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Synods and canons

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By Anna Greenwood-Lee

As we begin another program year, please take a moment to glance through The Year Ahead webpage that outlines the major diocesan events of the 2024/2025 program year.

November 1–2, 2024 we will be gathering as a diocese in synod. Whether or not you are an elected synod delegate, please join us for the opening worship on Friday, Nov. 1 at 7 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria. If you are unable to travel to be with us at the cathedral, the service will also be livestreamed. It will be a beautiful All Saints service, which will also include my charge to synod and the installation of Jenny Replogle as our canon for lay-led parishes and parishes-in-transition, and Lisa Alexander as our canon pastor. Following the service there will be a reception and a chance to gather with and meet members from across our varied and beautiful diocese.

Synods are, in my mind, first and foremost about trust building and transparency. At synods we elect representatives to diocesan council, provincial synod and general synod, we review the diocesan financial statements. At this synod we will also be asked to adopt new canons (which are similar to by-laws) for our diocese. All these things are part of building trust and transparency. We need to be open and clear about how we are governed, how we spend our collective resources and who has which roles and responsibilities in our collective life.

The canons that are being presented at synod were developed after the following motion was passed at the May 2023 synod:

"That the canons committee as constituted from time to time undertake a complete review and redrafting of the canons and regulations with the intention that the canons committee present to Synod 2025 a revised set of canons and regulations that:

1. Is in plain language;
2. Is internally consistent in terms, process and formatting;
3. Reflects the current experience of the diocese;
4. Reflects the appropriate division among issues that belong in the canons, those that belong in the regulations and those that belong in a policy manual;
5. Is forward looking and allows for future flexibility where flexibility is appropriate."

We are indebted to the diligent work of our canons committee as we are (for the first time in church history?) ahead of schedule on a project. Our hope is that they can be passed at the November Synod and come into effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

You may wish to look at the substantive changes to the

canons document on the diocesan website to see an overview of the major changes in the canons.

At Synod 2023 the theme of my charge to synod was "the future is not going to look like the past, and the future is bright." I have been encouraged by how many people and parishes have quoted this phrase back to me, and have wrestled with how this applies to their own contexts.

Synod 2024 will be a continuation of that theme, reminding us that it is all of us, together, who must grow into the bright future that God is calling us to.

Please mark your calendars for 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 1, and join us in person or online for the opening worship of Synod.

Remembering Herbert O'Driscoll

By Ian Alexander

October 17, 1928 – July 25, 2024

With immeasurable sadness, we announce that the Rev. Canon Dr. Thomas Herbert O'Driscoll (known to many as Herb) died peacefully at home in Victoria, BC on July 25, 2024, surrounded by family and friends after a 4-year battle with melanoma.

Herb O'Driscoll was an eloquent preacher, a prolific writer, an inspiring teacher, and perhaps above all, a uniquely gifted, natural, lifelong storyteller. He was also a persuasive apologist for Christian spirituality in an increasingly secular age. Author of more than fifty books and dozens of hymns, and leader of countless retreats and pilgrimages throughout North America and beyond, he was one of the great church leaders of the second half of the 20th century, whose active career continued well into the 21st.

Herb O'Driscoll was born to Annie and Terence in Cork, Ireland in 1928: as he later wrote, "a wide-eyed Protestant boy, caught up in the surge of a vast Roman Catholic tide." His Celtic roots ran deep, and greatly influenced his later ways of thinking, writing and speaking. He attended Trinity College, Dublin, where he won the gold medal for oratory, and was ordained in 1952 in Christ Church Cathedral by the Archbishop of Dublin. "Never forget," said the dean in his sermon that day, "that on that step where you will kneel, men have been ordained for 950 years." Herb would always combine a love of tradition with a keen consciousness of change, and an equally keen appetite to embrace it – and to connect the two.

His first curacy was at Monkstown Parish Church, County Dublin, where he first met his future wife, Paula. They reconnected in the square of Trinity College, Dublin, and he invited her for a cup of tea. Herb already knew he was planning to move to Canada and, in time, asked Paula if she was ready for a future

together. After about a year in Canada, Herb (always "Herbie" to Paula) returned to Paula's home town of Holywood, County Down, Northern Ireland, for their wedding on July 23, 1955.

Back in Canada, there were early postings in the nation's capital and the Ottawa Valley, and three years as a Navy chaplain in Halifax: an experience that taught him how to communicate to a diverse, often non-church community. Six years in the early 1960s, as Rector of Ottawa's high-profile downtown parish of St. John the Evangelist, included a widely heard radio ministry, which led to the fateful call in 1968 to become dean of Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, BC. It was a time and place of great cultural change, from which the church was not exempt. It was to be a crucible for Herb O'Driscoll for the next decade and a half; the experience shaped him for the rest of his life, and provided a unique opportunity for him to exercise his special gifts of ministry.

He welcomed the counter-culture, recognizing within it a longing for meaning and fulfillment. On one occasion, he invited a group of Vietnam protesters into the cathedral, much to the consternation of many parishioners. He spoke the language of "spiritual but not religious" long before the phrase was fashionable. Savvy in the ways of media, he soon became a popular fixture on local daily radio (where his *One Man's Journal* column ran for years) and was a frequent go-to commentator for national television. He was also a much-in-demand visiting guest speaker, not only at numerous and varied church gatherings, but also on the world stage: addressing the World Council of Churches, senior Canadian government ministers, American Supreme Court judges, and audiences of civil servants, scientists and business people. He was also an early advocate of ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue; some still remember a headline-making visit of the Dalai Lama to the Vancouver cathedral in 1980.

His tenure as dean also saw a bitter conflict over the future of the cathedral building. Eventually, under his leadership, a way was found to preserve that heritage building for future generations, while also ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the parish, through a then-unprecedented air rights agreement with a major developer: a template for what has since become common practice for churches in urban centres across the country.

Within a year of moving to the West Coast, Herb and Paula and their family discovered a second home at Sorrento Centre: camping in a tent trailer, sitting around a bonfire on the beach, connecting with old and new friends and continuing Herb's teaching ministry in a unique, natural setting, which he always referred to as one of those "thin places" where the spiritual realm feels especially close at hand.

Having been invited to speak at conferences and retreats throughout North America, it was inevitable that the United States would come calling. In 1982, Herb O'Driscoll became warden of the College of Preachers at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. While administration and fund-raising were not his first love, his hands-on, experiential approach to teaching the art of preaching influenced countless preachers-in-training, and he continued to offer week-long programs at the college for many years after his relatively brief tenure as warden. His commitment to narrative preaching in particular is celebrated and extended through the Herbert and Paula O'Driscoll Forum in Preaching and the Liturgical Arts, an annual fixture of the summer program at Vancouver School of Theology. He continued to send weekly sermon notes

to clergy on his email distribution list up through the last year of his life. He was, as he himself said, "hard-wired for preaching."

Herb returned to Canada to serve for nine years in the later 1980s and early 1990s as Rector of Christ Church, Elbow Park in Calgary, Alberta. There his unique combination of compelling preaching, engaging pastoral care and visionary leadership guided the congregation, which grew and flourished in this period. They also generously gave him the flexibility to continue working on a wider stage, through his published writings, speaking tours and leading numerous pilgrimages, notably to the Holy Land and to Celtic Christian sites.

In the mid-1990s, Herb and Paula "retired" (inverted commas very much intended) to Victoria, BC. "Welcome to virtual retirement," he told a friend some years later. "You're going to be busier than ever." And so it was for Herb, whose energy was boundless. Serving as honorary assistant at the cathedral, he offered wise counsel to a series of deans, and helped revitalize the office of choral evensong there. At the same time, he continued speaking and travelling, devising liturgies and creating hymns, writing and publishing – notably a collection of autobiographical memoir pieces entitled *I Will Arise and Go Now* (Morehouse Publishing). Not surprisingly for a life-long communicator, he embraced new technologies, and during the pandemic, while well into his nineties, delivered Zoom talks to clergy conferences and an Easter sermon to the local parish where members of his family worship. He also continued to work on a compilation of his writings on preaching. He spoke with characteristic insight and style at the inaugural O'Driscoll Forum lecture at VST, just a year before his death.

Herb and Paula supported each other over 69 years of married life – what he always described as "a life-long love affair." Herb loved family gatherings, with all the lively conversation, laughter and usual chaos, where he would naturally move into the role of storyteller, drawing on his vast knowledge of history, literature and popular culture.

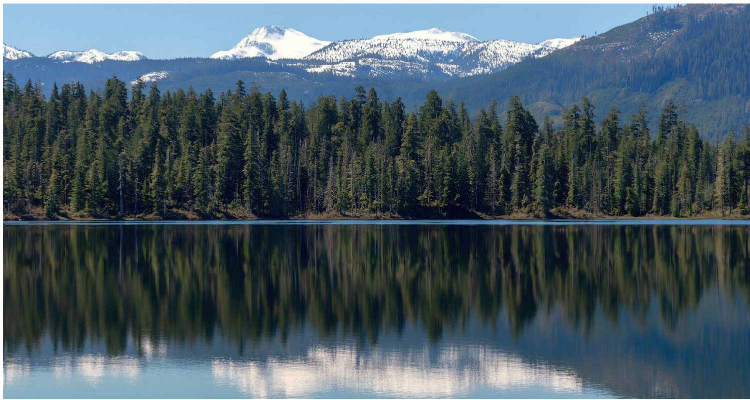
Herb is survived by his wife Paula (nee Lucy), his four children: Deirdre (Peter), Erin (Rick), Moira (Colin), Niall (Mary-Ann), eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, brothers Percy (Sue), and Terry (Sharon).

Sincere thanks to all those who cared for Herb, including Dr. Vanessa Bernstein, Dr. Boris Valev and the Oncology team at BC Cancer Agency (Victoria), the staff at Amica On The Gorge residence, the staff on 5SE at Royal Jubilee Hospital and Victoria General Hospital ER.

A celebration of Herb's life will take place on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024 at 2 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria BC (livestreamed at christchurchcathedral.bc.ca). In lieu of flowers, donations are welcomed to the BC Cancer Foundation (directed to melanoma research) or Sorrento Centre.

This obituary was written by Ian Alexander and the O'Driscoll family.

Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations building hope for the future



On their traditional territory, creation provided everything the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations needed. Image by marneejill used under a CC BY-SA 2.0 license.

By Christine Muise

If you come to the North Island, to the settler community of Port Hardy, you may not even notice the small bridge at the northeastern tip of town that takes one into the Tsulquate Reserve, home to the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations. These had been separate Nations. The Gwa’sala had a winter village in Smith Inlet, and the ‘Nakwaxda’xw had a winter village in Ba’as (Blunden Harbour) and others in Seymour Inlet. Despite losing many people in the epidemics of the 1800s and early 1900s, because of geographic isolation, their traditional culture was mostly maintained. They had less involvement with the settler’s political and religious authorities than the Kwakiutl peoples, whose traditional territory is occupied by Port Hardy. However, by 1929 the Gwa’sala and the ‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations were impacted, when their children were removed to St. Michael’s Indian Residential School.

The Nations were self-sufficient. There was water and land and enough creation to have everything they needed. They traded goods between Nations and held Potlatches. They fished and harvested seaweed, seagull eggs, shellfish and more.

Map showing the traditional territory and reserves of the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations.

The problem for the government was that it was expensive for them to offer resources such as access to health care. In the 1960s, as part of their efforts to assimilate Indigenous peoples into settler culture, the Canadian government, and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in particular, began to push the Gwa’sala and the ‘Nakwaxda’xw Nations to relocate and integrated into the Kwakiutl First Nation. The government knew that this move would make it less expensive to provide health care, education and access to resources.

The Canadian government used both threats and incentives: if the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations stayed where they were, they would not get any help building houses, schools and medical clinics. If they moved, they would get all these things and more: a community hall, a place for their boats, good jobs and a good school in Port Hardy for their kids. With this pressure, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations amalgamated and agreed to move. However, the government supposedly didn't have enough money to keep their promises and told the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations that only a few people should move, and that others should come later. That is not how these Nations work: they do not leave people behind.

In 1964, at the end of their fishing season, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw moved from 350,000 square kilometres of traditional territories to the 0.59 kilomtres squared Tsulquate Reserve, which had been a campground of the Kwakiutl First Nation, who reside at Tsaxis (Fort Rupert). It is rugged land with big rocks and steep hills.

Approximately 200 people made the move. They arrived to find four houses that were incomplete, with no running water or toilets. They did not have any safe places to moor their boats, meaning that many were destroyed in the river. Many families were forced to live in these uninsulated boats; they were overcrowded and without resources. The children were sent to school with strangers who spoke a different language and lived a different culture. Their traditional ways were not possible on the Tsulquate Reserve. There was no going back though: the Canadian government, through the RCMP, had gone to their territories and burned down their villages, including their big houses (Gukwdzis), their belongings, their valuables and their regalia.

The Kwakiutl First Nation did not appreciate the amalgamation with the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations and they petitioned to be separated, since the Nations were not benefiting from this agreement, only the Government of Canada was. The Kwakiutl were successful in this bid.

In 1970, the government investigated what had happened and acknowledged how horribly wrong it had all gone, and that the promises that had been made had been broken. In 1974, Alan Fry, a settler who worked as an Indian agent, wrote a book about the the Tsulquate Reserve and called it *How a People Die*. There were about 200 people living on the reserve and he did not expect that they would survive this experience.

There is no doubt that this traumatic experience has had serious impacts on the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations. Looking at the challenges facing these Nations today, it should be acknowledged that it is not a homelessness problem here, it is a houselessness problem. The people of these Nations have a home — the 350,000 kilometres squared of lands and waterways they were enticed from. It is a different scenario than for much of the country, where land was stolen for the purpose of settling other (white) people. Land was stolen because the federal government could save some money while also working to assimilate them.

Intergenerational trauma and the impacts of colonialization and racism are being felt by the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations. There are high rates of substance use disorder and deaths by suicide. On March 1, 2024, a state of emergency was called after 11 people had died since January 1, 2024. The abuse of power at St. Michael's Indian Residential School has meant that sexual violence and intimate partner

violence also factor in— shame and trauma undergird the realities of addiction and suicide. The Port Hardy Hospital has the capacity to offer Forensic Nursing Services 24/7 for anyone 13 and up who has experienced these sorts of assaults. A community of this size (Port Hardy has a population of 3,902) should not need this service 24/7. The people who have died are buried in the Port Hardy cemetery, not in their homelands.

But here is the thing: Alan Fry had it wrong. 60 years after the relocation (1964-2024) the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw have not died out or disappeared. In 2010, a Comprehensive Community Plan was developed, and the Nations are now in stage five of the treaty negotiation process (stage six is implementation of the treaty). The community is working on language and cultural reclamation (in the 2016 census the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw numbered over 1000 (on and off reserve), but just 30 people could speak Kwak'wala). They are passing on the traditions and teachings of the ancestors. They have established guardians to care for their sacred places, lands and waters on their traditional territories. They are building strong families.

In 2012, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations worked with an Anishnaabe filmmaker, Lisa Jackson, and released a film called *How a People Live*. The film uses archival footage from over 100 years ago, interviews with people, and a trip for some members of the Nations to visit their homelands. There is resiliency here, with Indigenous-led efforts to provide resources and a better future.

Intergeneration healing is happening. There is movement for the creation of culturally safe supported housing, youth supports and more. Now the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw number over 1000 people (on and off reserve). Building is happening in their traditional territories with cabins at Ba'as and Takush. Much is being done to improve food security including access to traditional foods. They now have their own schools, an Elder's Centre, a medical clinic and more. There are supports at places like North Island Building Blocks, Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre and the K̓wa̱la'sta Healing Centre. They have established the K'awat'si Economic Development Corporation, whose work includes the building of Kwa'lilas Hotel, as well as other construction projects and operations throughout the North Island.

In December of last year, the hereditary chiefs and representatives reclaimed some of their kikasu (the treasures of their ancestors) from the Royal BC Museum. This included masks, regalia and carvings. These items will be part of the opening ceremony of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Gukwdzi (Big House), which is set to open later this year. These Nations, after 60 years, are going to have their own Gukwdzi. The healing from their cultural genocide will continue. This is the place where people learn to dance and sing, to tell their traditional stories and to speak their languages. This is the place where they feed and connect to their ancestors. Potlatches, naming ceremonies, weddings and funerals will be held there, and it will serve as a meeting place for decisions and governance. (All these years they have been holding these events in the neighbouring Gukwdzi in Tsakis, or in Wakas Community Hall, which is a gym with a cement floor.)

There is so much hope for the future. There is so much good work being done to remedy the trauma caused by Canadian society. In the work towards reconciliation, the Anglican Church needs to be actively engaged in

supporting the initiatives of the First Nations, whose lands and waters we occupy. All people of faith need to be pressing all our elected leaders to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as outlined in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the 94 Calls to Action and the 231 Calls to Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG).

More information can be found in the links throughout this article.

The story of our church in this land

Christ Church Cathedral. Image copyright: J. Abrams Photography.

By Jesse Robertson

The following is a sermon delivered by Jesse Robertson at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria on June 23, 2024.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jesse. I am a parishioner of this cathedral, and a PhD candidate in history at the University of Victoria. I'm also a historical consultant. For the past year and a half, I've been working with the diocese to better understand how we came to acquire various church lands across Vancouver Island, and to place those properties within the broader history of colonization that many of us are becoming more aware of. It's an honour to have been asked to share a part of that history with you today.

If you look to my right, some of you will be able to see the image of Saint Matthias in a stained glass window. In his hands he carries the original Christ Church — a wooden structure that stood about a block west of us, on the land now occupied by the provincial courthouse. It was built in 1856 in what remained an inconsequential settlement at the edge of an empire — before the gold rush, before the founding of this diocese — by a priest whose predecessor had died in a shipwreck while trying to leave the island just two years earlier. It was an act of profound trust that this place would be one where Christians might gather in prayer for generations to come. We owe a real debt to these forerunners in faith, for having a vision of the future that, in tangible ways, included each of us.

But a church is not made by faith alone. Look again towards Matthias. Hovering above the saint and the church he carries, you will see, strange as it may seem, a corporate logo in the hands of an angel — the coat of arms of the Hudson's Bay Company, the powerful fur trading operation that, at one point or another, exerted a commercial monopoly over most of what is now Canada. This church, we shall see, is their legacy, too.

In 1849, the British Crown gave the Hudson's Bay Company a ten-year lease to the entirety of Vancouver Island, its land and minerals, for a paltry seven

shillings a year — about $65 today. Eight million acres for less than my weekly grocery bill. In return, the company was expected to establish and administer the new Colony of Vancouver Island, and was empowered to sell and reserve land to attract loyal British subjects to settle here.

This grant relied on the convenient fiction that this land was free for the taking. But if you were to stand on this hill in 1849, the landscape around you would have been more lək̓ʷəŋən than British. A row of longhouses stood on one side of the harbour where the Delta Hotel stands today, the site of the Songhees Reserve until it was moved to Esquimalt in 1911. The area below us, where the Empress Hotel stands, was known as xwsəyq’əm, a tidal flat where people harvested clams and passed their canoes along the creek that still runs below Humbolt Street. To the south were great beds of flowering kwetlal, or camas, owned and tended by particular families who harvested its starchy, edible roots across míqən, the area we know as Beacon Hill Park. The hill where we are currently gathered was covered in ancient oak trees, where people could access hunting grounds and medicines. Every part of this land was named, known, owned and loved by the lək̓ʷəŋən from time immemorial.

Old Songhees village, Victoria Harbour.

The Hudson’s Bay Company at least went through the formality of signing treaties or land purchases with local lək̓ʷəŋən families in the spring of 1850. Chief Factor James Douglas signed a treaty with the family of Swenghung that covered most of the present-day City of Victoria, including the ground beneath this church, for £75 in blankets — around $15,000 today. The company considered this sufficient to proceed with land sales. lək̓ʷəŋən accounts insist it was, at best, a land sharing agreement.

It didn’t take long before the few independent settlers began criticizing company officials for inadequately supporting the young colony. The company was pressured to prove to London that it was, in fact, meeting its contractual commitment to establish a settler colony. It was in this context that it produced a map of proposed improvements for Victoria — a reservoir, gardens, a wharf, and, at the top of this hill, a proposed church. By establishing a church — an *Anglican* church — the Hudson’s Bay Company sought to demonstrate its commitment to settling this island and encouraging a culture of loyalty to the British Crown. The church was a small, but important piece, of corporate efforts to defend their presumed title to this island.

But the company, intent on maximizing return for its shareholders, was understandably reluctant to bankroll a church whose priests would not contribute directly to profits. And so what do they offer instead? Remember, they have a piece of paper signed in London saying this island belongs to them, and that they may sell and reserve land as they wish. And so they do, reserving substantial lands for the Anglican Church to farm or rent for its own profit. Now, for context, the current cathedral precinct, this one city block, is about three

acres. In 1858, the Hudson's Bay Company surveyed a church reserve encompassing 23 acres. We are currently gathered on the final remnant of that reserve, which once stretched from the back of this church almost to Douglas Street, south to xwsəyq'əm — the tidal flat buried under the Empress — and back east along McClure Street. Seven blocks of prime real estate in what has become one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country.

The reserve was formally deeded to our diocese in 1864, making it possible not only to farm and lease land, but also to subdivide, sell and mortgage it to turn a profit. At the time, the land was valued at $60,000 — around $3,000,000 today, according to my napkin math. Consider how fortunate you would be to invest that kind of money in the housing market just 15 years ago. Now consider what it would mean to invest that money over 150 years ago. Stripped of every building upon it, the land we were given alone is worth something like $240,000,000 today — a quarter of a billion dollars. All the more shocking, when we recall what the lək̓ʷəŋən received for a much larger piece of land the previous decade: just $15,000 — less than one percent of what the church reserve was worth in 1864. This is one of those moments where we can see the fortunes of settlers and Indigenous people fundamentally diverge; a moment that would be repeated every time a stretch of Indigenous territory was surveyed, fenced and sold to the highest bidder.

It would, perhaps, be unfair to fault our forebearers in accepting such gifts. But gifts often come with unstated obligations to the giver. In accepting this land from the Hudson's Bay Company, as if it were theirs to give, our church benefited materially from the dispossession of an oppressed people and accepted an equivalency of Christianity and civilization which, at its worst, has provided the justifying ideology for residential schools that sought to strip Indigenous children from their culture.

The last piece of the church reserve, where the Court House sits today, was sold to the province in 1937. And now we are left to grapple with this dual inheritance: a gift that is not only a gift, but a responsibility. These are not entirely new concerns. They appear throughout scripture, which, comfortable Christians sometimes forget, is fundamentally a story of God's faithfulness to a people oppressed, and often corrupted, by empire.

Today we heard the famous story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17), which we fairly read as a story about trust. David removes his sword and armour, trusting in the common sling of a shepherd, in his confrontation with the giant Goliath, who approaches with a bronze helmet, coat of mail and massive spear. The battle comes at a crucial moment for the people of Israel, who, a few chapters earlier, rejected their God by demanding a king to rule over them instead, ignoring the prophet Samuel's warning that the king would seize the best of their fields and vineyards (1 Samuel 8). That prophecy was later fulfilled in the story of King Ahab, who executes one of his subjects, Naboth, for refusing to sell his vineyard (1 Kings 21). Naboth's last recorded words, "The Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance," have been echoed by people confronting colonization on this coast for over 150 years. Steps away, in our archives, is a hundred-year old letter from Kwakwaka'wakw leaders, summoning the Anglican bishop to help them protect *their* ancestral inheritance: "We want our rights, as the proper owners of this Country that God gave to us and our forebears."

The story of David and Goliath is one of trust in God,

but it is equally a parable of caution against the powers and principalities of this world. The passage is careful to note that the sword and armour David abandons were given to him by none other than Saul, the king against whom Samuel warned the Israelites. The king's gifts are so heavy that David is literally immobilized, unable to walk, let alone face his adversary. It is in shedding them, and accepting his reliance on God alone, that David overcomes Goliath and gives glory to his creator.

We, too, are the recipients of a loaded gift, a past that has, and will, continue to define us. But we are not the first community to confront such legacies. Churches have been active in the land justice movement, finding creative ways to recognize our role in the theft of this continent. The Shalom Mennonite Fellowship in Tucson, Arizona has an annual budget item allocating to Indigenous organizations part of their property tax exemption. In 2019, the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster instituted a tithe, offering 10% of future property sales to Indigenous communities. In the 1990s, our own diocese restored almost 140 acres of Cormorant Island to 'Namgis First Nation, in the very place where we once ran a residential school.

There are many dimensions to this history. The story of our church in this land is a story of a people that would travel to Indigenous villages to learn their names and languages, while campaigning against their sacred ceremonies; who vaccinated Indigenous children against smallpox when few others were willing, and later crowded them into horrific schools; who fought for integrated churches where all races could worship together, while actively benefiting from the theft of Indigenous land. It's the story of Indigenous people who embraced Christ and call the rest of us to follow his teachings more faithfully.

How will we, as individuals and community, steward the histories we have inherited? There is no simple answer, alas, but the question is essential. May we ask it then, confident that God is here with us, calling us to a love that has no limits. David sheds his armour, he says, "so that all the earth may know there is God in Israel." May we, too, cast down our armour, and every encumbrance that prevents us from receiving and proclaiming a God whose love is beyond the kingdoms of this world.

Anglican Deacons Canada conference well attended by local deacons

Anglican Deacons Canada attendees from Vancouver Island. Pictured are (left to right) Helen Lingham, Brigitte McKenzie (Grace Lutheran), Trish Vollmann Stock, Ansley Tucker, Lynn Cawthra, Norah Fisher, Cindy Hayley, Niall Barnard, Ed Hayley, Nancy Ford and Martha McGinnis. Image by Ken Gray.

By Ansley Tucker

For three days in mid-June, Anglican and Lutheran deacons from all over Canada converged on the Sorrento Centre, in the interior of BC, for a conference entitled Beacons of Hope in a Messy World. Every three years, Anglican Deacons Canada holds a conference for professional development and relationship-building amongst deacons. Because of COVID-19, this was the first in-person conference since 2018, when our own diocese was host. It was also the first time that Lutheran deacons were invited to join in the planning of the conference.

The Anglican Church of Canada is committed to restoring the diaconate as a robust order of ministry, clearly distinguishable from that of priests and bishops. The role of deacons is to ignite the church's attentiveness to the needs of the world, and to help the church enact the gospel imperative to align itself with those who are most vulnerable. Their focus is thus quite different from that of the parish priest.

The growing importance of the diaconate in our two churches was evident in the participation of our Primate Linda Nicholls, National Indigenous Archbishop Chris Harper, National Bishop Susan Johnson, and Kathy Martin, bishop of the BC Synod.

A highlight of the conference was keynote speaker Christian Harvey, deacon, who is a passionate advocate and provider for those who are street-involved in Peterborough, Ontario. Harvey called deacons to wise, informed and wily interventions, rooted in the principles of non-violence set forth by Dr Martin Luther King. He had participants laughing and crying by turns — and motivated to take up the work of advocacy for the vulnerable.

The Diocese of Islands and Inlets was particularly well represented at Sorrento, with four Anglican deacons, one Lutheran deacon, two individuals in discernment, and the diocesan director of deacons. Our diocese also contributed well to the leadership of the conference, with both Nancy Ford, retired deacon to the city of Victoria, and Ed Hayley, Christ Church Cathedral's director of finance, serving on the planning committee. In addition, Ian Alexander, member of the cathedral management team, has served as the consultant on a strategic planning project which was presented to the conference; and Cindy Hayley kept an eye on vineyard provisions for the opening reception and closing banquet. All in all, we punched well above our weight.

Young cathedral bell-ringer wins prestigious award

By Naomi Racz

Amiel Elfert, 20, who is studying music at the University of Victoria and is the organ scholar at Christ Church Cathedral, has been awarded the 2024 Jeff Smith Memorial Young Ringer Award. The award is given out by the North American Guild of Change Ringers, which promotes change ringing and provides a network for change ringers across the continent. The award is intended to promote change ringing among young people and to encourage young bell-ringers to hone their skills.

The cathedral bells. Image courtesy of Christ Church Cathedral.

Change ringing developed in England in the seventeenth century and involves a series of bells hung upside down on wheels. The wheels are turned using a rope attached to the rim of the wheel and controlled by a bell-ringer. The bells take a few seconds to complete a full 360° rotation, making it impossible to play a recognizable tune. Instead, the bell-ringers perform "methods." A method begins and ends by ringing down the scale. In between these scales the bells are rung in changing sequences or "permutations," with each bell ringing only once and without any change in the sequence being repeated.

Christ Church Cathedral is one of just seven churches in Canada that has bells hung for change ringing. The original eight bells were first rung in 1936, although the tower itself wasn't completed until 1957 (a wooden structure protected the bells from the elements.) Two treble bells were added in 1983 and were dedicated in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

Amiel first became interested in bell-ringing when, at the age of seven, he visited the bell tower at Christ Church Cathedral. Amiel lived in Spokane, WA at the time, but would ask to see the bell tower whenever he visited his grandparents in Victoria. When he started his music studies at the University of Victoria in 2021, Amiel quickly took up the opportunity to learn the art of change ringing with the cathedral's bell-ringers — the Christ Church Cathedral Guild of Change Ringers has around 15 members.

In March 2020, the cathedral's bells fell silent as the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the group from ringing in person. However, Amiel continued developing his skills through Zoom practices using a website called Ringing Room. While a website doesn't perfectly simulate the experience of change ringing, Amiel says that change ringing is "more of a cerebral exercise than it is a feat of endurance." The bells are heavy, but since they are hung upside down, gravity does much of the work. Instead, the change ringer must have an excellent memory and develop a keen sense of coordination.

The ringing chamber is situated 71 steps up the cathedral tower. A thick masonry roof separates the change ringers from the bells. Image courtesy of Christ Church Cathedral.

Faith Magwood, a member of the cathedral's change ringing guild, agrees. Faith has been change ringing for over 45 years and is a vocal champion of change ringing. Faith credits the Zoom practice sessions with Amiel being able to learn change ringing, and all the methods that

the cathedral's guild performs, in such a short space of time. She says that although change ringing isn't physically demanding, it is a lot of fun. "The tenor bell weighs as much as a medium sized car and makes a lot of noise, so knowing you can control something of that size is exciting."

To be considered for the Jeff Smith Memorial Young Ringer Award, young change ringers must ring a quarter peal, which consists of 1260 permutations and takes about 45 minutes to complete. Amiel completed his quarter peal at St Olave's Church in London, and he was nominated for the award by the cathedral.

As it originally developed in England, 94% of the world's rings of bells can be found there. As well as St Olave's, Amiel has rung bells at York Minster. Faith says that wherever she and her fellow bell-ringers travel, if there are bells, then they are welcomed.

The cathedral change ringers are keen to encourage as many people as possible to witness this unique aspect of the Anglican tradition. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about change ringing or simply wants to see (and hear!) the change ringers in action, can arrange to visit the cathedral tower during practice every Tuesday from 7 – 9 p.m. and on Sunday morning at 8:45 – 9:15 a.m. and 10:30 – 11 a.m. Contact Tower Captain Peter Bailey at towercaptain@christchurchcathedral.bc.ca.

The Woodlands at Dawson Heights nearing completion

By Peter J. Parker

The Woodlands at Dawson Heights, which offers independent below-market rentals, is nearing completion. Image courtesy of Peter J. Parker.

Anyone who has driven by 3700 Cedar Hill Road will have been impressed by the handsome building nestled against the Doncaster Escarpment, more or less across from Lutheran Church of the Cross. (Drivers will have been less impressed with the road work, as Saanich takes its time coordinating with the construction company to upgrade the road, cycling lane and sidewalks.) The construction schedule will see the building and finishing completed by the end of November.

After Percy Dawson's major donation to St Luke's Anglican Church in 1949, a dedicated committee of parishioners, with guidance from the diocese,

established what was then called Twilight Homes. Mr. Dawson, as sole shareholder of the project, bequeathed his shares to the diocese in trust for the work of providing affordable housing on the property. Over the years, scores of volunteer board members have kept his vision growing. The entire property, originally glebe lands attached to St Luke's, was covered with single story cottages. As they aged, and as demand grew, it was both logical and essential to replace the cottages with larger capacity buildings.

Approved some 25 years ago by diocesan council, the first two phases, The Dawson (independent rentals for seniors on limited income) and The Cedars (assisted living for seniors on limited incomes) were completed by 2003. Phase three, The Woodlands (independent below-market rentals), will be receiving residents into its 85 units starting (we hope) in February 2025.

From ditches to doorknobs, bedrooms to balconies, hinges to hallways, landscaping to light fixtures, fridges to fire alarms, the complex details have been managed by Jensen Group Architects (who designed phase one and phase two) and Heatherbrae Builders, with input from Dawson Heights staff and the board of directors. M'akola Development Services has expertly guided us through the complexities of dealing with three levels of government funding, and more regulations and codes than one can imagine.

The Woodlands is officially owned by Dawson Heights Housing Society, whose formal membership consists of Dawson Heights Housing Limited and the diocese. The society receives financial support from BC Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the District of Saanich and Dawson Heights Housing Limited, and is guided by a board of directors with wide ranging skills and experience. Of the seven members, five are active members of Anglican parishes.

Below market housing is often referred to as a housing project, but this project is more accurately described as a ministry. Though there are no religious requirements, all staff are committed to providing a safe and supportive home for all residents. In The Cedars, a weekly spiritual hour led by different denominational leaders, and a resident-led Bible study, offer a prayerful presence. The Cedars' recreational programs are open to all residents on campus. The goal is not mere housing, but homefulness. One of the unwritten policies is often quoted: "If you have to err, err on the side of compassion." Percy Dawson's legacy continues, and is one that earns our pride and gratitude.

Can the church learn to be small but mighty?

Photo by John Cafazza on Unsplash

By John J. Thatamanil

Church and world: how are we to think about the relationship between the two? Once upon a time, the question would have made little sense. When the church was the established centre of cultural life, it would have been impossible to untangle the church from the world. This was once the case in Anglican England, and, to a significant extent, also in Canada. The standard cultural expectation for Sunday morning: be in church! This wasn't a matter of choice. You couldn't imagine lying in bed and wondering about whether to remain in the church of the holy comforter or head off to the Church of St John the Divine.

Now, the struggle is real, for everyone — save clergy, who have no choice but to show. Everyone else has to make a deliberate choice between competing options: go to the kid's soccer game, read the paper in bed, watch the Sunday morning news shows, or do all the household errands that cannot be completed during an ever-crazier work week. When church attendance becomes optional, attendance rates plummet. Now, church is the countercultural choice. It is a choice that is frankly unimaginable for most. Church!? Why go there?

If you're in church on Sunday morning, you have made a self-conscious decision to be there. Cultural inertia and social pressure are not enough to drag most of us out on a Sunday morning.

Most church leaders recognize this vast cultural shift. But the implications of this shift are innumerable, and we are still learning to understand the church's dislocation from centre to periphery. If default church attendance is a matter of the distant past, particularly in British Columbia, we can draw one obvious conclusion: church and world are now distinct domains.

The greater the gap between the two, the more likely it is that the church and world will become unintelligible to each other. Diminished biblical and liturgical literacy are now very real, and what the church does and why is largely incomprehensible to non-churchgoers. Now, add to this scenario the reality of the church's eviscerated moral credibility due to residential schools and sexual abuse of minors (and no, it does not matter that that crisis has largely been in Catholic contexts; for the world, it's all just "church"), and the gap threatens to become a yawning and unbridgeable chasm.

Given these circumstances, the church's understandable longing to recover some golden age of church attendance — Make Anglicanism Great Again — is naïve and misguided. As with MAGA across the border, the past was never great to begin with. The church routinely functioned as chaplain to empire, rather than as God's prophetic community — a vocation we have only occasionally fulfilled.

So, now, what to do? Recruiting the world to join the church without reputational repair is a quixotic enterprise. First, we must become a community worth belonging to. That will only happen when the church finds an honest, prophetic and pastoral voice that meets the demands of the time. Second, the church must continue the work of repentance. This does not mean being on a perpetual public apology tour, but rather simple honesty about what we have done and who we have been. Still more, it means finding new and healing ways of being with Indigenous communities and the lands on which we find ourselves. Repentance is not repentance without repair.

Nor can we permit shame and guilt about what we have done in the past to silence our voice about the

urgent issues of this current moment. No one wants to belong to a community that constantly looks backwards, either in nostalgia or recrimination. We must join the fight for a livable future in an era of intense climate catastrophe. Our churches are burning down. Entire communities and towns are going up in smoke. Our streets are filling up with the homeless as rents and house prices skyrocket. Isolation and loneliness are becoming public health emergencies. A church that has nothing to say about these crises is not worth attending. Why bother?

We must engage in these issues, while recovering precious New Testament metaphors of smallness. Jesus never imagined that his tiny community of disciples would become the cultural establishment, the New Rome, but he did hope that his disciples might become critical difference makers, small but mighty. Hence his love for metaphors of salt and yeast, where a tiny bit goes a long way.

No one wants to eat a dish made entirely of salt; and who wants to eat just yeast? Moreover, Christianizing a religiously diverse world is a dubious colonial enterprise. So, in thinking through the relationship between church and world, we will want to stay with the power to be found in these metaphors. What might it mean for the church to be salt or yeast in this historical moment? How can a small but nimble church make a healing difference? These are the questions we must struggle with now.