



# FaithTides

RENEWED HEARTS, RENEWED SPIRITS, RENEWED PEOPLE

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This PDF is a simple printable document of FaithTides online, which can be found at [faithtides.ca](http://faithtides.ca). Questions or comments can be sent to the editor at [faithtides@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:faithtides@bc.anglican.ca).

# Be present and celebrate



*The Nativity. Image courtesy of Janet Best. Used under a CC BY-ND 2.0 Deed license.*

*By Anna Greenwood-Lee*

Words are not enough.

We are coming again to that time in the church year when we celebrate the Word that becomes flesh and dwells among us — Emmanuel.

This Advent and Christmas season I invite you to consider that the fundamental teaching of the Incarnation is that words are not enough. God comes to us not in words, but in the flesh — in the person of Jesus. Yes, Jesus teaches us with words. But more fundamentally, he teaches by actions, by presence, by healing, by suffering, and by dying and rising again.

If words were enough, God would have sent a book. But no, God became flesh. Words, as lovely as they are, are not enough.

The Jewish theologian, Martin Buber, taught that dogma is the most exalted form of invulnerability to revelation. Buber invited religious people into what he called “holy insecurity.” When we enter into holy insecurity we *wrestle* with presence instead of *resting* in beliefs. What would this Advent and Christmas season look like, if instead of resting in our beliefs, we wrestled with the presence of God, of Jesus, of the Spirit?

This season I invite you to let go of words, and instead be present and celebrate God’s presence. Open yourself to God incarnate, God with us, in the ordinary and the everyday, in the the broke and the whole, and in the beautiful and the despised. God is truly with us. God has taken on flesh, God has broken into Creation to walk among us.

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## A child’s Christmas



*Snowy Field. Image courtesy of Liz West, Used under a CC BY 2.0 Deed license.*

*By Herbert O’Driscoll*

The word “Christmas” is more than a mere word. In the world of music, a chord is composed of notes, but it is infinitely richer than any one of those notes. Some words are like that. They are far more than a mere word.

Christmas is such a word. We have only to hear it to feel it probing deeply — first into our hearing, then into our minds, then into memory, and finally into our hearts. Then will come the feelings that always accompany remembering — sadness and regret, joy and appreciation, and laughter or tears.

I share a memory of Christmas with you only so that it may take you into your own remembrances. What has always been for me a magic moment can lead you to what was for you likewise.

Magic moments are really the doorways to magic kingdoms. Most people tend to think that they are, as we say, out of this world. The truth is that magic kingdoms are very close to this everyday world that we ironically call the “real world.” All we have to do is to search for the door that takes us through or the bridge that takes us over.

My own magic kingdom was very much in this world. It had small winding roads, a village, a humpbacked bridge over a small river, meadows of hay, fields of golden corn, horses, a donkey, cows, and a wonderful black and white sheepdog named Billie. At the heart of this magic kingdom was Donaguile, my mother’s childhood home and my grandfather’s farm.

In the summer of 1929, at the tender age of nine months, I was taken, for the first time, on the long journey from Cork to Castlecomer and nearby Donaguile. I’m told we went in my father’s gleaming

Morris Cowley automobile, complete with rumble seat. Come to think of it, perhaps this was the magic chariot sent by the gods to take me into my magic kingdom!

My very first memory of Donaguile came three years later when my father took my mother and myself for a Christmas visit. As with all magic moments, it came in the middle of very ordinary ones and was suddenly there to be remembered for the rest of my life.

I am standing with my mother and grandfather at the door beside the horses’ stable. This door leads out to the Barn Field. Later, I would learn that every field has its own name. The fields are white with snow, something not frequently seen in the south of Ireland. My grandfather has mixed a large bucket of feed for the young calves. He opens the door, bangs on the bucket and gives a loud call. Immediately, the calves turn towards us. Then, with that skipping gait of the very young, they run towards the doorway, all jostling for a place, all trying to get their heads into the bucket, at times almost wresting it from my grandfather’s firm grip.

He watches carefully to see that each gets a fair share. For a moment, he lets my mother place my small hand on the head of one of the calves. I feel the matted hair and the hard crown that is already showing the signs of what will one day become horns.

My grandfather scrapes the last of the feed from the bucket and hurls it out into the snow. The calves turn and chase after whatever extra mouthful they can get at. He then closes the door on the cold white vision of the fields and a moment of vivid childhood memory is blotted out, not before it will be retained for a lifetime.

Years later, I would come across a short but lovely

poem by an English poet. It speaks of fields far away from where I stood that December morning as a child gazing at the white expanse of the Barn Field, yet for some reason it links me with that moment.

*We stood on the hills, Lady,  
Our days work done,  
Watching the frosted meadows  
That winter had won.*

*The evening was calm, Lady,  
The air so still,  
Silence more lovely than music  
Folded the hill.*

*There was a star, Lady,  
Shone in the night.  
Larger than Venus it was,  
And bright, so bright.*

*Oh, a voice from the sky, Lady,  
It seemed to us then*

*Telling of God being born  
In the world of men.*

*And so we have come, Lady,  
Our day's work done,  
Our love, our hopes, ourselves  
We give to your son.*

The poet is Clive Sansom. The title of the poem is *The Shepherd's Carol*.

A holy Advent to you, and a joyful Christmas!

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# “Falling in love with God” — monasticism in the 21st century



*Image courtesy of Brother James Koester.*

*By Roland Hui*

In anticipation of Brother James Koester’s visit to the diocese to host a workshop for the clergy this December, *Faith Tides* had the pleasure to interview him.

Br. James is the Superior of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE), a monastic community in Cambridge, Massachusetts. For more information about the SSJE please visit: [www.ssje.org](http://www.ssje.org).

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**You were born and raised in Saskatchewan — what religious background are you from and was there a supportive community of faith that your family was part of? You mention playing with a blue dressing gown as a child and pretending to be a priest even at a very young age. Tell us about that.**

I was born in Regina Saskatchewan in the late 1950’s and grew up in the same neighbourhood that my father had grown up in. We attended St Mary’s Anglican Church, which had been the family parish since the 1930s. My grandparents attended the 9:30 a.m. service and we went to the 11:00 a.m. service. That’s where the seed of my faith was planted, and where I learned to love both the 1959 *Book of Common Prayer*, much of which is still firmly planted in my memory, and Anglican tradition.

In many ways it was my father who was instrumental in the development of my faith. Some of my most cherished memories are kneeling beside him at church on Sundays. Later in life when my other siblings had grown up and gone from home, it would be my father and me who would go to church on Sundays, leaving Mum behind to have a quiet morning at home.

Our rector, who in the tradition of St Mary’s at the time, was known to us as Mr. Pasterfield, made a huge impression on me. I could not have been more than six or seven when I announced to my mother one day as she was doing the laundry, that I wanted to be like Mr. Pasterfield when I grew up. I don’t recall what it was that intrigued me about him, except that at the time I had a dark blue woolen dressing gown, which I would wear backwards like a cassock, and pretend to be him.

In high school, I attended boarding school in Winnipeg and about a mile or so from the school, was the local parish. Church going on Sundays was what I'd grown up doing, so I would take myself off to church on Sundays. At first that was a little embarrassing, as I would have to put on my school uniform on a Sunday, and then report to the teacher on duty. After a few Sundays, this just became accepted behaviour for me, and no one said anything. I certainly was not teased by the other boarders. It was while I was at school in Winnipeg that I discovered Anglo-Catholicism. St Michael and All Angels was nothing like St. Mary's. I was used to cassock, surplice, stole, with holy communion and morning prayer alternating on Sundays. At St Michael's, I was introduced to vestments, mass, incense, and calling the priest "Father". In many ways St Michael and All Angels had as profound an effect on my faith development as did St Mary's. I am still very much living out those two sides of my upbringing.

**What was your calling to the priesthood like? Was it easy to enter into your vocation or were there some struggles/challenges along the way?**

I don't remember a time when I did not want to be a priest. It is not something I ever discussed with anyone, although I know my parents and siblings discussed it amongst themselves. We all simply understood that's what I'd end up doing. In many ways it was simply a matter of time. The first person I ever spoke to about a vocation to the priesthood was Michael Peers. He had just moved to Regina to become the dean of the cathedral. At the time, the cathedral had a late afternoon eucharist one day a week. During the summer after graduating from high school, I go into

the habit of attending that service on my way home from my summer job. Over the next few summers, I became friends with Michael (and later his wife Dorothy). One week I was on the afternoon shift so on my way to work I stopped in at the cathedral and spoke to Michael about ordination. Following university, I moved to Victoria for a job and began to attend St Barnabas. My first Sunday there, as I was leaving, Father Chassels, the rector at the time, asked me my name. When I told him my name he spelled it back for me, which was a great surprise. Hardly anyone knows how to spell "Koester!" It turned out he and my father had been in the navy together during the war. That put an end to my church shopping, and St Barnabas became my second home for the time I lived in Victoria. It was from there that I finally took the plunge, enrolled at Trinity College, Toronto, and told my parents I wanted to be a priest. Their reaction was, "what took you so long?"

**At what parish did you serve in British Columbia? And how did you go from being a parish priest to being a Brother in the SSJE? What drew you to this particular – and especially in this day and age unconventional – way of life?**

Following my ordination, I served first as the Assistant Curate in Parksville with Peter Parker. Shortly after my arrival, Peter celebrated the 10th anniversary of his ordination. I remember thinking that seemed like such a long time. A few years later, when I was rector of Salt Spring Island, the local Roman Catholic priest celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination. At the time I remember saying to my warden, I could not imagine that. In April 2024, I celebrate my 40th anniversary. From this vantage point, 10 years seems

like nothing, and 50 is just around the corner!

My monastic vocation began, almost as a joke. Just before the Easter holiday one year, my grade 9 math teacher wanted to kill time, rather than teach a class, so he went around the room asking what we planned to do after high school. He got the typical answers you would expect from 13-year-old boys, that is until he came to me. I was too embarrassed to say I wanted to be a priest, so I told him I wanted to be a monk. This story obviously went around the staff common room several times for the next few years. One day in grade 11, Barry Valentine, who was then Bishop of Rupert's Land, and who came into the school once a week to teach a class on great religions, asked me to stay behind for a moment. When everyone else had left he turned to me and said, "James, I understand you want to become a monk." We talked for a few minutes and then the two of us went off to lunch. Years later, Barry, who by then was no longer Bishop of Rupert's Land, was working in Washington DC and was looking to return to Canada. He phoned Ron Shepherd, then the Bishop of British Columbia, and asked if there was an opening in the diocese. Ron responded that as a matter of fact there was as one of his priests had just announced his resignation so that he could test his monastic vocation, to which Barry responded, "So Koester is finally going is he?"

I was 29 when I was appointed Rector of Salt Spring. Unbeknownst to me, Ron Shepherd had told the parish that he did not know if I would be there for two years or 20, because he thought I'd eventually try my vocation as a monk. In the end they asked him to appoint me anyway, and he was right, I stayed for two years.

I first came into contact with SSJE while I was an

undergraduate student. At the time there was a monastery in Bracebridge, Ontario, and I visited there a couple of times during reading weeks. I immediately fell in love with the routine and rhythm of the life. My love of the *Prayer Book* planted so many years before at St Mary's, found an outlet in the daily office, and my love of the eucharist and ritual I discovered at St Michael's found an outlet in the worship of the monastic community. Having spent so many years living, first in a large family of seven people, and then in a boarding school, I found community life to be second nature. My pattern of visiting the community in Bracebridge continued while I was at Trinity. One evening as I sat in the chapel before compline, I remember saying to God that if I was still interested in testing a monastic vocation when I was 30, I would come. As things unfolded, that wasn't too far off. I joined the community here in Cambridge just before my 32nd birthday.

One of the sticking points that kept me from coming to the community sooner, was that 1984, the Canadian house closed, and the Canadian members of the Society moved to the monastery in Massachusetts. While I had visited the Cambridge house several times after that, I had a really difficult time imagining myself living in the United States. Over 30 years later I still do! When I die they will find a maple leaf tattooed onto my heart! I have not taken out US citizenship, and remain proud to be both a Canadian and a member of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Having said that, the things that attracted me then are the same things that hold me here today. A monastic vocation is almost exactly like falling in love. One doesn't fall in love with an idea. One falls in love with a person. I have fallen in love with a community, a rhythm, a routine, a life, a ministry. As much as some

days I wish it were otherwise, I can't imagine doing anything else with my life. In the same way, couples can't imagine spending the rest of their life with anyone else.

In your question you used the word "unconventional." In many ways the vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience are unconventional. So much of contemporary tells us that we can have it all, take it all, and be it all. Monastic vows remind us of the important of limitations, and living within those limitations. We see all around us the damage caused by the belief that there are no limits to what, or who we can have, or become. We see that principally these days in the environmental crisis so evident all around us; in what is described as toxic masculinity; and in the inability to really listen to one another. The monastic vows are not about living an impoverished life, which regards sex and sexuality as evil, and doing what we are told to do, simply because we are told to do it. In the vow of poverty, we are invited to remember that creation is good, and is meant to be shared and is not there for my sole use. By celibacy we mean we are to respect one another's boundaries, and that human relationships are not simply for my individual gratification. The vow of obedience is not really about "obey," but listening to one another, not with the intent of changing the other person, but to be changed yourself.

I'd also say two other things. In our Rule of Life, we say that *people are hungry for good news that life is full of meaning in union with God*. So many look for meaning through their possessions, their work, their ability to consume. We live in stark contrast to that kind of personal meaning making by living a life focused on God, who through Jesus came not to be served but to serve. It is by living in union with a "servant God" that

we find life's meaning, and we try to draw others into that same kind of life.

The other person I love to quote is our founder, Father Richard Meux Benson, who writes that "*none came come to Christ and go away as they came. Our coming to Christ changes everything.*" He goes on to say that we are to live as people "*who have been with Jesus.*" For Father Benson and for us, our primary relationship is with Jesus, and so our whole life is shaped around allowing that to happen. Anyone who has been in a relationship with another person knows that being in a relationship radically changes you. As a life lived in relationship with Jesus was a changed and challenged each day to our core by Him. At the end of any given day, I am a different person when I go to bed, than the one I was when I woke up, simply by encountering Jesus in word, sacrament, prayer and my Brothers.

**I'm sure many Anglicans/Episcopalians are surprised to know that there are nuns and monks within the faith. How aware — or not — were you?**

I have been told on more than one occasion that I must be mistaken when I describe myself as an Anglican monk. Since Anglicans don't have monks and nuns, I must be Roman Catholic. I showed up in a church once in my habit, and was politely told the Roman Catholic church was down the street. I grew up however being aware of the existence of, at least nuns. Growing up in Regina, I attended the Qu'Appelle Diocesan School (QDS) for nursery school, where my teacher was Sr. Audrey, SSJD. I am convinced that Sr. Audrey's on-going prayers for me are one of the factors that led me to SSJE. On one of my first visits to Bracebridge, I met Fr. Frith, SSJE. It was only years after his death that I



discovered Sr Audrey and Fr. Frith were brother and sister!

**Some may have the impression that being a cloistered religious implies a total withdrawal from the secular world — do you think this is correct? Or can one still be engaged in what goes on outside the monastery’s walls?**

I’d challenge your use of the word “secular,” because of course all creation has been touched by grandeur of God, and in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, “*it will flame out, like shining from shook foil.*” One of our roles as monastics is to help people see the grandeur of God about them, even in routine and common tasks. For the person of faith, there is nothing secular. You hear that day by day in our intercessions as we pray for the end to gun violence in this country, ask for healing on behalf of someone who has sent in the name of someone for whom they would like us to pray, give thanks for a particular Brother, or pray for a guest who is present.

Even when no words are spoken aloud, I know that the people of the Holy Land, Ukraine and Russia, are being prayed for. Sometimes I come away from church and I wonder where this feeling that I have been carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders comes from. Then I realize, I have been carrying the weight of the world, because I been holding the cares and concerns of so many in prayer before God. Anyone who really prays and believes in God cannot withdraw from the world.

**Describe a typical day for you at the SSJE.**

I wish! While our day is rooted in rounds of prayer, worship, silence, hospitality and ministry, there is no “typical” day. Except for Mondays, our Sabbath Day, we celebrate the Eucharist and pray morning prayer, the mid-day office, evening prayer and compline, as well as keep the greater silence from 9 p.m. until 9 a.m. each day. Every Brother has an hour of private prayer each morning.

After that, other than meals at set times, we all have various jobs and responsibilities which fill the rest of the day. As Superior, that might involve speaking with a member of staff, or a Brother; meeting someone via Zoom; greeting guests; writing letters or a sermon; doing desk work; or getting ready to travel for ministry.

While I have professional assistance, I am also responsible for meeting our Annual Fund goals, which this year stands at \$1.5 million. I am the community archivist, so I work in the archives and respond to questions from people doing research that touches on our history. I like to walk, and read mystery novels or history books. I am also working on a couple of fun archival projects. One is creating a list of every man who has ever come through our doors to test a vocation, whether or not he stayed. The other is researching SSJE’s role in introducing the liturgies of holy week in English to Anglicans and Episcopalians in North America.

Somewhere in the mix I am responsible for some of the housework, to keep the monastery clean, and I take my turn doing the dishes. People think we simply spend our time singing and praying, but in between the singing a praying a great deal of other stuff goes on. One thing that preparation, or parish ministry did not prepare me to do was to run a multi-million-dollar, international corporation, but that really is my job as

Superior.

**What advice would you give someone who is curious or interested in a contemplative religious life?**

**Admittedly, monasticism isn't for everyone, but clearly some are attracted to it, as you were. What would be considered "right" reasons – and "wrong" ones – in wanting to join a brotherhood (or sisterhood)?**

One of the questions I always ask a man who comes to inquire about a monastic vocation, is to tell me about their experience of falling in love. I am not interested in the private details of a man's love life, but this life is about falling in love. We come because we have fallen in love with God, and we come to this community because we have fallen in love with this particular group of men. We also come because we have discovered that God has fallen in love with us, and also to see if these particular men can fall in love with us. Saying that someone has a monastic vocation is like saying you have a vocation to marriage. You may want to be married, but until you find that particular person, you are only attracted to the idea of marriage.

I also like to remind people that this life will kill you, and that's the whole point. *Unless a grain falls into the earth and died, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* Someone who comes to this life, needs to be prepared to die. Learning to die is the work of a lifetime. Some of the signs of a willingness to die are seen by those who demonstrate a love for the gospel, an attraction to ministry, a desire for prayer, and signs of personal adaptability and flexibility. If you are looking for a place where you can fall in love every day, and where the process of falling in love will kill

you, you might want to consider a monastic vocation.

**For an institution to be sustainable, it needs to be relevant to new younger generations. What efforts has the SSJE made to ensure that it will still be a vibrant community of faith in the years to come? Has there been outreach to millennials, for example?**

Ever since I was elected Superior in 2016, I have been focused on raising up a new generation of leaders in the community. It's not just that we have run out of older monks to fill the various roles, but it is because we are in the midst of a sea change. The community, the church, the world is different than it was 50 years ago, never mind just 10 years ago. When I *retire* from being Superior in March 2025, I will have been Superior for nine years and it will be time for a new generation to take over. It is not simply because it is time for me to move on. It's because everything is different. It is not that there is no longer any room for tradition, or the Christian tradition, but how tradition is lived, embodied, and passed on in the next 10 to 50 years will not be the same as it has been for the last 50 years. And I don't know what that will look like, and in many ways, as someone approaching his 70s, that's not my job. That's the job of someone in their 30s and 40s. What I do know is that the next Superior will be very different than any for the last 50 years, and certainly different than me.

**As a Canadian living in the United States, do you think your perspectives on current American affairs (political, sociological, etc.) is somewhat different, having grown up and lived in a different country?**

This is the question that kept me from trying my vocation earlier. I simply could not get myself mentally across the border. I finally talked myself into by telling myself that Americans and Canadians weren't all that different, after all we watched (mostly) the same TV shows and movies, listened to the same music, had the same plumbing. How different could we be? So, I came to try my vocation and within weeks discovered Americans and Canadians are very different.

Even 30 years ago, the United States was a much more religious country, and Canada far more secular. Religion (and by this, I mean conservative evangelical Christianity) plays a huge role in the public discourse in the U.S., in ways that are inconceivable in Canada. The gun culture continues to shock me, as did (does) the resistance to universal medical insurance. In many ways the Civil War continues to be fought, and racism runs deep here. The list could go on. The one thing that brought these differences home to me shortly after my arrival was a discussion about the lottery. I knew about lotteries — you buy a ticket and hope to win. In this conversation it was clear you did not want to win. It took me awhile to realize the conversation was about the Viet Nam draft. That war continues to scar the national psyche. In fact, there was a conversation last Sunday at dinner about it.

At the same time, I experience Americans as incredibly generous, and amazingly proud of their country and its traditions.

**It has been said that Anglicanism is in decline in Canada. Our own Bishop Anna has talked about how the diocese here is one of the most secular. How, do you think, do we address this situation? How do you**

**imagine the role of the Anglican Church in Canada in the decades to come? How can it stay relevant?**

That's the million-dollar question, isn't it? Everyone is asking that. I don't know if this is *the* answer, but it's the answer for me. Anglicans are theologically rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation. Our worship, theology, and practice centres on the mystery of God taking on human flesh in the person of Jesus, and dwelling among us. *The home of God is among mortals.* As Anglicans I think it is first of all our challenge to remind ourselves of that, and then to demonstrate that we actually believe it.

I know by living in the US, the world is watching as Canada comes to grips as a nation with our history of First Nations – settlers relations. As the Episcopal Church begins to explore its own role in residential schools, I know too that it is looking to the Anglican Church. How we come to both see and show that truth of the Incarnation has been our vocation from the beginning, and it is chief strength.

Anglicans are also discovering that we are a people on a journey. One of my favourite gospel lines is *go and tell my disciples that I go before them to Galilee, and there they will see me.* It comes from the resurrection story. I have no idea what the future holds for us. What I do know is that Jesus promises to meet us there. I don't think we need to be afraid, for the simple reason that as we walk boldly into the future, we will discover Jesus already there.

**In one of your sermons, you wrote about how “it's easy to be overwhelmed... to give up hope. To live in fear.” With so much going on right now – armed**

**conflicts around the globe, political unrest, acts of violence and aggression in the news, the damaging effect of climate change on our planet, and so forth – how do we remain positive, you think?**

My hope is rooted and grounded in the resurrection. I cannot imagine the fear and terror that gripped Mary Magdalene and the other women that first Easter Day, as they headed to the tomb. They were however prepared to face their fears, and look death firmly in the face. What they saw however was not death, but life. Curiously, it was not death that shocked them. What shocked them was life. But they could not see life unless they were prepared to look into the bleakness of death.

As you say, there is so much going on right now that is pretty terrible, and which I have a really difficult time looking at, or even considering. What gives me hope is that the Risen Lord is standing in the midst of some much death, and calling my name, and sending me off to proclaim, *I have seen the Lord*. I think it is pretty unbelievable for most people that we can come to know hope, not by gazing a sunny sky, but by looking into the blackness of death and the chaos of the world and hearing the Risen Lord saying, *go and tell my disciples that I go before them to Galilee, and there they will see me*. It's the promise of God that we will see the risen Lord, and one thing I know, is that God is faithful and that promise will be fulfilled, so that like Mary we can say *I have seen the Lord*. That's where I find hope.

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# A ministry of action in liturgy, word and charity



*Trish Vollmann Stock (right) with Henry Wikkerink and Irene Carrera Herreros.*

*By Trish Vollmann Stock*

As a deacon in the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, I work alongside some fantastic people at the Cowichan Valley Basket Society (CVBS), also known as the foodbank in the Cowichan Valley. The CVBS's mission statement is "Ensure no individual or family in the Cowichan Valley goes hungry either physically, spiritually or emotionally."

Poverty is not a sin, nor is it a new problem. Jesus said in all four gospels, Mark 6, Luke 9, John 6 and Matthew 14 – "They need not go away: you give them something to eat." In each of the gospels, human generosity and faith are part of the miracle of the feeding of the 5000.

Jesus takes what is offered to satisfy the needs of the

hungry and multiplies it. God intends for hungry people to be fed, and he calls his people to provide the food.

I recently joined the Guest Relations team along with Irene Carrera Herreros. In doing so, I decided to interview its manager, Henry Wikkerink, and submit this story to *Faith Tides* after many discussions about the changing landscape of our city.

I asked Henry to describe what changes he has observed in the last two years he has served here. “Over the 24 months, I have been the manager of CVBS, I have seen a significant increase in the unhoused in our region,” he replied. “Many were renting before, but because of the sale of rental or change in them, the situation is that they cannot rent again because of significant rent increases. Some of the guests we serve suffer from a variety of addictions or mental illness, but over 50 per cent do not. I believe that these problems are compounded by living in impoverished conditions and having no access to the help they need, including a place to live.”

“The CVBS offers services to guests of all ages and backgrounds. Children receive food with their families, and the dining area has children and seniors who come for a hot meal or a snack. Many of our seniors come to the Basket Society for companionship. Seniors and families can get their hampers delivered.”

Henry further explained that providing food hampers was the first program offered by the CVBS over 40 years ago. The founders had hoped the program would be short-lived, but we are today with a small paid staff and over 80 volunteers from many backgrounds and faiths.

“We have changed very little in what we do — helping people suffering from food insecurity,” said Henry. “What has changed is how we do it. We find ourselves with more unhoused in our region, and we need to provide not just food, but a safe place for our guests to meet and share life.”

What needed to be added to fulfilling the promise of our mission statement was to address spiritual and emotional peace as well. Earlier this year, Henry told me, the Basket Society received a grant that helped improve how we serve our unhoused guests. The funds allowed us to add an all-season tent to the backyard, doubling the space for them. Many want to avoid coming inside as they are guarding their carts that contain their worldly possessions. The grant also let us hire additional staff whose vocation it is to reach out, support, encourage and help direct individuals to a better life. The other program is supported by the guest team of myself and Irene. Henry believes that it has been an enormous success.

Giving people hope when they feel hopeless is the best food. Henry hopes the funding will continue next year or that he can find further grants to keep the program going. It has changed the lives of many who have so little. This is the first in any of the island’s food banks.

The numbers are growing each day lunch is served, and now, with the addition of the guest team, the hours are extended from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday.

We all know that CVBS is doing an excellent service to those here in Cowichan, but it is putting a band-aid on the problem. We need to pray and continue to advocate for the needs of the unhoused, or these problems will never go away. Housing for all sectors is required. The

most significant need we see here in our community is a place for individuals who want to live in a place that is drug and alcohol-free, and to have the freedom to live behind closed doors in their own home.

We need your support. For more information on the CVBS and to help, please visit: <https://cvbs.ca>.

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## December — joyful and challenging



*December Calendar. Image courtesy of Marco Verch. Used under a CC BY 2.0 Deed license.*

*By Cathy Carphin*

We are at the opening of the Christian year, a time of reflection in Advent, of joy and celebration at Christmas and entering into a new year of commemoration of God's plan and act of redemption. For many, December also can be a challenging period, if only from a secular perspective. Christians live in both worlds of course and are subject to the same pressures and expectations as anyone else.

As children, we look forward to presents on Christmas morning. We may be happy about being the centre of attention, or we may be disappointed that we didn't get gifted with all the things we hoped for.

As young people we might shift our attention to partying with friends and neighbours more than the expectations of Christmas morning.

As adults, we are faced with preparing a bountiful few days in our own home, entertaining friends and family, and maybe even assessing how we compare with the provision others make for their families. Many reach out to the wider community, helping the marginalized and isolated.

As my husband and I got older, Christmas became less about decorations, gifts, feasting and gathering with friends, and more about God becoming flesh. The glitz and glam of the season faded a bit into the background, and the Christian focus on Advent and the appearance of God on earth became more prominent.

So many factors can dampen our observance of this holiday season — our finances, absent family members, distant friends, illness, job loss, social pressures and so forth; in fact all the challenges that can crop up at any time of the year. As Charles Dickens writes in his novella *A Christmas Carol*: "(Christmas) is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices."

*A Christmas Carol* is my favourite story of the season. For me, it has all the components of good story telling — the range of human experience, heroes/anti-heroes, memorable snippets, ghosts, kindness, misery and ultimately, redemption. I often think that if Scrooge can do a 180 in his beliefs and behaviour, then there is

hope for all of us!

While we all can think of real people who have had this major turn-around, one of the most famous examples is John Newton. He left the slave trade in the 1700s to become an abolitionist and priest, and he is best known for writing the popular hymn *Amazing Grace* (for more information: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazing\\_Grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazing_Grace)). *The New Testament*, of course, is replete with examples of conversion, the most well-known of which is probably Saint Paul himself. As well, we have the Roman Emperor Constantine. And don't forget, through the centuries, many Christians, like Saint Francis of Assisi, were called from a dissolute life into God's service.

This material world is full of great blessings and joy. Our best antidote to the disappointments and trauma that also exist is to focus on God's plan for us as celebrated in this Christmas season by God's becoming flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Regardless of our circumstances, I think that the most important thing we can do is to be kind — to ourselves, to our loved ones and to everyone we meet along the way.

I wish you great blessings for a joy-filled Christmas.



*Image courtesy of Matthew Claxton/Langley Advance Times.*

*Faith Tides* extends its congratulations to Kelly Duncan as the new rector of St Andrew, Sidney. She was inducted on Nov. 25 by Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee.

Kelly attended the University of British Columbia where she received a degree in commerce. However, she was inspired to study theology afterwards and obtained a Master of Divinity at the Vancouver School of Theology. As she recently told *Faith Tides*, "I became a priest 15 years ago after having grown up in the Anglican Church and experiencing the breadth of worship styles and theologies that find a home in our "big tent." Working at a World Council of Churches Central Committee meeting in Berlin, Germany and as a missionary in Honduras have rounded out my experiences in the ecumenical church."

Formerly, Kelly served at St Mary, Kerrisdale as a priest and at St George, Fort Langley as its rector. She has recently moved, with her family, from the Lower Mainland to Sidney and is "loving Island life," she says! As well, "I'm looking forward to getting to know the community at St Andrew's and to walking alongside them as we discern together what God is calling us to

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## Our well wishes to Kelly Duncan!

*By Roland Hui*

do. St Andrew's is an outward-focused parish that reaches out to those in the wider community in incredible ways. It has been such a blessing to begin to get to know the members of this community and to learn about all the various ministries that go on here. It is exciting to see God at work in the world through the church!"

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## A place of remembrance

*By Mark Oldnall*

As Diocesan Cemetery Manager for the Diocese of BC, my duties include oversight of our 19 historic and active cemeteries, as well as eight memorial gardens. I assist the cemetery committees with administration and act as a liaison between the synod office and individual parishes. I also administrate cemetery sites that are not attached to a parish.

In this role, I have been blessed to visit many parishes and diocesan sites, meeting wonderful members of the diocese. I also am honoured to represent the diocese to the public regarding its cemeteries.

On Oct.28 of this year, I had the pleasure of welcoming several Sea Cadets at St. Mary, Somenos Cemetery, located in the Cowichan Valley.

St. Mary's Cemetery is located at 6309 Somenos Road, North Cowichan, on land donated by the Drinkwater

family in 1874. Soon after, an Anglican church was constructed and consecrated there, and a cemetery established. In 1909, the church building was torn down and a new one built. The second church stood on the site until 1970 when it was deconsecrated, and the Anglican Church donated the building to the town of Port Renfrew. The building was moved and serves as a community hall to this day.

For many years, the cadets have come to lay crosses at St. Mary's Cemetery and in local cemeteries within the valley. This year, over 75 crosses were laid at St. Mary's Cemetery.

After each one was laid, the Cadets saluted the veterans and spent a moment to reflect.

During this visit, I was given the opportunity to address the cadets. After a welcome on behalf of the Diocese of BC, I thanked them for their dedication and time to pay tribute to the many veterans in our cemeteries. As well, I was happy to say that the diocese will continue to honour their memory by maintaining our cemeteries as a welcoming place for all.





# St Luke, Cedar Hill honours its veterans

*By Barb Prescott*

Through research by Cemetery Committee members and information from family members, St Luke, Cedar Hill has found that at least 161 veterans are buried or commemorated in its cemetery.

Each November, we hold several events to honour these veterans and we invite the community to take part in these events. Prior to our Service of Remembrance, remembrance pots containing sprigs of rosemary, a Canadian flag and a poppy cross were assembled by children and adults attending the Nov. 3 Fantastic Friday.

On Nov. 5, we held our Service of Remembrance. After a short ceremony in the church to honour our saints for All Saints' Day, we moved outside to the cemetery. The rain held off and we were blessed with a relatively warm day as we paid tribute to the 161 veterans resting or commemorated in St Luke's cemetery by reading out their names.

On Nov. 10, Grade 8 students from Cedar Hill Middle School came to pay their respects by placing painted poppy rocks on the veterans' graves. They participated as part of the No Stone Left Alone Program ([www.nostoneleftalone.ca](http://www.nostoneleftalone.ca)), a national program to remember the service and sacrifice of Canada's military by educating and inspiring youth to place poppies on veterans' headstones.

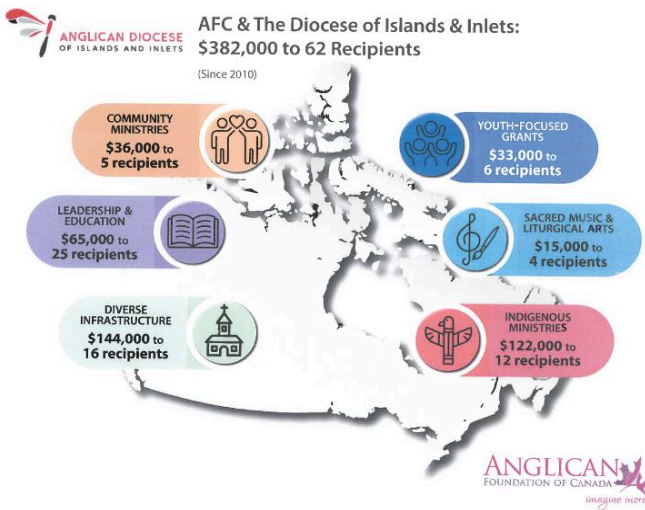
These events recognized and honoured the veterans in St Luke's Cemetery as well as strengthening community connections with Cedar Hill Middle School and with family members of veterans who live in the Victoria area.



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## AFC giving — legacy gifts “lift all boats”

*By Faith Tides*



### Name your passion, grow your legacy

In 1973, A.E.J. “Ted” Fulford partnered with the [Anglican Foundation of Canada \(AFC\)](#) to develop a trust to promote, develop, and enrich sacred music in the Anglican Church of Canada. Since then, the A.E.J. Fulford Trust for Sacred Music has awarded more than \$580,000 in grants, which have supported choir schools, bursaries for choir camps, choral scholarships, organ study, and more.

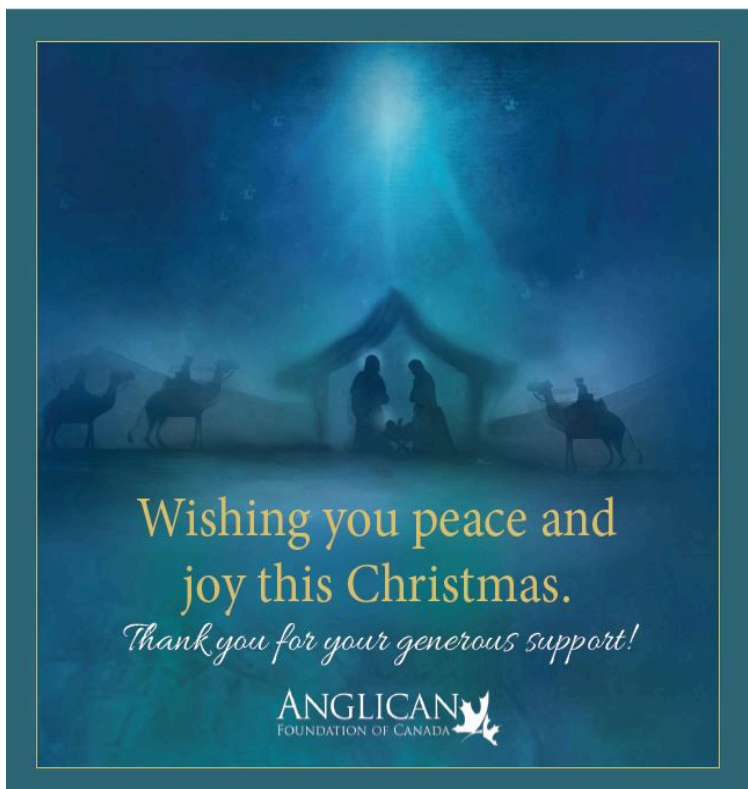
“The generosity which arose from Ted Fulford’s desire to foster musical education and training in Canada allows churches and other music programs to reduce or eliminate financial barriers for young people who are seeking musical training,” says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director, AFC. On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Fulford Trust, AFC is celebrating Ted’s generosity by encouraging Anglicans across Canada to do as he did: name your passion and grow your legacy.

“Ted Fulford’s philanthropic spirit, and that of hundreds of other Canadian Anglicans, have formed the bedrock of AFC’s \$15 million endowment,” says Brubacher. “These legacies have varied in size and do

not come exclusively from wealthy philanthropists. The thread that unites them all, however, is a passion to make a difference.” Brubacher explains that AFC’s capacity to weather the pandemic, while also pushing its grants program to new heights in recent years is directly attributable to the “growing impact of enduring gifts.”

Whether motivated by their love for sacred music, belief in the value of leadership and education, a vision to reduce poverty, or a desire to support the Indigenous church, an increasing number of Canadian Anglicans are choosing to remember the church in their wills.

Brubacher says that among the many bequests it has received in recent decades, AFC is rarely the sole faith-related beneficiary. “Our experience has been that legacy gifts typically lift all boats by supporting the church at various levels—locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. It is especially heartening to see the benefit to the local church as well as to a donor’s family and other much-loved charities. From hospitals to universities to animal shelters, Canadian Anglicans are putting a great deal of care, compassion, and consideration into how they put their wills to work.”



*This year, AFC is joining the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund as well as dioceses across Canada to partner with Will Power, a national campaign of the Canadian Association of Gift Planners (CAGP) that educates Canadians about the power of leaving a charitable gift in their will. Visit [willpower.ca](http://willpower.ca) to see all participating charities across the Anglican Church of Canada.*

## The Saint Martin's Day Lantern Walk

*By Roland Hui*



*Stained glass of Saint Martin at Martin's Church, East Horsley, England (detail). Image courtesy of Andy Scott. Used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 Deed license.*

On the evening of Nov. 11, the streets around St Barnabas, Victoria were lit up by colourful lanterns carried by the children of the parish.

This annual celebration is in honour of Saint Martin of

Tours, also known as Saint Martin the Merciful. Born in the 4th century, Martin, a citizen of the Roman Empire, embraced the recently legalized Christian faith at a young age and then served in the military as he was required to do.

But as a pacifist, Martin refused to take up arms, and he was known for his compassion to others. According to legend, he once met a beggar in rags with whom he shared his warm cloak with by splitting it with his sword.

Another story says that Martin, also renowned for miracles he performed, was so revered by the people that they were determined to make him a bishop. But Martin thought himself unworthy and went so far as to hide himself. His followers took up lanterns to look for him in the night. When he was finally discovered, he was elected Bishop of Tours in Gaul (later France).

Saint Martin's feast day is Nov. 11, and following a tradition still practiced in Germany, children from St Barnabas' stage a play about his life, followed by an outdoor procession of lanterns in which they re-enact the search for the missing saint. After he is "found," pretzels and other refreshments are enjoyed in commemoration of his generosity and goodness.



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# Celebrate the season at Christ Church Cathedral (Dec. 9 and Dec. 17, 2023)

*By Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria*



*Image courtesy of Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria.*

### **Messiah from Scratch**

A singalong fundraiser with Donald Hunt, the Emily Carr String Quartet... and YOU!

Saturday, Dec. 9, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Now's your chance to lift your voice in song, as we present the ever-popular "Messiah from Scratch!"

Come join a team of some of Victoria's best singers and instrumentalists and add your voice to the stirring choruses of Handel's iconic masterpiece. "Messiah from Scratch!" distills Handel's joyful masterpiece to its Christmas essentials for maximum fun: angels, shepherds abiding in their fields, exalted valleys, a Saviour born and, of course... a Hallelujah Chorus. Proceeds to support the cathedral music program.

For more information visit:

<https://www.christchurchcathedral.bc.ca/events/messiah-from-scratch-1255/2023-12-09>

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### **Lessons and Carols for Christmas**

Sunday, Dec. 17, from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

A seasonal staple, the festival of lessons and carols has been celebrated at Anglican churches and cathedrals for well over 100 years. Each year, hundreds of people pack the cathedral to celebrate the season with traditional carols led by the cathedral's choir and

organ. This year, the service includes a new carol by BC composer Tobin Stokes.

For more information visit:

<https://www.christchurchcathedral.bc.ca/events/lessons-and-carols-for-christmas-1241/2023-12-17>

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# Leading the liturgy of the word — Lay Leadership in Worship course this spring (March to May 2024)

*By Ingrid Andersen*

Many of the parishes in the diocese are "in transition" and do not necessarily have a priest to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday. Additionally, parishes are rediscovering the daily office and considering ways to have lay-led weekday services. Lay-led services are an opportunity for renewal: to encourage lay people to live into the vows they made in their baptismal covenant, which reminds us that each and every one of us, lay or ordained, is called to participate in worship by virtue of

our baptism.

We are asked, “Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?” We answer, “I will, with God’s help.”

If your parish is often or occasionally without clergy and you are a lay leader who would be able and willing to lead in services, you are invited to apply online to in order to be considered by the bishop to be nominated to attend an upcoming seven-week course. Upon successful completion of the course, a conversation will be held about how and when you might help lead Services of the Word in your parish.

The Diocese of Islands and Inlets is presenting its fourth offering of the *Lay Leadership in Worship* course from early March to the end of May 2024. The course will provide the skills and resources for laity to lead worship services, Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Liturgy of the Word (a church service without the eucharist). To date, more than 70 lay leaders have been successfully trained in the diocese. Regardless of their knowledge and experience, all participants go on to deepen their understanding of liturgy and the offices, and gain confidence to become more effective leaders of worship.

### **Course description**

The eight sessions will equip lay leaders to:

- Understand the purpose of liturgy
- Follow the liturgical year and the lectionary and examine their purpose in worship/  
liturgical formation
- Understand our Anglican, geographical, social

and historical context

- Become familiar with the broad principles and structure of the Offices in the *BCP* and the *BAS*, as well as the Liturgy of the Word
- Learn to plan worship collaboratively in your parish
- Access the available liturgical, lectionary, prayer and sermon resources needed to plan and lead a worship service
- Reflect on learnings from the practical implementation of course content

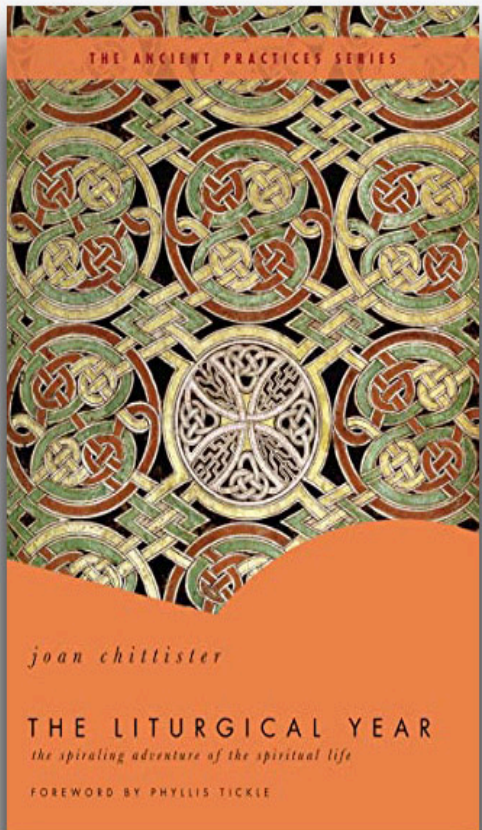
### **Dates and location**

Via Zoom, on Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
March 7, 14, 21, April 4, 11, 18, 25 and May 30  
Three mentored services during a month of mentored practical experience in your parish/region, followed by a final Zoom class on Thursday, May 30, 2024.

### **Cost**

Free; however participants must purchase their own copy of the required reading well in advance of the course.

Required reading: *The Liturgical Year: the spiraling adventure of the spiritual life* by Joan Chittister (2009), from the Ancient Practices Series.



**How to apply:** Those interested should visit the program website [here](#) to apply. Applications will be accepted from Dec. 1, 2023 to Jan. 13, 2024.

In partnership with Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, this course is brought to you by The Rev. Sr. Ingrid Andersen, MEd, Incumbent at Church of the Advent, Colwood, Diocese of Islands and Inlets (BC) and other teachers and facilitators from throughout the diocese and beyond.

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# Embrace Discovery — an online Pre- Lenten retreat for men (Feb. 2024)

**Qualifications:** All those wishing to lead the Liturgy of the Word must provide proof of the following BEFORE applying for the course:

1. a valid Police Information Check (with Vulnerable Persons Sector check)
2. completed [Safe Church](#) training within the last five years
3. read the [diocesan policies](#) and signed the policy acknowledgement form
4. approval of your parish incumbent (or in the absence of an incumbent – your warden or regional archdeacon) to lead the Liturgy of the Word in your parish

*By G. Wayne Short*

Join us on **Feb. 7, 2024, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and then 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Atlantic Time)** for an enlightening online Pre-Lenten Retreat entitled *Embrace Discovery*. This retreat will guide us to be more open with ourselves, others and God.

Our retreat will delve into the profound themes of vulnerability, self-awareness and self-care. Comprising three one-hour sections, we will engage in active listening, silent reflection and open sharing. Remember, “when we nurture our inner life, our inner life nurtures us.”

To enhance your experience, upon registration, you will receive a concise retreat guide that will help you maximize the benefits of this spiritual journey.

The Fee of \$20 is payable to sponsor [The Martha Spirituality Centre](#), PEI. Please register with Sr. Joan Campbell at [drjoancsm@gmail.com](mailto:drjoancsm@gmail.com)

Guiding us on this path will be **Reverend Dr. G. Wayne Short**, a retired Anglican priest and meditation teacher with a doctorate degree in pastoral care and counselling. His professional career in pastoral ministry spanned seven parishes across Canada. Wayne brings a wealth of experience and wisdom to the table.

He currently resides in Sooke, BC with his wife Sheila.

For any queries or additional information, feel free to contact Wayne at [mcast709@gmail.com](mailto:mcast709@gmail.com).

Join us as we embark on this journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth.

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# A joint appeal for Gaza from Archbishops Hosam Naoum and Justin Welby

*By Faith Tides*



*Archbishop Hosam Naoum and Archbishop Justin Welby. Image courtesy of St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem.*





The Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem

The Archbishop of Canterbury



Dear Friends,

24 October, 2023

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**From Archbishop Hosam Naoum:**

Just over two weeks ago, the world was horrified at the sudden eruption of war in the Holy Land, resulting in hundreds of deaths, injuries, and displacements. Since that time, those numbers have multiplied into the thousands, as open hostilities have drastically escalated. Innocent civilians, especially women and children, have been caught in the deadly crossfire. As you have probably seen, a massive rocket blast exploded in the midst of our own Ahli Hospital in the heart of Gaza City, tragically killing or seriously wounding hundreds of refugees who had gathered there because they had no other place of shelter in which to go.

Although Ahli's buildings were heavily damaged, two nights later our devoted staff partially reopened the hospital. In doing this, they demonstrated the determination we have in the Diocese of Jerusalem to persevere in our Christian mission to serve others as though we were serving Christ himself (Matt 25:31-46). And this is the case not just for Gaza, but throughout all the Holy Land. Yet in order to accomplish this mission in the midst of a devastating war, we need to draw upon the strength of the larger Body of Christ. For we understand that when one member of the Body suffers, all parts suffer (1 Cor 12:26).

And so, my sisters and brothers in Christ, I appeal to you to first of all to pray for our mission here, as well for the peace of Jerusalem (Psa 122:6). Secondly, advocate with your representatives for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land, so that all who dwell within these lands can live in security. Finally, if you are able, support our ministries in Gaza, Palestine & Israel, and throughout the Diocese of Jerusalem by contributing financially through one of our international partners.

Thank you for helping us continue the work of our Lord Jesus Christ in the very lands in which he himself ministered in his earthly life before offering up his life on our behalf and then rising again victorious from the grave, overcoming death and giving us hope for a new life. May God bless you.

**From Archbishop Justin Welby:**

As war devastates the Holy Land, we ask where Christ is to be found amid the cries of His children. When the lives of the innocent are at risk, we strain our eyes for the light of the One who offers healing, peace, and justice. In Gaza, the Al Ahli hospital, run by the Diocese of Jerusalem, is that light. Despite being hit by rocket fire last week, it is still providing critical care to the injured and anyone in need of medical attention. As health services become even more vital in Gaza, the work of the hospital becomes more difficult for urgent need of medications, equipment and fuel.

Please, continue to pray for those who mourn, those who are in pain, and those who are in fear, and for those who are caring for the injured and bereaved. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says that those who have looked after the sick have cared for Christ himself. I urge everyone, if they are able, to support the Al Ahli Hospital's work caring for the wounded body of Jesus Christ and contribute to the Gaza Appeal.

In Christ,

The Most Reverend Hosam E. Naoum  
The Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem

The Most Reverend Justin Welby  
The Archbishop of Canterbury

[info@j-diocese.org](mailto:info@j-diocese.org)

To download the joint appeal for Gaza from Archbishop Hosam Elias Naoum and Archbishop Justin Welby, please click [here](#).

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## International Partners receiving donations for this appeal:

[American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem \(USA\)](#)

[JMECA \(UK\)](#)

[Friends of the Holy Land \(UK, Joint Anglican-Roman Catholic\)](#)

[Canadian Companions \(Canada\)](#)

[The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund \(PWRDF\)](#)

[Anglican Board of Mission \(Australia\)](#)

[EMS \(Germany\)](#)

[To contact the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem](#)

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