



DIOCESAN POST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

FEBRUARY 2020

The listening bishop retires

BY SUSAN DOWN

Bishop Logan to step down in the spring

During his six years as bishop in this diocese, the Right Rev. Dr. Logan McMenemy kept his ears open as he spent time in the parishes. “I said I wanted to be a listening bishop,” he remembered. This intention became a defining characteristic of his episcopacy.

He will complete his term this year, leaving May 1 for mandatory retirement at the age of 70. The diocese made the announcement January 5, and parish incumbents read his letter aloud during worship (see sidebar). The timeline and process of an electoral synod will be outlined in a forthcoming issue of the *Post*. During the interim period before a new bishop is chosen, Ansley Tucker, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, will act as the diocesan administrator.

The bishop’s retirement caps his 33-year career in ordained ministry, all in service to the parishes on Vancouver Island,

including time spent in Tofino, Duncan, and several parishes in Victoria. McMenemy was dean of Christ Church Cathedral when the preceding bishop, James Cowan, stepped down, and he was one of six nominees for the top post. He won on the third ballot in December 2013 and was consecrated in 2014.

During the previous bishop’s term, the diocesan leadership had to make hard financial decisions to close some churches. “I saw the pain that caused. Every parish felt the ramification of that,” said Bishop Logan, who entered his episcopacy with his own focus. “When I first became bishop, I knew that our work over the coming years needed to focus on three things: healing and reconciliation, as a diocese and between us and the First Peoples; discerning a vision that would help us further direct our efforts; and, sharing funds to support that vision.”

Following through on those plans, in 2015 he made a formal apology to Residential School survivors on the site of the former St Michael’s Indian residential school on Cormorant Island. The next year, he went into action, trekking the length

Continued on page 8



Bishop Logan McMenemy

Letter from the Bishop

Dear friends,

I write to inform you that I have submitted my resignation as bishop to Archbishop Melissa Skelton. It is a bittersweet experience. I will retire as your bishop on May 1, 2020. Am I ready to leave the post? Yes, however there are many things and people I am going to miss.

I believe we have accomplished much over the last number of years. We have set a course for the future, and with commitment and hope in the Gospel, we will accomplish much more. At a time when we hear that the church is in decline, we can attest to being alive in so

many ways. I will not be “taking things easy” over the next few months. I realize that during a time of change in a diocese, the temptation is to shift the focus to the election of the next bishop. However, I ask that you do not take your foot off the accelerator. Continue during this intentional time of prayer to seek new ways to minister together as we work to transform our future. Take seriously my call for the season of discipleship and spend time together this Lent to study the book *Watershed Discipleship*.

The chancellor will send out a letter which will explain the process of electing the next

bishop. It will be my prayer that the work we have done will not be lost in this time of transition but will be solidified, and as you seek the 14th bishop of the diocese, you will be inviting that person to join in this exciting journey of transformation. Thank you all for the trust and confidence you have placed in me. Thank you for the journey through tough decisions and challenging times. As we continue, I believe we have a faith-full future as the diocese of islands and inlets.

*Yours in Christ,
Bishop Logan*

Parksville Anglicans offer ‘pray and stay’ to homeless

BY SUSAN DOWN

With its graceful steeple and the rough-hewn log construction, the historic St. Anne Anglican church

in Parksville is truly picturesque. Now known as St. Anne & St. Edmund, the congregation worships in the more modern St. Edmund church, which has a hall, a kitchen and washrooms. With its pioneer pedigree, the older church is popular for summer services – and it is just a few steps away across the cemetery. Celebrating St. Anne’s 125th anniversary in 2019, the congregation thought the new heater could allow them to have Christmas, memorial and funeral

services in the old church again.

Instead St. Anne provided a Christmas gift of another sort with a bold outreach measure. On Dec. 6, the church opened its doors for a “pray and stay” prayer vigil, offering a safe and warm place to bed down for the area’s homeless because there was no cold weather shelter option in the area this year.

Since then there have been from four to 15 people staying every night. By the middle of the month (December 19 was the

start of Oceanside HEARTS Assisi Shelter) there were both staff and volunteers managing the shelter. Early on the evening I visit, a man is sleeping on a cot near the altar, and another man is about to have a piece of donated blueberry pie. He’s chatting with support worker Kelly Morris, a recovered addict who was homeless as a young teen. Morris is proud of the fact that she has quickly gotten six people into the drug rehab program run by

Continued on page 3



Christine Muise

Five steps to a hands-on vision



Dean's Corner

BY ANSLEY TUCKER

Engaging God's World demands all-in action

We used to call it “outreach,” or “mission and outreach.” Our diocesan vision, by contrast, refers to “engaging God’s world.” This new language invites us to understand that the Church must do more than simply share its wisdom and hand out its resources. Rather, like the incarnate Christ himself, we are to roll up our sleeves and risk close contact with the aching world he came to redeem. Hearts in. Hands on.

It is no longer enough simply to send money to the mission fields, or to our favourite not-for-profit group. It is no longer adequate to treat outreach as a transaction by which we donate the surplus of our blessings to people we

either pity or otherwise deem worthy of our assistance. This is charity, not engagement.

Here are the five things that I believe form the basis of a robust outreach ministry:

We pray. This probably sounds obvious, but our prayers, whether individual or liturgical, need to be specific. If our parish has a cause, then we know exactly what and whom to pray for. And it is only in that kind of specificity that we know how to join our own hands to the outcome for which we pray. A vague commendation to God of environmental sustainability doesn’t hold a candle to a prayer for this Saturday’s plans for a local coastal clean-up!

We give. In some ways this is the easiest thing for us to do, and we are pretty good at it. We write a cheque or drop some cash on the plate in order to support an important cause. We are humble enough to know that in many cases others are far better situated and equipped than we are to meet complex needs.

Unfortunately, this is where many churches stop. But “praying and paying” is only the beginning of what it means to engage God’s world. We must add to this education, advocacy, and hands-on ministry.

We educate. An essential aspect of reaching out heartily and effectively to others is taking the time to inform ourselves about their situation and challenges. We need to know what we’re talking about. How can we respond compassionately and wisely to the opioid crisis, for instance, if we understand nothing about adverse childhood experiences, the physiology of addiction, or the interplay between homelessness, mental health, and the court system? Why would we respond at all if we haven’t imbibed Jesus’s own special affection for those at the edges of our society?

We advocate. If, as they say, membership has its

privileges, then privileges have their obligations. Where voices are silenced or discounted, it is our responsibility, as people who have educated ourselves and have access to decision-makers, to speak out in the cause of mercy and justice. This is our calling as disciples of Jesus.

We participate. Even though parishes may share their resources with other agencies doing good work, it is still important that every Christian community have some project which calls upon their collective time, and not just their money, prayers, or advocacy. Perhaps it is to serve meals at the local shelter, to engage in literacy programs, to

build relationships with local Indigenous communities, or to provide a safe and welcoming space for the homeless. It isn’t until we come alongside those we mean to help that we learn how needy and alike we all are and experience at first hand the joyous ministry of mending the world God loved enough to create in the first place, and to redeem in his incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

The bottom line? If we want to engage God’s world effectively, we will do five things. We will pray, pay, learn, speak, and do. ■

M. Ansley Tucker is rector of Christ Church Cathedral and dean of Columbia.

CARING FOR GOD'S WORLD WOMEN'S GATHERING

SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2020 9:30 TO 2:30

9:30	Registration and coffee
10:00	Eucharist, Reverend Dr. Canon John Steele
1:00	Presenter, Elizabeth May OC MP
Cost	\$30 including lunch

Registration by March 7, 2020
Carole Gill #1-491 Lakes Rd, Duncan, BC V9I 3E9
wcgill1@shaw.ca • 250-748-2035

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ANGLICAN CHURCH
3295 Cobble Hill Road, Cobble Hill

PASS THE POST HELP US SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS

When you've finished with your copy of the *Diocesan Post*, leave it in public places where others can enjoy it.

- doctors' offices
- seniors' centres
- libraries
- hospitals
- book swap boxes

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**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

Published by the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia ten times a year from September to June as a section of the *Anglican Journal*.

Editor: Susan Down **Ad Manager:** Angela Rush
Proofreader: Jan Rogers
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
The Post is printed and mailed by Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON

Subscription Changes

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 54, No 2

What is watershed discipleship?



BY MATTHEW HUMPHREY

For over a decade, I've had the privilege of working with a small but growing network of faith leaders longing to see the church engage the healing of Creation. For the last five years, that work has focused around the concept of "watershed discipleship."

This odd phrase is a triple entendre that recognizes three important challenges facing our life of discipleship today. First, we live in a watershed moment. The health of Creation, our home, is threatened by an interlocking set of concerns. Climate change is one of the most pressing, but it exacerbates existing environmental concerns such as resource depletion; loss of species habitat and biodiversity; toxicity in our soils, air, and waters; and a human culture built on overconsumption and careless use of finite resources.

We needn't be alarmists or doomsdayers to recognize this is an important moment in human history and that the decisions we make in our generation have the potential to make a lasting impact on earth's future. Many have referred to this period as the Anthropocene, a new geological epoch in which the main influence and impact comes from humans. For those of us in the faith community,

it presents us with a moment of existential and theological clarity. What are we living for? Where is our hope found?

Second, we recognize that we are disciples in a watershed (whether we know it or not!). Not a single one of us simply lives "on earth" and consumes "resources." I live in the Cecelia Creek watershed. One of the most degraded watersheds in Greater Victoria, it collects rainwater across Victoria and Saanich and drains into the Cecelia Ravine and the Gorge. A septage plant was closed in 2000, but the legacy of a century of thoughtless development and industry still leaves deep marks of pain in the landscape. What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus in this place? How might my faith call me to love my neighbour here? Whose land was this long before my ancestors arrived?

The invitation of watershed discipleship is analogous to liberation theology. It means allowing our theology and faith to be truly informed by our context, the social and ecological setting in which we abide. Faithful discipleship in our time and place means taking stock of our inherited histories and the ongoing impacts these may have for our most vulnerable neighbours – including humans and other species. To this end, we are put squarely back in our commitment to reconciliation, albeit in a way that is contextually located to the particular people and places with whom we share this life.

Finally, if we are to learn to be disciples in a watershed, we must start by becoming

disciples of our watersheds. Or, as my friend Todd Wynward says, we must come to see the watershed as rabbi. This is something we may learn from Indigenous folks who have inhabited this place for eons. Our Wild Church group just finished a book study on Robin Wall Kimmerer's Braiding Sweetgrass. In it she writes,

"Until we can grieve for our planet we cannot love it—grieving is a sign of spiritual health. But it is not enough to weep for our lost landscapes; we have to put our hands in the earth to make ourselves whole again. Even a wounded world is feeding us. Even a wounded world holds us, giving us moments of wonder and joy. I choose joy over despair."

We cannot come to know the wonder and joy of a wounded world through watching David Attenborough documentaries, sharing Facebook posts, or writing important position statements. Rather, deep learning comes from putting our bodies and hands (and souls) in touch with the world that sustains our very life: its soil, air, and waters. What might it mean for your Church to engage the wonder and grief of your watershed? Who is already at work caring for that place that the Church might come to partner with? How might new hope be born in us this year as watershed disciples? ■

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

Parksville churches shelter the homeless

Continued from cover

InnerVisions Recovery Society in Port Coquitlam. The plan (at press time in late December) has been to have a rotating shelter with other churches taking a turn until March.

Parksville has had a cold-weather shelter since 2011, first run by the Salvation Army and then by Arbutus Grove Reformed Church with Island Crisis Care. When the 52-unit Orca Place housing complex for the homeless opened last summer, it didn't include the planned cold-weather shelter as part of it.

Local churches mobilized to organize some support quickly in the fall of 2019. The churches include Arbutus Grove Reformed Church, Knox United Church, Oceanside Community Church, Catholic Church of The Ascension, Parksville Fellowship Baptist Church, Christian Fellowship Centre Church and the Anglican Church of St. Anne/St. Edmund.

They formed the Oceanside HEART Society (HEART stands for homelessness ecumenical advocacy response team) and looked for ways to fill the need. A team visited each church to ask the congregation about their fears. "We could feel people's hearts being opened," said Christine Muise, priest associate at St. Anne and St. Edmund. "We needed to do something. People are suffering and this is unbearable." With the hearty support of the congregation and the incumbent, Andrew Twiddy, they got St. Anne's ready.

Muise calls the experience both exhausting and exhilarating. "That first night we didn't know how it would go. I was expecting to be up all night," she said. "Instead they were all asleep by 11 p.m." She said people feel safe curling up on the pews with their backs against the seat backs. She is pleased with

the support. "A huge number of people from the community have said 'how can we help?'"

They do more than provide beds and food for the guests. Staff and volunteers (from community agencies and mental health) help them access programs and navigate through the daunting paperwork. Along the way they have discovered the barriers that keep people from finding shelter such as the 10-page application for housing (and an additional nine pages if the applicant is homeless). The homeless guests are grappling with several kinds of challenges from physical injuries to trauma to drug use. "People who are addicted or who are on the street are our modern-day lepers," said Muise, who has spent her career helping people on the margins. "People are afraid of them. They don't want to touch them. But these folks just need somewhere to eat and sleep, where they don't feel like they are going to be hurt by someone else, and where they feel loved."

Indeed, there were some touching moments. A few days before Christmas, organizers asked the shelter guests what they would like for a gift. A choir, they said. So about 40 people came over to sing carols.

Muise thrums with enthusiasm for the project. She points out that it started on Dec. 6, which is St. Nicholas Day, celebrating the fourth-century bishop who assisted poor families. It is also the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on the anniversary of the 1989 Montreal Massacre. Finally, it was the 11th anniversary of her own ordination.

She quotes Frederick Buechner: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet," adding that her passion has built on her own experience residing in a girls' home as a teen, and earning a criminology undergraduate degree. "It's been grace," she said. ■



St. Anne & St Edmund priest associate, Christine Muise, (R) and support worker Kelly Morris (L) pose in the cosy church.



The historic St. Anne Church kept the door open on cold December nights to welcome homeless guests.

Joining faith traditions

BY SUSAN DOWN

Alastair and Sabina

Ed. Note: In last February's St. Valentine edition, the Post ran several features on clergy married to clergy. This year we hear about Alastair McCollum, archdeacon and rector at St. John the Divine, Victoria, and his recent marriage to Sabina Singh, a secular Sikh.

Etiquette mavens suggest you refrain from talking about religion or politics at any social gathering. But from the moment they met, Alastair McCollum and Sabina Singh delved into just those serious subjects. And that choice made for a happy ending.

Both divorced, they first met through an online dating site (OK Cupid) about two years ago. In his profile, Alastair mentioned hobbies and views, but not his vocation, after a previous experience with a date who had misconceptions about what a priest was (closed minded and not progressive).

They met in person for the first time at the Victoria Dragon Boat Festival, where she was a paddler. They had coffee and talked, discovering they had very similar progressive views on issues such as social justice and decolonization. And that's when he revealed he was ordained, and why he was always busy Sunday mornings. "I thought, I can't go out with a priest," recalls Sabina, who had taught political science at the university and college level. She had sheltered her kids from religion completely after her own negative experiences. "I went back and told all my dragon

boat team members that I didn't think I'd be able to go out with a British priest."

He persisted and asked her on a second date to go to music bingo at a local pub. "It went from there," he said.

Culturally they come from very different worlds. He is from a huge blended family in the UK (his Irish stepfather had 13 children already when he married Alastair's mother). Racism was overt when he was young, and the mindset of "us and them" was very prevalent.

Sabina was born in Kamloops into a Sikh family (her parents were from the Punjab region of India) and attended Catholic school and later Anglican boarding school. Her mother she describes as British Indian, a woman whose father fought for the British army. Her father, a neurosurgeon, helped establish the local temple even though intellectually he was quite secular, says Sabina. She stopped attending the temple regularly in 1984 after news of the violent clash between the Indian Army and Sikhs at the Gurdwara (Golden Temple) at Amritsar.

They didn't see each other for a time. But he kept texting to see how she was doing. One of those texts was perfectly timed; she had fallen and hit her head, which was bleeding profusely. She asked if he could help. He drove her to a medical clinic. That clinched it, and she let go of her prejudices.

The couple was married in July 2019 at St. John the Divine by Bishop Logan, who used the interfaith liturgy for the Anglican marriage ceremony. The sermon was given by comparative religion

theologian John Thatamanil. For the sermon, John used questions asked of Jesus and gave answers back using Sikh religious texts, to illustrate both the similarities and the differences of faith.

Both their mothers attended the wedding. Sabina's kids approved wholeheartedly as did her extended family. "It was perfect timing for me because I just became an empty nester. Also, I have multiple sclerosis, so they can relax a lot more knowing I am taken care of," she said.

Still there were parts of the ceremony – such as reciting the Lord's Prayer – that Alastair included without realizing it would be a trigger for his wife. Afterward, in his blog, he wrote:

This prayer is a trigger because it links with what can only be described as oppressive or abusive behaviours by religious figures who forced children to learn it (and others) by rote, and threatened with promises of hellfire and damnation those who could not recite such prayers parrot-fashion on command –

even those of other faith traditions, or none, who were also being taught their own inadequacy or exclusion from "the faithful."

And yet for me, it is a prayer of intimacy and freedom, of unity and love. For me, not having had these negative experiences, and being the beneficiary of privilege which allowed me to feel included in the usage of such a prayer and not excluded I had no idea of the negativity behind including it in the form it was used in my own marriage service.

They were no sooner married than they began campaigning. After years of teaching politics, Sabina put her knowledge into practice and ran for the NDP in the October 2019 federal election in the Saanich-Gulf Islands riding held by Green Party's leader Elizabeth May. To do some homework, Alastair read a book by NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh (no relation to Sabina). "Indian culture is so interwoven. It gave him an understanding of how culture and spirituality can

be intertwined in a way that it isn't in the West," said Sabina. For his part, Alastair says he's committed to keeping church and state separate as institutions, "But I don't think you can be a person of faith without getting engaged in the work of the world and the political world."

It's been exciting learning about each other's cultures and communities says the couple who will travel to India in March for their honeymoon. They hope to catch the spring Holi festival, when people smear bright coloured powders on each other. "Meeting Sabina, whose cultural upbringing was so different, makes me question where I come from in a good way and think about the assumptions and prejudices that I carry," said Alastair. For her part, Sabina says she is much more open minded now. "It's not a world I ever thought about entering," she said about the Anglican community. "But I feel a great sense of belonging and welcome." ■



Alastair McCollum and Sabina Singh

Spring Retreat April 24-26, 2020

Lake Cowichan Research Centre, Mesachie Lake

All are welcome to join us for this gentle introduction to silence, chanting and lectio (sacred reading of scripture).

Facilitators: Heather & Christopher Page

Registration \$245.

Bursaries available.

Deadline April 3, 2020. Space limited.

Support generously provided by the Educational Trusts Board.

Email sharonrichmond@gmail.com for information or to register.



A LIFE WORTH LIVING: DIOCESAN WOMEN'S SPRING RETREAT

APRIL 17-19, 2020

REGISTRATION DEADLINE
MARCH 30, 2019

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
REGISTER VISIT BC.ANGLICAN.CA/EVENTS

DIOCESAN POST WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unveiling a new portrait of Mary Magdalene

BY RUTH DANTZER

Jerusalem pilgrimage fundraiser

As part of the pilgrimage program offered through Anglican Campus Spirituality at the University of Victoria, in April a group of UVic students will visit Jerusalem. There they will immerse themselves in the ancient stories of Israel and its contemporary quest for peace. During this 14-day journey, the students will attend a course called Footsteps of Jesus offered through St. George's Anglican College in Jerusalem.

As a group, we meet regularly on campus to prepare spiritually for our upcoming journey. We have walked the labyrinth, simulating the age-old pilgrimage to the Holy Land in this practice of walking meditation. We have attended presentations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to understand the context for

our trip to Jerusalem. We have shared our personal life stories with one another, relative to our spiritual journeys, to help the group to understand our various perspectives (religious and otherwise) and our intentions. We ate with Muna, a Palestinian Christian who volunteers at an Anglican Campus Spirituality program and is eager to share her customs as we prepare to travel to her homeland.

This is the second pilgrimage that I have offered out of UVic since the inception of the pilgrimage program in September of 2018. The program is a UVic-sanctioned activity, whereby the president has given his approval for these trips to happen under the university's name. This is a big step, because it means recognition of potential educational enrichment in a sacred journey experience. As with last year's Camino de Santiago trip, funding to help lower student costs has come from many sources. This trip



Ruth Dantzer (centre) with the UVic students planning a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the spring.

has been supported by the Educational Trusts Board, the Fred Hiltz scholarship, Multifaith Services, St. Philip Anglican Church, and once again, the Vision Fund.

As a fundraiser for the pilgrimage program, we've invited

guest Canon Dr. Richard LeSueur to give a talk on **Jerusalem Unveiling A New Portrait of Mary Magdalene** on February 7 at 6:30 p.m. He will speak of how a recent archeological discovery has changed 2000 Years of Christian teaching about Mary

Magdalene. All funds raised will go directly toward student costs for the pilgrimage. For more information contact Ruth Dantzer, anglican@uvic.ca. ■

Ruth Dantzer is the Anglican chaplain at UVic.



your sacred space for retreats & conferences

upcoming events & retreats



Celebration of Spirit
 Sunday Feb. 16, 2020 | 3:30 pm
 A spiritual celebration open to everyone that is looking for community

Tibetan Bowl & Gong Meditation
 Thursday Feb. 20, 2020 | 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
 w/ Benjamin Bollich. A sound bath to soothe your body and soul.





Mindful Self Compassion 5-Day Intensive
 Mar. 22-27, 2020 Learn the core principles and practices that enable you to respond to the difficult moments in your life with kindness, care and understanding

Considering a Group Retreat?
 Bethlehem Centre is offering special rates until the end of March on groups of 10 or more, Monday - Fridays






call or register online

1-877-889-0517
 2371 Arbot Road, Nanaimo, BC
www.bethlehemcentre.com
 250-754-3254

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

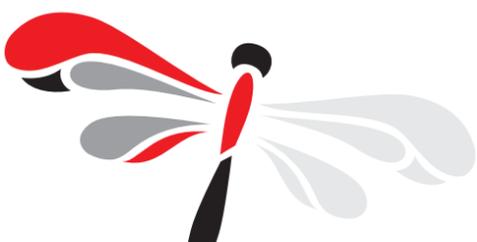
Do you know someone who is being ordained or someone celebrating an ordination anniversary?

Give them a Clergy Bear with surplice and stole in a colour of your choice.

www.anglicanfoundation.org



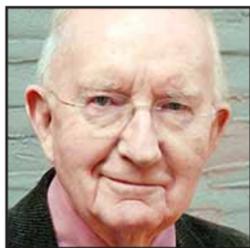
RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS**
 RENEWED **PEOPLE**



WEB EXCLUSIVES

TO ACCESS ADDITIONAL *DIOCESAN POST* STORIES GO TO www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-post

Entreat me



Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

In the year 825 BCE, a traveller taking the steep winding road from Jerusalem down to the Jordan Valley would be able to look eastward to where the Arabian desert shimmered in the heat.

On a certain early morning in that year the traveller might have seen three distant figures moving across the desert towards the bank of the Jordan river. At that distance he would not have been able to tell very much about the group and their camels. For all he knew or cared, they may

have been coming to trade south of Jerusalem, or in the city itself.

If we wish to meet that small group, we can do so. Someone in the long intervening millennia wrote their story, telling us why three women, one elderly, two youthful, arrived at the Jordan River, hoping to cross into the Bethlehem area.

Whoever wrote their story did so sensitively and thoughtfully. In a time when the names of women were often omitted from manuscripts, our unknown writer has given us the names of every character in the story.

About 35 years before this group of women appeared out of the desert, a young couple named Naomi and Elimelech lived in Bethlehem with their two small sons, Mahlon and Chilion. When famine struck, Elimelech decided to leave the area and migrate across the Jordan into the land then called Moab.

The decision to emigrate seemed a good one for the boys.

Then disaster struck. Elimelech died. For a while, the family was able to continue with the boys, now strong youths, working the land. Both eventually found wives in Moab. Mahlon married Ruth. Chilion married Orpah.

Life was good for about a decade, then both young husbands became ill and died. Neither marriage had produced children. Naomi's worst nightmare had come true. She and her daughters-in-law were left defenceless and without support.

There was only one course of action: return to Israel and throw themselves on the good will of Naomi's extended family in Bethlehem. Travelling mostly by night, they had safely reached the border, the river Jordan.

As they camped by the Jordan, the women once again discussed the risks of leaving Moab and entering Israel. Not only are all three widowed, but the moment they cross the river, Orpah and Ruth will be foreigners without protection or rights of any

kind. The best they could hope for was that Naomi's extended Bethlehem family would take them in for her sake.

At a certain point Orpah made her decision to return to her people. Naomi now waited for Ruth's decision. When it came, it would form what was one of the most beautiful expressions of human love ever spoken.

We can imagine the moment in which Ruth turned to Naomi. The long-agonized conversation between the three women was over. The small fire on the sand had died down. By this time, Orpah had left the fire and gone into the tent to prepare for the dangerous journey home. Naomi looked toward Ruth, awaiting the answer she knows by now is coming. At this moment, Ruth may well have moved to put an arm around Naomi.

*Intreat me not to leave you
or to turn back from
following you.*

Where you go, I will go.

Where you lodge I will lodge.

*Your people shall be my
people,
and your God my God.
Where you die, I will die,
there will I be buried.*

The matter settled, Ruth scattered the last embers of the fire, helped her mother-in-law to stand, and closed the tent to sleep. They had to rest before the river crossing on the morrow.

In the years ahead many things will happen to these two women. They will both find happiness: Ruth in a love affair that leads to marriage, Naomi in her joy at her daughter-in-law's happiness.

Some have called their story one of the world's great love stories. You can read it in a very short book of the Bible, the Book of Ruth. It's sandwiched in between all the sturm und drang of the Book of Judges and 1st. Samuel. ■

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

Respecting covenant: risking the journey towards reconciliation

BY JULIE FOSTER

In August 2019, through the generosity of the Educational Trusts Board, I was able to attend the conference of the Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC) at UBC. I joined 12 communities from Canada, the US, the Caribbean, and Brazil from seven denominations. The theme and title for the gathering, *Respecting Covenant: Risking the Journey towards Reconciliation*, was explored through a rich mix of speakers, Bible study, worship services, workshops and site visits focusing on creation and refugees.

Indigenous issues were a thread throughout the sessions. Carmen Lansdowne, ordained minister and executive director of the First United Church Community Ministry Society in Vancouver, is a Heiltsuk woman from BC's central coast, and she spoke of the painful lived experience of not knowing her birthright

and culture. Melanie Delva, reconciliation animator at the Anglican Church's national office, spoke on the journey from genocide to justice. As individuals, we need to know our history, including concepts such as the "doctrine of discovery," and terra nullius, which justified taking and settling land. As churches, we need to look at what we are doing with the 94 Calls to Action, and issues such as child protection practices and mining without Indigenous involvement.

I attended a workshop with Hummingbird Ministries (a First Nations outreach program of the Presbyterian Church) and explored the Indigenous resources on the UBC campus. The UBC library is in the process of digitization of First Nations records and photographs, including some from northern Vancouver Island. The Indian Residential School and Research Centre is on campus providing a source of information for

First Nations people who attended the schools. The campus is on a dedicated journey of reconciliation, and with ceremony from many tribal groups, raised a reconciliation pole.

In conversations with others at the conference, I learned about the United Church survivor ministry on the Six Nations reserve, the Presbyterian annual pilgrimage for settlers to visit and stay in First Nation communities, and the Brazil Lutheran language program and resources. I have learned, shared and prayed and continue to live out the call to reconciliation respecting God's covenant.

The diocese offers four educational grant programs for ordination candidates, ordained clergy, and laity through the Educational Trusts Board. Consult the Synod website www.bc.anglican.ca/resources/funding for more information. ■

Julie and her husband, Denis, are members of Christ Church, Alert Bay.

The *Contemplative* Society "Committed to recovering the mystical heart of the Christian Wisdom tradition"

RETREATS 2020-2021

WARD BAUMAN
June 10—13, 2020
Bethlehem Centre,
Nanaimo, BC Canada

MATTHEW WRIGHT
August 18—21, 2020
Cowichan Lake Research
Station, BC Canada

CYNTHIA BOURGEAULT
April 23—27, 2021
Cowichan Lake Research
Station, BC Canada

Phone: 250.381.9650
Email: admin@contemplative.org
Website: www.contemplative.org
Facebook: The Contemplative Society
Twitter: @ContemplativeSociety



FOR DIOCESAN POST AD RATES VISIT US ONLINE www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-post

Abundance of meaning



My Journey

The My Journey column is a regular Q&A feature that explores the lives of clergy members. Ruth Dantzer was ordained in November 2019. She is a chaplain at the University of Victoria.

BY RUTH DANTZER

I grew up on an acreage in rural Alberta, between Calgary and Cochrane. As a young girl I remember sneaking away with a loaf of bread and my parents' wine to practise saying the words of Jesus as I sat in a field looking onto the Bow River and towards the Rocky Mountains. As a family we went to a Catholic church every Sunday. However, attending church didn't help fill the void of teenage angst, nor

did it help with the numerous existential crises I came up against. Instead, I turned to drugs and alcohol for meaning. When that didn't work out so well, I turned to the austerity of Buddhist practices, diving into the wide world of meditation. Around this same time, I volunteered at the Mother Teresa organization in Calcutta. Here, (in Mother Teresa's words) I served the poorest of the poor in orphanages, the Home for the Dying, and at the Howrah train station. This experience, at the age of 20, exposed me to the harsh realities of the world, but also helped to give me a greater sense of clarity, meaning, and purpose. Fast forward 20 years, and today I find myself living on a rural acreage in Cobble Hill with my husband, Gabriel, and my two young children, Odran (8) and Iona (6). I still don't have many of the answers, but I have found an abundance of meaning!

When I was a child, I wanted to be a saint when I grew up. I suppose seeds were being planted, even back then, for a

life of ordained ministry. Since then, the 20-year journey, I have been led, guided, and nudged. I was never set on being a priest, but rather trusted in each step as it unfolded, curious to see where I would end up. I left home at the age of 17 to travel the world, and it was during this period that I received a calling to the priesthood, while on a Buddhist meditation retreat in India. I was raised Catholic but had not known of the rich contemplative practices within the Christian tradition, and so I delved deeply into other religions. Eventually, at university, I was introduced to the practice of centering prayer which led me back to my Christian roots. While initially I imagined my call to ordained ministry to be at a parish, this changed over time as I immersed myself in various settings as a chaplain. Chaplaincy plays an important role in the church, as chaplains reach those people who, for whatever reason, won't enter a church.

What is your work background?

Mostly I have worked in chaplaincy settings. I have worked as a chaplain at a

Faith in Foundation

What are the greatest challenges facing the church?

The greatest challenge is being scared to reimagine what the Anglican Church needs to look like in this new time, and not being rooted deeply enough in prayer and spiritual disciplines to surrender to the (sometimes) uncomfortable process of transformation that will be required for such a change. We need to let go of that which is no longer serving us, all the while keeping the traditions that infuse meaning and depth in the Anglican Church.

I understand why many turn away from religion, and I am comfortable supporting these people through a spiritual path that provides nourishment without being under the sole guise of Christianity. That said, I am madly in love with religion – all of the world's great wisdom traditions – and I see the beauty and potential that each path holds. Being a campus chaplain enables me to put into use many of the skills that I have learned in my life and in my studies. ■

trauma hospital in Denver (in the ICU and in the emergency department), at two different hospices and at an addiction treatment centre in Nanaimo. I have offered spiritual direction, taught yoga, led wilderness solos, and facilitated contemplative retreats over the years. I have also worked as a doula (labour assistant) for pregnant women and new mothers. I have worked as a restorative justice facilitator in an inner-city high school in Denver and as a personal network coordinator in a drop-in shelter for women and children.

What route did you take for your studies?

I received my undergrad degree in religious studies from Naropa University, a contemplative-inspired university in the US whose curriculum integrates the contemplative practices of the world's wisdom traditions. As part of my master's degree, I took a two-year-long spiritual direction certification program through a Benedictine monastery in Colorado.

Future shock: media and churches

Editor's Note

BY SUSAN DOWN

In just 20 years there will be no Anglicans left, reported The Anglican Journal last month. The handwringing about the future of the Anglican Church reminded me of the prevailing fears in another industry: newspapers. In the last decade, there were bold predictions about the death of newspapers.

During my tenure at what was then known as the Canadian Newspaper Association – now News Media Canada – we rebranded our annual conference, calling it Ink and Beyond. In 2007, it was the unknown “beyond” that was on all publishers' minds. What could they do to save an industry that had been disrupted by the internet? Lucrative print classified

ads disappeared overnight and major advertisers were lured away by cheap “pay per click” online ads. And worst of all, newspaper circulation was dropping precipitously while online aggregators were grabbing editorial content and using it for free.

A generation ago, attending church was as common a habit as reading the daily newspaper, the paper that had been lobbed onto the front step early that morning. According to an Angus Reid Institute poll in 2015, 23 per cent of Canadians said they had gone to church at least once in the past month, compared to 43 per cent in 1986.

The study results can seem contradictory. About 75 percent of Canadians believe in God, according to Angus Reid's 2017 religion survey. But another survey found the majority of people agree that a belief in God isn't needed to live a moral life.

The share of Canadians who ticked off the “no religion” box on the census form rose from 4 per cent in 1971 to 24 per cent in 2011. And yet, sociologist Reginald Bibby noted how 54 per cent of Canadians who say they have “no religion” nevertheless acknowledge they have “spiritual needs.”

We live in a post-Christian age, say the pundits. Browse in any bookstore and you'll see whole sections crammed with mindfulness, spiritual and self-help books with the same narratives you might find in a Sunday sermon. Book sales in this area were up more than 13 per cent in 2017 in the UK, reported The Guardian. Sales leaders included titles such as Buddhist monk Haemin Sunim's The Things You Can See Only When You Slow Down, and Angels: How to See, Hear and Feel Your

Angels by “angel expert” Kyle Gray.

What's the church to do? Take a look at the newspaper industry. It consolidated, innovated and whatever the platform, continued to be a trusted medium. Reporters don't meet just one deadline anymore. They tweet, blog and post constantly throughout the workday. A recent headline on an industry website read “Canadian newspaper readership at an all-time high.” Turns out millennials haven't turned their backs on the industry; 88 per cent of them read a paper every week – on their phones or tablets. So the newspaper industry is still very much alive, but completely transformed.

Just as methods of keeping up with the news take many different forms, worship can evolve and change. Maybe, like the newspaper industry previous focus on print circulation, they are tracking the wrong statistic. For the

church, maybe it's not about attendance on Sunday, it's about serving the community and combining forces to help fill people's spiritual needs. Both news media and churches are vital elements of a healthy democracy. Freedom of religion and freedom of expression (including a free press) are two of the four fundamental freedoms written into the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (the other two are freedom of assembly and association).

In 20 years, perhaps there won't be any people sitting in the pews on Sunday. But there may not be any pews either. Instead, the churches will be filled with community and support groups meeting every day of the week; and even more people will be watching the livestreamed church events or joining online discussion groups at home – right after they finish reading the online edition of their daily newspapers. ■

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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

The listening bishop retires

Continued from cover

of Vancouver Island to emphasize the work of reconciliation. His Sacred Journey made headlines. He began the walk in Alert Bay during Lent in March 2016 and completed the second part of the walk during Lent the following year. The walk was an act of penitence, he said. “Through our forebears, we entered this land the first time believing we carried God with us. We failed to recognize that the Creator was already here, working in and through the First Peoples of this land. Now we, in our generation, need to symbolically re-enter this

land in a new way—a way marked by respect and humility on the part of the settler church.”

Bishop Logan hopes the decolonization of the church will continue in earnest. “I’m hoping we will live reconciliation as a spiritual practice in relationships with other churches and with families,” he said.

His working name for the diocese, “diocese of islands and inlets,” is the most visible illustration of how our perception of ourselves can begin to change. “Rather than trying to shape the land in which we find ourselves, we will be shaped by that land,” he said, adding the name reflects where we find ourselves rather than where we came from.

Bishop Logan believes a

significant accomplishment has been articulating the diocesan vision and identifying in it three areas of focus: faith in action, faith in formation and faith in foundation. “The vision comes out of an understanding that we, as a church must never be satisfied that we are doing everything right,” he said. “We must always challenge ourselves to look again and do things differently when they are no longer serving our purpose. We adopted the term ‘Re:’ in 2014 as a way of reminding ourselves to re: imagine, re: consider, re: focus in all aspects of our shared work. This helped frame the vision as it is now articulated.” Today, parishes across the diocese have incorporated the language of the vision into their own missions and

visions. It has been an important part of our own healing and reconciliation as a diocese.

Recently, the Anglican Church of Canada released gloomy projections that by 2040, there would be no parishioners, attendees or donors left. “We knew that stuff from the 2006 Diocesan Ministry Resource Team (DMRT) report. This is not a surprise to us. But let’s not wallow in that. Don’t be frozen by it,” he responded.

“We have begun the work of using our vision to inform the two-pronged approach we call Transforming Futures which is both a congregational development process and fundraising effort. We can’t get distracted by numbers when we have so much work to do,” said

Bishop Logan. He trusts that the people of this diocese of island and inlets have the creativity and the energy to continue this work.

In his retirement, Bishop Logan looks forward to spending time with his wife Marcia and their seven children. He plans to take up hobbies he hasn’t had time for in recent years including woodworking at the family cottage in Youbou making toys for his 15 grandchildren. He hopes to do some travelling as well, including taking his oldest grandson (who is 12) on a trip to the UK.

And, of course, Bishop Logan will continue walking his journey of reconciliation, each step another on the journey he began six years ago. ■

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was struck by the juxtaposition of articles in the January 2020 *Diocesan Post* and *Anglican Journal*. In the former the piece is about parishes in Port Alberni merging; in the latter it is a screaming headline about how there will be no Anglicans left by 2040!

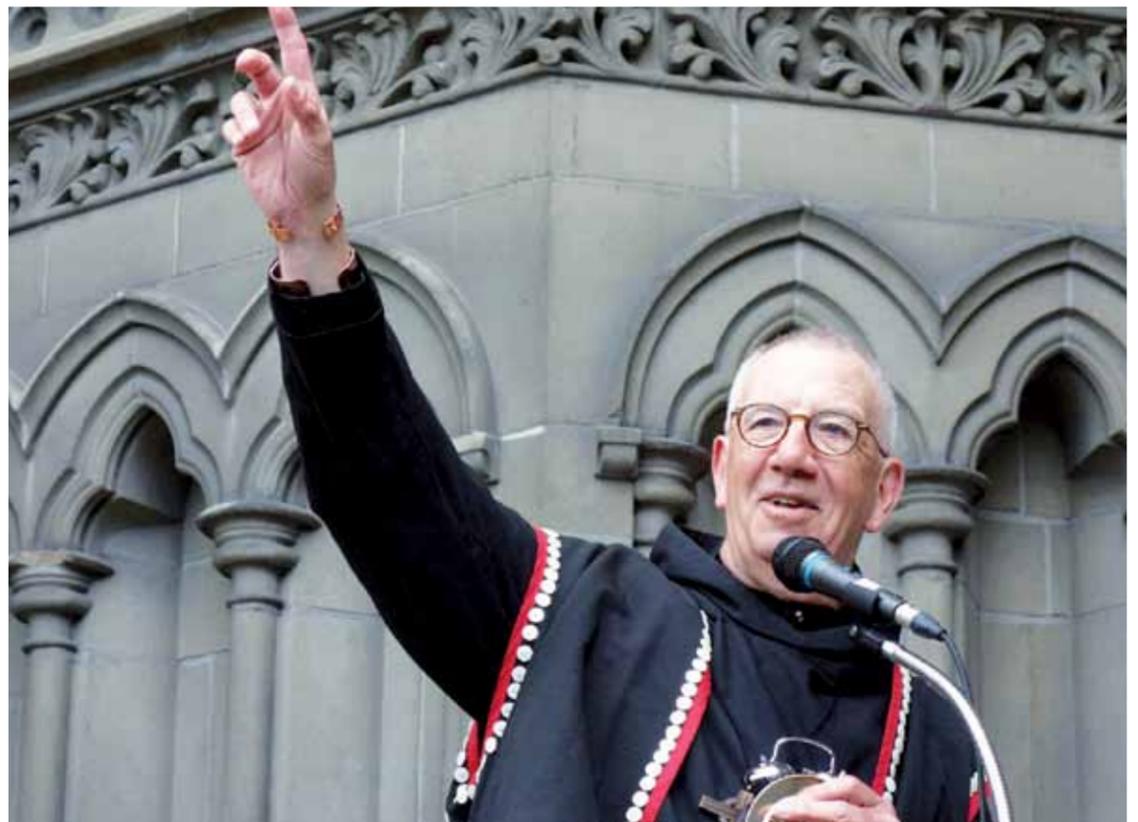
The Port Alberni merger struck me as it is about Anglican and Lutheran parishes coming together, presumably not just to survive but to make their joint community stronger. Bully for them. While the demise of Anglicanism in Canada by 2040 is an exaggeration, it suggests that perhaps more parishes in our dioceses nationwide should be thinking of joining together.

In our own Diocese of BC, there are presumably several

parishes that should be thinking of consolidating. Certainly in Greater Victoria there are several struggling parishes that could be bolstered by judicious mergers with neighbouring parishes.

We all understand that no one likes to think of “their” parish closing, but if we are to build our strength in order to ignore the 2040 prophesy, there is merit in retrenching in the short term in order to build the critical mass that will carry us forward into the future. We need better visioning, stronger management and, yes, some bold risk-taking, if we are not to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

David Collins
Victoria



Bishop Logan addressed the crowd from the front steps of Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria following the completion of his Sacred Journey in 2016. (Photo by Catherine Allen Whale)



Staying active is part of a healthy lifestyle. We hear you.

- Connect Hearing has the latest, most discreet hearing aids on the market.
- We’re Canada’s #1 physician referred† hearing healthcare provider.

We have clinics conveniently located in communities across Vancouver Island.

Call to book your FREE* hearing test today.

1.888.850.9979
connecthearing.ca



Connect Hearing
YOUR HEARING PROFESSIONALS