



DIOCESAN POST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

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Safeguarding Environmental Health



Bishop Logan Writes

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
DR. LOGAN MCMENAMIE

Bishop calls for institutional jubilee on climate

We only have to watch or listen to the news to know that, in addition to the daily pressures of a world that is changing faster than we can keep up, the climate crisis is top of mind for most folk in our communities. It's easy to be swept up in the wave of protests and propaganda, and some may say that in doing so Christians are losing track of our own path. I say to you that by attending to the warnings about creation, we

are engaging God's world. Make no mistake, God is not waiting on the church to act. God is acting and invites the church to join God's mission in the world.

In 1991, we had a diocesan conference in Parksville called "Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation." The speakers were Peter Hamel and Loren Wilkinson and the topic was the care of creation. It was a very difficult conference, for we were in a place of fear, worry and anxiety. Much discussion ensued around theology and truth, liturgy and language, science and faith—and there was much fear and distrust. There were conservative stances and liberal stances, secular stances and progressive stances, and all divided and alienated the other. We had conversations as to how God had created the universe and how our planet had come to be. It was a time to ensure that particular groups and their beliefs were not lost, and equally, that those that were opposed did not take root. It was the beginning, sadly, of what was to be lived out in our diocese in the following years.

One moment of sense and wisdom happened just as the conference was coming to an



A twice-weekly walking group at Christ Church Cathedral enjoys a scenic pathway.

end. The bishop was starting his closing remarks and, just before he was about to adjourn the gathering, he saw two youth delegates standing at a microphone. In his wisdom, he stopped and said, "I have called for this gathering to close, but I will give these two young women the last word before we leave and go home." They thanked the bishop and everyone present for giving them the opportunity to speak. Then, they spoke to the gathering, probably with fear and trembling, and this is what they said: "When we all arrive at the throne of heaven, God will not ask us what and how

creation was formed, because God knows that. God will ask us, at that time, what we have done with creation and how we have cared for the earth."

As we see thousands of folks gathering around the globe to ask governments to do something about the impending climate crisis, in what ways are we, as Anglicans, responding? What does it mean for us on these islands and inlets to respond and join our voices with those who are asking for something to be done? What will it mean for us to join in partnership with others in our community to care for creation? What do we

have to offer? An argument? Or do we have solutions as how we best care for this planet? Surely we, who live so close to the land and the ocean and to the Creator, have insights and discernments as to how to care for creation.

It is part of our baptismal covenant: "Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God's creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?" We respond: "I will, with God's help."

So, how will God help us, and where do we start?

Early in 2019, I called the diocese to a season of discipleship. I said, "[Discipleship] is a call to

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Port Alberni Parishes Merge

In Port Alberni 19 years ago, St. Alban Anglican and Christ the King Lutheran churches decided to "move in together," pooling their resources to form a shared ministry. This was a year prior to full communion being ratified between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and

the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). It was decided that St. Alban would house the two congregations, so Christ the King church property was sold with the proceeds divided between the BC Synod and the congregation. The two faith communities shared the clergy, determined to have one worship service on Sundays with rotating liturgies from both traditions, and do all programming together. Soon after, All Saints Anglican asked

to become part of the shared ministry as well, subsequently merging with St. Alban. A new name was chosen and given that the parish involved three congregations the decision was Trinity: Trinity Anglican Church and Trinity Lutheran Church. The new parish was dedicated on March 28, 2004.

Over the course of the next 15 years the congregations continued to weave ever more closely together. There came a

point when it seemed redundant to have two councils, two treasurers and two envelope secretaries. Although there was a deep respect for both traditions, identifying as a member of Trinity was more important than being Anglican or Lutheran when most appreciated growing in Christ as both.

Seeking an official way that the congregation could become one faith community, we crafted a memorandum of agreement, and

it is this MOA that was signed Dec. 1 by the present bishops of the Diocese of British Columbia (Islands and Inlets) ACC and the Synod of British Columbia ELCIC, the incumbent/pastor and two lay leaders. The name of the new congregation will be Trinity Anglican + Lutheran Church. This action of the pen sets in motion a legal process, but it also reflects the fulsome identity of the present congregation and

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Environmantal Health

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live in a particular way and to be shaped by a lifestyle. Jesus calls us to live in relationship to kingdom values. Central to these values are the beatitudes. The beatitudes shape and form us as we seek to live as disciples.” Now, as we welcome another new year, we must ask how does our ongoing formation as disciples of Jesus relate to the needs, hopes and fears of the world in which we live—yes globally, but as a place to start, why not regionally?

Through distribution to the clergy, each parish in the diocese should now have a copy of the book Watershed Discipleship, a collection of essays edited by Ched Myers that explores ecological theology and practice. A watershed is an area of land that catches rain and snow which then seeps into a marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater; it can be a small pond or a great lake. Metaphorically speaking, this book calls on us to investigate what ideas or beliefs have seeped into our congregations, regions, and the wider diocese. What’s in our shared groundwater of kingdom values? The book calls us to recognize the real concern that we are in a historical moment of watershed crisis as an institution and as a planet. I am asking every parish to take

seriously this book and make it our focus during this season of discipleship. I am therefore calling the whole diocese to an intentional period of prayer from the Epiphany (January 6, 2020) until Ash Wednesday (February 26, 2020), in which we will ask God to move in and through us as we seek to be shaped by the Spirit and move into God’s future.

Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation?

Then, as we move into Lent (February 26 to April 9, 2020), I am calling for an institutional jubilee in which we will focus on study instead of institutional maintenance. I have asked diocesan council and finance committee not to meet for business during this time, but to meet instead to study and dream together. I encourage parishes to do the same—instead of holding parish councils or vestries, use the time usually set aside for meetings during those 40 days, for discussion and brainstorming instead. What will it mean for us not to have meetings during Lent this year? As a diocese, we are travelling heavy now; we need to move into the future and travel lightly. By giving ourselves a break from institutional maintenance, will we finally be able to traverse our watershed

smoothly? Will the water appear clearer?

What else can we give up that will unbind us and free us to focus on ministry?

It is my belief, as we engage in this discussion around our watershed vitality, that we will be able to be more creative in what we are called to become through Transforming Futures. I remind you that the Transforming Futures campaign isn’t just about revitalizing our churches, but about engaging with the needs of the wider world by living as disciples of Jesus—by his example to care for one another and for creation.

As I imagine the future of this diocese, I see transition. A change in shape. Water is a powerful force that easily

Bishop’s Calendar

January

1-6	On vacation
11	Induction of Sulin Milne - St. Peter, Comox
12	Parish Visit – St. John the Divine, Courtenay
16	Finance Committee – synod office
18	Speaker at Men’s Breakfast - St. George, Cadboro Bay
19	Parish Visit – St. Mary, Nanoose Bay
23	Clergy Day – St. Philip, Cedar
25	Diocesan Council – location TBD
26	Parish Visit – St. Paul, Nanaimo

moves and reshapes nearly everything made by human hands and God’s hand. It’s a fitting metaphor for our diocese of islands and inlets to adopt and explore. The question is, are we currently cultivating lush brooks blessed by beatitudes

or are we digging convenient culverts to carry our runoff? Let’s see this watershed moment as an opportunity, not a threat, and lay aside anything keeping us from fully participating in the transformation of God’s good creation. ■



Bishop Logan preaching at Christ Church Cathedral.

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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 1

Editor's Note

This is the month of diets, healthier habits and of course, Epiphany. I like to think there are a few epiphanies in each edition of the *Diocesan Post*, stories that give readers a new awareness of an issue or a life story of a someone in the diocese. A watershed moment

is a kind of epiphany, a dividing line beyond which nothing will ever be the same again. Bishop Logan directs us to answer the urgent call for environmental disciples. Stewarding the environment seems like an obvious focus for the church. In upcoming editions, we will continue to report on environmental activities throughout the diocese. Also in this edition, there is a chorus of fine writing voices: Alastair McCollum

talks of death and dying, Jim Holland examines the positive influence of atheism and Dyan Davison discusses her path to the priesthood. Elizabeth Welch's powerful sermon given at Ruth Dantzer's ordination is excerpted here, too. A future edition will be devoted to the rich Anglican music tradition in the diocese. If you have a suggestion for a story to share, drop us a line. -Susan Down, editor

Faith in Formation

Port Alberni Parishes Merge

Continued from cover

makes clear its witness to the wider community. We are so fortunate with this action to be able to save human resources by not having to duplicate

efforts but rather use all our resources for what is most important in being a faith community. ■

Brenda Nestegaard Paul (pastor/incumbent), David Bishop (people's warden), Elizabeth Stokes (pastor's warden), Barbara Smith (Lutheran chair).

Atheism's Contribution to Religion

BY JIM HOLLAND

An Anglican priest and chaplain talks frankly about faith to Shawnigan Lake School students. An excerpt from a 2018 speech to youth in grades 8 to 12

At a conference for school chaplains I recently attended, a question arose about the students (and staff) in our school communities who consider themselves agnostics or atheists. How do we serve them? Some of you will be surprised by what I about to say, because I am going to speak about the contributions that I believe atheism makes in our pluralistic society. I am not going to attempt to speak on behalf of atheists, but rather as a religious believer who has received considerable

wisdom from those who do not believe as I do. There are many reasons for identifying oneself as an atheist. Some atheists believe religion is a stumbling block to scientific and social progress. Of course this has been true at times. There have always been religious institutions and individuals who have pitted themselves against scientific and social progress. The Dark Ages were partly the result of the church belief that it had to stamp out the accumulated wisdom of the "pagan" Greek and Roman cultures. Atheism has been and continues to be a counterpoint and a corrective to the kind of religion that sees progress as a threat. Healthy atheism is based on skepticism, on intellectual honesty and on the importance of personal responsibility. There has been, and continues to be, religion that makes no room for questions and critiques. Skeptical atheism is open to questioning everything,

including religious beliefs held by a large portion of the population, and sometimes this takes great courage. As I learned at the chaplain's conference, there are still areas in the U.S. where, if you identify as an atheist, you are considered "un-American."

Healthy atheism is based on skepticism, on intellectual honesty and on the importance of personal responsibility

Another critique by many atheists is that religion has been used to avoid both personal and social responsibility. We have all heard comments like: "God is in charge; there is nothing we can do about the problems in the world." The atheist would say, there are no outside forces causing us to act good or bad. We are responsible for our own actions; and the human race is responsible for the state of the world.

The French philosopher, Albert Camus was once asked to speak to a community of Benedictine monks. He asked them: "If you knew today that there was no God, no afterlife, would you choose to live any different that you are living now?" He went on to say that to live an authentic life either as a Christian or an atheist, we must live according to what is fundamentally important to us, not out of hope for reward or fear of punishment. Ultimately we must be responsible for whatever it is we believe. We cannot put that responsibility onto any creed or ideology. The contributions atheism has made to religion have rarely been recognized by religious people. We tend to resist looking deeply at criticisms of our church. To those of you who consider yourselves atheists, my plea is only that you not be too quick to judge religious people as all the same, nor to see religion as static. Religion is a multi-faceted, evolving phenomenon. It has been the source of some of history greatest violence, but it has also been the source of some

of history's greatest and most heroic humanitarian efforts. It has stood in the way of science, and it has been the source of some of the most important scientific advances in history. All of us are constantly in the process of learning and trying to figure out life, and some people choose to explore what it is to be an atheist. To do so with integrity is not an easy thing, but when atheism is considered with thought and care it can provide important questions and critiques for those of us who have a religious bent. The question remains, how can I best serve those of you who are not believers? My hope is that you have never felt intentionally excluded or disrespected, but I imagine that regrettably, you have sometimes felt neglected. I hope that today is a small step toward rectifying that. None of us is finished growing, and the best way to continue to grow is to continue to engage with one another in meaningful conversation. ■ The Reverend Jim Holland is the chaplain at Shawnigan Lake School

A LIFE WORTH LIVING: DIOCESAN WOMEN'S

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

An Act of Imaginative Hope

BY ELIZABETH WELCH

This is an excerpt from a sermon delivered at Ruth Dantzer’s ordination to the priesthood, held at UVic Interfaith Chapel on Nov.16, 2019 (the full sermon is available on the diocesan website). On that date, we commemorate Margaret, Queen of Scots, Helper of the Poor. Elizabeth Welch is incumbent at St George the Martyr, Cadboro Bay.

Just think for a moment of a spiritual experience (for lack of a better term) you’ve had. Perhaps it was gazing at the blank brilliance of a full moon just declodded of clouds; or standing before the waves of the ocean which, despite the chaos in your mind, just keep washing ashore in their untroubled rhythm thereby soothing your soul; or holding your newborn baby to your breast; or kneeling on the damp earth before the grave of a loved one; or entering a church and receiving a bit of bread and a sip of wine and suddenly being filled with a sense of your unity with every hungry being who has ever walked the earth. We have all had experiences that simultaneously take us out of ourselves and bring us home to ourselves.

The point is we all have experiences of the Holy. Why then do we ordain people? The word “ordain” stems from the Old French ordener meaning to “place in order, arrange, prepare; consecrate, or designate.” We ordain priests, I think, because we need people to help us navigate the borderlands of our lives. Ordained priests help us embody and integrate our experiences of the Holy; they preside over the rituals that turn us again and again towards the Holy. They accompany and encourage us as we carry the snuffed candles of our souls back to the Holy Fire of God to be relit. They are a symbol, a reminder, that God is not just in some distant realm we cannot touch but is always meeting us here in the chaos of the world, if we have the courage to look with our hearts. They help us open the daily invitations we receive to dwell in divine love, to seek divine justice.

Ordained priests are not closer to God, we’re just designated to keep turning us all toward God, when it would really be much simpler to turn away. Dwelling in God’s presence sounds lovely and comforting but sometimes actually it’s nothing short of

terrifying, because if we dwell with God then we have to go where God calls. There is a good reason why nearly all the prophets of the Hebrew Bible, when called by God, say in some way or another: “Hmmm, don’t you think you’d like to find someone else for that job?” And God will burn away all the layers of fakery to get to the core of us, the naked us, and will say: “you are so beautiful, and I love you.” God’s love always confronts and transforms us if we let it, and that is always a little terrifying.

In the Anglican Christian tradition, to give us courage and direction in our own journey of faith, we honour the lives of certain faithful people who’ve come before us. Today is the commemoration of Margaret, Queen of Scots. Margaret was an Anglo-Saxon princess who was married to King Malcolm III of the Scottish people in 1069. She is revered as the “helper of the poor” because she went out to meet the poor where they were and she brought them into her home and knelt and washed their feet, and she sought to reform institutions to better serve them.

This is I think the best summary of what the work of a priest is: to love such that those we serve are called to love the world more.

And when I say love, I don’t mean love like the saccharine sweetness of a Hallmark card. But love like bread in the mouths of the hungry, love like standing on the front lines pressed up against the police barricades as we protect our sacred lands, love like cutting ourselves off from fossil fuels and seeking a way to live that honours the generations to come, and love like reaching across the lines that divide us.



Ruth Dantzer

What I think I’m trying to say is that being an imam or sheikh or rabbi or priest or a minister or pastor is inherently

political. It is a defiance of all that would tell us that the world is only a marketplace and we are only products in it, a refusal to accept that the almighty dollar is the altar at which we should bow. It is to say, “God is bigger than all the pharaohs of all the world; and God’s bottom line is bread in the mouths of the hungry, the earth restored, the human family offering to one another the dignity to which we are called.” When I say clergy-people are political, it is because they insist on behalf of us all that every living being is worthy of tender care.

We are in dark times and many people are in despair. But this moment, this ritual, reflects our commitment to hope. Ordination is an act of imaginative hope; an insistence that God will always be calling us all into the glory of the kingdom that is Love. And it isn’t far away, it’s right here.

Ruth, you do not need to be perfect, you do not need to be the most inspiring preacher or the most knowledgeable teacher. You do not need to flawlessly preside over our rituals. What you need to do this sacred work you already have – because you have your desire to dwell in the presence of God, your commitment to be God’s friend. ■



Ruth Dantzer was ordained in November at UVic’s Interfaith Chapel where she is a chaplain. Photo credit: Susan Down.



KEYED UP: Jeremy Carr receives the ceremonial keys to the church at his induction at St. Dunstan, Gordon Head in November.

DIOCESAN POST WELCOMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hearing the Call?

BY JOY ADAMS BAUER

The discernment process explained

A new process for those discerning priestly or diaconal ministry was put in place in our diocese in 2014 directed by an examining chaplains committee. Since then, (under the leadership of committee chair Joe Forsyth), a new, more friendly name has been given to the team of lay and ordained folks that make up our ministry discernment team whose members are now called mentoring chaplains. Upon Joe's retirement in December 2019,

Bishop Logan appointed me chair of the team.

As a retired communications professional, I know the challenge of trying to spread the word about a process when everyone is overwhelmed by a tsunami of information every day. To help, our team has developed a ministry discernment toolkit for clergy and discerners. A communications plan for the kit is being worked on. Stay tuned!

To whet your appetite, here are the basic steps in the process towards ordination in our diocese.

Stage One – a person feels a call

People who feel a call to ordained ministry start the process by approaching their parish priests to talk about what they are hearing from God. If the priest discerns evidence of a vocation or call, s/he and the individual meet with the bishop to confirm that feeling.

Stage Two – discernment at the parish level

If the bishop agrees, a parish discernment group (PDG) is established, and the parish priest informs the chair of the diocesan ministry discernment team (MDT). A member of that team attends one of the first meetings of the parish group to explain the process. The PDG includes the parish priest and could include one of the wardens or a parish council member, a deacon or a retired clergy and three to four other individuals of the parish who are in active lay ministry within the parish community. After meeting for at least six months, the PDG makes a recommendation to the bishop. If a call is confirmed, the bishop informs the chair of the diocesan MDT. A mentoring chaplain is assigned to the discerner to walk alongside him or her as s/he continues to discern the nature of the call.

Stage Three – Ministry Discernment Weekend

When ready, the discerner applies to attend the annual diocesan ministry discernment weekend. All applications must be received by July 15 for the weekend process, held in late fall at the Bethlehem Centre in Nanaimo. The application form is on the diocesan website at <https://bc.anglican.ca/pages/parish-ministry-discernment--241>

Members of the MDT review applications and the chair lets applicants know if they can attend the weekend. Over the weekend, applicants meet with a team of assessors who continue to work with them on discerning the nature of their call. Following the weekend, the assessors prepare a report to the bishop on future direction. That direction can include ordination to the

priesthood or the diaconate or a confirmation of lay ministry, all equally important. The report is shared with the applicant who meets with the bishop to discuss the bishop's wish for her/him and the next steps in the process. Applicants continue to receive support from their PDG and mentoring chaplains until ordination or until they are comfortable in a lay ministry role.

There are many steps in the process. However, throughout, everyone involved is always listening to the voice of God and being guided by the Holy Spirit.

More information is available on the Diocesan website. ■

Joy Adams Bauer is chair of the ministry discernment team for the Diocese of British Columbia. mdt@bc.anglican.ca

Deadlines: Planning for Departure

BY ALASTAIR MCCOLLUM

Death is not the most popular conversation around the family dining table, at least not around mine. But when St. John the Divine (Victoria), organized a four-part series exploring

death and dying, the room was packed to bursting each week. It is obviously something which we should talk about more as pilgrims on a spiritual journey which we don't believe finishes at the end of our earthly life.

Using the outline of a

checklist called Coming To Terms With Our Mortality, available from willowEOL.com (a BC-based organization delivering education on end-of-life topics), we explored how to prepare to face that time when there are probably fewer years ahead of us than behind us. The full list is worth searching out, and it deals with the very real experience of planning for the end of our lives in three areas which are useful in any part of our life journey, seeking to deepen our sense of confidence in approaching life, and death issues. Using material from *Finding Meaning In the Second Half of Life* by James Hollis and *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr, we explored opportunities to grapple with deepening our spiritual journey, moving forward into the mystery of life and death.

Both these authors offer ways of looking at our spiritual, emotional, and physical journeys which tend to happen when we get to a certain stage in our lives – when we may feel we have established ourselves, or made ourselves secure in the lives we have, and

are seeking something more, deeper. Facing aging, or death, is often a catalyst for this kind of reflection and consideration.

The WillowEOL list comes in three sections to guide our entry into this deeper thinking:

It's never too late, or too early, to undertake deeper exploration into the end of life.

Foundations.

These undergird the whole endeavour. We reflect on making sense of life and death using the frameworks and many different theologies found in our Scriptures, teachings, and traditions. We are to be honest about regrets and grieve over those things we have lost over the years and thankful for all we have gained and all we have become, then learn to share with others our deepest feelings about our relationships with them and about the life we have lived, and are living.

Making Choices.

Planning our own funerals can be a profoundly worthwhile exercise, as can writing our own obituaries (not for publishing,

but as a reflective exercise). This is also the time to consider our plans for now and for the end of life. These plans can include setting up practical arrangements for care and reviewing our finances. The latter is a good exercise in considering our priorities and our attitudes to stewardship and giving.

Clearing the Way.

There is a Swedish practice called *döstädning* (death cleaning) that is worthwhile not only for the end of life. It means looking at all we have accumulated, both physically and spiritually, and leaving behind those things that are encumbrances to us. This also entails dealing with unfinished business, making sure those things we wish to leave behind are clear and available, and being willing to have courageous conversations with relatives and friends, with God, and with ourselves.

In short, it's never too late, or too early, to undertake deeper exploration into the end of life or seek a meaningful, substantial encounter with God as we consider the most important parts of our living and dying. ■

Alastair McCollum is incumbent at St. John the Divine, Victoria..

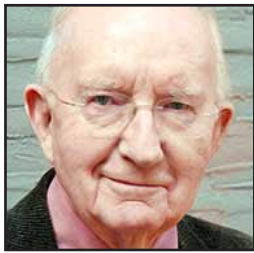


NEW CANON: Ian Powell celebrates his appointment as canon. The bishop performed this commissioning at a meeting of the Hotel Association of Greater Victoria where he acknowledged Ian's long-term contribution to both the diocese and to the greater community in Victoria in his role as "Priest to the City" at Christ Church Cathedral. Ian is general manager of the Inn at Laurel Point. (Susan Down photo)

WEB EXCLUSIVES

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The Emperor's Dream



Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

I've begun to notice the frequency with which preachers will say that the Constantinian Church is over. That may be true, but I suspect that some of us are none the wiser. Here, for better and for worse, is one of the great stories of western history.

The early 4th century was an uneasy time for the Roman empire. The public finances of the empire were being weakened by the accumulation of vast private wealth. Does that sound familiar in 2019? A recent article in the New Yorker put the personal fortune of Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon, at no less than \$174 billion US and growing.

Other concerns were worrying thoughtful people in Rome. Protecting the frontiers of the empire was becoming increasingly costly as migrations from northern Europe pushed south. Political factions were forming among powerful Roman families, all with their opinions about how these problems should be addressed, threatening the unity of the empire.

In the year 306, the senior

officers of the legions quartered in Britain met in their headquarters in Eboricum – we know it as York – and made a decision. They persuaded their commanding officer – his name was Constantine – to accept the title of emperor. On January 6, they actually crowned him. Then, mustering a substantial army, they crossed the channel and marched on Rome. At a place called the Milvian Bridge they defeated the homeland legions and thus ensured Constantine assumed power.

Before the battle, Constantine claimed to have had a dream in which he saw a cross in the sky shining brighter than the sun. On the cross were four Latin words: *In Hoc Signo Vincas*. In this sign conquer.

The next day victory was indeed gained. Following that victory Constantine declared that the Christian movement, which in spite of periods of savage persecution had already become considerably strong in Roman life, would henceforth be tolerated.

The decision would have huge consequences. The bishops of the empire would form into a network of imperial authority that would represent the emperor in every province. Vast amounts of imperial money would go into building great basilicas, churches, monasteries, some there to this day. Centred in the new city built by Constantine (at first called Byzantium and

later Constantinople), was an ecclesiastical-political system that would eventually form the Europe of the Middle Ages under the authority of a continent-wide church that would come to be called Christendom.

It would be seven centuries after Constantine's death before this vast fabric would break apart. In 1054 it would bifurcate, becoming Western Catholicism and, in the East, what we call today Orthodoxy (Greek, Russian, Armenian, Coptic, etc.). Then, 500 years later, in the 16th century, Western Catholicism would shatter in what would be called the Reformation.

Christianity would remain the faith of the western world. In the explosion of missionary activity of the 19th century, that

faith would again follow empire and spread across the planet. Only in the 20th century would the hegemony of Christian faith be challenged and, in our own lifetimes, eventually broken.

Many factors would contribute to the dismantling of what had come to be called the Constantinian Church: the Enlightenment; the scientific age of the 18th and 19th centuries; the cultural, social, scientific revolutions. Other factors included wars and the horror of Holocaust. Today Christian faith and its still vast fabric of buildings, schools, universities, seminaries is struggling to find its place in the multicultural world that society has become.

Saying a certain form of institution is over does not mean

that Christian faith is over. This truth appears at unexpected times and in unexpected places. France is probably the most secular society in a largely secular Europe, yet when Notre Dame in Paris was in flames, tens of thousands of people publicly prayed, wept and sang, many for reasons they might have great difficulty expressing.

At least you don't have to wonder any longer what the passing of the Constantinian Church refers to. Of course, the really fascinating part of the tale is far from over, but then, that's another story... ■

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



DORCAS OUTREACH: The diocesan ACW executive wishes to extend heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to our annual outreach to Caledonia. This includes all those who knitted, crocheted, sewed, held baby showers, contributed yarn, and filled joy bags before the packing event as well as those who worked on packing day. In October 2019, 24 people gathered in the church hall at St John, Duncan to unpack, sort, and allocate the donations. The boxes contained sweaters, mitts and gloves, toques, scarves, baby items, toys, afghans, and quilts destined for parishes in Old Massett and Masset on Haida Gwaii, as well as Port Edward, Hazelton, Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, and the community of Fort St James. This outreach activity has continued since the late 1850s; we cannot let it fade away now as the need in the north has not lessened.



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THRESHOLD
HOUSING SOCIETY

Law and Church: Moments of Grace



My Journey
*A regular column
sharing the voices
of new clergy
in the diocese*

BY DYAN DAVISON

I grew up in Toronto, and organized religion didn't have a huge influence on me. We attended the United Church, and we were the family that went Christmas and Easter. I was always spiritual person believing in God. I come from

a very large family of educators, and between them we had every subject area covered. They always assumed I would go on to university. I started my undergrad degree in psychology at York University. I had a plan: I wanted to earn a Ph.D, and I wanted to work with criminally insane people. But when got to third year, I didn't have the passion to continue. I slowed down to buy myself some time to figure it out. My plan had changed. Then I visited a friend in first-year law school, and within a very brief period I wrote the LSAT entrance exams and started studying law at UBC, graduating in 1991. Then I was at a crossroads because I had a big, thick, close family back in Toronto. My dad had retired and moved to Salt Spring Island, and he told me to stop and take some time to decide. While taking time I managed to get a job with a very prominent lawyer in Victoria. Now I am a

sole practitioner with a focus on family law. I also represent kids who are hurt and help them. In 2009 I went to a spiritual retreat for two weeks alone with a monk on the side of a mountain. At the time, I was unsettled, but didn't know what was wrong. The retreat was absolutely incredible. Right from the beginning (after the retreat) the world looked different. To me even the trees looked very different. But it was a big struggle because I had a call and didn't want it. I kept thinking: you got the wrong gal; it ain't me. I had to put down the armour and say I'm listening. It's not like I went out and looked for it. I couldn't get God off my mind, and things would happen that would drive the point home to me. I spoke to the bishop (then dean of Christ Church Cathedral). I started attending services, I got confirmed at the cathedral and then I became involved with the diocesan response team. I began taking distance courses in theology at Thorneloe University, part of Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario. The advisory committee on postulants for ordination committee gave its

Faith in Foundation

vote of confidence to go ahead. In 2015, I started at Vancouver School of Theology studying for a master's degree (I am 2/3 of the way through). In 2017, I became canon pastor for diocese and was ordained a deacon in 2018. Now I am a non-stipendiary priest at St Mary, Oak Bay. Because I had so much help it made it easier. People like Ian Powell trail blazed in a dual-career role as a priest to the city. I have a massively supportive husband, and never could I have done this without his unwavering support. I meditate a lot, and I am good at boundaries. I leave work at work, and my home is sanctuary. That way, things don't bother me. I work out all the time, I am an amateur photographer, and I try to have regular holidays. In family law in general now, going to court is the exception, not the rule. We have mediation. I have a reputation for being a pretty tough litigator. I was all about amicable settlements which are a thousand times better than a court-imposed order which makes two losers. I would never

say "we'll get them." I say that you don't want to go to court. There are similarities to working in the church. In family law we are providing services similar to pastoral care; sometimes clients are crying hard. You have to be a human being and walk them through it and make sure they're okay. People don't come to a law office because life is great, so you have to have compassion and empathy. There are two types of reactions from people I meet in the law practice. Sometimes people will sit in my office and say so-and-so said you are Christian so I wanted to have you as lawyer. I wear a cross. With colleagues there are people who have reached out and others who don't say a word. Some friends say "I love you but I'm not sitting in church." I feel like I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be. Out of the blue, I have these moments of grace. ■

Dyan Davison was ordained to the priesthood in November 2019, and was posted to St. Mary, Oak Bay. She continues to practice law.



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Diocese and National Church in Step With Future Planning



Fly on the Wall

BY CATHERINE PATE

This regular column reports on the activities and decisions of Diocesan Council, the “synod between synods” of our diocese. Download monthly meeting minutes at www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-committees/diocesan-council.

Bishop’s Remarks

In his opening remarks at the November meeting of diocesan council (also distributed to all clergy), Bishop Logan shared with diocesan council that he and the regional deans, archdeacons, dean and senior synod staff met in the middle of November to develop some action steps for the next 12 to 14 months in the life of the diocese. Although the day was a good start, it was evident that there continues to be a disconnect between the conversations taking place at the diocesan level and those had in the parishes. In the light of this discrepancy, making concrete plans together is a challenge. Some of the questions the group was left to consider include:

- How do we embrace change in our context?
- What do leaders need to lead

- effectively in times of change?
- What can we learn from First Nations communities in how we order ourselves and determine a way forward?
- What is keeping parishes from collaborating with each other?
- How can leaders reduce anxiety in the system?
- Are there effective ways to evaluate our parish efforts?

All of these questions, the bishop noted, need to be considered as they relate to our diocesan vision, and that Transforming Futures, with its two-pronged approach of congregational development and fundraising, is the mechanism by which we will collectively realize that vision.

Reconciliation & Beyond

Lon Towstego, a member of the diocesan vision implementation team for Reconciliation and Beyond, reported to diocesan council about the group’s work over the last several months. This work has focused primarily on offering the very successful 94 Calls to Action workshops across the diocese. Towstego challenged diocesan council to continue to make the church’s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) calls to action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) a priority item on its agenda. Diocesan council asked that the vision implementation team bring back recommendations

about how best to do that work. This will be on the agenda for future meetings. Reference was also made to the importance of highlighting the work we are doing with Dismantling Racism and the connection between it and the work of the Reconciliation and Beyond team.

National Church & the Council of General Synod (COGS)

Our diocesan representative on COGS, Ian Alexander, provided a thorough report to council on the fall meeting of COGS. In his report he noted that the conversations taking place in the diocese about declining church attendance, shrinking budgets, and the need for the church to embrace the inevitable seismic change that is just around the corner, are the same conversations taking place at the COGS. A very sobering

report was given to COGS by national church statistician, Neil Elliot. The major revelation of that report, based on data projections, suggests that, at the current rate, there will be no “members, attenders or givers” of the Anglican Church of Canada by approximately the year 2040. Highlights from this report can be found on the Anglican Church of Canada website www.anglican.ca/news/highlights-from-the-council-of-general-synod-november-8-2019/30025302/.

Despite the necessarily pessimistic reality check that COGS (and by extension the wider church) was confronted with, Alexander shared with diocesan council a sense of optimism about the leadership of our new primate, Linda Nicholls. Her grasp on both the administrative and pastoral concerns we face as a church

in changing times, Alexander suggested, will serve General Synod well as it navigates, in earnest, a strategic planning process over this triennium.

Finances—Budget 2020

Adjustments to the five-year projections presented at Synod 2018 have been made to account for the slow uptake of Transforming Futures in the parishes. The projected 2020 deficit, if no funds are received from those efforts, will be \$284,000. The full budget will be approved at the January diocesan council meeting and will be available online on the diocesan website shortly after. ■

Catherine Pate is the diocesan communications officer, responsible for supporting and animating effective communications in all expressions of the diocese.

Spring Retreat April 24-26, 2020

Lake Cowichan Research Centre, Mesachie Lake

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Facilitators: Heather & Christopher Page
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Personnel Updates

Ian Powell has been appointed as diocesan canon.

SuSan Jensen has been appointed as deacon at Holy Trinity, North Saanich, effective Dec. 1, 2019.



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