



DIOCESAN POST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

DECEMBER 2019

Vision Fund Awards Make Lasting Impact

2020 final year
for grants

BY IAN ALEXANDER

The faithful people of this Diocese of Islands and Inlets are truly living out their shared vision in many and varied ways, thanks to the Vision Fund!

The Vision Fund jury awarded new grants this fall, bringing the total funding distributed over the past three years to about \$530,000. Projects receiving support in the latest round include: a new Tolmie Region youth initiative; a co-

operative undertaking by three parishes on the Saanich Peninsula for workshops to deepen understanding with local First Nations; a conference about end-of-life issues on Pender Island; another diocesan silent retreat organized out of St. Philip, Oak Bay; an innovative approach to liturgy, arts and prayer for next year's Season of Creation at St. John the Divine, Victoria; and a new monthly community meal at St. John, Port Alice. As well, the Vision Fund is contributing subsidies for new computer purchases in parishes being co-ordinated out of the Synod office, and it provided



Church of the Advent parishioners and quilters Mary Wills (left) and Linda Van Sickle (right) show off the quilted wall hanging created by parish members on the first Sunday of Advent in 2015 as part of Adventivities! The deep blue color highlights the expectant and hopeful nature of the season, and of our faith.

resources so the recent series of "eco-theology" presentations at St. George, Cadboro Bay could be videotaped for all to see.

Reports continue to come in highlighting the lasting positive

impacts of previous Vision Fund grants. The new Chapel Art Gallery at St. Matthias in Victoria, and the Star of the Sea Centre for Spiritual Living and Practice on Salt Spring Island,

both of which received start-up support from the Vision Fund, are now thriving on a self-sustaining basis, offering rich and busy schedules of events that

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Greater Works Than These

BY WALTER STEWART

Christ Church Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral School are engaged in a process

of discernment to ask to what greater works each are called in the middle years of the 21st century. This process will lead to a vision of how the cathedral is and can be a cathedral for the City.

Christ Church Cathedral has been a beacon in the city and a centre of Christian life and service for 90 years. The

beauty, the grandeur and the music express the love and hope of Jesus Christ only because Christ is present in service to the community delivered by those who follow him. The cathedral recognizes that it can only serve if it knows the community it serves. That community is one in very significant transition:

- 20,000 more people will live in

the City of Victoria by 2041 than in 2011 – a 25 per cent increase.

- 50 per cent of the increase will live in the downtown with Cathedral Hill a major target for more housing.

- The neighbourhood will become higher and denser – up to six storeys on the cathedral side of Quadra and up to eight on the other.

- 33 per cent of households in Greater Victoria are one-person households.

- The percentage of Victorians over 65 is forecast to rise from 17 per cent in 2016 to 29 per cent in 2041.

- The city faces serious challenges in affordable housing, services for seniors, attracting and

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Mount Douglas Manor Officially Opens its Doors

BY CHRIS PEASE

A new affordable housing project is always cause for celebration. The Mount Douglas Seniors Housing Society (MDSHS) welcomed over 50 guests to the

official opening of the Mount Douglas Manor on October 9.

The ceremony was officiated by BC Seniors Advocate Isobel Mackenzie, and the building blessed by Bishop Logan McMenamie. Nathalie Chambers, acting Saanich mayor, was also in attendance as were the consultants, contractors and funders that made the project possible.

MDSHS has been providing a safe and caring community

and comfortable homes to independent seniors for 48 years, and now a new In the late 1960's, the fund-raising efforts of the Anglican Church Women (ACW) facilitated the purchase of four acres of property and the Society's first project, Mount Douglas Court, opened in 1971, offers 72 studios and eight one-bedroom suites. The Manor adds 38 studios and 46 one-bedroom units for a total of

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Entrance to the new Mount Douglas Manor

Transformation: ‘Tis the Season for All Things New



Bishop Logan Writes

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
DR. LOGAN MCMENAMIE

A few years ago, at a regional meeting on forming the diocesan vision, breakout groups were asked, “How can we transform ourselves?” One group spent the whole time trying to understand the meaning of the concept and the word transformation. At that meeting, I suggested to the group that to sit and discuss the meaning of the word transformation was not helpful, but now I wonder if this group’s query might offer some insight as we launch into Transforming Futures.

The word transformation comes directly from the Church Latin *transformationem*, which means “change of shape.” It’s interesting also to note that this concept has action at its heart. I think it might be helpful for us to apply this meaning to

the task ahead and then work towards that idea: how do we realize a change of shape in parish membership, a change of shape in spiritual formation, a change of shape in community outreach, or a change of shape in the congregational role of young people and families?

A change of shape offers a delightful opportunity: to explore and experiment with new and different forms of ministry. The creativity we are looking for will be found in the diocesan vision and how that is expressed through Transforming Futures, not as a financial initiative, but as a congregational development tool. When your congregation finds a new, compelling shape, then finances will follow.

I believe this quote from author Wade Davis helps us to see what needs to be done: “Creativity is a consequence of action, not its motivation. Do what needs to be done and then ask whether it was possible. Orthodoxy is the enemy of invention, despair an insult to the imagination.”

We must not be afraid. We must remember that this theory of transformation has served us well before. Through 2006-2010, the diocese made some very serious and far-reaching

decisions to close parishes in an attempt to shape and form us into the future. We have benefited as a diocese from those decisions: the funding for the diocesan vision and the Vision Fund came from these decisions. We have since seen many creative projects that relate to the vision funded as pilot projects around the diocese.

As we enter this season of Advent, we do so with expectation. Expectation that God, who has promised to make all things new, will enter our lives and bring change and transformation. Let us hear the scripture, be attentive and alert and watch for this new thing to emerge through us, with us or in spite of us. Whatever way it appears, it will bring transformation.

The data we will look at as we embark on Transforming Futures does not bring good news to us about where we are at this time. However, I warn that to be caught in the weeds of this data will not be of any assistance for us. We need to look at this data and say, “Yes, this is what we are now, but it is not the shape we are going to stay.”

Just like Christ, a change of shape is coming. Are you ready to welcome it? ■

Bishop’s Calendar

December

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 | Parish visit and signing MOU with ELCIC, Trinity Church, Port Alberni |
| 2-13 | Bishop away |
| 15 | Parish visit and confirmations, St. Peter, Quamichan |
| 15 | Holy Eucharist, Nanaimo Correctional Centre |
| 22 | Parish visit, Church of the Advent, Colwood |
| 24 | Preaching, Christ Church Cathedral |
| 25 | Preaching and presiding, St. Matthias, Victoria |
| 26-31 | On Vacation |

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2020 Request for Proposals to address the Crisis of Climate Change

20 grants up to \$2,500 each available.
Submission deadline is April 1, 2020.
anglicanfoundation.org/rfp



Diocesan Post

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Editor: Susan Down Ad Manager: Angela Rush
thediocesanpost.ads@gmail.com

Address: 900 Vancouver Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3V7
Editorial E-mail: thepost@bc.anglican.ca Online: bc.anglican.ca/the-diocesan-post
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Subscription Changes

Beginning January 2019, all current and future subscribers must ‘opt-in’ to continue or begin receiving the *Diocesan Post* and *Anglican Journal*. Current recipients who do not confirm their desire to continue receiving the paper by October 2019 will be removed from the subscription list. To subscribe please email circulation@national.anglican.ca or write to Diocesan Post c/o Anglican Journal, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto ON M4Y 3G2 or phone 416-924-9199 ext 241 or complete the online form at anglicanjournal.com and click “Subscribe”

Some costs associated with the production of the Anglican Journal and the Diocesan Post are offset by parish contributions to the diocese. In return, parishioners receive a copy of the Anglican Journal, including the Diocesan Post at no cost. Other subscriptions: \$20/10 issues or \$2/issue. The Anglican Journal and Diocesan Post do not share subscription lists with outside organizations or businesses.

Submissions

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.

New Submission Deadlines

January issue - November 25
February issue - December 25
March issue - January 25
April issue - February 25
May issue - March 25
June issue - April 25
September issue - July 25
October issue - August 25
November issue - September 25
December issue - October 25

All material is subject to editing.

Volume 53, No 10

Should Christians Care?

BY WALLY EAMER

Creation Matters is a small, determined diocesan committee linked to Engaging God's World. We examine Christian responses and actions that help avoid or ameliorate human-caused (anthropogenic) environmental issues. Co-Chairs: Dr. Geoff Strong at St. Peters in Duncan, and Wally Eamer (rector at St. Peter and St. Paul, Esquimalt).

The vast majority of Canadian Christians accept that Earth is round, and that evolution happens. A few disagree, but our society lives and works with those basic understandings. As scientific evidence and our collective

experience mounts, an increasing majority of Canadian Christians also accept that global warming is real. The two concepts are fundamentally separate: facts about the physical Earth happen and continue without action on our part, while global warming is anthropogenic. What humans do, we can undo through thoughtful personal, social, and economic actions.

As a Christian, my faith must affect that personal and political response. If not, truly I am rocky soil for the seed of God. So how does my faith lead and help me?

A positive, deep answer is in Genesis and the Gospels. We nurture what we love: family, neighbours, and the very

good world God made. Global warming is being caused by everyone around the world, although more by the rich than the poor, and affects all forms of life. Consider that half of the new carbon we put into the atmosphere today will still be in the atmosphere in 3020. This is double the time since humans began farming. If we continue on the old path, or despair that a new path is too difficult, many species will go extinct, and poor people elsewhere will die or become climate refugees.

What would Jesus say to Christians like you and me if we ignore these costs that mostly are borne by poor neighbours living far away, because we hope that we can remain comfortable here in Canada?

What approaches have the greatest chance of success at the least cost and are fair to all? My faith alone doesn't give me all those answers, and neither does science alone, but two complement one another. Science offers a method to seek, test and confirm new knowledge. Faith cannot be tested or examined by scientific method, but people from many faiths, and no faith, can together engage, decide and act, using scientific knowledge and human skill and compassion, adding that essential dimension of ethics to the scientific evidence. Even when mistakes are made, new knowledge can be gained. We must learn and adjust.

Perhaps I will follow Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenage

activist, or perhaps I will work to fulfil the pledge of oil sands companies to become carbon-neutral. But certainly I must live "faith in action" with other people. May my faith lead me to community, erode my arrogance and strengthen my patience, compassion and resolve to journey successfully.

If you wish to examine faithful exploration and action on issues like global warming, plastics pollution and many more, please contact our Creation Matters committee. We meet in person and by telephone, and we find strength and inspiration in each other's ideas, backgrounds and experiences. We are linked to the implementation team of Engaging God's World and are on Facebook as Creation Matters and on the diocesan website. ■

CANTICA NOVA: NEW CANADIAN CAROLS

The ideal Christmas present for everyone on your list!

A brand-new CD release featuring ten Christmas carols commissioned over the past decade from ten Canadian composers, including Patrick Wedd, Stephanie Martin, Zachary Windus, Stephen Chatman, Rupert Lang and Matthew Larkin. The carols were created for the annual Service of Nine Lessons and Carols at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria BC, and are sung by the Cathedral Choir, conducted by Donald Hunt. Plus recordings of the cathedral bells, with the Guild of Change Ringers.

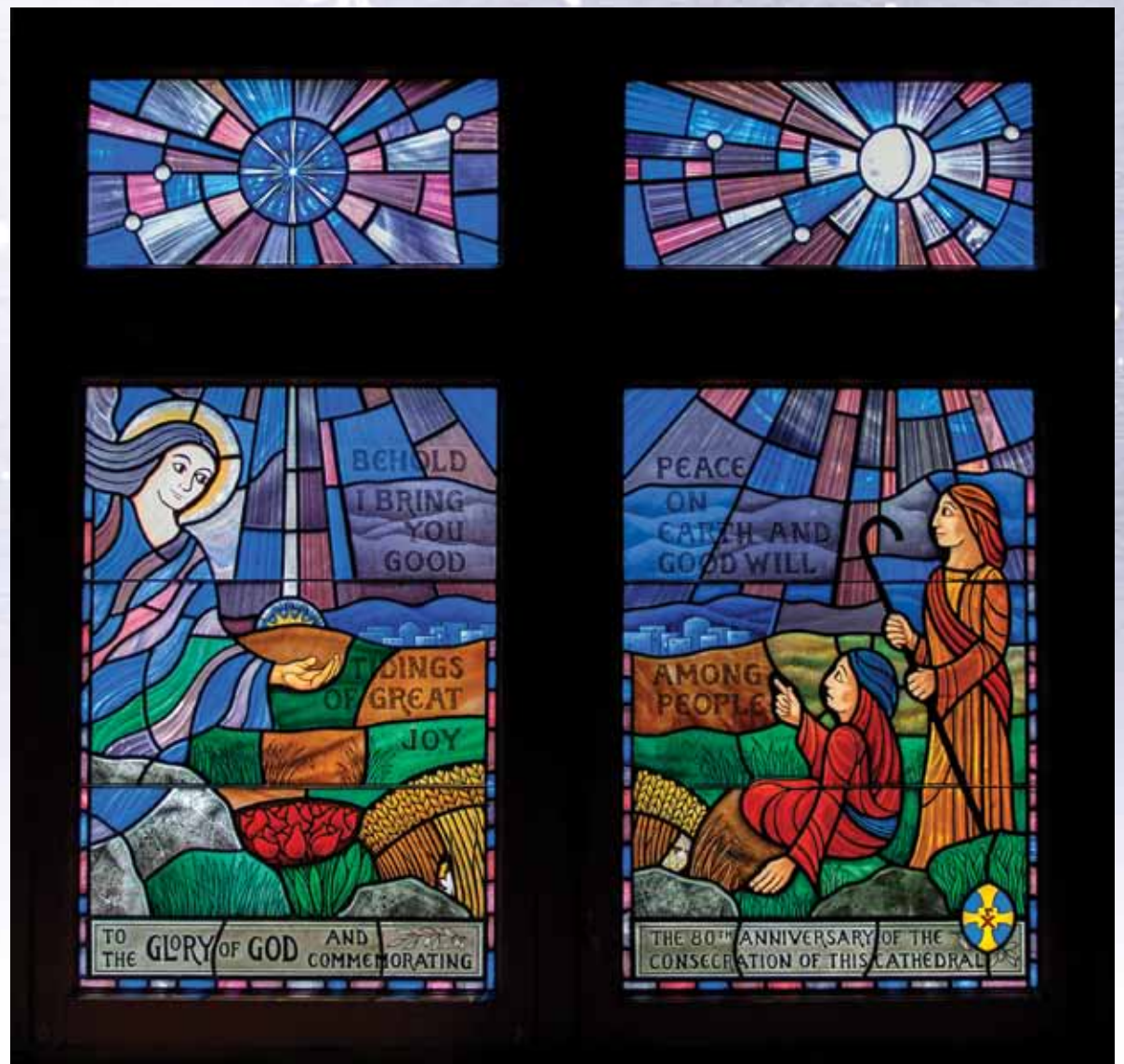
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SUBMISSION DEADLINES

SUBMISSION DEADLINES ARE THE 25TH OF THE MONTH (TWO MONTHS IN ADVANCE OF EACH ISSUE)
NEXT SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS DEC 25TH (FOR THE FEB ISSUE).

New Eyes for Reading the Old Testament

BY SELINDE KRAYENHOFF

Parishioners sometimes ask, “Why do we still read from the Old Testament?” The Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, instructor at Vancouver School of Theology (VST), will answer this question for Vancouver Islanders in January when she presents a public lecture (Jan.31) and a VST continuing education program (Feb.1) in Nanaimo entitled “New Eyes for Reading the Old Testament.” The sessions will bring participants a new appreciation for this part of our Christian tradition.

The initiative has been organized by the rectors from St. Paul, Nanaimo; St. Philip by-the-Sea, Lantzville; and St. Mary, Nanoose Bay.

This introductory lecture and workshop will help participants understand the insights and beauty found in the



Patricia Dutcher-Walls

Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Background information and resources will allow a hands-on learning experience using a variety of Hebrew Bible passages so that we can hear the many ways God’s people have witnessed God. We’ll focus

on biblical narratives because the brilliant storytelling of the Hebrew Bible invites us into a world of wonder and wisdom.

I was taught by this instructor at VST in recent years and during a course on the prophets, I literally jumped out of my seat in excitement! Pat is such a gifted and inspiring teacher. She is dean and professor of the Hebrew Bible at the Vancouver School of Theology. She holds a doctor of theology from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and a master of divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School. Her book, *Reading the Historical Books: A Student’s Guide to Engaging the Biblical Text*, is aimed at making the Hebrew Bible accessible and understandable for all audiences. ■

Selinde Krayenhoff is the rector at St. Mary, Nanoose Bay.

New Eyes: Details

Friday January 31
7-9pm
Free public lecture

Saturday February 1,
10 am to 3 pm
Workshop – \$25
lunch provided,
by donation.

Both events are held at
St. Paul, Nanaimo.

Register through the
Vancouver School of
Theology website:
www.vst.edu
under the Continuing
Education page.

Marking 30 Years

It is 30 years since 14 young women lost their lives in what has become known as the Montreal Massacre when a gunman opened fire on women students at Montreal’s Ecole Polytechnique. This day has become known as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

There are annual memorials in several locations on the Island. In Victoria, the memorial event will feature a multi-faith celebration of their lives, along with a pledge to eliminate gun violence.

Where: First Metropolitan United Church
932 Balmoral Rd.
When: Dec. 6 at 5.30 p.m.

Vision Fund Awards

Continued from cover

attract large and diverse audiences. Further north, community service programs organized with the help of the Vision Fund out of St. John Gualbert Anglican/United Church in Port McNeill are now touching approximately one in every three residents

every month. Five university students were assisted by the Vision Fund to walk part of the Camino in Spain earlier this year; in September, they testified during a Sunday service at the UVic Interfaith Chapel to the power of that pilgrimage to form, and transform, their spiritual lives. A new grant will provide a similar opportunity to other students to travel to the Holy Land next spring.

2020 will be the last year of the Vision Fund in its current

form, as our diocesan focus shifts towards Transforming Futures. Preference continues to be given to creative, innovative and, yes, visionary proposals that: embody some elements of the diocesan vision; are in the spirit of the bishop’s call for a season of discipleship; “prime the pump” for Transforming Futures; go beyond parish boundaries to embrace regional co-operation and the wider community; and represent new ways of “being church.”

Check out the Vision Fund web page at www.bc.anglican.ca/vision/vision-fund and consider putting together a proposal for submission. There will be up to \$60,000 available to be distributed next year. It’s expected that the 2020 intake deadlines will be March 15 and June 15. Successful proponents tend to be those who plan well ahead of time! ■

Canon (Lay) Ian Alexander is chair of the Vision Fund jury.

Personnel Updates

The Rev. Gail Rodger has been appointed incumbent at St. Peter and St. Paul, Esquimalt, starting Oct. 1, 2019.

The Rev. Jennifer Marlor has resigned as incumbent at St. Columba, Tofino, effective Dec. 31, 2019.



Happier times: Youth group member Tyrese and Santa last Christmas.

A North Island Christmas Hope

BY ALASTAIR HUNTING

As I was thinking about my hopes for this Christmas, I couldn’t help but reflect on a photo that was taken last year of a young man named Tyrese who tragically passed away in October at the age of 16. Tyrese was an active member of our youth group, The Ark, at St. Columba in Port Hardy. Alison and I had the privilege of taking Tyrese and a group of our youth last February to a winter retreat at Camp Pringle. At first after a six-hour drive to the camp, which was buried in snow, Tyrese wanted to leave; but after sticking it out for a

day, he came alive and started making new friends from all over the Island.

When Tyrese left us that day in October, the community was devastated and in shock. Tyrese had an infectious smile and was welcoming and quick to make new friends. He loved to joke around, tease, and play tricks on people. He would have turned 17 years old this December. At one of the comfort services at the Gwa’sala-Nakwaxda’xw Hall, one of Tyrese’s close friends was planning on giving him his Xbox One this Christmas, since, as he explained with tears in his eyes, “one of Tyrese’s favourite things to do was hang out with his

friends and play video games.”

My hope this Christmas is that our local and wider church won’t forget about our precious youth. That we’ll take the time, energy, and resources to reach out, engage, and build relationships with youth. That we’ll learn the beautiful lessons that youth like Tyrese offer us every day. That in our youth we’ll harness the magic of Christmas, the wonder of our faith, and the realization that the possibilities for ministry are endless. ■

Alastair Hunting is rector at St. Columba, Port Hardy; St. Olaf, Quatsino; and St. John, Port Alice.

DIOCESAN POST WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Almost Heaven



My Journey

A regular column sharing the voices of new clergy in the diocese

BY MATTHEW HUMPHREY

Matthew was ordained September 20 as a transitional deacon.

I like to say I grew up in a John Denver song (Almost

heaven, West Virginia/Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River...) as I grew up in the U.S. state of Virginia, in the small town of Winchester.

I grew up in the Lutheran Church and had a really good experience. It was always a place of welcome and warmth. There were two experiences in high school that formed my call story. After I went on youth retreat with about 700 students in synod, the bishop wrote a letter affirming some of my gifts: leadership and laughter. I came back and wondered what to do with this. Then later I went to a national youth gathering where the keynote speaker was Bishop Desmond Tutu. I was completely blown away by the hardship he had endured in his life, but also the joy he carried. It left me with the sense that there was a lot more to God than was in my experience.

I attended university in Virginia, starting in a recreation management program. In

summers I worked in a Lutheran camp, and I spent my days in the woods. The logic I heard from a lot of people was to learn as widely as I could. Even if I did have a call from God, they said “you might want to have an employable skill.” But after two years I came back in September to find the program had been cut. Instead I got a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy and religious studies. A friend of a friend had been out to BC on a trip and recommended it, so I applied and got a job as a mountain guide leading youth on trips in the Jervis Inlet area. I wanted to stay in Canada after guiding a six-day trip with another guide, Roxy (now my wife). In the woods, you work out compatibility pretty quickly.

I wanted to serve but wasn’t sure seminary was the right place for me. I enrolled in Regent College in Vancouver and did a master’s degree in religious studies. I had a lot of questions about how the church engages with the environment, so I

did a thesis on environmental ethics. Roxy and I had married 2007 and then we both lived and worked for seven years at A Rocha Canada, a Christian environmental organization and intentional community with organic farm based in Surrey.

Our family (we have three children aged nine, seven and four) moved to Victoria three years ago because it felt like we were just on the edge of a rat race in Vancouver, and Roxy longed to be back here. A bunch of doors seemed to open for us. We found our way to the Abbey Church and Emmaus community. That started me on two years of formal discernment.

At my ordination, I was nervous, but it was incredibly moving to stand amid clergy that I know and make promises before them. The parts of my job that have been the most delightfully surprising were things I hadn’t done before: a hospital visit and a home visit where we took

communion. It has given me an appreciation for the sacred role that ministers play in the community.

I co-teach a course at Regent College about food and agriculture. At my new parish, I am doing a supper church presentation called “eating your way through Luke.”

With some financial help from the Vision Fund and support from the AbbeyChurch, we created Wild Church. The goal is to remind Christians what it means to live as creatures within God’s world. We organized summer hikes with gently guided contemplative time. A book group has been launched at the Chapel Gallery at St. Matthias, and I am planning some workshops. My hope is we can help other churches equip themselves. ■

The Rev. Matthew Humphrey is assistant curate for the Parish of Central Saanich, community life minister for the AbbeyChurch, and curator of Wild Church Victoria.

Greater Works Than These

Continued from cover

keeping young families, social cohesion, loneliness, community engagement.

To begin the process of discernment, two sets of consultations were designed and conducted between May and September 2019 involving well over 200 people. One set of consultations involved the school and focused on parents, alumni, and staff. The other involved cathedral parishioners, canons of the cathedral and of the diocese, members of the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia, and members of Diocesan Council.

The school consultations resulted in a report which is under active discussion by the board of the school that will lead to a board strategic planning retreat in early January. Highlights of the report include an extraordinary level of engagement and appreciation of the work of the school among parents and alumni, a strong

valuing of the relationship and connection between the school and the cathedral, and serious challenges facing the school in both the quality and amount of space available to it.

Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these.... John 14:12

With the cathedral consultations extensive notes were taken that have been reviewed by a “cabinet” of cathedral leaders, who working with a consultant, were charged with directing the discernment process. The cabinet’s review of the notes resulted in the identification of six categories of opportunities for the cathedral’s ministries: building and grounds; engaging the community; the environment; social justice, reconciliation, and advocacy; using technology to expand reach; and building up the body of Christ.

On October 19, some 70 people gathered in the cathedral to discuss the opportunities noted under each category. Participants were asked to focus on the opportunities and strongly urged to avoid questions of “how.” How talk will come and will be important, but only when clarity on what and why and with whom is achieved.

The cabinet developed a more focused report on the opportunities to the cathedral community and presented it on November 30.

Discernment is an evolving process. The middle years of the 21st century (2025 to 2075) is a long time. We will be able to have specific plans for the early years; a sense of direction for the

middle years; and faith, hope, and courage for the later years. It is simply important that we engage and are faithful to the process. The eager participation in the first set of consultations and the active, enthusiastic, response of the large group that gathered in October have made it clear that engagement has been achieved. Your cathedral is on the move; stay tuned. ■

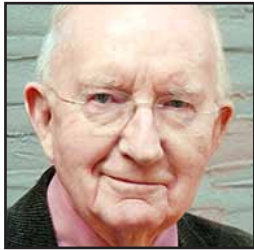


ORDINATION: Dyan Davison was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Logan McMenamie at St. Mary, Oak Bay on November 1. Davison is also a practising lawyer.

WEB EXCLUSIVES

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This Most Tremendous Tale



Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Mid-September 1954 on the south coast of Ireland offered its typically alternating cycle of sun and rain. I remember, as I opened the gate to the rectory grounds, how the rain hissed on the gravel leading up to the house. I had just ended my first curacy in Dublin and was bound for Canada in a couple of weeks. I had come to say goodbye to the rector, a good friend and mentor who had played a considerable part in my decision to be ordained.

In that conversation, because he was well aware of my interest in poetry, he produced a small

book of poems newly published. The poet's name, John Betjeman, was unfamiliar. My rector wanted to show me one poem in particular. Its title was simply Christmas.

I read it and would never forget it. Hardly a December has since gone by without my finding some way of making others aware of it. The verse that immediately spoke to me was:

*And is it true?
And is it true,
This most tremendous
tale of all,
Seen in a stained glass
window's hue,
A Baby in an ox's stall?
The Maker of the
Stars and Sea
Become a Child on
earth for me?*

If I am asked to focus even more closely on this verse, I look at the last two lines with their wonderful linking of something

vast – “the maker of the stars and sea” – and something tiny and vulnerable – “a child on earth for me.”

The fact that a child is at the heart of it all tends to bring out the child in us. This does not diminish in the least the beauty and truth of it. I think we are wise to take refuge in the simple things of the season – the carols, the cards (and these days, the emails) sent and received, the decorations, the wrapping, and all of our groping efforts to respond to an immense and beautiful mystery.

The majesty will elude us to the end of time. The thought occurs to me that John of Patmos had something of the same struggle when he wrote his great preface to his gospel. He too moved from vast panorama – *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God* – to the particularity and the vulnerability of – *He came to his own and His own received him not*. Both poet and evangelist are trying to plumb

the depths of the event for its endless levels of meaning.

And there are indeed so very many layers of meaning. To say that Christmas isn't just about giving a gift, or about going home for a few days, or wishing folk well, is not in the least to dismiss such things.

The heart of the matter is a certain question. “What child is this?” Its simplicity is deceptive because it is massively profound, as we discover when we try to answer it. No wonder there is an instinct in us to reach for simplicity

In those simplest of images Betjeman moves us into different territory. This is no longer just pleasantness or sentiment. An awesome claim is being made. The irony, of course, is that all those simple carols we love make the same claim. It's just that the immensity of what they are getting us to sing so heartily has been largely filtered out, perhaps by familiarity.

So why is this claim about the identity of this child so

important? Because the great contribution of Christian faith to the world is to offer the news that the divine shares human experience and is present in human history.

And why is this important? Because if we are to live within human history hopefully and creatively, we need the reassurance that God shares that history. To believe this is to know God, not as an infinitely remote concept gazing from beyond time and space on a struggling self-threatened species called humanity, but as a power, an influence within our human experience; *indeed within all life wherever it is to be found among the innumerable suns and galaxies of God's creation*.

It is amazing that all this wonder is hidden inside those two cheery words we call out to each other at this time of year... Merry Christmas. ■

Herbert O'Driscoll is a retired priest, conference leader and the prolific author of books, hymns and radio scripts.

RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS** RENEWED **PEOPLE**



**SAFE HOMES,
BRIGHTER FUTURES**



This November, Threshold Housing Society is **Shining a Light on Youth Homelessness**. Threshold Housing provides safe housing, support services, and community to at-risk youth. You can contribute and help end youth homelessness by donating today. Visit thresholdhousing.ca/donate and help provide a brighter future!

THRESHOLD
HOUSING SOCIETY

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Whom Can We Believe and What Can We Believe?

BY ALAN H. BATTEN

Talk of science and religion usually involves one or both of Galileo and Darwin. A recent series of Christ Church Cathedral lunchtime talks deliberately avoided these men and their stories, which are more complex than commonly supposed and atypical of the relations between science and religion. Instead, the series focused on modern problems created by scientific advances and changing social attitudes: the increasing distrust of institutions, scientific and religious; the ethics of vaccination; medical assistance in dying; and genetic engineering aimed at “improving” the human race. Each topic was discussed by an expert from the University of Victoria, while this writer addressed the questions in the above title.

British philosopher Bertrand Russell once wrote that when

experts agree it is unwise to express a contrary opinion and when they disagree it is unwise to express any opinion. That is a partial answer to the question “Whom can we believe?” Experts backed up by solid empirical evidence, as in the matter of vaccination against childhood diseases, are trustworthy. Even unanimous expert opinion can change, however. Two hundred years ago almost everyone in the western world believed that the Earth was only a few thousand years old and that each species had been specially created and remained fixed. The geologists Hutton and Lyell chipped away at the first belief, but scientific controversy raged around it throughout the 19th century. Arguments between scientists and religious believers were secondary. Indeed, some believers were open to the new ideas, including evolution. Similarly, the atomic theory of

matter, although ancient, remained controversial into the 20th century, when the smallest elements of matter were found to behave like either waves or particles, as does light. The ultimate nature of matter is still mysterious.

One of the oldest philosophical problems is whether mind or matter is more fundamental

One of the oldest philosophical problems is whether mind or matter is more fundamental. Modern western culture favours matter. Our minds are seen as a function of our brains, and the mind itself seems too vague a concept to have produced this vast physical universe. If that is so, Christians are, as St. Paul said, the people most

to be pitied, because we believe in a delusion. The geneticist Richard Dawkins wrote *The God Delusion*, and the theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss has proclaimed “God is redundant.” If mind is a function of matter, they may be right, but explaining either mind or matter in terms of the other is explaining one mystery in terms of another!

Suppose that our brains are instruments of our minds. Plato thought something similar, as did, in our own times, Karl Popper and Teilhard de Chardin. Michelangelo suggested that a sculptor’s task was to reveal statues already existing in blocks of marble. What about other creations in art, music and literature? Artistic creation and scientific discovery might have more in common than generally supposed, as the astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington suggested 90

years ago. All these activities are kinds of revelation. Moderns tend to discount revelation as a source of knowledge and the claims of religious traditions to enshrine revealed knowledge are a real barrier to non-believers. If, however, scientists and other creative individuals are revealing things to us, then why should the great religious teachers of our race, the authors of the Vedas and Hebrew Scriptures, the Buddha, the Prophet Mohammed, and Jesus Christ, to name the most influential, be any different? The questions “whom can we believe?” and “what can we believe?” become one. ■

Alan H. Batten is a Christ Church Cathedral parishioner and has been a member of the bell-ringing team for 60 years. For over 50 years he worked at the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory and served as a vice-president of the International Astronomical Union from 1985-1991. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.



Ribbon Cutting to open Mount Douglas Manor: L to R: David Cooper, Board chair; Barbara Colman, ACW; Isobel Mackenzie, seniors’ advocate; Dawn Giles, resident; Jane Mason, vice chair.

Mount Douglas Manor Officially Opens its Doors

Continued from cover

164 units of affordable housing on the site. Both buildings are fully rented with a waitlist.

The tremendous undertaking by (MDSHS) was led by Jane Mason (building committee chair), David Copper (board chair), Peter Daniel (diocesan asset manager), and Gail Caryn (executive director). The Manor was designed by Number TEN Architectural Group and built to Green Gold Certification by Città Group Construction. The team’s commitment to affordability brought construction costs in at \$195 per square foot, considerably less than the current average of \$300, enabling the society to keep rents well below market at \$650 to \$900.

The society is grateful for the support from its many funders. CMHC and Vancity Community Foundation provided project start-up funds. MDSHS also received a \$150,000 grant from the Saanich Affordable Housing Fund and the ACW donated \$200,000, which will be used to furnish tenant amenities. Vancity Credit Union provided the construction loan, and TD Bank will fund the mortgage of over \$12.5 million. A more whimsical donation was received from the Victoria Conservatory of Music in the form of a piano flamboyantly painted as homage to Sir Elton John.

We must remember that what we are seeking in Transforming Futures is not success, but faithfulness. We are attempting to create space and allow new forms of faithful practice and ministry to emerge from within our midst. We do not know what the results will be, but with hope and expectation we can move in this direction. ■



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Renewed Hearts, Renewed Spirits, Renewed People

Council Applauds New Youth Group

Fly on the Wall

COMPILED BY
PAUL SCHUMACHER

At October’s diocesan council meeting, three themes emerged as central to the work that council finds itself doing at this point in the life of our church.

- How do we discover and use the gifts of the Spirit with which we are each individually gifted?
- How do we, as the “synod between synods,” understand our role in the life of God’s people in this present age?
- And finally, how best can this diocesan council live into the work which it is being asked to do?

Bishop Logan opened the meeting with prayer and a welcome to Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria. Joan Hoffman, a member of diocesan council from Selkirk region, offered a spiritual reflection around the spiritual gifts with which we are each blessed by the Holy Spirit. Our gifts are to be used for the common good of all peoples. Joan reminded council that our gifts may not be at all like those of our immediate family, neighbours or others, and it is important that we recognize and honour the gifts of all whom we encounter.

Eight Vision grants totalling \$31,100 were approved.

Parish Improvements

The Church of the Advent will be replacing its carpet in the

sanctuary and chapel with funds from their unrestricted bequests and rectory trust invested in the Consolidated Trust Fund. A long-term lease was signed with Christ Church Cathedral Educational Society to operate a junior kindergarten at the Annex building at St. Dunstan. St. Peter, Quamichan will be replacing its furnace in the hall with a loan from the diocese.

Governance

Canon Ian Alexander, at the invitation of the bishop and diocesan council, facilitated council in a study of our governance model and how we, as God’s people in this place, can be the church in new and different ways. Two questions seemed to recur during these discussions. Are we doing things right? And, are we doing the right things?

Much discussion and many ideas came out of this work by the members of diocesan council. Council is working with the dynamic interplay between our vision, Transforming Futures and new experiences of being church. We will continue examining our role and how our ideas may be used in the future work done by this council and succeeding councils in the Diocese of British Columbia.

Youth Council

Diocesan council was blessed with a presentation by the members of the newly formed diocesan youth council. Ashley Blair, a member of diocesan council representing our young

people, with the assistance of Leslie Flynn, who is acting as an adult advisor to the youth council, presented a well-designed plan for the incorporation of the youth council into the life of our diocese. A package, which includes a description of the youth council’s formation, its work in the diocese and applications for membership by the young people of our parishes, has been provided to each parish through the offices of your parish administrator and clergy. Membership is open to youth in grades 9 to 12 and young adults aged 18 to 25 years. At the invitation of the bishop and the youth council, a select number of adults (aged 25+) may be chosen to act as advisors. This is a great opportunity for our youth to share their gifts and talents with the members of our parishes, our diocese and the wider community. Diocesan council fully supports the formation of the youth council and the work of our young people in the diocese.

Walter Stewart, co-chair of the Transforming Futures (TF) initiative, provided some thoughts about progress to date. Parishes are moving forward, albeit slower than was anticipated at the beginning of the TF program. He again stated how important it has become for parishes to thoroughly develop their case for support for their local church and community before moving into action.

Diocesan council will meet next at the end of November.

Faith in Foundation



Music With a Face

An unusual piano resides in the Agnew Lounge at Mount Douglas Manor. Called “Homage to Elton,” the painted piano has illustrations that characterize the hit songs Sir Elton John composed in his career. Created by Oak Bay artist Sheryl Hustins as part of the 2015 Oak Bay Summer Art Festival, the piano was auctioned off, and donated to the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM), which then gave it to the Manor as part of VCM’s mission to provide opportunities for music to the elderly. At the Manor opening receptionn Collins, jazz pianist and VCM student, played many of Elton John’s hits. -Chris Pease



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