



RENEWED HEARTS, RENEWED SPIRITS, RENEWED PEOPLE

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Recommitting ourselves for Lent



Ash Wednesday by Lawrence OP, used under a CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license.

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

Those in our diocese taking part in the lay leadership in worship course have read Joan Chittister's *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of the Spiritual Life*. This is an excellent book I come back to often. Every time we enter a new season of the liturgical year, it nudges me toward the fullness and the mystery of the season.

In February, we will once again enter into the mystery and fullness of Lent. Chittister writes about Ash Wednesday saying:

"Ash Wednesday, an echo of the Hebrew Testament's ancient call to sackcloth and ashes, is a continuing cry across the centuries that life is transient, that change is urgent. We don't have enough time to waste on nothingness. We need to repent our dillydallying on the road to God. We need to regret the time we've

spent playing with dangerous distractions and empty diversions along the way. We need to repent of our senseless excesses and our excursions into sin, our breaches of justice, our failures of honesty, our estrangement from God, our savouring of excess, our absorbing self-gratifications, our infantile addiction, one creature craving another. We need to get back in touch with our souls."

What I find helpful about this is that while the emphasis is noticeably on the need for repentance, Chittister also makes it clear that it is not an end in and of itself. God's desire for us to turn away from our wasteful and sinful habits is not because God is preoccupied with sin or takes any pleasure in us feeling guilty. Rather, God knows how much time we are wasting and how much more life-giving the path to salvation can be and is.

Jesus came into being that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). During Lent, we recommit to that abundant life, first by reminding ourselves of our own mortality, and second, by walking away from those things that keep us from the fulfilling existence that Jesus promises.

The liturgy of penitence in the Ash Wednesday service in the *Book of Alternative Services* helps us do this. We confess to God "the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives." We also admit to not only those things which we have done — "our self-indulgent appetites and ways, our exploitation of other people" — but even more importantly, the good and life-giving things we have *not* done. Also, we come clean how we have not loved God with our whole heart, mind and strength. We acknowledge how we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves, and how we have been indifferent to injustice and cruelty, and how we have

been negligent in prayer and worship. We confess these things in order that we can begin to, in Chittister's words, get back in touch with our souls, to that which is good, life-giving and holy.

The abundant life that God promises, that God incarnates, that God is, is real. But in order to live into it there are things we must let go of. There are practices we must embody. This Lent I invite you to join in repenting "our dillydallying on the way to God." Life is short, beautiful and precious. Much is wrong with the world as there is much right with it. We cannot just sit idly by.

As C.S. Lewis put it so succinctly, "you are living your life as if you were trying to survive it." This Lent let us do more, individually and collectively, than worry about our survival. Let us instead dare to enter into the abundant life that God is always and everywhere inviting us into.

By Herbert O'Driscoll

For one enchanted evening a very long time ago, I was one of the Magi — a wise man. My black moustache and beard were part of my older cousin's makeup kit and my turban was one of my mother's colourful scarves. I think my all-enveloping outer garment was the dressing gown of some diminutive family member.

I've forgotten which of the wise men I was, but I do remember having some imaginary frankincense in a small glass bottle that my dad had been given by an old army friend who had served in India. That alone made it mysterious and romantic. Frankincense suggests, from what we know of the ancient tradition, that I was playing Balthazar. With two other choirboys playing Caspar and Melchior, we all made a grand entrance on to the parochial hall stage. Miss Greenish, our Sunday school teacher, played the parish piano and we manfully led the audience — mainly proud parents — in the hymn "We Three Kings of Orient Are."

Such memories link us to long ago. But the question is, why when *Faith Tides'* editor asked me for a serious article about the meaning of Epiphany and Lent, do I begin so playfully? Should I not be solemn and suitably theological? Yes, indeed I should, but there is something paradoxical about childhood memory. You realize that it was making sure that you would never forget this because in your adult life you were going to realize that some things — like the Epiphany and Lent — were to become a very big deal. The vividness of the memory ensures that you know its importance years later.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us the story of the Magi. It shows us that the birth of the Christ Child in a lowly stable in a tiny village is no small event. It is a big part

Companions on El Camino



Camino de Santiago by Rocco Rossi. Used under a CC BY 2.0 license and with slight modification.

of God's plan that involves the whole world; nothing less than the whole of humanity needs to be told about it.

At the baby's birth, Persian scholars in the east see an unusual sign in the heavens — a wondrous blazing star. A delegation follows it for over hundreds of miles. Arriving at the stable, the three men kneel and present gifts to the newborn child. For them, the journey has persuaded them that this birth has meaning far beyond itself. They have what we call an "epiphany" — a moment of realization that something is much more than what it seems.

So how do we reach this understanding today? We pray and we listen — with great attention — to this passage of the gospel. Then we try to truly understand what the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ means for us.

For instance, this year — Year A of the lectionary — we are given every Sunday no less than eight readings. In them we either read of someone having an encounter with Jesus that enriches their understanding of him (and of course ours) or we read of individuals becoming aware of the consequences of Jesus' life and ministry for them (and again for us). Each of these events gave them (and us) an epiphany — a great surprise or an eye opener! In the last of these readings, we come upon Jesus giving his followers a great shock. This epiphany was the miracle of his transfiguration. So that's the great climax of the season of Epiphany. You might also say that's the wonderful stuff that we experience before the tough stuff of Lent.

When you come to think of it, what you and I are doing every time we worship is that we are sharing an aspect of Jesus' life and ministry. In fact, I have just this moment thought of a new way of grasping all this. You

know the famous pilgrimage route in Spain called El Camino? Anyone who has ever taken that journey of faith will tell you what makes it fascinating is the people you meet walking it with you. Well, I have suddenly realized that if I study carefully the gospel passages of Epiphany and Lent as given by the lectionary, I am walking a kind of camino (or pilgrim way) in the company of Jesus himself! I read of how he deals with individuals and groups, how he speaks of things of the spirit, how he heals, and how he wrestles with death itself as in the raising of Lazarus.

In these passages, I am receiving nothing less than a "master class" in the Christian way. Near the end, I must decide whether I have it in me to share the terrible part of our Lord's journey, the one that ends in pain and death on Calvary. But if I do stay with him, I am given the wonder and the joy of Easter!

All of this is ahead of us as you read this. So, make the decision to set out on El Camino with Jesus. You'll find him very good company!

Herb O'Driscoll is a retired priest, conference leader and prolific author of books, hymns and radio scripts. His newest book of memoirs, I Will Arise and Go Now: Reflections on the Meaning of Places and People, was released in 2021 by Morehouse Publishing.

A conversation with Holly Ratcliffe



By Roland Hui

Holly Ratcliffe wears many hats. Not only is she a theologian, an anthropologist and an associate priest at St George, Montreal, she is also a talented and recognized ceramicist. Holly is currently doing an artist-in-residency at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. Faith Tides had the pleasure to speak with Holly about her work and its themes, and about her ministry in the Anglican and Episcopal churches.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Faith Tides: Holly, tell us about your work with clay. What drew you to it as an artistic medium? Did you start from a young age with mud pies in the sand box?

Holly: From childhood, I have drawn and painted and done papier mâché sculpture, that sort of thing. As for

painting, I've done a fair enough of that over my lifetime to have an idea of what my style is, though I'm not active in it right now. I began to work with clay as a form of therapy. We worked in a group and there was someone to teach us and to give us some basic techniques. I've never looked back.

Clay is tactile, it is earthy and it allows us to bring our thoughts and feelings into expression. When we don't have the words for what we want to say or need to say, clay serves as a preverbal medium.

Faith Tides: Much of your work in terms of forms, colours and textures makes one think of objects from antiquity, artifacts one might uncover in an archaeological dig or see in a museum. Are you inspired by the past?

Holly: That is the effect I am hoping to get. I have a background in anthropology as well as in theology. Actually, my first artist residency was at the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) at the University of British Columbia. There, I had daily exposure to its collection. I could see, for example, its ancient Asian — Chinese, Japanese and Korean — ceramics. So yes, that was really a kick start in that direction.

Faith Tides: You fully immersed yourself in ceramic arts in 2015. Why were you drawn to do this at this particular time and why focus on funerary urns?

Holly: I was nearing retirement, so it was timely. As for choosing to make urns, it's partly because of my background as a priest. I've been with people in the last stages of their lives and with grieving people who have lost a family member or a loved one. I've officiated at many funerals. So that whole dimension of life is very familiar to me. I just sort of gravitated to making

funeral urns. They have a function that is also highly symbolic.

Faith Tides: And there are historical examples. The ancient Egyptians used canopic jars to contain parts of the bodies of the deceased.

Holly: Absolutely. There is such diversity of practices around the world. That's what I was discovering at MOA. You know, when a Korean princess was born, a beautiful celadon jar was made. After the birth, the baby's placenta was placed into it! As Christians, in the creed we say we believe in the resurrection of the body. Historically, that has meant that our earthly bodies are to be treated with reverence. They are not just to be disposed of. But what happens so often at funerals is that the cremated remains are put into a very nondescript box.

Faith Tides: You're interested in exploring the concept of "befriending our mortality" through clay. What inspired you to begin with?

Holly: In 2018, I made a life-size sculpture of a sarcophagus entitled *À chaque semence son corps particulier* (To every seed a body of its own). I was inspired by Paul's reflection in 1 Corinthians 15 on the Corinthians' question about what kind of body we will have in the Resurrection. It was a meditation on my own mortality so it had to be big enough for me. What inspired me to do this is a potter in England, Julian Stair, who spent 10 years preparing an exhibition of sarcophagi, ossuaries and funeral urns. I saw a photograph of his exhibition showing 10 or 12 standing sarcophagi in a room. It was very powerful in a contemplative way (see <https://cfileonline.org/exhibition-julian-stair-quietus/>).

Faith Tides: About our mortality, do you feel that we, in the West in particular, have a detachment from death? We're very uncomfortable with it. For one thing, we mostly don't deal with the actual process of death or what needs to be done afterwards. We leave it to professionals such as physicians and morticians.

Holly: It began to be very noticeable to me, even at the cégep (Cégep Limoilou in Quebec City) when I decided on my final project. Nobody wanted to talk to me about it. All these young kids were doing the usual cups, bowls and plates. They just kind of rolled their eyes at me.

Still, having exhibitions has been wonderful because that's where I've been able to have conversations with people outside of the church context. When people come into a church, they automatically feel limited to a certain sphere of conversation. But at the exhibitions, there is nothing pressing them to speak in any particular way. That's where, for me, the conversations are really interesting.

I began cultural mediation workshops for people who are interested in working with clay and discussing mortality. They want to talk about their own attitudes and contexts. People listen to one another speak and they share their fears and so on. And working with clay is a creative, playful way into the subject. While some cultures are more open to embracing death, here, we don't talk about it.

Faith Tides: How did you get involved in the artist-in-residency program at the University of Victoria?

Holly: In 2020, I left MOA because COVID-19 was announced. As the pandemic went on, I started

looking for artist residencies in Canada and I found one at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS). I made contact and discovered that one of the themes the Centre engages is that of religious understandings of a good death in palliative care. I was referred to the books that the Centre has published on that subject. I read them from cover to cover. It was the concept of *pentimento* that inspired me to create the project I'm working on here. *Pentimento* is the Italian word for repentance. It is used in oil painting to refer to the reappearance of an early sketch that was subsequently painted over and obliterated by the artist. More recently, biographical theorists use the word to refer to the reappearance of aspects of a person's early life. In the books I read, the authors use this term to describe people who return to their early religious beliefs when they are dying.

My project is to research biographies of people, living or historical, in which individuals, who were raised in a religious tradition but abandoned it during their lives, have had that kind of spiritual homecoming at the end of their lives. And then, I create an urn which expresses something of each one's *pentimento*, or spiritual homecoming, through layers of texture and glaze. I hope to have an exhibition of these urns. Each urn will be different of course and beside each one there will be a short biography.

***Faith Tides:* Prior to becoming a full-time ceramicist, you worked at different parishes including one in Oklahoma. What was that experience like?**

Holly: I was in North Tulsa for my first parish. This is the Black side of town, where the race massacre of 1921 took place. St Aidan, Tulsa is the only Episcopal church there. I learned quickly that I knew nothing about race relations. That started my own education — which

grew enormously while I was there — in recognizing my own systemic racist assumptions. I began to say to people I just met, “I don't expect you to accept me,” and that often helped to break the ice.

Once I was asked to preach at a community service to which the whole of North Tulsa was invited. The gathering was to promote greater commitment to action in the community. What could I offer them? The sermon ended up being my confession to being a “recovering racist.” It was a powerful night. None of us are conscious of our own assumptions until we're facing someone who hears what we are saying in a very different way. For example, coming from Southern Ontario in the late 1980s, I assumed that calling the police for help was a good thing. But this assumption was not necessarily shared by those with whom I worked. I had wonderful parishioners who were willing to hold my hand while they gave me this kind of feedback and helped me learn. I began to see the gospel in a new way, in their conviction that each was a beloved child of God — in the face of those who would not accept them.

***Faith Tides:* You then returned to Canada to serve in ministry, and you're now at St George, Montreal as an honorary assistant. Tell us more about that.**

Holly: I came to Quebec in 1991. I became rector of St Stephen, Lachine for seven and a half years. Subsequently, I was the director of Unitas, which at the time was a very active and high-profile ecumenical spirituality centre for Christian meditation. I then took a sabbatical to work on my doctorate on Julian of Norwich. Having completed that, I worked at Christ Church, Sorel-Tracy, the one fully Francophone mission in the Anglican diocese of Montreal. It was hard work, but it was really satisfying and creative. But

after 11 years there of working entirely in French at Christ Church and then as a part-time prison chaplain for the Correctional Service of Canada, I became exhausted. That's when I turned to ceramics.

You asked why I went to St George's. At the time, I just I wanted to come home. I wanted to come to an English-speaking parish with a great choir and be able to preach, pray and sing in my own language. Over time, especially with COVID-19, we did a lot of work in raising our awareness of systemic racism. Because it is a very multicultural downtown parish — with people from the West Indies, Melanesia, Africa and so on — we had individuals interested in discussing such important issues in our online Zoom sessions. I think a lot of good work was done during COVID-19 in the parish.

***Faith Tides:* What's your take on the future of Anglicanism in Canada? Certainly attendance, particularly in places like Quebec, isn't what it used to be, and sadly many churches are closing.**

Holly: Well, certainly Quebec is in a much worse situation in that sense of depletion. But anyway, being focused on death — and new life that can only come through death — is not such a bad thing when it comes to experiencing churches' decline. Because then you begin to get into the habit of asking questions like, Where's the meaning in this? How may our belief in the resurrection of Christ help us to understand death, as individuals and as communities?

There's a woman here at CSRS who is from Czechoslovakia, and when she heard about my project, she put me in touch with a Czechoslovakian author. Under the communist regime, he became a Roman Catholic priest working underground. And so his

whole experience has been of Christianity in a context in which the worldview is other than Christian. He talks about the "hidden Christ." I think this is a theology for us — a theology for people for whom it isn't just a nominal faith. It can call forth in us a self-understanding and an understanding of community that is very different from what we have known or have assumed in Christendom.

***Faith Tides:* You've been quoted recently saying that the "strands of my life are coming together." How so?**

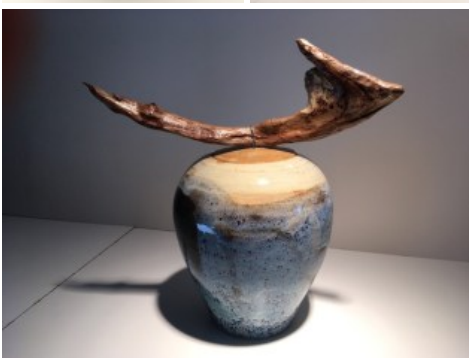
Holly: I never thought that I'd be an anthropologist again or exploring other cultures the way I did when I was in my 20s. And I see my work as a ceramicist as being in continuity with my life as a priest too.

***Faith Tides:* You mentioned your 20s. What advice would you have now for your 20-year-old self?**

Holly: (laughs) Oh, I don't have any advice for my 20-year-old self. I need the advice *now*!

For more information about Holly's work as a ceramic artist, visit: <https://www.hollyratcliffceramic.ca>.

On April 6, Holly will be presenting a public lecture *Pentimenti: Ceramic Funeral Vessels as Biographies of Spiritual Homecomings* as part of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society's weekly lecture series. All are welcome to attend in person or online via a Zoom link. For more information, please go to <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/events/>.



Halfway back to the light



Stained-glass of St Brigid at St Etheldreda, London by Lawrence OP, used under a CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license.

By Adela Torchia

A new Irish public holiday begins this year in honour of St Brigid as one of the country's patron saints <https://www.officeholidays.com/holidays/ireland/st-brigids-day>. It's the first such holiday named after a woman; and will be on Feb. 6 — the Monday closest to her traditional feast-day of Feb. 1 to Feb. 2 coinciding with the old Gaelic festival of Imbolc. Early February is close to the halfway point between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. In many traditional and/or indigenous cultures marking the seasons of the year and points in-between — is seen as important for physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Although for centuries European patriarchal religions severely punished such celebrations as being about 'witchery' — thankfully in many places today we've emerged into a renewed

appreciation for these earth-based connections and celebrations. St Brigid of Kildare (c.451-525) shares much in common with the ancient Celtic Goddess Brigid whose early February feast days were also seen as the return of the Goddess of the Light. The traditional Gaelic festival of Imbolc also marks the beginning of spring in parts of the world where Snow Drop flowers or crocuses or the first daffodils begin to shoot up during this shortest month or soon thereafter — to cheer us on as signs of dormant spring’s awakening.

Last year I wrote a Faith Tides book review on one of many excellent books about Brigid that are emerging in our times <https://faithtides.ca/st-brigid-spans-pagan-and-christian-traditions/>. It’s such a blessing to live in places where this re-connection with the Celtic realm is welcomed and celebrated. Celtic spirituality is usually nature-based, gender-equal and focused on the sacred found in our everyday lives. John Philip Newell’s short book called *Listening for the Heartbeat of God* has served as a great primer for Celtic Christianity’s roots in a number of parishes I’ve served. And the many similarities between Celtic and indigenous spiritualities are another source of celebration and hope — for a renewed respect for Creation as God’s gift for us to cherish and protect.

What a relief it is to turn over the January calendar page and bump into these delightful celebrations which will hopefully gain a stronger foothold in Christianity around the world. Historically, Christianity has often suppressed these celebrations with more church-related themes like the blessing of candles called Candlemas, or the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. The latter feast traditionally included the Purification of Mary — an observation based in Levitical notions of the impurity of a woman who has given birth. The new

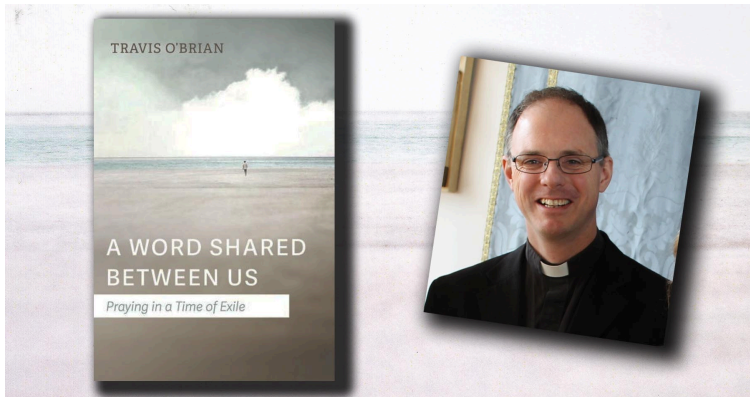
mother was seen as impure or in the process of purification for 40 days if she gave birth to a boy, and for 80 days if she gave birth to a girl (Leviticus 12). The misogyny behind such ideas have stubbornly persisted in many parts of the church around the world, so it’s a healing balm to bring Celtic Christianity’s overall gender equality to areas of persistent gender injustice. Saint Brigid was especially concerned to welcome the stranger and help the poor — both ministries which need our ongoing participation in today’s world of great human suffering and inequality.

Meanwhile we rejoice in the lengthening of days (after which Lent is also named) that herald the soon arrival of Spring. There are excellent Wikipedia articles on Brigid of Kildare and on Imbolc and other related terms — which are a good place to start or further one’s explorations on these matters. Many of us Canadians who are children of immigrants from distant lands can often also see a resonance between some of these Celtic concepts and our parents’ old-country ways. Until quite recent times, traditional peoples around the world relied heavily on nature’s changes to know when to plant and harvest gardens to grow food for their families and communities. As industrialization and capitalism came to control the lives of many people around the world, these older traditions were largely lost, but are now being rediscovered. Words like Imbolc used to scare ‘good Christians’ as sounding pagan. But pagans are basically people from the countryside who lived lives more closely connected to earth. And Imbolc literally means “in the belly of the mother.” In other words, we rejoice in this season that spring newness of life is being carried in the womb of Mother Nature and will soon begin to show signs of her gorgeous revelry at the coming of spring flowers.

Happy Imbolc everyone, and may St Brigid throw her

mantle of protective blessedness around the weary shoulders of a humanity longing for justice, peace and the beauty of spring's rebirth, showing us once again the splendour of God's creative and compassionate love for all beings, Amen.

Book review — A Word Shared Between Us



A Word Shared Between Us: Praying in a Time of Exile by Travis O'Brian.

By Roland Hui

Few of us will look back at 2020 with fondness. The COVID-19 disease which had appeared in late 2019 was by March of the following year officially declared a pandemic. In Canada, shutdowns were put in effect, which included places of worship. Accordingly, churches within the Anglican communion were closed. The months that followed were a hardship for most. Parishioners, so used to seeing one another on a

regular basis at religious services and special events, now found themselves confined to their homes and missing one another. The isolation was particularly hard as there was seemingly no end in sight, and the spiritual comfort of worshipping as a community was put on hold indefinitely.

Travis O'Brian, the rector of St Barnabas, Victoria, responded by composing daily prayers, which he subsequently published as a collection entitled *A Word Shared Between Us: Praying in a Time of Exile* (Resource Publications, 2022). Initially, these were his own private meditations and conversations with God. But realizing that they might also be a source of comfort to his parishioners, O'Brian began circulating them by email. His series of prayers, beginning in the spring of 2020, received very positive feedback, with many recipients saying that his writings gave them great solace. They understood what their parish priest was experiencing — sadness, confusion, loneliness, anger and even the occasional unexpected sensations of joy — as they were feeling the same way.

O'Brian's opening reflection, dated March 18, addresses his worries during the start of the shutdowns. COVID-19 was continuing its deadly onslaught, creating much alarm. "Father of all," O'Brian begins praying, "we are in need of your comfort. At this strange time, when many of us are sick or afraid of becoming sick; when many of us are cut off from family, friends, colleagues... when we are prevented from gathering as your church to worship you... bless us with the comfort of your Holy Spirit."

O'Brian is obviously a man of faith, but his prayers also reveal his very human fears and doubts to which we all fall into in times of trouble. He laments how his parish is now an "empty church... the doors are locked, the

hymn books and the prayer books are stacked in cupboards; the vestments removed and put into storage... the pews are like a wheat field after the harvest, waiting — for what?” Is it for “a resurrection and new life”? O’Brian wonders.

Despite the need for patience, the pandemic admittedly takes its toll upon O’Brian. As his ongoing prayers reveal, he cannot help but feel frustrated and forsaken. At times, he even questions his trust in God. “My faith leaks away,” O’Brian confesses, and he is even reminded of an earlier time in his life when he rejected the very notion of the divine. Thankfully, he is able to lift himself out of his despondency. “But all the while it was you, Lord,” he writes, “leading me through whatever barren places through which I needed to travel in order, finally to turn and face you.”

Along with his personal prayers, O’Brian shares recollections of his family life — both its joys and its challenges. He writes of a memorable outing one May when he and his wife and their four children went boating and fishing on the Cowichan River. It was the kind of day, O’Brian recalls, that he loved best when “there seemed space enough for each of us to be happy in his or her own way.” Still, there were times when the pandemic took its toll upon them, O’Brian admits. Tempers were short and angry words exchanged. Thankfully, such occasions were few and far between, and O’Brian, recognizing his own shortcomings, sought forgiveness and understanding through prayer.

In the last entry of his book, O’Brian writes of word being received that churches were allowed to be opened soon for in-person worship. While this was welcome news, there was also trepidation. After a long stretch of “growing familiarity with plexiglass and face

masks,” were people ready to come out of isolation and interact with one another again in “a world scarred by the acne of fear”? O’Brian questions. Again, he turns to prayer in hopes of healing for his parishioners:

“Father, bless us, your people, your children now as we are steered toward another way of striving to be your church. Help us to meet every new day with praise and thanksgiving and to find pathways to serve you in each other. Condition our bodies and our minds in love’s moment. Teach us in everything that we think and do what it means to pray. Amen.”

Since his book was published in early 2022, St Barnabas has fully reopened and services resumed. While not all of its parishioners have felt comfortable enough to attend worship as they used to, the church has welcomed back many familiar faces.

A Word Shared Between Us was put together as a response to the pandemic, but O’Brian’s collection of prayers can be read and appreciated beyond it. Well written, heartfelt and sincere, they are invaluable to those needing comfort and reassurance whatever the circumstances.

For more information about *A Word Shared Between Us: Praying in a Time of Exile*, visit:

<https://wipfandstock.com/9781666730463/a-word-shared-between-us/>

Coming soon: The Oaks at Dawson Heights

By Peter J. Parker

In 1949, philanthropist Percy Dawson made a generous donation to St. Luke, Victoria to provide affordable housing for senior widows. His legacy continues to this day. Thanks to Dawson's bequest, a series of little cottages were created dotting the landscape — now called Dawson Heights — near the church on Cedar Hill Cross Road.

The homes were built in the early 1950s by a company called Twilight Homes Limited set up by the diocese and St Luke's. In 1996, the church's board of directors, in consultation with the diocesan council, adopted a new triple phase vision for redeveloping the site:

- Phase One: the creation of a 45-unit independent rental building called The Dawson
- Phase Two: the creation of a 53-unit supported independence building called The Cedars
- Phase Three: the creation of an 85-unit mixed-market independent rental apartment building called The Oaks

The Dawson and The Cedars were completed in 1999 and 2003 respectively. Work is expected to begin on The Oaks this February and is being undertaken by

Dawson Heights Housing Limited (formerly Twilight Homes Limited). Don Brown, of Jensen Group Architects, who designed the first two buildings, will also draw plans for The Oaks. M'akola Development Services will act as development consultants.

The Oaks has not been without challenges. In 2018, as we were about to submit initial plans and rezoning applications to the city officials of Saanich, the diocesan assets committee put us on pause while it made its review. It was an unfortunate 17-month delay that, in retrospect, cost the project dearly through inflation. Then there was another holdup as we navigated our way through the timelines and costs of Saanich's approvals and permits process. Interruptions and financial setbacks, as experienced by non-profit and charitable groups like ourselves, have garnered no small amount of attention in the press recently. Our efforts were further complicated by the often conflicting energy and environmental requirements of BC Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Because of the difficulties put in front of us, our initial estimates of \$18 million have now risen to \$33 million.

But now we are pleased to say that the waiting is behind us. Notice has been given to the remaining cottage residents, and in a few cases, already uninhabitable dwellings will be taken down in preparation for the third phase. While we are excited to finally move towards erecting The Oaks, there is some sadness at the loss of such a unique part of our Dawson Heights community and the homes that residents came to value over the years. It is our hope that many of them will return once The Oaks is completed.

Dawson Heights has been guided by a skilled and dedicated volunteer board of directors, including

members from St Luke's and four other Anglican parishes. Individuals with expertise in the housing sector have also been involved. It is not policy statements or organizational goals that have made Dawson Heights a facility that the whole diocese can be proud of. Rather it has been the visionary leadership of the board and particularly the skilled and wise leadership of our chairmen Dudley Thompson and Bob Watts. Equally valuable has been the work of our executive director, Karen Hope. Her steady guidance and caring creativity has at every stage helped to shape an environment that employees love to work in and residents love to live in. Below market rentals for 55+ seniors remains our most important mandate in keeping with Percy Dawson's legacy.

Dawson Heights has always strived to provide a warm, safe and supportive community through a compassionate and helpful staff. As an example of the kind of care we offer, five years ago, the cottage residents were the first to be consulted on what features they would like to see in The Oaks. A number of unique design components in the upcoming suites were based on their input. We also hired a rental and administration manager to assist tenants with relocation where needed, and we provided financial assistance to help with moving expenses. Of the long-term residents in the remaining cottages who preferred to move out earlier, some were able to transfer into The Dawson and others to alternative options such as Mount Douglas, Court Gorge View or Kiwanis Housing.

Perhaps the best summary of Dawson Height's ministry comes from one of the cottage residents who wrote to us in January, shortly before he had to leave. Here is an excerpt from his letter:

"My settling here under the canopy of this Golden Nootka Cypress... has been nothing short of a refuge. The natural elements and colors of the triple trunk tree, the water rock stone carpet, the six foot stone wall... the micro pocket of wilderness above it and the Gary Oak meadow canopy has been such a wonderful blessing. It is one of the few times I've felt God's presence. Who else could have me in such a wonderful place? Honestly, I came here a broken mess and things were rocky at times initially. But as time went on, this place worked its magic on me. Gradually in fits and starts, I started to stabilize into a much better place. Much healing has taken place and a lot is owed to this setting. I want you to know that. I believe it's important. And not just the setting. Being treated with dignity and respect... you have hosted with excellence."

Percy Dawson started all this with his donation of \$100,000. As one former resident used to say, "A vision without a task is but a dream. A task without a vision is but drudgery. But a vision with a task is an accomplishment." The Diocese of Islands and Inlets can be truly proud of this accomplishment of providing safe and affordable housing to over four times the original cottage population.

For more information, please visit:

<https://dawsonheights.ca/>.



we were forced to stop by COVID-19. Last September, we were able to start meeting again.

We are thankful for the relationship we have with the First Nations, which began about 20 years ago with a program named by Pauquachin First Nation as Trinity Time. Since then, we have hosted many workshops, family gatherings, healing circles and cultural events. All are centred around a meal (eucharist) as we gather on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish People. We strive to build trust and meaningful relationships with our participants. Many are going through vulnerable and difficult times in their lives. It is a time of sharing stories that are often difficult to tell, of mourning and of finding support and encouragement. Also, it is a time to find joy and the motivation to live life again. We are told by many members of our group that “Holy Trinity feels like home.” We begin our Grief and Loss Circle with a lunch. Tables are usually arranged in a circle and a First Nations Elder offers thanks and gives a blessing before the meal. After lunch, there is a sharing time that is facilitated by a First Nations councillor.

Comfort and healing in Saanich

By Dorothea Dickson

“Building Trust takes time, but can be shattered in a moment.”

Approximately five years ago, Holy Trinity, North Saanich, was asked by the Tsawout First Nation to host a Grief and Loss Circle. We did so for two years until

The Grief and Loss Circle is now a joint ministry between three bands (Tsawout, Pauquachin and Tseycum) and two parishes (Holy Trinity and the Parish of Central Saanich). As Lynda Clifford at Central Saanich says, “We are very pleased to have this opportunity to journey together with Holy Trinity. There is strength in numbers and it does make sense to combine our resources when we are in such close proximity. It is good to work together. The Parish of Central Saanich has enjoyed meeting new friends, but more importantly, we have become aware that we have so much to learn from each other. We are thankful for this opportunity.”

The Grief and Loss Circle meets every Friday from noon to 3 p.m. All are welcome to join. For more information please contact admin@holytrinityns.org.

Appointment of Denise Doerksen

By Faith Tides



Denise Doerksen. Image courtesy of Young Hip & Married.

Denise Doerksen has been appointed as incumbent of Holy Trinity, North Saanich beginning on Feb. 15, 2023.

Denise has a Master of Divinity degree from the College of Emmanuel and St Chad in Saskatoon. She was ordained to the priesthood in 2004. Over her career she has served in many roles, including duty chaplain, youth outreach priest, assistant priest, interim priest-in-charge, and incumbent in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, the Diocese of Saskatoon and the

Diocese of New Westminster. She is a trained spiritual director and owns her own textile arts business.

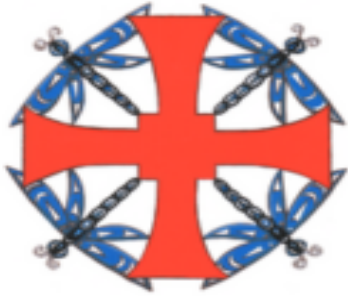
“I am very comfortable befriending people of other faiths, cultures, genders and socio-economic statuses,” Denise says. “I have a great passion for social justice and environmental justice to the extent that I seek out other leaders in the community to partner with for the advancement of mercy and justice for all created things.”

Denise's husband, Allen Doerksen, has been appointed the incumbent at St Philip, Oak Bay and will begin his ministry in March.

Nominations for the Order of the Diocese of BC

By Faith Tides

The Order of the Diocese of British Columbia



Recognizing extraordinary voluntary
commitment and service.
Investiture Service: October 21, 2023
Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria
Nominate an extraordinary lay leader
from your parish!

Do you know someone deserving of the Order of the Diocese of BC?

On Oct. 21, 2023, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee will invest the next group of worthy people into the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia.

The nomination process thrives on the active participation of each parish submitting the name of one of their number to become a Member of the Order and jointly with other parishes the name of someone to become an Officer of the Order.

Who can be nominated?

For Member – A lay person of the diocese who has provided extraordinary service to their parish and/or community

For Officer – A lay person or retired cleric who has provided extraordinary service to the diocese, the province, the Anglican Church of Canada, or the nation

Honorary Officers and Members – These are awards given to people who are NOT members of our diocese. They are British Columbians who may not be of our denomination, or even faith, but nonetheless have demonstrated the same sort of exemplary service to their community, province or country. Whilst these are very limited in number and are within the gift of the bishop, the advisory council is always open to suggestions. If you think you may know of such a person, please contact the secretary of the Order to discuss.

Who can nominate?

Member of the Order – Each parish may nominate a person.

Officer of the Order – Five members of the diocese (a mix of lay and ordained) from five different parishes may nominate a person.

Timing for the 2023 Investiture

Nominations opened January 2023

Nominations close April 30, 2023

Confirmation of Award by June 30, 2023

Investiture Service Saturday, Oct. 21, 2023, at Christ

Church Cathedral, Victoria.

For details of the who, what, when, why and how can be found on the diocesan website under **Resources, Order of the Diocese of British Columbia**: <https://bc.anglican.ca/resources/order-of-the-diocese-of-british-columbia>

Advertise your parish events on Faith Tides

By Naomi Racz

Did you know you can advertise your diocesan or parish event for free on the Faith Tides website? Send your ad to faithtides@bc.anglican.ca (see below for file and size specifications).

If you need support creating your ad, send the text to faithtides@bc.anglican.ca and we will work with a designer to create your ad. Please note, this option comes with a small fee of \$20.

File specifications:

Format: GIF, JPG, PNG

Max size: 150KB

Ad sizes (at 72 dpi):

240×400

See how the different sizes look on your browser [here](#).
