



# Faith Tides

RENEWED HEARTS, RENEWED SPIRITS, RENEWED PEOPLE

May & June 2024

This PDF is a simple printable document of Faith Tides 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).

# ‘It is easier to talk about reconciliation than to do reconciliation’



Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee. Photo by Kevin Light.

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

Dear friends,

At the end of 2023 the Yellowhead Institute, which monitors progress on the 94 Calls to Action from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission, issued a report saying that in 2023 no Calls to Action were complete. Their report noted that “there are limits to how many times you can write a report about how Canada, once again, has failed to make any meaningful progress.” They noted that there are five main challenges to reconciliation.

- Paternalism
- Structural anti-Indigenous discrimination

- Reconciliation as exploitation or performance
- Insufficient resources
- The economic interests and apathy of non-Indigenous People

I read this report with shame as I know that I am part of the reason so little progress is being made. It is easier to write reports and talk about reconciliation than to do reconciliation.

In this issue of *Faith Tides* you will hear from Marvin Underwood. Marvin was awarded the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia in 2023 for his extraordinary service to the church in building bridges between the cultural ways of Indigenous Peoples and Holy Trinity, North Saanich. In Holy Week, Marvin chose to return his Order as he felt that while he had been faithful to the church, the church had not been faithful to him.

I am deeply humbled by Marvin’s words and actions.

I would ask for your help in advocating for Marvin and for all day school Survivors. Having been dehumanized and abused by the schools themselves, the Survivors, like Martin, are now being dehumanized by the very process that is meant to compensate them. As you can read [in the interview with Marvin](#) (and in the CBC news link below) the process employed was not humane, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive or even practical (asking for paperwork that is impossible to obtain).

[Opposition parties call for the day school settlement agreement to be reopened | CBC News](#)

Below you will find a letter from me, co-signed by Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Archbishop Chris

Harper, calling for the day school settlement agreement to be reopened. Please join me in writing similar letters to Minister Anandasangaree, Prime Minister Trudeau and your own elected representatives.

[Letter to Minister Anandasangaree, co-signed by Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Archbishop Chris Harper](#)

# Day school Survivor calls for justice and true reconciliation



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April 25, 2024

The Honourable Gary Anandasangaree  
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0A6  
Via email: gary.anand@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Anandasangaree,

I am writing to you as the Anglican Bishop of British Columbia. The Diocese I serve is home to over 50 indigenous nations. There are countless residential school survivors and day school survivors in our diocese and the harmful legacy of these schools is an ever-present reality. The church has much to atone for, most especially St. Michaels Residential School. I was honored to spend part of Holy Week on 'Yalis with, among others, survivors of that school.

Joining me as co-signers of this letter are The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and The Most Rev. Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

We write today to join our voice to the opposition MPs in asking that the day school settlement agreement be reopened. Many claimants have been retraumatized by the very process that was meant to compensate them for their abuse.

Three quarters of claims have been paid out at the lowest level of compensation and we know that much of the reason for that is that the burden of proof on the victims to prove 'repeated sexual abuse', in order to receive the highest claim amount, is simply too high.

What seems to have been lost in the settlement agreement that is being administered by Deloitte and Gowling is that we are dealing with instances of child abuse. These are not simple insurance claims.

I urge you to re-open the settlement agreement and to find a more compassionate and trauma-informed way to compensate victims.

Peace,

The Right Rev. Anna Greenwood-Lee  
Bishop of British Columbia

The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls  
Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

The Most Rev. Chris Harper  
National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop  
of the Anglican Church of Canada

RENEWED HEARTS RENEWED SPIRITS RENEWED PEOPLE



*Orange ribbons tied to a wrought iron fence outside Saint Mary's Cathedral, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Photo copyright: Dan Hussy Photo.*

*By Naomi Racz*

Between 1865 and the turn of the millennium, 699 federally-funded day schools operated in almost every Indigenous reserve across Canada. Unlike at residential schools, students went home at the end of the day. However, as with residential schools, the goal was cultural assimilation — to “kill the Indian in the child” — and many of the roughly 200,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children forced to attend suffered abuse.

While day schools were funded by the federal government, they were owned and operated by Roman

Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and United churches. One such school was St Michael's in Alert Bay, which the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia began operating as a day school in 1878.

While a 2006 agreement provided compensation to Survivors of residential schools, no such compensation was forthcoming for day school Survivors. In 2009 Garry McLean, who passed away in 2019, and others initiated the Federal Indian Day School Class Action. After several years in legal limbo, in 2019, the Federal Court approved a settlement agreement, which allowed Survivors and their family members to submit claims for compensation.

Survivors could apply to have their claim assessed at five levels, depending on the type of abuse they suffered. At the lowest claims level, Survivors received \$10,000, while for the highest level they could receive up to \$200,000. Of the over 180,000 claims submitted, around three-quarters were for the lowest level of compensation — a fact some believe shows that the process for higher-level claims was too demanding.

The deadline for submitting claims passed in January 2023. However, calls have been growing, from Survivors, their families and MPs, to reopen the settlement agreement. Marvin Underwood, a parishioner of Holy Trinity, Saanich, is one of those Survivors calling for the claims process to be overhauled, on the grounds that it is “discriminatory and re-traumatizing.”

Marvin attended Tsartlip Indian Day School on the Tsartlip First Nation reserve for eight years. He also attended St Mary's Indian Residential School in Mission, BC, and spent time at the Indian Hospital in Nanaimo. He says the impacts on his life have been

“countless.” Trauma and stress have resulted in physical pain that sometimes leaves Marvin needing to use a cane. He requires pain relievers, which he has to pay for out of pocket. Marvin also has an alcohol use disorder, which he says he came by in a legitimate way, as a product of the day and residential school systems.

He describes his experience with the settlement claims process as “quite the ordeal, to put it mildly.”

“I, like other Survivors, have made numerous applications to the federal government's compensation package since it was first announced in 2020. I contacted Deloitte [the claims administrator] by phone in January 2023 because I hadn't received acknowledgment of my application. I was told by the person on the phone, ‘That's not how things are done.’

“I would have to wait until a determination had been made regarding my application. Then I would hear from them. In March of this year, after the third time applying and having my claim level denied, I asked to receive an independent review. I am waiting for a response.”

Marvin feels that not only is the claims process unjust and inequitable, but that it has compounded the emotional and physical trauma he has already experienced.

“Telling our stories leaves applicants open and vulnerable. Then, we wait months, not knowing what is happening. The whole process, and the uncertainty of it all, has taken a toll on me, both medically and emotionally.”

Marvin has witnessed both the church's and the federal government's attempts to put reconciliation into action.



He says that Stephen Harper's 2008 residential school apology had a deep impact on him. Marvin also took part in Bishop Logan's 2016 Sacred Journey. Bishop Logan completed a penitential walk from Alert Bay to Victoria, meeting with chiefs and representatives of the First Nations whose land he passed through along the way. However, Marvin feels that at both the federal and diocesan levels he has been let down.

In 2023, Marvin received the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia, for his work building bridges between his church and Indigenous culture. Shortly after receiving the Order, Marvin contacted the diocese seeking support in his calls on the federal government to overhaul the day school settlement claims process. However, in March of this year, Marvin chose to return his Order, as he felt his call for support had gone unanswered.

"This was not a hasty decision," says Marvin.

"Reconciliation is fragile. All the good work of past efforts can unravel if the church leadership becomes complacent... The lack of support for me from the diocese over the last six months has been very hurtful."

*Faith Tides* readers can find the letter Marvin sent to Bishop Anna accompanying his Order, as well as Bishop Anna's response to Marvin below. You can also read [the Bishop's Column](#) reflecting on these events in this issue. In April, Bishop Anna sent a letter co-signed by Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Archbishop Chris Harper to Gary Anandasangaree, the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, calling on the government to re-open the claims settlement process. Readers can also find that letter [in this issue](#) and Bishop Anna is asking that parishioners across the diocese add their voice to this call by writing to Minister Anandasangaree, Prime Minister Trudeau

and your local representatives.

Returning the Order and now sharing his story here has taken great strength on Marvin's part, but he feels it is an important step towards reconciliation.

"I am telling my story here in hopes that Anglicans across our diocese will find meaningful ways to live lives of truth telling and healing, and to follow the path started by Bishop Logan's 2016 Sacred Journey; a path toward true reconciliation. It may be as simple as writing a letter to your federal MP, as Bishop Anna has done, calling on them to overhaul this unjust, colonial claims settlement process so the Survivors of their Indian day school system can finally find some healing and peace.

"I don't know what is next for my reconciliation journey with the church. We will just have to take it one step at a time."

[Marvin Underwood letter to Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, March 28, 2024](#)

[Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee response to Marvin Underwood, March 28, 2024](#)

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# Primate visits the diocese

Archbishop Nicholls announced her retirement earlier this year, which will be effective Sept. 15, 2024.



*Pictured (left to right) are Jacqueline Stober, senior associate priest, Christ Church Cathedral; John Steele; Eric Partridge, diocesan executive archdeacon; Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, bishop of the Diocese of Islands and Inlets; Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada; Sean Tiernay; Jeannine Friesen, priest in charge, Christ Church Cathedral; and Lon Towstego, incumbent at the parish of Central Saanich and archdeacon of the Western, Peninsula and Gulf Islands region. Photo copyright: J. Abram Photography.*

*By Naomi Racz*

From April 19 to 24, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, visited the Diocese of Islands and Inlets. During that time, the Primate took part in the Women's Spring Retreat, which you can [read about in this issue](#), and presided over Choral Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral. You can see a gallery of images from the Evensong below. Archbishop Linda also spent time at St Peter's, Lakehill and St Mark's, Qualicum Beach. You can see photos from and read about the primate's visit to St Mark's below.

## Choral Evensong at Christ Church Cathedral



## Primate visits St Mark's, Qualicum Beach

*Words by Elizabeth Northcott*

It's not every day that your bishop calls and asks that you host the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada! "Oh, and by the way Elizabeth," she continued, "make certain that whatever you plan has the whole of your archdeaconry represented."

The archdeaconry for which I am canonically responsible is called the Mid-North Island region. There are ten parishes in this region from Port Hardy to Nanoose Bay, and from Tofino to Denman Island. Our parish of St Mark's was to host the region in celebration of Archbishop Linda's ministry.

The date and time were set by the Archbishop's "PA" (personal assistant) in Toronto and we were full steam ahead for the dates of April 23-24. With this news and the guidance of Bishop Anna, we planned a clergy supper at the Bayside Oceanfront Resort in Parksville — the same place the Archbishop would be staying for the night. There were lots of stories told, and much laughter and discussion about the ministry to which we are called. Archbishop Linda was a most gracious dinner companion.



The next day, Anglican friends from the north coast of the island arrived. Parishioners from Port Hardy



reconnected with folks from Nanoose Bay, and from Tofino with Comox. It was a wonderful gathering and mid-week service of Eucharist. There were readers from St Mary's, Nanoose Bay, and Communion servers from St Peter's, Campbell River. While our two area deacons, Marion Edmondson and Lynn Cawthra, helped proclaim the gospel and serve at the altar. Barbara Paterson from St Edmund's in Parksville led the intercessions, while Robert and Judy Fyles from Port Hardy read the psalm.

Alastair Hunting, incumbent at St John the Divine, Courtenay served as the Archbishop's chaplain — a new role for Alastair. It was a sacred and wonderful gathering around the table with the Archbishop preaching.

Next we were off to the parish hall to enjoy a simple soup and sweets luncheon. We served bread from local baker Wild Culture Bakery and cheese from the Little Qualicum Cheeseworks. Each parish was asked to bring a tray of sweets, and were they ever good: I tried most of them.

The visit was all about the making possible of connections with Archbishop Linda, our primate. During the lunch, she took up the microphone and spoke clearly and passionately about the ministry that she shares with us as the Anglican Church of Canada. She spoke about the Middle East conflict and the work of Anglicans around the world, calling us to pray and continue to work for justice and peace for all God's children and creation.

What a joy to have been able to open our doors to the primate, show her a welcome and celebrate her ministry.

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# Churches across the diocese celebrate Holy Week



*St Philip's, Cedar (Nanaimo) sunrise service with Cedar United Church at Blue Heron Park. Photo by Elizabeth Razzo.*

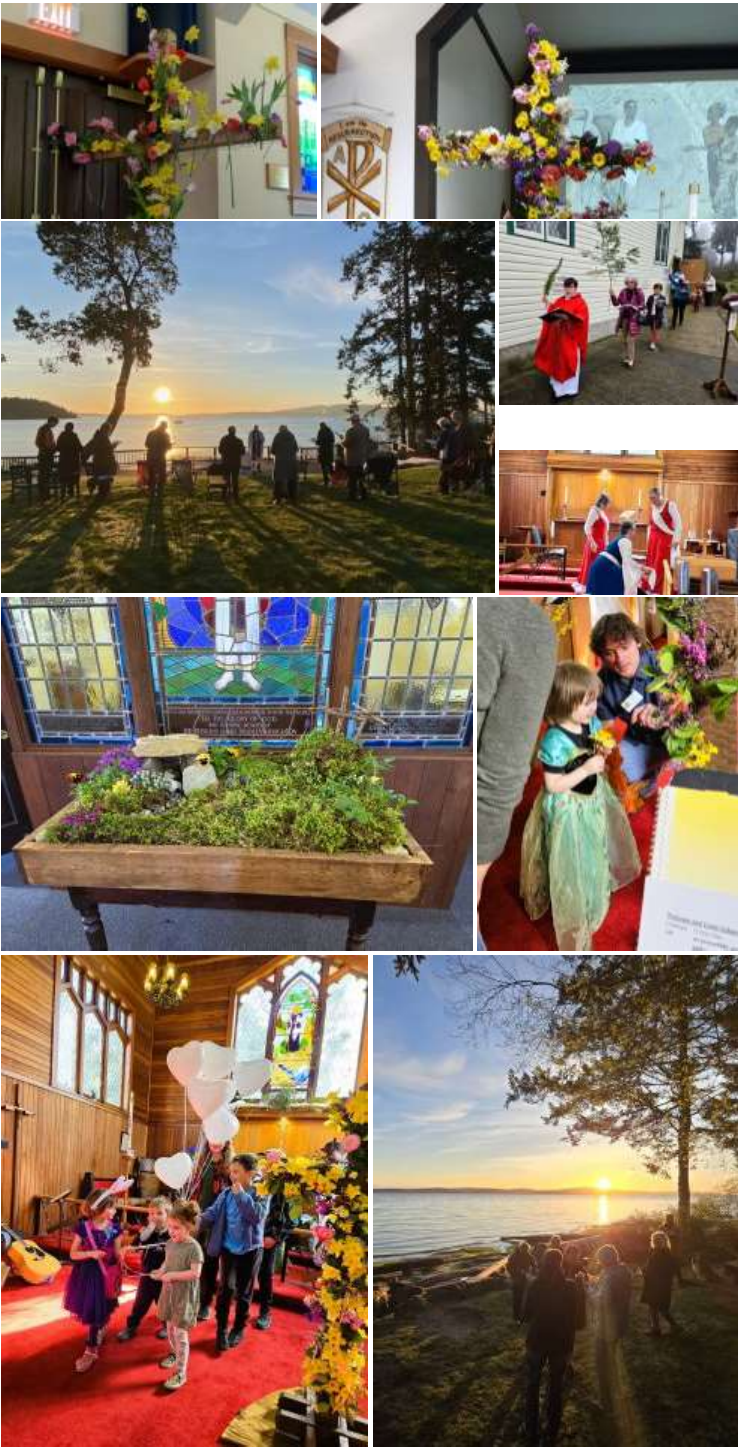
*By Naomi Racz*

Below is a selection of photos from the Holy Week 2024 events and celebrations held by churches across the diocese.

Cowichan/Mid-Vancouver Island







**St Michael and All Angels, Chemainus parishioner brings family’s lamb cake tradition to the island**

*Words by Jodie Phillips*

In 2017, while visiting my mom in Chicago and looking in her pantry, I discovered a two-piece cake mould. I recalled the years, as a child, when mom’s coconut and candy decorated lamb cake delightfully accented the dessert table at Grandma Emily’s Easter brunches.

Our family originated from Guardiagrele, Italy. The lamb cake tradition began in Poland and other European countries. The cake represents spring, purity and the precious Lamb of God. The lambs were placed on church altars among Easter baskets filled with fruits and bread, to be blessed during the Easter Sunday service.

Mom trusted me to retain our family traditions, even in Canada. In 2017, I married and moved to Chemainus. As time went on, at St Michael and All Angels I noticed “real bakers” gave their best, and from *scratch*. I quickly learned that this lamb cake deserved

more prominence.

One day, a cousin sent our Italian family's pound cake recipe. Perfect! Loaded with eggs, it is enhanced by almond and buttery icing, fruit and a satin bow. The lamb decor is complete with a bell and colourful jelly beans.

The "dainty" pound cake desserts fed a full house of parishioners after glorious Easter worship. Over 50 parishioners awaited with joy, sharing a sweet slice of tradition with their coffee, tea and precious church family. I am grateful and blessed to share this "made with love" tradition.

## **Western, Peninsula, Gulf Islands and Greater Victoria**







Mid-North Island



# Planted in the earth itself



Photo by Naomi Racz.

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

*Below is a selection of photos and an excerpt from the transcript of Bishop Anna's closing sermon at the May 2024 We Together diocesan conference. You can also watch the morning and afternoon sessions on the [diocesan website](#).*



As we bring this time together to a close, I would like to leave you with an image from the late and great Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). Teilhard was a



fascinating Jesuit priest and theologian with a fascinating story. Look him up when you get a chance.

Some 70 years ago Teilhard observed that Christianity is like a tree that has been planted in too small a pot. He said that Christianity must be replanted, either in a bigger pot or, he suggested, better yet, in the earth itself.

This is a rich and helpful metaphor, especially in this part of the world, where we are blessed to live alongside some very, very big trees. Trees that are hundreds of feet tall and hundreds of years old. Trees for which the idea of a pot is laughable. No pot could ever contain the trees of our rainforests, our Douglas firs, pines and hemlocks.

James and I have recently welcomed a third teenager, apart from our own two. We've welcomed the child of a friend, a 16 year old from Tokyo who was in need of a change. She's been with us a couple months and if you ask her what she thinks of living in Victoria, the first thing she says is that she loves the trees. How big they are, how many of them there are.

For you can't live in this part of the world and not be awestruck by the majesty of Creation.

As Brendon mentioned last night, and as John mentioned this morning, a 2022 publication edited by our friend at the University of Victoria, Paul Bramadat, *Religion at the Edge: Nature, Spirituality and Secularity in the Pacific Northwest* identifies that this part of the world is characterized by what he terms reverential naturalism. For me, reverential naturalism boils down to the fact that everyone who lives in this part of the world cannot but be enchanted by the trees, the coastlines, the waves and the wind, the ferns, the oaks,

the whales, herons, kingfishers and sea lions. The canticle we started our day with — “Glorify the Lord, O mountains and hills... O springs of water, seas, and streams, O whales and all that move in the waters.” — makes sense to us, resonates with us.

The beauty and majesty of this part of Gods' creation is so great, the revelation that is creation is so wonderfully accessible to us here, that it's no wonder some people are so enthralled with the first book of revelation, with creation itself.

So, to go back to Teilhard de Chardin's metaphor of the church being like a tree that has grown too big for its pot and that needs to be replanted. My closing question for us is: what would happen if we here in this Diocese of Islands and Inlets lived as if God has already made that happen? As if God has already gone on ahead of us — as he, the risen Christ, does at Easter — and planted the tree that is the church in the earth itself?

What if we were honest about the fact that the church as institution is not a great gardener. We are putting a lot of effort into keeping the church in the pot. We lament that we don't have any young people in the pot anymore, that the pot is cracked and needs a new roof and heat pump, that the cracks are showing.

Meanwhile, meanwhile, maybe God has already transplanted the tree, not into a bigger pot, but into the earth itself.

John has reminded us of how we have become misenchanted with capitalism and consumerism. Our misenchancements have caused us to turn inward. But God, God I am quite sure needs us to turn outward.

For the first and great commandment is that we must

turn outward, to love of God and love of neighbour. It's not, thank God, all about us, our own comfort and desires, but about a world in which all people, all of creation thrives. And that world is possible, but it requires each of us to discipline ourselves, to seek the good of others before our own good, to be enchanted with the whole of creation and to let go of being so obsessed with consumerism and self-satisfaction.

I don't need to tell you that the world is facing some pretty huge problems and it is going to take all of us, working together, to tackle them. We are not doing enough for the children in Gaza, Ukraine, South Sudan. We are not doing enough for the young people, especially the Indigenous young people, in our own country. There are more Indigenous children in "care" today than at the height of residential schools.

I think that what God is telling us, as the Diocese of Islands and Inlets, the most secular diocese in North America, is that we don't need to worry about the pot. We need to grow where we are planted and I think we are, like it or not, being transplanted. We are being taken out of our comfortable little pot, our comfortable pew, and planted in the earth itself.

Not everything about the secular society is good but not everything about it is bad. I think the good news in this part of the world is that the so-called secular society around us is enchanted with the earth itself. And this, this gives us an opportunity for dialogue, service and faithfulness. The Diocese of Islands and Inlets has roots in so many places across this beautiful diocese of towering forests and mist-laden coastlines.

But we need to get out of our pot, out of our bounded identities, our comfortable and familiar ways and dare to be planted, dare to be planted in earth itself. Our

God-infused island home.

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## The Rafah Crossing



*The Flight into Egypt by Jacob Jordaens. Image via WikiArt.*

*By Herbert O'Driscoll*

*Jan. 12, 2024*

Night after night on our television screens, we see the Rafah Crossing between southern Gaza and northern Egypt. The area is teeming with desperate people trying to escape from Gaza, weaving and dodging through the long line of trucks crossing the border into Gaza with their desperately needed supplies. Families do their best to stay together. Distraught mothers carry newborns in their arms and men bearing wounded children run through the crowds, seeking hospitals already bombed out of existence. As I write this piece, the accusation of genocide being brought against Israel by South Africa is in its opening days.

As I was watching, I remembered that a very long time ago, another couple had to make a decision that bought them to this place. It would have been before Rafah was built as it is now, but it was a border crossing, with

all the tension, fears and dangers of such a place.

It is not mentioned in the gospel, but just a few miles from the village of Bethlehem a vast fortification loomed over the area. It was Herod's Herodium, a fortress at which foreign visitors we know as Magi appeared, asking about a child who was being spoken of as a future king. The reaction to that question was fast and deadly. Death squads were ordered into the surrounding countryside, with express orders to kill newborn children.

Some days before this order was given, a young couple — we know them as Mary and Joseph — made their decision to flee towards the coast with their newborn child named Jesus. There they would join the caravan route known as the Way of the Sea. They made for where there would be others travelling south for many reasons. There would be trading caravans, government delegations and other refugees, all using the road south.

Eventually they would arrive at the area we know today as Rafah. They too would face teeming crowds, border guards and hard questions. Eventually they got through to go on their way.

They had choices. All down the Sinai coast there were refugee communities. It is possible that Joseph managed to get contacts for hospitality. They might have been advised to hug the coast, paying to attach themselves to the safety of a caravan heading to Alexandria, where they were told of a very large Jewish colony in which they might find a welcome. We know that Joseph, a carpenter, had a skill that has always made it possible to earn a wage.

Luke tells us that at some point in Jesus' boyhood, news

came south that Herod had died. It was safe to return north. This time, Joseph was warned that Archelaus, like his father Herod, was violent and dangerous, so he avoided the Bethlehem area, instead heading north for Galilee and eventually the village of Nazareth. Here, their eldest son would live and work for approximately thirty years until he would leave the village, responding to a deep and insistent call within himself. Jesus' response to that call would forever change the world.

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## A debate on human goodness



*Pope Francis. Photo by Long Thien, used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 Deed license.*

*By John J. Thatamanil*

Recently, a theological dispute broke out in the public square: a relatively rare occurrence in our post-theological era. Conservative evangelicals are irate about Pope Francis's recent claim [during an interview with CBS evening news anchor Norah O'Donnell](#) that human beings are essentially good. They are not upset about Pope Francis's unequivocal "No!" to O'Donnell's

question about the possibility of women being ordained to any holy order. On that matter, they agree with the Pope. Nor do they seem to be angry about Francis's claim that wealthy nations bear a disproportionate share of the blame for climate change. No, instead they are enraged about a matter of "theological anthropology," a theologically informed account of what it means to be human.

So, what precisely did the Pope say that triggered outrage? [Here's what transpired:](#)

"Norah O'Donnell: When you look at the world, what gives you hope?

"Translator: Everything. You see tragedies, but you also see so many beautiful things. You see heroic mothers, heroic men, men who have hopes and dreams, women who look to the future, eh? That gives me a lot of hope. People want to live. People forge ahead. And people are fundamentally good. We are all fundamentally good. Yes, there are some rogues and sinners, but the heart itself is good."

The Pope is saying nothing contrary to basic Christian teaching. The first word that God proclaims after completing the work of creation is to pronounce it good: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31). Christians have long affirmed that the fall does not destroy created goodness. Positing "total depravity" — the idea that nothing of human goodness remains after the fall — is a minority note in Christian teaching.

But, even if you happen to agree with some account of human depravity, that doesn't need to trigger theological fury. There are many Christianities, and there is no unanimity across a wide range of

theological issues. However, a peaceable recognition of difference across Christian traditions is not what transpired.

Instead, the Pope's claims about human goodness triggered fury. Probably the most intemperate responses came from Southern Baptist leader, Albert Mohler. Some of what Mohler had to say is standard issue anti-Catholicism, including, of course, the assertion that the papacy itself is "an unbiblical office." Coming from Mohler, such words hardly surprise. But Mohler said far more:

"He says, 'But the heart itself is good.' The Bible says that the heart is desperately wicked, and that's clear language, as clear as it gets. And furthermore, you have this statement that is completely devoid of Christ, that you don't even find Christ here. The pope claims to be and has claimed to be the vicar of Christ, but this is Christless. Now, I want to be very clear here. I'm talking about the abandonment of the Gospel, and the Pope is not alone in this."

These are not mild words: "Christless" and "abandonment of the Gospel." And, of course, Mohler seems to believe that complex theological issues can be settled by citing Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (KJV)

Is this a tempest in a teapot, an arcane theological tussle between Christian communities? Hardly. Deep questions about human life and its possibilities are at stake in this debate.

To begin, it must be recognized that the Pope does not deny the reality of sin and human waywardness. On the contrary, elsewhere in his interview, the Pope



explicitly said, “Do you know who are the privileged in the church? The sinners. We, the sinners, are the privileged ones because Jesus came to call upon us sinners, all of us. The Lord forgives everything. Everything. It is we who get tired of asking for forgiveness.”

Is the Pope then contradicting himself? How can the heart itself be good if we are sinners? Far from being self-contradictory, the Pope strives to strike a delicate balance between two core Christian affirmations, both of which are true. Human beings are created good; human beings are sinners. Yes and yes.

Affirm only the first, and we fall into an unrealistic and sunny optimism. Open the morning newspaper and you can see that every single day brings its own litany of human evil and violence.

Affirm only the second, and we undercut the reality of human kindness and the possibility of human transformation. If we sound the sober note of sin too stridently, we risk suggesting that human beings are capable of undoing God’s good work of creation. On this account, Christ’s atoning work can generate only divine forgiveness but not human growth into sanctification. If the heart is desperately wicked and remains so, we cannot and must not expect much from ourselves.

The Pope, by contrast, is encouraged — his heart is emboldened — by daily evidence of human decency, kindness and heroism. He has not given up on humanity. On this matter, I stand with the Pope. The daily newspaper will not report a thousand points of light, but light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.

The question of human goodness and human evil remains a live conversation within and across Christian communities. Because complex matters are at stake, we must seek conversation not closure. What we need are not dogmatic dictates but ongoing learning — learning that can and should also include wisdom from other religious traditions. Sharp and disparaging words in which we hereticize each other accomplish little. What the world needs to see is Christian communities dedicated to cultivating conversation rather than pronouncing facile platitudes.

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## Bidden or not bidden, God is present



*Women's Spring Retreat 2024 attendees with Archbishop Linda Nicholls (centre). Photo courtesy of Trish Vollman Stock.*

*By Trish Vollmann Stock*



The Women's Spring Retreat, held at the picturesque Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake on 19-21 April, had thirty-two attendees. The retreat facilitator was Archbishop Linda Nicholls, and the spiritual leader was Lynn Mills, incumbent at St Mary's, Metchosin. Archbishop Linda's warm, understanding and easy-going nature eased us gently through the theme of "God's Story in Us."

The retreat attendees all agreed that having conversations with like-minded Christian women, being away from the busy demands of home; and being able to pray, break bread and learn really helped shape their prayer lives.

We began the retreat with the bold statement that God is here whether we like it or not. This sentence is of great comfort, but it can also make us uncomfortable. Psalm 139 makes this noticeably clear to us:

O Lord, you have searched me and known me!  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from afar.  
You search out my path and my lying down  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

Bidden or not bidden, God is with us. For some this may feel uncomfortable or as though we are being scrutinized. Archbishop Linda invited us to imagine inviting Jesus into our homes: which rooms would we not allow Jesus to enter? Are there areas of our own lives we try to hide from Jesus? It was a gentle reminder that we cannot keep him out. He knows us and loves us, and we are not in charge, God is.

Archbishop Linda quoted New York Times bestselling

author and Lutheran pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber: "So recently I've been wondering: if, when Jesus says deny yourself and follow me, that maybe it's not about insuring [sic] his followers are doormats. Maybe he's inviting us to deny the part of us that wants to see itself as separate from God and others."

Archbishop Linda went on to say that the reality is that God's presence is working in us all the time. Following means he is leading the way. It is nothing to be fearful of but means allowing the spirit to be our guide. When we are baptised and marked with the cross, we are God's forever — not just if we get it right or are perfect. Marked but not chained: we are invited into Christ. It is not a coercive love, and always there is room for you even if you wander off. It is of great comfort that we are God's forever.

### **Responding to God in us**

How will we respond to God's presence throughout our lives? We respond differently in the dark times and the happy times. Surely we carry joy in our hearts, even in life's difficult moments? Archbishop Linda reminded us that there is a difference between joy and happiness: joy is always present even amid pains and sorrows. There is nothing the world can do to us that can separate us from God's love. God's doorways into faith are so unique for every person. It is a lifelong journey to listen to the voice of God.

In breakout groups participants responded to the question "How do we hear God?" Answers included: the songs of birds, in music, in water and in the snow-capped mounts and streams. There are many diverse ways that God speaks to us. The breakout groups were a great way of building community within the retreat.

The Primate asked if we would go where God called us. Sometimes the answer is not obvious: it is not a clear “yes” or “no”, but rather, God is with us and wants us to discern more.

### **In a mirror dimly**

Archbishop Linda told us about the Mirror of Erised in the Harry Potter books. The mirror shows the orphaned Harry with his parents. Around the edge of the mirror is the words “I show not your face but your heart’s desire.” Harry sees his deceased parents because that is what he most desires. But Dumbledore warns Harry that many have wasted away while staring into the mirror. We miss while looking in the mirror what we should see. Archbishop Linda asked what clouds the mirror for us? What destroys what is good?

We talked about sin and what it is to turn away from God. We talked about all the different ways we believe that if we do more we will be rewarded by God’s love. The truth is that no matter what we do, it is not a transactional love. We are loved no matter what. This does not mean that we are not accountable for our own actions.

We were asked to reflect on what helps us see ourselves warts and all, and how God’s love has lifted us up in times of despair. We are rooted deeply in the love of God when we are open to seeing ourselves and what God wants to show us.

### **God is our gift and deepest joy**

There are patterns in how we deal with conflict, each other and God. We may not be ready to grow into who God truly wants us to be. “Until the pain of staying the same is greater than the pain of changing,” said

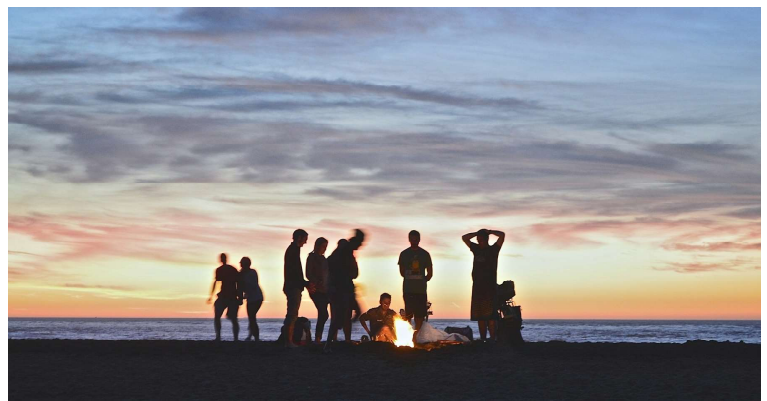
Archbishop Linda. When we finally reach this place there is great joy. In these moments we are most vulnerable to God, and he holds us in love.

We reflected on whether we have a resistance pattern and how we can embrace it as a gift. One of the attendees suggested that we are products of our upbringing and the legacies of our ancestors. We can grow into who God truly wants us to be, and sift out the good and bad of our upbringing and learn from it.

Sometimes we need the wisdom of our community, and, most importantly, God is with us in our community. This is paramount. We struggle with community daily, in our work lives, our parishes and our families. We need to remind ourselves that God is at work in the messiness of it all, and that we all must listen to the Holy Spirit and remember that God is always there.

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## Where did all the young people go?



*Photo by Kimson Doan.*

*By Christine Conkin*

Average churchgoers and scholars alike have been asking hard questions about our theology and practice of Christianity for years. The 1960s marked a watershed in such questioning as we noticed secularism taking hold, and concerns for justice and civil rights of all kinds rose in our consciences. Church observers began wondering if we were witnessing a simple generational shift or something more expansive.

The turn of the century brought even more changes, as “postmodern” became the word du jour. Beginning in architecture and philosophy, it soon expanded to describe a broader cultural phenomenon. Deeply held modern values around our human ability to solve all our problems through objective thinking and scientific and technological advances shifted dramatically. Instead of mechanistic and dualistic understandings of the universe, people started to value more relational, personal and integrated ways of being.

Phyllis Tickle explained it all to us with her 2008 landmark book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. She offered a theory of what might be going on through the macro lens of history. “Every 500 years, the church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale,” she quotes from Bishop Mark Dyer. Many people have come to believe that we are living in such a time now, a time of epochal shift, and that we’re still in the early days of working out “what now?” and “what next?”

A macro perspective reminds us that we are caught up in cultural, spiritual and societal forces larger than ourselves or our church. It’s not all about us. Far from it. And still, we are not powerless. Out of our love for one another, for our world and for our church, Jesus still calls us to Christian discipleship. How are we to live it?

Ron Heifetz’s theory of technical and adaptive change offers practices to build our capacity to engage in the most difficult and messy issues of our time — within and outside the church. Learning skills of adaptation will not likely answer questions like “how can we get young people back?” Instead, adaptive capacity can help us move forward in faith, whatever the future may hold.

Change, by its very nature, means loss. So, our adaptive capacity starts with grief and repentance, as we let go of the beliefs, the practices, the ways of being in the world, that served us so well in days gone by. “Right-sizing,” refocusing, our institutional life may be necessary as we seek to decolonize and “eco” our theology. And as we experiment with various ways of being church together: in worship, in spirituality, in justice making, in service and in community. Such adaptation is not easy, but it is worth it, as we follow the risen Christ, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in our journey of faith.

Earlier this year, we explored these topics at St George’s, Cadboro Bay over the course of 4 weeks. Resources are available on the [St George’s website](#).

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# A sabbatical in New Orleans

*By Alastair Hunting*

*Alastair Hunting, incumbent at St John the Divine, Courtenay, shares his experience on an extended educational leave in New Orleans.*



*Alastair Hunting (left) with Ren, a staff member from the Harry Thompson Centre, New Orleans. Image courtesy of Alastair Hunting.*

extended education leave to New Orleans, Louisiana. Br. Bill Tartar from Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria put me in touch with a Franciscan brother Br. Donald Dubay, who is a professed member of the Community of Francis and Clare in New Orleans. I was able to immerse myself in some of the ministries that Br. Donald is part of and do some hands-on learning. My time with Br. Donald provided me an opportunity to witness the good work that he and the Episcopal church are carrying out in the city. It was also a time to take a step back from parish ministry in the Comox Valley to pray, study and refresh. I was there for carnival and Mardi Gras and I was able to dive into the celebrations, parades and energy of the city.

Br. Donald put me in touch with the Harry Thompson Centre, where I was able to volunteer. Located in the centre of New Orleans, the Harry Thompson Centre is a low-barrier day shelter providing hospitality, showers, health care and housing navigation services to the unhoused community of New Orleans. My role there was to help with the delivery of services to the guests and to be a pastoral presence. A lot of my time at the Harry

This past winter I went on an

Thompson Centre was spent building friendships by playing chess, checkers and dominoes. This gave me the chance to listen to people's stories and pray with them when the opportunity allowed.

During my time in New Orleans, I attended St Anna's Episcopal Church on Sunday mornings. St Anna's is an Anglo-Catholic parish whose mission statement is "All are welcomed. None are shunned." They're practising what they preach. The parish is located in the historic Tremé neighborhood of the city, which is one of the oldest African American neighbourhoods in America. They are involved in a vibrant food ministry, which supports local food banks and provides meals after every Sunday service.

My first Sunday worshipping at St Anna's, Fr. Don (interim priest at St Anna's), Br. Donald and I were invited to go to the Friendly Bar after church. The Friendly Bar is a long-time, established gay bar close to St Anna's. During football season they have what they call "Saints Sundays." The Saints are a local NFL football team. The bar offers a potluck during the game, where people can donate money in a jar. All the money they raise goes to support St Anna's food ministry. Fr. Don shared his gratitude to the bar manager and customers for their generosity. This football season they raised over \$3000! I was blown away by this unique and "unexpected" partnership in ministry. I stayed around for the game (the Saints beat their rivals the Atlanta Falcons but still narrowly missed the playoffs), ate a lot of good food and chatted with some amazing folks.

Through St Anna's I was able to connect with David, one of the parishioners who helps to run the New Orleans branch of ACORN International, which advocates for affordable housing and tenant's rights. I was able to take part in their work by supporting a family facing eviction



for speaking out against their slumlord, who wasn't dealing with a major mould problem in their apartment. Due to the pressure that ACORN placed on the landlord, the family were able to receive monetary compensation from the landlord and find a better place to live.

All in all this was a highly transformational and refreshing experience for me. It broadened my horizons. I'm grateful to my parish in Courtenay (St John the Divine) for their support, as well as the bishop and the Educational Trusts Board for their encouragement in helping to fund my time in the Crescent City.

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## St Luke's raises funds with attic treasures



*Photo courtesy of Barb Prescott.*

*By Carol Turnham*

On Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., St Luke's, Cedar Hill and [Vintage Fashion Showcase](#)

(VFS) held a new fundraising venture called Attic Treasures Vintage Market. This was similar to the version we had planned to hold in 2020 before all public gatherings had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. A small planning committee was formed from St Luke's and VFS. Vintage vendors were approached and before long, all of the 8' x 8' spaces and single tables had been rented.

The parish hall was organized on the Thursday evening and bunting was put up to decorate the hall inside and out. On Friday, it was full steam ahead for setup: St. Luke's and VFS during the day, and the vendors from 7 to 9 p.m.

Market day arrived and quite a few early birds paid a premium (\$10) to be given entry at 9 a.m., giving them an hour to browse before the general opening at 10 a.m. when the entry fee was \$5. Coloured tickets were used to tally attendance and we found that we had 582 customers — an excellent turnout!

St Luke's sold both old and new items in the front half of the room. The other half of the room featured racks of clothing sold by Vintage Fashion Showcase members. As well, a small sealed-bid auction was positioned along one side of the hallway. Many sellers wore vintage outfits to add to the fun.

All the vendors were very pleased and complimentary about our facilities and the organization of the event, and expressed the hope that it become an annual event. The event was very successful and raised a total of \$4,623.60 for St Luke's, Cedar Hill. It was hard work but lots of fun!

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# Cathedral appoints new Dean and Canon

*By Faith Tides*



*Jonathan Thomas.*

Following Ansley Tucker's retirement in October 2022, a Cathedral search committee and Bishop Anna undertook an extensive search process to find and appoint a new Dean and Rector of Christ Church Cathedral. In April of this year, Bishop Anna announced that the search was over and that Jonathan Thomas will take on the role from September 2024.

Jonathan served as a high school teacher before discerning a call to ordained ministry. He has earned a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary, a Diploma in Anglican Studies from Virginia Theological Seminary and a certificate in non-profit management from the Kellogg School of Management. Jonathan served in parishes in the

Diocese of Connecticut and Chicago.

In his response to the parish profile, Jonathan wrote that engaging with people's inherent spirituality while giving them Anglican language and structure for living out their faith is a hallmark of his ministry. He believes that we influence the world around us by being in conversations, building relationships and creating a common good. In turn, Jonathan was impressed by how the cathedral's parish profile reflected a desire to be a church that relies on partnering, connecting and working together with all those around them.

In a video address to the cathedral community and the wider diocese, Jonathan says that when he first applied for the position he was initially unsure about moving to the island. But he says that on visits here he "fell in love with the beauty of the place and the grace of the people."

Addressing the diocese, Jonathan has the following to say:

"It is a hard time to be and do church in our current cultural context. The only appropriate response is to support one another and be all in on this together. To demonstrate to the world that we are Christ's disciples by the love we have for each other, and to show that in the face of diminishing resources, there is still a better way if we choose collaboration over competition.

"I'm all in on that work and I hope to partner with you to grow the church and its mission throughout the diocese. And I pray that by working alongside you in this mutual ministry, you might indeed come to think of me as 'our dean.'"

Jonathan comes to the Diocese of Islands and Inlets from the Diocese of Chicago where he and his wife, Jenny Replogle, have served as co-rectors of St Paul's Episcopal Church in Peoria. Jenny will also be moving to the diocese and will be working for the Synod office as canon for lay-led parishes and parishes-in-transition. Bishop Anna describes this appointment as "a bit of an experiment." It is intended



*Jenny Replogle.*

to better support parishes that do not have a permanent clergy or are in transition.

Jenny has extensive training and background in congregational development. She sees the heart of her ministry as enabling people to live fully into who God created them to be. Jenny is passionate about working with individuals and communities as they discern how God is calling them in their own unique ministries.

*Faith Tides* will be catching up with the new Dean and Canon later in the year, once they have had the chance to settle in to their new life here on Vancouver Island. In the meantime, Bishop Anna has asked that members of this diocese keep Jonathan and Jenny in their prayers.

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