nominees will be notified by the Bishop's Office after the completion of the nomination process in June or July. Rectors, priests-in-charge and wardens will also be notified.

**Each parish may nominate one person in 2018.**

Please contact Bill Siksay, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop's Office at [bsiksay@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:bsiksay@vancouver.anglican.ca) or call 604.684.6306, ext. 228 with questions or for more information. ✠



## AROUND THE DIOCESE

### • Staff Activities January 2018 •

The first staff meeting of 2018 took place in the Trendell Lounge on the morning of Wednesday, January 3. It was good to be together and to celebrate the January 4 and January 5 birthdays of the Ven. Douglas Fenton and Mr. Philip Colvin.

We picked up a “real” Red Velvet Cake (buttercream icing outside, cream cheese and buttercream inside) from Le Gateau Bakeshop at 3458 East Hastings (this mention is in hope of a discount ☺). But it wasn’t just all about cake, there was also a meeting, and the first staff meeting of the year was chaired by Rob Dickson.

On Tuesday, January 9, the majority of the staff and spouses of the Synod Office gathered at the Shaughnessy Restaurant to celebrate now-retired Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving Glen Mitchell’s 14 years of service. It was a wonderful evening with many sincere tributes offered to Glen by his former co-workers. Glen and his spouse Christine Mitchell who had recently retired as Parish Administrator of St. Mary’s, Kerrisdale had a great time and enthusiastically shared with those present their plans for the future.

On Wednesday, January 10, the staff welcomed the Rev. Andrew Halladay, vicar of St. Augustine, Marpole and Director of the Diocesan School for Parish Development to the first ever Synod Staff *Lunch and Learn* event. Bishop Skelton had asked Andrew to be the first speaker and to share with the staff the developing story of the remarkable missional success of St. Augustine’s and the parish’s positive impact on the Marpole neighbourhood. A united vision for mission has taken shape in what had up until recently been a combative and shrinking congregation creating a more optimistic and compassionate community.

On January 16, the Rev. Dr. Tellison Glover — recently arrived in Vancouver from Turks and Caicos — began his new ministry as Director for Mission and Ministry Development at the diocese of New Westminster. The first week he “hit the ground running” attending: worship at Christ Church Cathedral, a fundraiser film screening for the benefit of Salal + Cedar at St. James’, a meeting with the senior ordained and lay leadership, and worship during Bishop Skelton’s episcopal visitation to St. Timothy, Burnaby. Tellison and his program staff colleague Tasha Carrothers are looking forward to working together, helping to serve the mission and ministry goals of the parishes, ministry groups and unit groups of the diocese. ✠



Phil and Douglas prepare to cut the cake. PHOTO Randy Murray



January 2018 Staff Meeting chair, Rob Dickson is waiting for agenda items. PHOTO Randy Murray



Phil offers a fond memory of his time on staff with Glen. PHOTO Randy Murray



LEFT Tellison and Tasha take time from a meeting to smile for the camera. RIGHT Glen listens to Phil’s kind words. PHOTOS Randy Murray



Rachel Taylor, the Rev. Andrew Halladay, Tasha Carrothers and Shailene Caparas at Lunch and Learn. PHOTO Randy Murray

### • Faith, Mental Health, and Caring for One Another •

Christ Church Cathedral Mental Health Ministry invites you to an educational day on mental health in faith communities.

**DATE** Saturday, May 5, 2018  
**TIME** 9 am – 3 pm  
**LOCATION** Synod Office,  
 1410 Nanton Avenue, Vancouver  
**COST** \$30 fee includes lunch  
 (vegetarian & gluten free options available)

#### Overview of the Day

Two keynote speakers will share their experiences of living well with and/or supporting a person with a mental illness diagnosis.

In the afternoon, you will choose from these workshops:

- Further discussion with either of the two keynote speakers
- Learning and coaching in listening and communications skills while responding to people who are different from us
- A presentation about the similarities and differences between depression and spiritual lassitude (acedia)
- An opportunity to explore starting a mental health ministry in your faith community

Registration is required.

Go to [www.eventbrite.ca/e/faith-mental-health-caring-for-one-another-tickets-42369075044](http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/faith-mental-health-caring-for-one-another-tickets-42369075044)

If you are unable to use *Eventbrite*, please register in person at the Christ Church Cathedral office, 690 Burrard Street with your payment in cash or cheque.

Because of our commitment to offer this event, no refund will be offered after April 28. Registration is limited to 125 people and closes May 1, 2018.

Please direct inquiries to [mentalhealth@thecathedral.ca](mailto:mentalhealth@thecathedral.ca).

We look forward to welcoming you to this informative and thought-provoking day. ✠

### • Mission Conference • Inside Out Church •

The 2018 diocesan Mission Conference titled *Inside Out Church* is scheduled for Saturday, May 26, 2018. The original venue, Musqueam Cultural Centre, was not available. The **new venue** is **Burnaby Mountain Secondary School** (8800 East Lake Drive, Burnaby).

A Conference Design Team has been assembled under the staff support guidance of Executive Archdeacon, the Ven. Douglas Fenton and consists of: Doug Ibbot, St. James’; the Rev. Craig Tanksley, St. Mark, Ocean Park; Lauren Pinkney, St. Alban the Martyr, Burnaby; the Rev. Wilmer Toyoken, St. Michael’s Multicultural, Kingsway; the Rev. Patrick Blaney, St. John the Evangelist, North Vancouver; and Kim Hodge, ODNW, St. George, Fort Langley. The Team is meeting regularly throughout the winter and spring.

Information about the keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel (*photo on right*) has been printed in *Topic* numerous times and is available on line. Dr. Daniel will open up the conversation: How do we “live into” who we are as disciples of Jesus? Why would our “good works” have to be

in line with our spiritual practice and life in a religious community?

More details and registration information will be posted as they become available on the Mission Conference *Inside Out Church* pages of the diocesan website at [www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/mission-conference-2018-may-26](http://www.vancouver.anglican.ca/diocesan-ministries/mission-conference-2018-may-26). ✠



PHOTO Submitted

### • Diocesan Confirmation Eucharist •

The Diocesan Confirmation Eucharist is at 10:30 am on **Saturday, April 21** at Christ Church Cathedral. Confirmation forms need to be submitted by parishes to the

Bishop’s Office by **Friday, April 13**. Please contact Bill Siksy at [bsiksay@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:bsiksay@vancouver.anglican.ca) or 604.684.6306, ext. 228. ✠

### Deadline for *Topic* Submissions

March 16 for the May issue

& April 20 for the Summer issue.

Please email Randy Murray at [rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:rmurray@vancouver.anglican.ca).

All contributions are appreciated • Editor

## Titles, Schmitles • What's in a Name?

RICHARD LEGGETT

Rector, St. Faith's, Vancouver; Regional Dean of Granville

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Communications Officer & Topic Editor

"So... 1410 Nanton Avenue... this is not New Westminster?" questioned Brent (not his real name) as he closed the door on his service vehicle and walked towards me.

"Well, no it isn't," I replied, my mind racing, synapses closing and opening at light-speed formulating a choice, a decision about whether or not to embark on a conversation that I had participated in many times before knowing that it could all go terribly wrong.

"When I input the address and then the city the GPS in my phone kind of freaked out" added Dylan (also not his real name) as he began removing tools and other items of his trade from the vehicle in readiness to begin work.

Brent and Dylan, both skilled tradespeople had arrived at the Synod Office to do some work that I had arranged. As the communications person for the diocese I sometimes help with organizing some of the physical needs of the building broadly related to my role. This was such a case. As we stood outside surveying the area that would be the recipient of Brent's and Dylan's skills, Brent narrowed his eyes quizzically, "New Westminster... the Archdiocese of New Westminster?" And that was the point when I made the decision; all was lost. "Brent, this is the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster and it was incorporated as the diocese of New Westminster in 1876, which was ten years before the City of Vancouver was incorporated. I believe that Vancouver was known as Granville at the time and was a small settlement across the water from Moodyville, which is the original settlement in what is now known as North Vancouver." Brent's eyes were beginning to glaze, but it was too late I had committed and his vanishing attention only fueled my desire to share the information.

"The Anglican Diocese of New Westminster consists of all the churches aligned with the Anglican Church of Canada and the worldwide Anglican Communion from Powell River in the west to Hope in the east, encompassing the urban and suburban areas of Greater Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. In total there are 66 churches, referred to in our denomination as parishes and three additional worshipping communities, two of those meet in churches which are their own parishes and host the worshipping communities and one meets outside, usually in natural areas of great beauty and/or spiritual significance. And... we don't have Archdioceses, the Roman Catholics have Archdioceses, but we do have Archbishops..." at this point Dylan had readied the equipment that was required to begin their task and had wisely ignored the lecture, Brent on the other hand had stopped glazing over, his eyes now shifting quickly as the limbic region of his brain began to activate the fight or flight sequence.

It was at precisely this moment that the Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett, professor emeritus of Anglican Formation at Vancouver School of Theology (VST), rector of St. Faith's and Regional Dean of Granville appeared, walking toward us on a path to the Synod Office entrance. I continued my pedantry, further victimizing poor Brent but soon decided to abandon the project, "We Anglicans do have archbishops and I could explain that to you but very soon you will want to kill me or kill yourself and I don't want to have that on my conscience." As I delivered this hopefully amusing self-deprecating hyperbole, we were joined by diocesan Director of Finance and Property, Rob Dickson, a very knowledgeable lay person and one of a handful of recipients of the highest honour that an Anglican layperson can receive, the Anglican Award of Merit. He heard me talking about archbishops and without knowing what had gone before he entered the conversation, which quickly branched out into Ecclesiastical Provinces and metropolitans and the role of archbishops. Not wanting him to miss out we called out to Dr. Leggett who was only too happy to engage in the discussion. Inadvertently, Rob and Dr. Leggett had positioned themselves to one side and in front of Brent trapping him between us as we entered into a robust discussion of titles, their portability and permanence or impermanence. Brent must have thought it odd that these three men were in a sense arguing about information that they were apparently familiar with but so arcane that up until today he not known any of it. Suffice it to say, we wrapped the discussion in a minute or two, Brent went to work and it seemed that after the initial scary encounter that both he and Dylan had a very positive experience on the job at 1410 Nanton Avenue.

As I went back to my office the idea for a Lenten op/ed article for *Topic* began to take shape (Lent is a time for deep reflection, and for some, a little bit of suffering). "Why not ask Dr. Leggett to provide some information about names and titles and what they mean?" So, here are the questions and the answers from Dr. Leggett.



ILLUSTRATION Neale Adams

Q. What's the difference between an archdiocese and a diocese?

A. Originally an archdiocese was a diocese located in a significant metropolitan area. Over time the original diocese was divided into additional dioceses, but the original metropolitan diocese, the "mother church" exercises some form of jurisdiction over the newer dioceses. Hence, it becomes an *archdiocese* with an *archbishop* to whom all the related diocesan bishops owe some form of obedience.

In Canada we have no Anglican archdioceses. Our provinces — Canada, Ontario, Rupert's Land, British Columbia and Yukon — function in a similar way to an archdiocese. The Archbishop of the Province does have certain constitutional and canonical responsibilities for the dioceses within her or his province, for example, presiding at the election of a diocesan bishop and at the meetings of the provincial council and synod.

Q. Why didn't the Anglican Church change the name of the diocese when the Cathedral was moved to Christ Church in downtown Vancouver in 1929?

A. When the Anglican Church in the Lower Mainland was incorporated by the Legislature of British Columbia, the Bishop's *cathedra* ("seat") was located at Holy Trinity Cathedral New Westminster. When the Bishop's *cathedra* was moved to Christ Church, it was determined that we should honour our history by retaining the name of the diocese and permitting Holy Trinity to retain the title "Holy Trinity Cathedral."

This is not so unusual. The *cathedra* of the Bishop of Kootenay was originally in Nelson before it was moved to Kelowna. But the original cathedral retains the title "cathedral."

All the dioceses in British Columbia were carved from the original diocese of British Columbia whose *see* (another word meaning "seat") city was Victoria. After the creation of other dioceses, the diocese of British Columbia retained the title even though its jurisdiction is limited to Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands.

Q. What are deacons, archdeacons, archbishops, metropolitans, deans and canons? How does a priest become those things? Do those titles remain forever? How do we correctly address clergy???

A. Ordained ministry in the Anglican tradition is exercised by three distinct orders: bishops, presbyters (usually called "priests") and deacons. Each order has a distinctive role in the life of the church:

- "...bishops ...carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church" (BAS 631);
- "...presbyters ...(together) with the bishops ...take part in the governance of the Church, in the carrying out of its missionary and pastoral work, and in the preaching of the word of God and the administration of (the) holy sacraments" (BAS 631); and
- "...deacons ...in addition to assisting bishops and priests in all this work, have a special responsibility to minister in Christ's name to the poor, the sick,

the suffering, and the helpless" (BAS 631).

By tradition bishops take the title "the Right Reverend" while presbyters and deacons bear the shared title of "the Reverend." In our tradition, ordination is a life-long commitment to the mission of God and the ministry of the church. Hence these titles are borne for life.

All other titles describe functions rather than order. Although it is customary in some places for people to carry these into retirement, it may be more appropriate that they are laid aside when a person retires or leaves the active exercise of this function.

- Archdeacons bear the title "the Venerable" and, whether a presbyter or a deacon, share in the bishop's ministry of oversight.
- Archbishops, also known as the "metropolitan of the province," bear the title "the Most Reverend." In some parts of the Communion, once a "Most Reverend," always a "Most Reverend." However, once an archbishop retires or ceases to exercise this ministry, he or she returns to the use of "the Right Reverend," for example, Archbishop Michael Ramsey, upon retirement, became "the Right Reverend Michael Ramsey."
- Often the Rector of the Cathedral is also the "Dean" of the diocese and exercises a distinct role in the life of the community. He or she bears the title "the Very Reverend." Regional Deans, in New Westminster, retain the title "the Reverend" and assist the Bishop in her pastoral ministry to the laity and clergy of a specific region.
- In medieval times the clergy of the cathedral formed a monastic community and were called "canons" ("canon" means a "rule" or "measure"). After the Reformation the title came to be used in three ways:
  1. *The members of the cathedral clergy;*
  2. *A cleric serving in a particular role for the bishop;*
  3. *And an honorific marking a cleric that the bishop wishes to honour.*

Although the canons (*the "rules"*) of our diocese permit the Bishop to appoint a member of the clergy as a "canon," this has not been the custom for a number of decades.

Addressing a presbyter or deacon as "Reverend Smith" is not appropriate, despite being frequently done. "Reverend" is a description of our office not of the person. "Reverend Mr." or "Reverend Ms." are the most formal, "Mr." or "Ms." a long-standing way. Some clergy use "Mother" or "Father," while others find "Deacon" (for a deacon) and "Pastor" (for a presbyter) congenial.

"Bishop" or "Archbishop" are appropriate forms of address as are "Archdeacon" and "Dean" when directed to a person in those offices and roles.

Usually the best thing to do is to ask the ordained person how he or she wishes to be addressed. ✠

## OPINION

## Standing By

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Retired Priest of the diocese of Calgary; Former Dean &amp; Rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver

*“Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus his mother,  
and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas,  
and Mary Magdalene.”*



Deposition of the Cross by Caravaggio. PHOTO Sedmak

When the young Roman guard asked them to keep back from the area she noticed that he was little more than a boy. The thought occurred to her that he must feel vulnerable at such moments as this. Around them milled a crowd, among them friends and family of the condemned, some half crazed with grief. If the prisoner was political there was the possibility of a rescue attempt, especially in the early stages of the crucifixion process.

She had arrived in Bethany too late to meet him before he had left for the city with his followers. She felt a passing twinge of resentment but she put it aside. By this time she had become used to being second to the demands of what he regarded as his ministry. As she tried to get some rest she had heard the visitors coming and going in the house, but she knew she was being allowed to rest because there was no good news to tell her.

Very late at night they woke her to let her know that he had been taken. As the young man told her of the impending trial, she knew that he was deliberately refraining from telling her of the possibility of execution. To her own surprise she found herself comforting him. When he asked her what she wished to do when the time came she said calmly that she wished to go to wherever her son would be. Again she tried to get some sleep.

In the early morning she left with her sister and the woman from Magdala whom she barely knew. As she walked the last few hundred yards towards the area where the crosses stood in the ground, they seemed to grow in height. When she was close enough to see features she forced herself to look. She was glad of an arm supporting her.

At first a wild hope grasped her that it was not her son at all. The body was revealed in total degradation and defilement. She found herself thinking that it was no worse than countless others had suffered. Like most people she had always avoided any acquaintance with the obscene process of crucifixion.

As the young Roman guard ordered them to keep their distance, they shuffled back some yards. She looked across the filthy ground between them and the crosses.

It occurred to her that all her life she had been distanced from her son. Even when she and Joseph had taken him as child to the temple she had had to look across a barrier as the priest took the baby and later returned him. Almost always it was across barriers and walls and chasms and crowds that their relationship had been conducted and their elusive love communicated. Of one thing she was certain, that he had loved her. Even if they had not often spoken it, she knew it to be real and lasting.

Someone told them how long it had been since the execution had begun. It now looked as if the end was not far off. By now the front of the crowd had inched forward again. She was aware with mingled terror and joy that he had opened his eyes and seemed to have seen them. She could see his lips moving, trying to form some word. Careless now of any restraint she moved forward to try to catch the sound.

When the whispered croaking sank to silence she moved back. In that moment, by the whispered statement of her dying son, this young man who had joined them and now stood beside her, had now become her son and she his mother. This evidence of her own son's concern for her, even in his extreme agony, was for her a mingling of pain and appreciation.

With the help of her sister and of the woman from Magdala who had come with them, she began to move away. She never heard the terrible cry of desolation that took all but his last breath.

An hour or so later a Roman lance pierced his side. If she had seen it she might have recalled the old man Simeon tenderly returning her newborn son to her arms in the temple all those years ago. She might have remembered his looking at her intently as he spoke very quietly. “One day,” he had said, “a sword will pierce your heart.”

One day... To a new young mother it had sounded so far in the future, and anyway she'd had no idea what the old man meant.

As they came down the hill she would have fallen on the treacherous path, had not her sister and the young woman of Magdala supported her. ✠

## Take Some Time this Lent • To Put Things Right

ART TURNBULL

Retired Priest of the diocese of Ontario, Priest with Permission to Officiate, diocese of New Westminster

Does God have a conscience? This question came to mind this winter as one after another, persons of influence and power were accused of misconduct. The #metoo movement highlighted the scope of the abuse of women by male predators. Men in positions of power and leadership were front and centre of alleged sexual assaults, racial slurs, homophobic outbursts, and just plain old-fashioned ignorance.

What caught my attention was the ready denial these people made. “Not me!” they said. “It was consensual,” said others. “Who me?” questioned some with an innocence that defined them as the victims.

Taking responsibility for one's errors in judgement, one's mistakes, or one's offences, is a good measure of an individual's character. It is what makes a good human being. That so many perpetrators exhibit no responsibility, have no remorse, and ignore common decency, signifies a lack of conscience. Are these people born with a missing gene? Have so many people (the vast majority are men), have been brought

up without an inner sense of what is right and what is wrong?

It is my opinion that when denial is made so easily, by so many, that this is simply a cop-out searching for a scapegoat. There used to be a bumper sticker that said, “God does not make junk.” Well, God does not make people without a conscience. If we are made in the image of God, then God must have a conscience. Even little children, tiny innocent ones, feel guilt. Why some humans are missing this characteristic is a mystery.

Lent is a good time to examine the topic of right and wrong, good or bad, black or white, or grey. The days of this church season give some time for contemplation, reflection, and even the spirit of owning up to one's self and to other human beings. We take time to think about what makes us tick on the moral(e) compass. To help with this read over pages 171–172 and 216–217 in the *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS). If you do not have a BAS, then read the one

in the pew during the sermon next time you attend a service.

At this time of year in the church calendar the liturgical readings have us look at the Ten Commandments. Some of these dictates are easy for us 21st century folk to understand. “You shall not steal,” can be comprehended easily enough, unless of course you are starving. Bearing false witness, lying, usually gets us into hot water. Murder is a given as we all know we are not supposed to do that. (Well, maybe some drug dealers have forgotten this one.)

Honouring Mom and Dad is great, but not always doable.

Harder to understand is the business of coveting your neighbour's house, or spouse, or sporty car. Desire goes deep.

Harder still is this one, “I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods before (besides) me.” I must confess this one is tough.

Yet, if we are made in the image of God then we have within us this God given sense

of right and wrong. That is if we accept that premise. If God has no conscience, then human beings can get on with mayhem. We are on our own in a dog-eat-dog world if that is so. However, it is not so or we would not know right from wrong. Listen to the Psalmist's word on this (*Psalms 19: 7–8, 10*):

“The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the decrees of the Lord are sure,  
making wise the simple;  
the precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart; ...  
More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.”

Take time this Lent to put right, reset, tune-up, your conscience. It is not just for you, but for the good of the whole world. The offended, the abused, the ignored, the forgotten, they all deserve our better conscious selves. ✠



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