



Faith Tides

RENEWED HEARTS, RENEWED SPIRITS, RENEWED PEOPLE

October 2024

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A month of thanksgiving



Photo by [Jakob Owens](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

“Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that their will not be room enough to store it.” (Malachi 3:10)

Blessings for the month of October, a month of thanksgiving, of harvest, of blessing.

We have much to give thanks for. In September, we ordained Mona and Reba to the transitional diaconate, we welcomed Jonathan as our dean and we welcomed Jenny as our canon for lay-led parishes and parishes in transition. God is blessing us with the people we need at the time that we need them. The future is not going to look like the past and the future is bright.

October is also the time when parishes should be conducting annual stewardship campaigns. Before we do the work of creating budgets for 2025, we need to

ask all of our members to prayerfully consider what they might be able to pledge for the upcoming program year. If you, or your parish, are not in the habit of doing this, please talk to your wardens and incumbents, and refer to the [giving section of the diocesan website](#), which has all the resources you need to easily do a stewardship campaign.

This year, as you think about stewardship, I'd like to draw your attention to chapter 3 of the Book of Malachi. It's a few years after the return from the exile in Babylon, and Malachi is frustrated with the people's (particularly the priests) lax religious and social behavior:

“Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings.” (Malachi 3:7-8)

And then we have the beautiful promise from God, “Test me in this ... and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that their will not be room enough to store it.” (Malachi 3:10)

I love this exchange as it's a reminder to us all that God's ability to bless is so much greater than our ability to give. We are called to give so little really, only 10% of what we have, and God, God pours out an abundance of blessings upon us so much greater than we can ask or imagine.

This October, I invite you to test God, to give your full tithe and see if God does indeed throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room to store it. From where I sit, in my ministry of oversight of this beautiful diocese, I do indeed believe that we have more blessings than we are able to count or store.

Rebecca Yeo and Mona Smart ordained to the sacred order of deacon



Pictured are (left) Mona Smart and (right) Rebecca Yeo. Image copyright: J. Abram Photography.

By Naomi Racz

On Sept. 15, Rebecca (Reba) Yeo and Mona Smart were

ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacon (transitional) at Christ Church Cathedral.

Mona Smart lives on Gabriola Island and her home parish is Christ Church Gabriola, an Anglican-United collaborative church. She has a masters of theological studies from St. Stephen's College, University of Alberta campus, and a graduate diploma in theological studies from Vancouver School of Theology. Mona intends to pursue further advanced education in theology.

Rebecca Yeo (they/them) is a recent graduate of the MDiv programme at Vancouver School of Theology. They are also working on a master's in interreligious and indigenous studies, with plans for a second graduation in 2025. Rebecca's home parish is The AbbeyChurch, where they are poet-in-residence, and they are a spiritual care provider at the University of Victoria Multifaith Centre. Rebecca lives on the Saanich Peninsula.

During the ordination service, Juli Mallett, associate priest at St Andrew's, Sidney, delivered the homily. Juli opened her homily by proclaiming that "to offer yourself for ordination in the church is unquestionably foolishness in the world's sight." She went on to say, "It isn't very practical. It's certainly not pragmatic. It's not the best use of your skills according to what the market will bear, and we don't ordain people simply because it seems like a good idea. Nor is it a prize to be earned."

Rather, Juli explained, ordination is about vocation. Not a vocation in the sense of a job, but in the sense of — in the words of theologian Frederick Buechner — "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

Juli spoke about the process of discernment broadly as “any process by which we try to figure out what God is up to in the world.” She described this as an open-ended process, as “not a process of deciding, but one of holding space for becoming... Discernment is about listening for your deep gladness, is about trying to feel the world’s deep hunger.”

But, Juli pointed out, discernment is not just a journey of individual transformation undertaken by the ordinand. Rather, it is a question of whether the church is also willing to be transformed by what God is up to, in this case, in the persons of Rebecca and Mona.

Addressing Rebecca and Mona, Juli said, “As a church, we proclaim that we wish to be changed by you, to be challenged by you, to be enriched by you. We will be changed by how you live and who you are.” Juli stated that the church would also support them in the grand vocation of being fully alive, of being fully themselves.

Bishop Anna echoed Juli’s homily as she closed the service. “Whoever you are and whatever brought you here today, know that you are deeply, deeply loved just as you are. And know that you have a vocation, that there is a place where your deep joy and the world’s deep hunger meet. May God meet you there and bless you with the courage, strength, grace and wisdom to live out that vocation.”

Below is a gallery of images from the ordination. To watch the full service and view the order of service, visit the [cathedral website](#).





particular story.

On Oct. 4, 2017, the day of blessings for animals, I expected an ark story and sermon, not the open invitation extended to all pets. I did not even think to bring Otter to church until I got there. Jane — a lady I had startled a couple of Sundays before, when I leaned on her pew, pushing her forward, after she had made sure all pews were perfectly aligned — sat undisturbed, her little dog beside her. I heard my call to action. As the blessings started, I raced out of the church, running hard to our house. “Otter, come on, we’re going to church!” We stopped only once, as he peed on a church shrub. Oh well, we would call that holy water. Up the wooden steps, we stopped in front of the carved golden church door adorned with carefully crafted flowers. “Otter, sit!” He did. I said a prayer for the cats (there were two on leashes inside) as we returned to the fold.

Oh God, it’s Otter!



Otter B. Hunting. Images courtesy of Ramona Jones.

By Ramona Jones

Fur gives and fur gets, my dog told me. No wiser words were ever spoken. In 2017, I decided to attend church in my new town, Port Hardy. Our man of the cloth, the reverend at our combined Anglican-United church, was Alastair Hunting. I find it amusing that our dog’s name, registered with the Canadian Kennel Club, was Otter B. Hunting (Otter to his friends). Otter, an irrepressible golden retriever, is the star of this

The animal blessings were over, and Alastair was preaching about something new. It was a lot to take in, this church talk and ceremony. I was more in tune with chaos and all things unceremonious. Otter and I rejoined my husband Dave. Otter wagged his tail so hard, the pew in front of us boomed out a happy rhythm to the faithful. One young girl shielded her cat, which was perched in the window, praying for a quick exit. The blessings were over, but Otter was not finished with church. He drooled and panted expectantly, eyeing all these great people, the other dog and the cats.

Our priest shared a long and very thoughtful sermon about animals. He talked about a book he had read called *Wonderful Fool*, about a man followed by a stray dog. The dog is the only being who sticks with the man, even when he feels alone and forsaken. Alastair likened the dog to Jesus, always humble. Otter knew he

was also God’s gift to man and wanted everyone in the church to know it.

Never leaving a soul behind, the Rev turned to Otter for the last blessing, but Otter got the last laugh. Our priest wore a long white robe with an intricately embroidered stole. This was just the thing for a golden retriever launch. As Alastair raised his arms, the cue to jump, Otter B. Hunting reared up in a flash, and put his paws on Alastair’s shoulders in rapturous greeting. With superb timing, the priest said this was just one of the hazards, *oops*, joys of his job. We all laughed, and the service ended quickly.

During coffee, afterwards, the owner of Cookie the cat came to say hi to us. Cookie hissed. Otter drooled and licked his lips as the cat waved his tail in Otter’s face. “Thou shalt not kill,” I prayed, and instead of a Cookie, offered Otter just a little piece of bread.

An invitation to stretch



By Faith Tides

On Thursday, Oct. 17, Vancouver School of Theology is hosting the 2024 Somerville Lecture at Epiphany Chapel. LaKeesha Walrond, president of New York Theological Seminary, is this year’s keynote speaker. Walrond is a prominent charismatic preacher and seminary leader who has also pastored in Harlem, taught in public schools in North Carolina and advocated for women and girls across the US and beyond.

Walrond’s lecture, titled *An Invitation to Stretch: Reconstructing Our Theological Assumptions* is intended to carve out a sacred space where attendees have permission to ask difficult questions — as our forebears in faith asked difficult questions!

Walrond will focus on beliefs about God, the Sabbath and the faith community in an effort to reconstruct a more accessible and inclusive faith narrative that stretches theological assumptions and expands our invisible yet fortified borders.

In true Christian spirit, and with the verve of a passionate educator, LaKeesha Walrond will carefully examine our spiritual beliefs and practices to draw up an expansive, love-infused alternative.

The lecture is free and open to the public, but [registration is required.](#)

About LaKeesha Walrond

LaKeesha Walrond is an educator, visionary leader and sought-after speaker with a passion for creating communities of learners. Her career includes eleven years as a teacher in the public education system in North Carolina. She holds degrees from Spelman College, UNC at Chapel Hill and Union Theological

Seminary. Walrond answered her call to ministry in 1995 and served as executive pastor of First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem for 13 years. In 2019, she became the first woman president of New York Theological Seminary. She also launched the Getting to Greatness Women's Conference to empower women through leadership development, and spiritual, mental and psychological wellness. Walrond is the author of two books, focused on ending child sexual violence and empowering women, respectively.

About the Somerville Lecture

Supported through the generosity of Archbishop David Somerville, a former VST faculty member, the Somerville lecture series has become one of VST's most prominent offerings to the faith community. The series was launched in the early 1990s by a group of students who were eager for VST to be a place for students to learn about the spiritual side of life and pass on to others the insights and methods of seeking God's presence.

Letter to the editor (October 2024)



By Faith Tides

Dear Editor,

I was both shocked and interested to read your article about the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations and their troubles ([Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations building hope for the future](#), September 2024). All the years I had been part of Aboriginal Neighbours, I had not known about them. With the encouragement of Bishop Logan McMenamie, we visited the long house at Alert Bay many times, but we had not known the grief of this group of people. The only excuse there can be is that, though a few members were living at Port Hardy, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations' homeland is actually on the mainland. I feel that we should be doing all we can in brotherly or sisterly love to help all people in the diocese, especially those in the most remote areas. It is where organizations like Aboriginal Neighbours can and should help.

Jenny Balme

formerly St John's, Cobble Hill
