

DIOCESAN EPOST

Celebrating the Diocese of Islands and Inlets

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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The Ven Alastair McCollum and the Rev Deborah Rivet enjoy the breeze through their vestments. Photo by Jeannine Friesen.

Meet the deacons

On Sunday, September 12, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee ordained Marion Edmondson, Colleen Lissamer, John Thatamanil and Stephanie Wood to the sacred order of deacons. In this issue of the *Post*, we've featured all things "diaconal." We hear about the experience of ordination from Bishop Anna in her letter "From the Bishop's Chair" and John Thatamanil in his first column as diocesan theologian. Nancy Ford, Christ Church Cathedral's deacon to the city, reflects on this summer's virtual Anglican Deacons Canada meeting and the history of diaconia in Canada. And we get to meet new deacon Colleen Lissamer in this month's "My Journey" column.

Discernment and deacons

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Read the full story on page 2

The need for deacons

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Read the full story on page 4

More questions than answers

Paul Bramadat, my close friend and a presenter at my ordination on Sunday, September 12, asked me in a regular meeting of research fellows at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (University of Victoria), "So John tell us why you chose to be ordained?"

Read the full story on page 5



Discernment and deacons

FROM THE BISHOP'S CHAIR

THE RIGHT REVEREND
ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

On Sunday, September 12 Stephanie Wood, John Thatamanil, Colleen Lissamer and Marion Edmondson were ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons.

Prior to the recent ordination service for our new deacons, I was blessed to lead a three day pre-ordination retreat for the four candidates at Bethlehem Retreat Centre in Nanaimo. For the theme, I took a line from an ancient prayer, "Make us O God, masters of ourselves, so that we can be servants of others." Ordained ministry requires not only theological and pastoral expertise but

also a level of emotional maturity.

The work of discernment, of raising up individuals for ordained ministry, is the work of the whole church. On the first evening when we gathered, all four candidates mentioned feeling the presence and prayers of all the people who had mentored and supported them in their life of faith and their journey of discernment.

Many ordained people, myself included, never considered ordained ministry until someone else said, "You know, you should really consider..." Sometimes people see gifts in us that we cannot yet see ourselves.

The diocese is hosting a Vocations Day on Saturday, November 6 beginning at 9:30am, to be held at the Multifaith Centre at UVic (COVID-19 permitting). The format will be for 12 people to each speak for 12 minutes about their understanding of ordained ministry. After each group of three speakers, there will be a brief Q&A. If you are interested in attending register here: www.bc.anglican.ca/events/vocation-day

While individuals discerning a call to ordained ministry are invited to come, I hope that the bulk of those who attend are simply church members 'at large' who wish to understand their role, as lay people, in lifting up faithful people for ordained ministry.

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Bishop's Calendar

October

- 4 **Funeral of Rev. Betty McLeod Miller, Christ Church Cathedral**
- 6 **Archdeacon's Meeting (Zoom) Hosting Online Book Study on "Resisting Structural Evil" (Zoom)**
- 7 **Provincial House of Bishops (Zoom)**
- 21 **Finance Committee (Zoom)**
- 22 **Collation of Archdeacons and Installation of Chapter Canons, Christ Church Cathedral Clergy Lunch and Learn**
- 23 **Order of the Diocese Investiture, Christ Church Cathedral**
- 22 **Preach at St. Andrew, Sidney**

Diocesan Post

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News, letters and other articles are welcome. Please limit articles to 500 words and letters to 200 words. Submissions must include name and contact information of the author.

Pictures must be a resolution of 300 DPI and in sharp focus. Clearly and accurately identify the name of all subjects as well as the person who took the picture.

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Meet the deacons

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(clockwise from top left) Pictured (left to right) are ordinands Stephanie Wood, John Thatamanil, Marion Edmondson and Colleen Lissamer with Bishop Anna on the cathedral steps following the service; Bishop Anna prays over candidate Stephanie Wood during the ordination service; Having received bibles from the bishop as a sign of their authority to proclaim God's word and to assist in the ministration of the holy sacraments, the new ordinands are welcomed with clapping from the congregation. Photos by Jeannine Friesen.

The need for deacons

BY NANCY FORD

Anglican Deacons Canada meets virtually to discuss the role of deacons in a pandemic-shaped world

Anglican Deacons Canada (ADC) had its first virtual conference in July (2021). Our Lutheran siblings and their national Bishop joined us formally for the first time. The focus was “What is diakonia in a pandemic-shaped world?”

Archbishop Linda Nicholls, the primate, reminded us of that with the renewal of the diaconate and the unequivocal statement from the Lambeth conference of 1968 that the diaconate was no longer considered an “inferior order.” She said she thought the last 50 years had been preparation for this liminal time of the church. Deacons have been preparing and

growing into what the church needs now.

The restoration of the diaconate has its roots in a movement spanning denominations and centuries. The DIAKONIA World Federation began with the decision to formalize the working relationships between deacons from several European countries and denominations in 1947. While this was in response to the havoc created by World War Two, it was also a response to a growing awareness of the need for “diakonia.”

In the diocese of Islands and Inlets the restoration of the holy order of deacons began nearly 40 years ago. The first distinctive deacon (The term “distinctive” deacon may not be familiar. It is used in the Church of England and in other places to indicate they are not “transitional” deacons whose vocation is priestly), William Savage, was ordained in this diocese in 1982. A decade later Margaret Edgar, Dolly Beaumont and Dennis Wheeler were the first “wave” of deacons in the diocese. The Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada (AADC now ADC) was formed in 2000. Today, there are distinctive deacons in most dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Archbishop went on to say that the narrative some might still hold about the church and its historic relationship with

political and social prestige is no longer true. “We are and will be a church without influence and need to shed the millstone of colonial structures.” Deacons call the church to attention; this is a time for “a new and deepened servanthood of all.”

The primate used the image of the deacon as a foot in the door, pushing open and calling the faithful into service. The deacon, she said, observes, notices and names the disparities, the needs.

The national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Susan Johnson, whose denomination has a long history of the diaconate, reminded us that deacons are to lead and work to ensure the gospel is heard as good news. Deacons are living bridges.

All this was woven together in a gospel song “We seek your Kingdom” (“We seek your Kingdom” www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCJJvVOY) shared at the end of the conference. The singers were living in pandemic reality but invited all to embrace our vocation and “transform, revive and heal society.”

The primate’s address can be found in its entirety at: www.anglicandeacons.ca ■

Nancy Ford is the past-president of Anglican Deacons Canada and Christ Church Cathedral’s deacon to the city.

Discernment and deacons

Continued from page 2

There is no one ‘type’ of person we are looking for when we are, discerning who is called to sacred orders. However, as our newly updated ministry discernment process (www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/ordained-ministry-discernment) outlines:

- *We are seeking those who have both an inner awareness of a call from God and are affirmed in that call as observed by others.*
- *We are seeking people who show both passion and realism in their commitment to the Church as a bearer of God’s mission in the world, and a current involvement in that mission through the life of a congregation within the diocese.*
- *We are seeking those whose spirituality is*

centered in their baptismal identity, rooted in a relationship with God, lived out in their practices of private and public prayer, and demonstrated through the stewardship of their relationships and their resources.

While Stephanie, John, Colleen and Marion began discernment long before I arrived in the diocese, I am thrilled to say that each of them incarnates these gifts. I have every confidence that they will faithfully and creatively serve the church and the diocese in this liminal season.

Stephanie Wood has been and will continue to serve at St. John the Divine, Victoria. She has remarkable gifts in pastoral care and, apart from her work at St. John, is also active in chaplaincy and chaplaincy training.

Colleen Lissamer recently accepted my appointment to serve at Church of the Advent, Colwood, and to assist the parish

and clergy there during their interim time. She interrupted her holidays and began that work in mid-July.

John Thatamanil will continue in his teaching role (by distance) at Union Theological Seminary and will also serve as volunteer curate at St. John the Divine, Victoria, and as Diocesan Theologian (see pg. 5).

Marion Edmondson will serve as deacon at St. John the Divine, Courtenay, where she is involved with various ministries including outreach to street-involved people.

I ask you to keep Stephanie, John, Colleen and Marion in your prayers as they begin their ordained ministry. I encourage you also to help the diocese and the church in the work of discernment. Please consider attending the November Vocations Day and please, always and everywhere, listen to who the spirit is calling to ordained ministry. ■



More questions than answers

Diocesan Theologian

BY JOHN THATAMANIL

Paul Bramadat, my close friend and a presenter at my ordination on Sunday, September 12, asked me during a meeting of research fellows at the University of Victoria's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, "So John tell us why you chose to be ordained?" Paul's question came with a prelude. "Given that you are a scholar of religion and, moreover, a theologian who affirms the truth and power of a variety of religious traditions, why throw in with the Anglicans?" As the conversation continued, I realized that several questions were at play, some explicit and some subterranean. An explicit question in a room full of religion scholars: "Doesn't commitment to any tradition presume a confessional claim to superiority?"

Another question in the room was rendered explicit: "The pageantry of the ordination still has an imperial feel. How do you reconcile that performative feel with your core convictions about religious pluralism?" Beneath that query lingered another: "Given the sharp scrutiny that Anglicans and other

forms of Canadian Christianity are now facing in the wake of multiple scandals—most especially the discovery of the bodies of Indigenous children in unmarked graves—how can a thoughtful and ethically committed person join a community with such a troubled legacy?" That question was never openly broached, but it was in the air.

As I pondered these questions in the week immediately following my ordination, I realized that these are just the sort of queries to be presented to a deacon. As Bishop Anna said in her sermon, deacons are "called to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world in 2021 not in some ahistorical la-la land..." Deacons go out into the world not only to serve but also to listen. And for those who seek to listen in depth, such questions are precious.

As for answers, those are hard to come by. Questions of such depth deserve deep reflection, and every Anglican Christian must respectfully wrestle with them. One answer I gave: as an academic theologian teaching in a seminary, I felt I was playing the role of a coach who remains safely on the sidelines. In a time of multiple crises, I must get on the field of play. If we want to have a good chance at mitigating the direst effects of the climate crisis, religious communities must play a role alongside a wide range of other social actors. This sports analogy was cheerfully received and found to be helpful.

And, I said no, commitment to one tradition need not imply that you take other traditions to be inferior. God's saving presence and power cannot be confined within the walls of any church, no matter how stately. As for my confidence in the truth of Christian tradition, you can be confident without being uncritical. Every tradition offers a particular way of accessing ultimacy, but it is not itself

the ultimate. William Sloane Coffin's insight still holds: we must strive to avoid being either "uncritical lovers" or "loveless critics." There is no perfect tradition, religious or secular, that remains uncompromised by structural evil. To commit to leadership in a tradition means only that you find yourself loving an all too human and flawed community through which the winds of the Spirit still blow. All our mortal loves are, after all, imperfect.

I also confided to my colleagues that we Anglicans may love our processions, but, pageantry notwithstanding, we are haunted by a mood of melancholy, acutely mindful of past wrongs and all too aware that an older form of establishment Anglicanism is passing away, at least in Canada. Don't let our love for beauty and ritual fool you into believing that we are unaware that something old is rightly dying even as we pray that something new might yet come to be. We are after all a resurrection people.

I am unsure that my answers were wholly satisfying. How could they be? They are the fumbling first attempts of a new minted coach turned wide receiver (I imagine Bishop Anna as the QB). Still, these are the conversations that every Anglican must join if we are to find a way to truly hear, heed and heal the cares of the questioning world that God so loves. ■

**DIOCESAN WOMEN'S
FALL RETREAT HAS
BEEN CANCELED.**

**PLAN TO JOIN US AT
CAMP PRINGLE
SPRING 2022.**



VOCATION DAY

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2021

9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

UVIC MULTIFAITH CENTRE OR ZOOM (TBD)





Order of the Diocese of British Columbia Investiture

On October 23, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee will invest 26 new members and 7 officers into the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia at Christ Church Cathedral.

The Order was established by Bishop Logan as a way to honour the faithful service of the laity of the diocese. “Members” are nominated by their parish for outstanding and considerable voluntary work that has benefited their parish, while the title of “officer” is awarded to those who have not only made a significant contribution to their parish, but also to the wider church through the diocese or the Anglican Church of Canada. Honourary awards are also given in both categories to those who are not part of the diocese.

Here are the 2021 appointees. In the November issue, we’ll feature interviews with some of the appointees. You can watch the investiture service, which will start at 10:30 a.m., on the cathedral and diocesan websites. ■

MEMBERS



St John the Baptist, Cobble Hill
Barbara Jean van Dyk



Parish of Central Saanich, Saanichton
Eva Annie Townsend



Trinity Anglican + Lutheran, Port Alberni
The late Edna Irene Cox



St John the Baptist, Duncan
James Roy Elvins



St Andrew, Sidney
Leonard Howland



Church of the Advent, Colwood and Langford
Donna Kathleen Brandle



St Michael and All Angels, Chemainus
Sally Jane Pilyk



St Mary Magdalene, Mayne Island
James Moore



St Mary, Metchosin
Andrew Robert Lindsey Spray



St Paul, Nanaimo
Marilynne Mark



Sts Anne and Edmund, Parksville
Julia Faith Macdonald



Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria
Mary Jennifer Hendy



St Peter, Quamichan
Mark Hird-Rutter



St John the Divine, Courtenay
Denise Naomi Ropp



St John the Divine, Victoria
John Peter Somerset McLaren



St Philip, Cedar
Margaret Molly Couchman



St Mark, Qualicum
John James Dol



St George, Cadboro Bay
Judith Trueman

MEMBERS, BISHOP'S LIST



Church of the Advent, Colwood and Langford
Elizabeth Ann Bennett



Holy Trinity, North Saanich
Janet Mary Billingham



HONOURARY OFFICER

Dr. Bonnie Henry
OBC, MD, MPH, FRCPC



St Andrew, Sidney
Timothy James Cribdon

OFFICERS

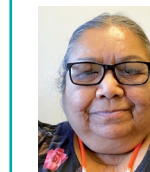


St Anne & Edmunds, Parksville
Lynne Eleanor Graham Downes



Society of St John the Evangelist Cambridge, MA
Br. James Koester SSJE

HONOURARY MEMBERS



Tsartlip First Nation
Lucia Bartleman



Congregation Emanu-El
Rabbi Harry Brechner



Jamaktkhana Mosque
Nazmudin G. Rayani



St Mark, Qualicum Beach
Cynthia Veronica Preyser



(St Luke's) Dawson Heights Housing Ltd, Saanich
Robert Watt



Chancellor of the Diocese
Robert Gill



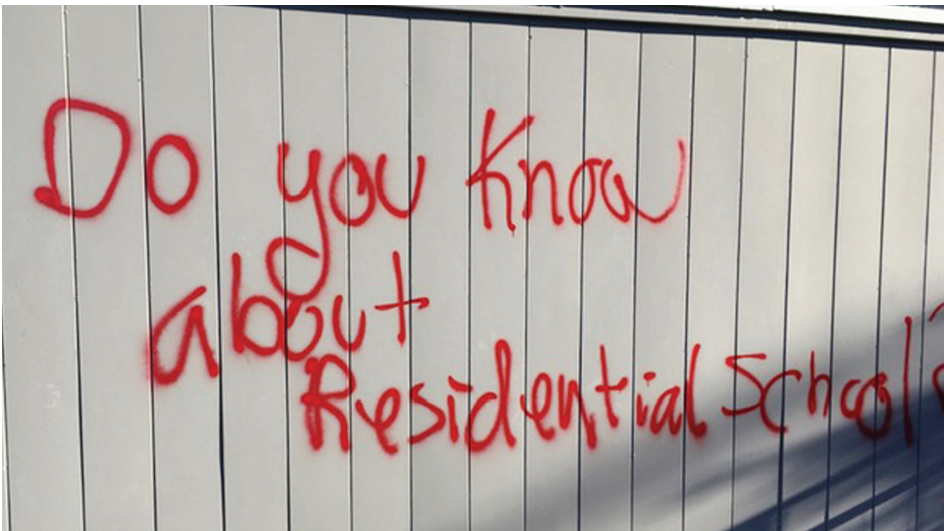
Parish of Central Saanich
Marcia McMenamie



Christ Church Cathedral
The Rev Canon Herbert O'Driscoll



Parish of Salt Spring
Walter Stewart



Some of the messages spray-painted in red and orange on St. Philip, Oak Bay.

We want to acknowledge, listen and learn

BY CHRISTOPHER PAGE

On the morning of Monday, September 13, I arrived at St. Philip, Oak Bay, to discover that the outside walls and all the signs and walkways had been spray-painted with bright red and orange slogans.

Everywhere I looked I saw messages such as “No pride in genocide,” “6000+ murdered and missing,” and “This is Indigenous Land.” The impact was powerful and deeply disturbing.

As I reflected on my feelings throughout the day, I realized that the depth of my discomfort, pales into insignificance compared to the pain and tragedy experienced by parents whose children were forcibly removed from their families, in some cases never to be seen again. Nothing I or our community experienced on Monday morning, or over the following days, compares to the horrifying events in our history that have given rise to the level of pain and anger expressed in paint on the exterior of our church building.



Some of the messages spray-painted in red and orange on St. Philip, Oak Bay.

In 1993, the then-senior bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada offered to the Indigenous peoples of this land a complete unqualified apology for our institution’s part in administering the Indian Residential Schools system. He said: “I accept and I confess before God and you, our failures in the residential schools. We failed you. We failed ourselves. We failed God. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we were part of a system which took you and your children from home and family. I am sorry, more than I can say, that we tried to remake you in our image,

taking from you your language and the signs of your identity. I am sorry, more than I can say, that in our schools so many were abused physically, sexually, culturally and emotionally.”

Archbishop Michael Peers gave no excuses with this apology. He did not make any attempts to justify the church’s role in the atrocity of enforced removal of children from their homes and the attack on their culture. He did not excuse the behaviour of the past or attempt in any way to make light of the terrible devastation brought by a system that sought to destroy the lifeblood of the original inhabitants of this land.

We make no excuse today. The actions of the church in administering a wicked system were wrong. Our ancestors participated in a program that unleashed a tragic torrent of pain and brokenness from which many people still suffer today.

Graffiti can be removed from buildings. Walls can be painted over. Signs can be restored. But the work of rebuilding respectful relationships with people whose lives have been shattered by violence and abuse is not so easy.

As a church, our desire is to be a vehicle for healing and hope for all people. We seek to support one another in growing in kindness and honouring all people, especially those who are most marginalized, neglected and abused in our society.

The journey to healing is long and hard. It requires deep listening and profound humility on the part of those who are part of the dominant caste in our society.

We may have painted over the spray paint on our church, but we do not want to paint over the horrors of our history. We want to acknowledge the wrongs of the past. We want to listen to the voices of those who feel compelled to express themselves in red and orange spray paint. We want to learn and become a source of light in the midst of the dark. ■

Christopher Page is incumbent of St. Philip, Oak Bay in Victoria.

Amazing journey day camp

BY BARB PRESCOTT WITH LESLIE FLYNN

This year's Amazing Journey Day Camp was different in many ways from our previous camps but many of the same elements were still there. St. Luke, Victoria, and Lutheran Church of the Cross started holding the day camps in 2012. St. George, Cadboro Bay joined in several years ago. This year's camp was our 10th day camp and it was held outside at St. George.

Being outside worked well in this pandemic time and gave a real feel of "camp" to the week. The group leaders and campers put up their tents each day and enjoyed "tent time" to start off the day. The theme this year was "Beyond our Backyard" and the camp was all about camping and being outdoors. We focused on caring for the earth and what it means to plant God's love and watch it grow.

There were different areas at the camp including a campfire circle (but no fire!) to hear the parable of the sower; a potting shed where campers built planter boxes and filled them with vegetable starters, herb plants and edible flowers; and a nature house for crafts and other activities including seed art, tying knots and learning First Aid.

In reflecting on the role of the camp in the lives of our campers and volunteers, one of the strengths of the camp is that we draw campers and volunteers from three churches as well as from the wider community. The day camp includes youth whom we might not see on a Sunday morning in church, but who participate in other programs at the three churches such as "Fantastic Fridays" (a Messy Church evening held at St. Luke) and youth group programs, as well as those in the community who saw the camp advertised and decided to register.

In addition to being a camp experience for school-aged youth, it was a camp experience in a difference sense for the eight teens who helped as small group leaders and assisted in various areas of the camp. While

we chose to register less campers this year than in previous years due to COVID-19 precautions (22 campers attended while in other years we had close to 50 campers attend), the same camp feelings of enjoying each other's company, trying new activities and feeling God's presence were there as they have been at the day camps each year.

Here Leslie Flynn, a member of the Amazing Journey planning team, shares her reflections on the camp experience:

The theology of children is something that we can all learn from. Although kids may not call playing, singing, crafting or spending time together theology, this is how I see it. As I watched the children of camp respond to the parable of the seed story with looks of wonderment, confusion, intrigue and sometimes criticism, I wondered if this is how the followers of Jesus reacted when they first heard this story.

As I sat in groups of kids and teenagers from over seven different parishes as they ate together, learned together and had fun together, I wondered if God is calling us all to live into a community like this. As I spent many hours outdoors, like a child with bumped knees and wasp stings (there were a few!), I found myself laughing, staring up at the sky, getting dirty and asking God how I am called to best take care of this blessed creation and work toward reconciliation with the people whose land it is. I have been in a classroom studying theology for the past year and to me day camp is practical theology lived in the chaotic energy, joy, fun and messiness of children. ■

Barb Prescott is the communications coordinator at St. Luke, Cedar Hill and one of the Amazing Journey planning team members.

Leslie Flynn was a member of the Amazing Journey planning team. She is in her second year of the Master of Divinity Program at the Vancouver School of Theology.



The campers and volunteers working on their planters. Photo by Ruth MacIntosh.



Three campers working on their miniature campgrounds. Photo by Ruth MacIntosh.



A camper with his God's eye. Photo by Ruth MacIntosh.



Ruth MacIntosh leading the songs at camp. Photo by Noah Edwards.



A camper with her craft project. Photo by Ruth MacIntosh.



The gift of a story

Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

One of the joys of ordained ministry is that you can find yourself baptizing your two great-grandchildren. For me those joyful occasions were a few years apart but on each occasion, when someone gingerly lifted a great-grandchild into my arms, I was struck by an intriguing thought.

As I held these children — not both at the same time! — I realized that in each case I was in the presence of a time traveller newly arrived from the future. Just as there stretches a long road behind me into the past, before both of them the future stretches away into the 22nd century.

At one point in the service I said a prayer that asks God for four gifts for a newly baptized child.

*An enquiring and discerning heart.
The courage to will and to persevere.
A spirit to know and to love God.
And the gift of joy and wonder in all
God's works.*

While saying the prayer, I found myself thinking about the meaning of this ancient rite of Baptism.

First, I recalled a small book I had read many years before for my son Niall. The title was *Johnny and the Six Dreadful Giants*. Johnny gets a letter from the king inviting him to visit the king's castle. The journey is long and dangerous so the King sends Johnny a sword and Johnny does indeed

have many struggles before he reaches the king's castle.

There are many such stories where the young traveller is given a talisman for the journey ahead. In Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, the wizard Gandalf gives Frodo a ring of great power. In the Harry Potter books, the giant Hagrid takes Harry down a perfectly ordinary street. Suddenly, they walk through a wall into another world, where Harry receives a wand for his coming journey.

So, Johnny has his sword, Frodo his ring and Harry his wand. What do we have for James and Emma on their baptismal day, the first day of their Christian journey?

I think we give James and Emma something powerful, beautiful and eternal. We give them a story. This is significant because James and Emma have set out on the journey of their lives. We know that at some point they will ask the biggest question we can ask as human beings. They will ask, "What is the meaning of my life?" That point may come in their teen years or in young adulthood. When it does come, those who love them have a sacred duty to tell them the story as they themselves understand it and have tried to live it. Here is my effort to tell such a story for when the right moments in their lives come.

Dear James and Emma,

A long time before you started the journey of your life, someone did the journey before you. His name was Jesus of Nazareth. He lived a life that was fully human but of extraordinary spiritual power. Even when he died at the hands of his enemies, he remained alive in the hearts and experiences of his friends. This has continued down through time to this moment in which you and I are thinking about him.

Thanks to four short books written about him, we know much about Jesus. For instance, we know that he had wonderfully honed gifts for healing human suffering. He had a dream of a just and fair world that drew people to him. That dream or vision he called the Kingdom of God. He gave us one command — devastatingly simple but deeply challenging: that we love one another.

Because many followed him, Jesus also had enemies, and because of them he died on a cross. However, after he died his friends knew him to be alive in their hearts. It seemed that Jesus' life was a kind of light that nobody could put out.

Just before he was tortured and executed, Jesus invited his friends to a meal. At that meal he said that anyone who followed him would always be his friend. He said that whenever his friends shared the simple meal of that evening, he would be there among them, and he asked them to tell others about his dream for a world of justice and love. You and I can share that meal every time we share bread and wine in church.

By the way, don't forget those four spiritual gifts. An enquiring heart; courage to persevere; love for God; and joy and wonder. Check them because there may come a time in your life when you will long for those things more than anything else in the world.

I hope someday you may find yourself telling this to someone you love very much, as I love you.

As you know, a story can be told many ways. The story I have imagined my telling an older James and Emma is the way that one great-grandfather would tell it. You tell it your way. The really important thing is that the story never be forgotten. ■

ANGLICAN
FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**PROUD TO
BE CANADIAN**

Hope Bear has a new sweater!
Available for purchase on the AFC Store.

anglicanfoundation.org/store

St. Peter, Comox, celebrates 130 years



Pictured (left to right) are Sulin Milne, incumbent at St. Peter, Comox, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee and parishioner Ingrid Joy Braathen at the Blessings Boutique at its opening. Photo by Jim Peacock.

BY NAOMI RACZ WITH TONY REYNOLDS

History, stories and hopes for the future shared

On September 11, St. Peter, Comox marked its 130th anniversary with a full weekend of activities, including a guided walking tour of Comox’s history, a Blessings Boutique where others’ surplus became treasures and a picnic provided by local business the Church Street Taphouse, which also renamed its house ale in honour of the occasion to “For Pete’s Sake.”

Bishop Anna attended the events on Saturday. She took part in the morning



Bishop Anna (left) and Sulin Milne (right) with the infamous 1927 Chrysler. Photo by Jim Peacock.

guided history walk. After which Sulin Milne, incumbent at St. Peter, had a surprise for the Bishop: a 1927 Chrysler to transport them back to the church in time for Bishop Anna to ring the church’s bell 130 times. Unfortunately, the Chrysler broke down on the way and they had to find alternative, less glamorous transportation. The Bishop may have been a bit late for the bell ringing, but the bells would have been heard across Comox.

In the afternoon, there was a “Celebration of Remembrance and Hope” held in the church garden, during which Bishop Anna acknowledged the church’s historic indifference towards Indigenous people.

Neil Crouch, a parishioner at St. Peter, Comox, also spoke to this topic and recalled prayer meetings held at the church in the 1980s. “Anyone who had native heritage was required, suggested, nudged to give up any hint of that spirituality so they could fully experience Christianity. There is so much to be forgiven. None of us who have settler roots can imagine not knowing what became of our children when they were taken away.”

He said that Julianne Kasmer, formerly a street minister for the United

Church, advised settler descendants to “be involved in conversations that are safe, honest, without outrage or shame and without the rush to fix that we as the powerful and privileged like to jump to. This is not a problem to be solved but an ongoing part of our lives to be lived.”

Ingrid Joy Braathen, a member of the parish with strong Indigenous roots, read an untitled poem written by Abigail Echo-hawk in honour of the missing children.

*When they buried the children
What they didn’t know
They were lovingly embraced
By the land
Held and cradled in a mother’s heart
The trees wept for them, with the wind
they sang mourning songs their
mothers
didn’t know to sing*

...

*Mother Earth held them
until they could be found.
Now our voices hear the mourning
songs
with the trees. the wind. light sacred
fire
Ensure they are never forgotten as
we sing
JUSTICE.*

Parishioners then took turns sharing memories from their time at St. Peter. Many spoke about their first encounters with the church. Brad and Jan Minton joined St. Peter in the fall of 1979. They were new in town and were looking for a place to have their sons baptized. “We encountered this group of people who weren’t like any we’d met before — excited about God, talking about Jesus as a real person and moving powerfully in the power of Holy Spirit.”

Many parishioners also spoke about the ways in which the church community had supported them during difficult times. When Joan Holmes’s son was struggling with addiction, she told her church family what was happening.

“Several years later,” Joan said, “it was Thanksgiving Sunday, and the Old

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St. Peter, Comox, celebrates 130 years

Continued from page 10

Testament reading was from Habakkuk 3 verses 17-19: 'Though the fig tree does not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail yet... I will rejoice in the Lord.' At that very moment I knew this was a word from God to me. Dark as things were, that was not to be the final word. God had his 'YET.' Joan thanked her "praying friends" for "a wonderful homecoming with our prodigal son who has come home to us and our family."

Alison Knowles spoke of coming to the church at a time of personal crisis: "I have asked people over the years why they walked into the door at St Peter's and why they stayed. It is amazing how often the answer is that they were searching and when they walked into St Peter's they were home. For me it was back during a very difficult time for my family. I had a deep desire for a place to kneel and hand over to a higher power. I wasn't Christian but people accepted me where I was."

Bishop Anna pointed out that "all of the parishioner's stories were about each other, about people, about God

working through you. Covid has helped the church remember that the church is not a building. It is people. I get the feeling that you in St Peter's know that. We don't go to church; we are church."

Sulin Milne spoke of the present as a time of "shifting sands" but pointed to the fact that, despite the uncertain times we find ourselves in, "We do know the way to our future. We do know the way because we know Him who is the way and the truth and the life."

The celebrations continued on Sunday, September 12 with more history walks, picnics and another round of bell ringing. But as Bishop Anna pointed out: "today we celebrate 130 years, but what we really do is to faithfully commit ourselves to walking into the next months, the next years, the next decade, the next century as faithful servants, knowing that the one God of all time and all space, will be present and faithful to us no matter what joys and what struggles come." ■



The Praise Group leading the singing at the anniversary service. Photo by Jim Peacock.

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Judith Coleman retires

BY NAOMI RACZ

If you've visited or placed a phone call to the synod office in the last fifteen years, then you will likely have spoken to Judith Coleman. Judith joined the synod office team as receptionist back in January 2007 and will be officially retiring on October 15.

Judith was born in London, England and moved to Canada with her family when she was nine years old. She grew up in Victoria and worked for Telus (back when it was called BC Tel) in customer services for 25 years. In 2006, Telus closed its Victoria office and that summer Judith was travelling on a canal barge in France when she met fellow passenger Imelda Secker, who worked at the synod office. After Judith returned home from her vacation, she got a phone call from Bishop Cowan, asking if she was looking for work



Judith Coleman.

and to her surprise she said "yes!"

Judith started working at the synod office that summer and through the fall, doing relief work, until the role of receptionist was posted and she applied. Judith has been at the synod office ever since. Although her role has always been about helping people, there have been some surprising changes in her work over the years.

Judith has helped organize 10 synods and back in 2006, synods were a three-day, round-the-clock affair with over

250 people attending in-person. All the documents that delegates needed to read for the meetings were printed on paper. Judith and a team of six volunteers would then lay all the papers out on tables and walk around the tables, stuffing envelopes. Paper cuts were a big hazard!

Back then, marriage preparation courses, retreats and summer camps were also run in-person and people would have to register over the phone and pay by cheque. Now, everything is done online and Judith has found her job involves much less paper.

The highlight of Judith's time at the synod office has been the three Bishops she's worked with: Bishop James A.J. Cowan, Bishop Logan McMenamie and, most recently, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee. She says they've all been "wonderful" and "inspiring."

Although Judith doesn't have any firm plans for her retirement, she's looking forward to spending a few months "letting the dust settle" and adjusting to retired life: "we'll see what happens after that." ■

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Greenwood-Lee invests our
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for more information.

See page 6 for a complete
list of appointees.



To be of service to the world

My Journey

BY COLLEEN LISSAMER

Where were you born and where did you grow up?

I grew up in Coventry, England, was baptized as a baby and grew up in the Roman Catholic tradition.

What were your early religious experiences and influences?

The greatest spiritual influences in my life were the religious sisters of St. Paul and my high school experience, which was grounded in daily prayer and a spiritual environment that was positive and nurturing. An important experience for me was the annual school retreat when I was fifteen. During a talk about missionary work in Africa, I had a clear experience that God was going to ask me to do something like that, but not yet. Later, after I graduated from teachers' college, I came to Canada to volunteer and live in a community setting with a lay organization called the Frontier Apostolate. This was my introduction to Canada and in a special way to the First Nations people in Northern B.C.

Tell us a bit about your previous work both within and outside the church.

I have been a grade one teacher for many years, and previously spent seven years as coordinator of adult faith development in a Saskatchewan

diocese. My journey has taken me from England to various parts of Canada including Fort St. John, Vanderhoof, Fort Smith, NWT, Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

What studies have you pursued?

My first degree is a Bachelor of Education with a focus on fine arts. A number of years ago, I did a one-year, full-time program for lay formation at Newman College, Edmonton. Five years ago, I began the Master of Divinity program at the Vancouver School of Theology, graduating last May. I am also a qualified spiritual director.

What made you decide to pursue the role of deacon?

My call to priesthood includes being ordained first as a transitional deacon. I felt an attraction to priesthood for a number of years but didn't see a way to respond as a Roman Catholic woman and I didn't consider it even after becoming Anglican. Five years ago, after the death of my dad, I was in Coventry Cathedral and experienced an irresistible desire to pursue this call. I began my studies at Vancouver School of Theology a few weeks later and the call has been sustained and confirmed in various ways during the past five years, particularly through the people of God in the parishes where I have served as an intern.

Who are some of the people that have inspired and guided you during your journey to deacon?

My M.Div. journey at the Vancouver School of Theology brought me into discussion and friendship with professors and students of various Christian and other faith backgrounds, which I appreciate. My internship experience with Dawna Wall and the community at St. Michael & All Angels, Victoria, provided the support and generous opportunity I needed to develop liturgical skills and preaching and

was a very unique experience during the pandemic. My learning continues with the opportunity to broaden my ministry at the Church of the Advent, Victoria, with Paul Schumacher.

How do you see the role of deacon within the church?

To be of service to the world, particularly those in the greatest need, to be active in working for justice, to bring the needs of the world to the church, to assist in the sacramental life of the church and to nurture the faith of the church community.

What have been your posting highlights so far?

Assisting with the liturgy, proclaiming the Gospel, preaching, working in a team ministry situation and visiting parishioners and residents of a long-term care home.

What do you see as the greatest challenge in the Anglican church?

Recognizing that younger people are facing challenges that are specific to their time in history and that many see church in quite different ways to their parents and grandparents. I believe that the church of the future will look quite different to how it looks now though we have no concrete grasp of what that will look like. We have to wait for the Spirit to show us the way and be willing to try some different ways of being church.

What was the most unusual sermon you have ever heard?

A sermon about the ascension, described by the preacher as "the feast of letting go." The sermon presented the concept that before we can receive the Spirit for something new in our lives, there are experiences, positions, places and even people that we have to let go of in order to really open to God's Spirit for "now." This is the only sermon I have heard that has had a continued influence on me. I constantly refer back to it and apply it to my present reality. ■



New council set to lead in liminal time

Leading Edge

BY CATHERINE PATE

This regular column reports on the activities and decision of the diocesan council, the “synod between synods” of our diocese. Meeting minutes are available for download at www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/diocesan-council.

September 23 marked the first meeting of the new diocesan council. With 17 members, this represents a significantly smaller council than previously (up to 14 fewer members) and the group will meet five times each year instead of the previous 10 times. This change is a result of a Synod 2021 resolution to streamline the governance of the synod to free up leaders’ time to develop and nurture ministry at the local, regional and diocesan levels. Feedback at the end of the meeting was overwhelmingly positive, and the council appears to be ready to meet the challenges and opportunities we face as a diocese

in these uncertain times. The size and frequency of council meetings will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, with a commitment to report back to the Synod in 2023.

“I think it’s important to remember that we are the diocesan council, working on behalf of the diocese 365 days a year, not just the five times we meet.” — Robert Gill, diocesan chancellor.

A significant portion of the five-hour Zoom meeting (originally planned for in-person but changed due to COVID-19) was set aside to orient the new council to their role, the role of the synod office leadership team and to introduce them to one another.

Bishop Anna also shared with the council her current six vision priorities. They include:

1. **Faith in Foundation** — Current ministries: post-pandemic re-opening
2. **Faith in Action** — Reconciliation and Beyond: racism and decolonization
3. **Faith in Action** — Engaging God’s World: climate catastrophe
4. **Faith in Foundation** — Current Ministries: human resource management
5. **Faith in Foundation** — Current Ministries: governance
6. **Faith in Action/Faith in Foundation:** stewardship

More information on these six priority areas can be found on the diocesan website.

Highlights of decisions made

Diocesan council passed three notable resolutions, with widespread implications for the diocese. In the face of shrinking budgets and an acknowledgement that a post-pandemic church will necessarily be less financially resourced than in the past, the diocesan council approved the establishment of a budget committee and a human resources (HR) working group. A motion to redirect the energy of Transforming Futures towards congregational (re)development for the next two years (not on fundraising), was tabled until the next meeting, when more information about the 2022 budget will be available.

Recognizing the cumulative effect of the pandemic on ministry staff throughout the diocese, the bishop asked diocesan council to approve a decision to grant all paid clergy and other synod staff a one-time paid week of leave to be taken between October 2021 and October 2022. This week cannot be banked or carried over into 2023. The diocesan council is encouraging parishes to extend the same offer to their lay staff. ■



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