

# Title Page



# Faith Tides

RENEWED HEARTS, RENEWED SPIRITS, RENEWED PEOPLE

February 2025

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).

# A kingdom of love, justice and compassion



Photo by [Michael Fenton](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

*In January the St Dunstan's property was listed for sale. The pastoral letter (below) outlines the process that brought us to this decision. Ongoing updates on St Dunstan's and all our diocesan property projects can be found [on our website](#).*

*On the first Sunday in February, I look forward to being with the people of St Dunstan's and Two Saints for their joint worship. I am so grateful for the wise and faithful wardens and leaders of both of those parishes and how well they are navigating all of these transitions.*

*If you have not already seen it, please take a moment to read the pastoral letter below and, above all, please keep the good people of St Dunstan's in your prayers.*

+Anna

## [Pastoral letter from Bishop Anna](#)

All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

— Isaiah 40:17

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

— Isaiah 40:24

Can you think of a country in the world right now with a stable government?

We are mid-way through the turbulent 2020s and it's not getting any less turbulent. November saw Trump elected. December brought no confidence votes in France and Germany, an impeachment in South Korea and the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. In January our own Prime Minister announced he was stepping down.

Most mornings, before or after looking at the news, I open the Church of England's Daily Prayer app and listen to morning prayer. So often the Hebrew scripture reading is one of the prophets lamenting the state of the world; calling the people away from their wayward and sinful ways and back into right relationship with God and with one another.

The prophets call us to look after the widows and the orphans, to beat our swords into plowshares, to put aside greed and live with compassion and mercy. They rebuke us for the ways our economies make people build houses that others inhabit and for how we so

easily sell the poor for the price of a pair of sandals. We are reminded that our way of life means destroying God's creation.

“They have made it an empty wasteland;  
I hear its mournful cry.  
The whole land is desolate,  
and no one even cares.”

— Jeremiah 12:11)

My question, as we hit the midpoint of these turbulent 2020s, is, are we ready to acknowledge that we have hit the limit of our current way of life?

Josh Weinsch took this image of his daughter's bicycle that was left on their LA driveway when they fled the January fires.



*Image by Josh Weinsch.*

individualism, secularism, modernism, capitalism and our current way of doing politics? In so many ways it's just not working anymore. The world is, quite literally, on fire. The widening gap between the rich and the poor, the housing and affordability crisis, climate change — it all suggests we have to find another way.

The good news is that there are other ways of being. As

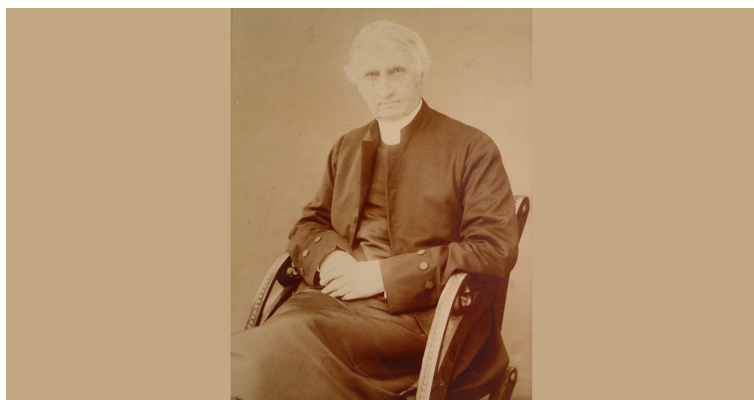
scripture reminds us, we are not the first people in history to come to the limits of our current way of being and to have to find a new way. We are not the first people in history to have to repent and come back into right relationships with God and with one another.

During the Advent season we spent time with John the Baptist. The people, disillusioned and beaten down as they were by the Roman Empire, sought John out in the wilderness. When they asked him how they should live, he told them that those of them who had two coats should give one away, and those with food should do likewise. He told the tax collectors not to take more than is due to them and soldiers not to abuse their power. He didn't call for full-scale revolt against the Empire, but he most definitely called people to live differently.

I invite all of us to reflect, this coming year, on how we are called, individually, collectively, as church and as society, to live differently. Let us hear the voice of God calling to us, through the prophets old and new, and let us remember that, ultimately, we are citizens not of the kingdoms of this world, but of the Kingdom of God — a kingdom of love, justice and compassion.

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# Bishop George Hills and Anglican opposition to segregation in early Victoria



*Right Reverend George Hills, D.D., Lord Bishop of British Columbia, 1859-1892. Photo: Diocese of British Columbia Archives*

*By Kieran Wilson*

If, in the year 1860, you were to stand on Beacon Hill in Victoria and look south across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, you would see in the Olympic mountains the westernmost rampart of a continent-spanning, slaveholding republic. In that last full year before the outbreak of the American Civil War, traffic in Black slaves was carried on in the fifteen so-called “slave states,” but the “peculiar institution” — the tidy euphemism with which slavery was cloaked — was not

confined to those states alone.

Manifest destiny, the notion that God had ordained the United States to spread the blessings of freedom and democracy, at the point of a bayonet if necessary, had carried the American republic to the shores of the Pacific — and slavery with it. Slavery was practised even in the “free territories” of the American Pacific coast. The streets of Victoria resounded on at least one occasion with merrymaking for a slave who had slipped across the strait from the “free” territory of Washington to deliverance from servitude in the British colony of Vancouver Island, where, as elsewhere in the British Empire, slavery was forbidden.[1]

Vancouver Island and its satellites had become a haven for Black Americans, former slaves or not, fleeing persecution in their homeland. For a time in the 1840s, the Black community of the fledgling colony looked apprehensively across the water at the land they had fled. In those days, the slogan “54-40 or fight,” referring to the hoped-for annexation of the British possessions along the Pacific coast of North America, was on the lips and in the hearts of many an American expansionist. The Black population of Vancouver Island, who knew exactly how far American promises of freedom and equality extended, had good reason to fear that the “peculiar institution” would soon catch up with them.

Even in 1860, though the clamour for annexation had faded south of the border, Victoria’s Black pioneers had reason to fear the growth of American influence from another quarter. A reforming party, which was widely believed to be if not outright in favour of American annexation then at least friendly to American interests, was challenging candidates associated with the ruling Hudson Bay Company clique in the colonial elections

in January of that year. The colony's Attorney General, a member of the clique, fearing both the growth of American influence and the reforming party's threat to the Company's power, immediately enfranchised former American slaves living in the colony regardless of their term of residency on British soil, creating at a stroke a contingent of anti-American voters.[2]

In the midst of the election campaign, on January 6, 1860, George Hills, first bishop of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, arrived in Esquimalt Harbour to take possession of his see. Hills felt little warmth for the cause of the reforming party and looked with repugnance on the attitudes of the Americans in the colony towards their Black neighbours. When the reform ticket was defeated, thanks in large part to the newly enfranchised British subjects, Hills reported back to England with obvious satisfaction that the pro-American party had been defeated by loyal Black voters.[3]

The racial divisions that afflicted the colony's political life in 1860 were also felt in the church. American congregants expected segregated worship as a matter of course, and many of Victoria's religious institutions hastened to accommodate this expectation. Bishop Hills, however, was firm in opposing any segregation in his diocese, assuring one anxious Black parishioner that "the Anglican Church would never make any distinction" on the basis of race.[4]

The bishop's reasons for objecting to segregation were both patriotic and principled. On the first score, Hills the proud and loyal Englishman saw segregation as an offence against the British ideals of freedom and fair play. The same ideals had led the empire to abolish slavery in the first place, and Hills believed it his duty, as a subject of the Queen and a bishop of the English

church, to further them. The contest between integration and segregation was, for the bishop, a contest between a noble "Christian and English sentiment" and a debased American prejudice.[5]

But more than this, segregation struck at the root of Christian spiritual equality. Black Christians were owed not distrust and revulsion, nor condescension and paternalism, but "honour and respect" as befitted "fellow immortals and equal[s] in the sight of God." [6] Segregated worship, which would obscure this fundamental spiritual equality, was simply unchristian. Nor did Hills' objection to the "colour distinction" stop at the lychgate: on learning that Black people were excluded from the Philharmonic and the YMCA, the bishop swore that "from whatever society they were excluded, I was excluded also, for I should belong to nothing where such unrighteous prejudices existed." [7]

The bishop's championing of integrated worship came at a cost. Many American Episcopalians refused to attend services at Christ Church Cathedral and expressed their horror — in language no longer fit to print — at the prospect of entering any church where they might be made to sit near their Black coreligionists.[8] Others made known their dissent with their pocketbooks: several people who had subscribed money for the building of Saint John's Church reneged on their pledges, a loss which the bishop, presiding over the new diocese's stretched finances, cannot but have felt keenly.[9]

Yet Bishop Hills's opposition to segregation was not without its consolations, apart from the bishop's vindication in the court of his own conscience. The bishop's resolution won for him and his church the friendship and gratitude, sometimes tearful, of the

colony's Black community, and some prominent Black Victorians transferred their allegiance from Presbyterianism to the Church of England.[10] But doubtless the greatest consolation, for Bishop Hills and for us who are the heirs and stewards of his spiritual legacy, is this: the bishop's vow that "the Anglican Church would never make any distinction" on the basis of race was a forceful witness in those infant years of British Columbia Anglicanism to a Christian ethic of spiritual equality that the church, in the century and a half since, has so often forgotten. God grant that we may never again forget this ideal nor flag in our efforts to see it realised.

### Sources

- [1] George Hills, *No Better Land: The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop George Hills*, ed. Roberta Bagshaw (Victoria: Sono Nis, 1996), p. 239.
- [2] G.P.V. Akrigg and Helen Akrigg, *British Columbia Chronicle, 1847-1871* (Vancouver, Discovery Press, 1977), p. 186.
- [3] George Hills, *An Occasional Paper on the Columbia Mission* (London: Rivington, 1860), p. 13.
- [4] Hills, *No Better Land*, p. 85.
- [5] Hills, *Occasional Paper*, p. 13.
- [6] Hills, *No Better Land*, p. 83.
- [7] *Ibid.*, *No Better Land*, p. 90.
- [8] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- [9] H.P.K. Skipton, *A Life of George Hills, First Bishop of British Columbia*, ed. Sel Caradus (Victoria: Christ Church Cathedral, 2008), p. 71.
- [10] Hills, *No Better Land*, pp. 85, 90.

# What is the place of joy in Christian life?



Photo by [Luca Upper](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By John J. Thatamanil

Within a context of overwhelming violence, injustice and suffering, what is the place of joy in Christian life? Under such circumstances, is joy an unseemly perversion, a self-indulgent obliviousness to real suffering? These questions seem unavoidable when unconstitutional abuse of power, approaching fascism, is being enacted in the United States and as ICE agents attempt to enter schools to detain and deport migrant children. When every hour brings a new violation, grief and rage on behalf of our American neighbours seem like the only fitting responses.

A remarkable verse from the book of Nehemiah has me rethinking my inclination toward despondency and anger. "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, *for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*" (Nehemiah 8:10) What could this possibly mean?

What is the connection between joy and strength?

Returnees from the Babylonian exile begin to grieve upon hearing the law read to them. Ezra and Nehemiah call them not to grieve but to eat the fat, drink sweet wine *and* send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared instead. In Israel and the church, justice and joy go together. Why is that? Because the law, at its best, is not a violation of the deepest longings of the human heart. The law marks out the shape of justice, and justice is not justice if it violates rather than heals the human heart. Biblical law, at its best, seeks to put people in right relation with themselves and each other so that people and communities can flourish. St Paul rightly reminds us that the law pinches only when it cuts against the grain of self-centered inclinations.

So, Jewish law is no narrow legalism. The law is the community's true delight. The law restores the frayed bonds of community. The law attends to the needs of those who suffer lack. The law repairs the breach between neighbour and neighbour. Is it any wonder then that Jesus the rabbi rightly states that the whole of the law can be summed up as love of neighbour and love of God? The law's true aim is love, and the sweet taste of love on our lips is joy.

Now, here is a matter that calls out for attention. Authentic joy, the real 24-karat deal, not fool's gold, cannot be our primary aim. If you aim for joy, you will miss it. That is because joy is a byproduct. Joy comes from and accompanies love. Joy is the bloom of a life well lived. Aim at joy directly, and it will pass you by. Trying to have joy without love and justice is like trying to achieve a runner's high without running. Hence the call of Ezra and Nehemiah. By all means, eat the fat and drink the sweet wine (unless you have gout, that is), but don't imagine that joy can be yours if you

know that your neighbour goes without. Share and then feast!

The joy of seeking only the good of me and mine, regardless of the cost to others and the natural world, is easily procured but quickly fleeting. Real joy is hardier. It can be found even in the grimmest of times. It endures and emerges not when it is sought but when justice motivated by love is sought.

Remember, Ezra and Nehemiah tell us that "The joy of *the Lord* is our strength," not the joy of marginalizing the Indigenous or immigrant other, nor the joy of status, control or coercion. Shallow counterfeit joys can be produced on demand but authentic joy is not fluffy. The real McCoy is not to be had on the cheap. It is always the fruit of justice seeking. The joy of the Lord is the bloom on the shoot of the beloved community.

We come now to the question that I suspect is on all our minds. Do we dare eat fat and drink sweet wine in such times? The answer to that question is an absolute and unequivocal yes! We must refuse to listen to those who suggest that Christian life must be a dour and joyless affair because the days are dark. Be suspicious of those whose ethical drive leads them to insist that our emotional lives must be marked by nothing but anger and outrage. There is no strength in that self-depleting way. On the contrary, we will find genuine strength only in the joy of the Lord.

But how? How are Christians to pursue joy? The answer is straightforward, though not simple. We don't pursue joy directly or make it our aim. Instead, we pursue a program of justice, and joy will be ours. Call for mercy, even with a quavering voice, and joy will be ours. Speak on behalf of LGBTQIA2S+ communities, and joy will be ours. Contest those who blame Canada's

problems on migrant communities, and joy will be ours.

Be, in Martin Luther King Jr.'s words, "a drum major for justice," and a deep and unquenchable joy will be ours. Why? Because the heart's proper rhythm is tuned to the frequency of love. Our hearts long for justice, so when we give our hearts what they genuinely desire, joy will come.

God does not want us to be glum. Nor does God want us to pursue joy as though it were a thing to be acquired and possessed. No, God calls us to pursue what our hearts most long for and, in so doing, find joy on the way. Give our hearts to the work of love and a deep, irrevocable, Spirit-filled joy will indeed be ours. And that joy will be a powerful consolation and empowerment, a source of mighty strength to resist evil.

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## The best of times, or the worst of times?



Photo by [Bethany Legg](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By Adela Torchia

You may have recognized this title as being from Charles Dickens's 1859 novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. And like much of Dickens's work, it remains relevant for our times. Here are the opening lines of the novel:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us ..."

These lines have resonated throughout many times and places since they were written, and seem to also relate to our own times. We live in the best of times given so many advances in fields like medical science, technology, transportation, communications and other things that give us much easier lifestyles than many of our ancestors had. But we also live in the worst of times in terms of climate catastrophes, terrible inequality even in the world's richest nations, millions of migrants forced to flee their homes with no way forward to greater stability, a tiny percentage of humanity having immense wealth while the majority of humans struggle for survival, terrible wars that maim and kill children and destroy homes and hospitals, etc. And, of course, there are many things about our times that make us feel like we live in an "epoch of incredulity"!

Yes, we can take the advice of Mister Rogers's mother when he was a child disturbed by news of bad events: she told him to look for the helpers in any situation because there were usually helpers wherever bad things were happening. And yet this advice might seem trite given the epic scale of human suffering seen today in so many places. Of course, all this physical suffering, like that of children in war zones, comes with terrible



mental, psychological and emotional anguish as well. Even those of us just observing it from a distance are often overwhelmed with grief and anguish at the cruelty that some humans inflict on others. As people of faith, we lift many prayers to God about these matters. And yet little seems to change. Progress at best seems to be at a snail's pace, or worse going totally in reverse.

Indeed, to use the words of Dickens, it does often feel like we are living in the worst of times, in an age of foolishness, in a season of darkness and a winter of despair. It's helpful to have Candlemas at the beginning of February, a feast which emerged from the earlier Celtic celebration of St Brigid and the return of the light. About halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, we rejoice that the days are brightening and that once again creator God reveals the season of light that comes after the season of darkness.

However, it's questionable whether we can always correctly distinguish between light and darkness, or even wisdom and foolishness, since many of us have experienced surprising reversals or opposite outcomes to what we expected.

The old Taoist story about a Chinese farmer is helpful here: when the farmer's only horse runs away, his neighbours say, Oh, that's bad luck. But the farmer says maybe. Soon after, the horse returns along with a few wild horses. Then, his son tries to ride one of the wild horses, but he is thrown off and injured, including a broken leg. Again, his neighbours commiserate with the farmer about his bad luck, and the farmer says maybe. Soon after that, the king's soldiers come to the village to recruit all able-bodied young men for a war, but they reject the farmer's son because of his injuries.

So, the "bad luck" events all ended up with good outcomes; and the same may be true for us as we observe or experience seemingly negative things that may be thresholds between the past and a future with surprising possibilities. The terms bad and good might be too binary. Surely many things happen in our lives that are somewhere in-between, precisely where Holy Spirit wisdom often operates. May we make room for her surprising ways.

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## Discover the world of women's preaching in medieval Europe



*By Faith Tides*

Step into the captivating, often overlooked world of women's preaching in medieval Europe with international scholar Carolyn Muessig! At the end of February, Carolyn Muessig, chair of Christian thought

in the department of classics at the University of Calgary, will be giving the Vancouver School of Theology's annual G. Peter Kaye lecture and workshop in person at Epiphany Chapel and online via Zoom.

The 2025 G. Peter Kaye lecture is titled Preaching under the radar: the creative world of female preaching in late medieval Europe.

The free public lecture on Friday, February 21 at 7pm offers a chance to discover how remarkable women defied conventions to engage with scripture in bold, creative and norm-challenging ways. This lecture is a must-attended for preachers, historians, medievalists and anyone inspired by stories of resilience and subversive faith!

Both the lecture and workshop (Saturday, February 22, 10am-2pm) are hosted in-person at Epiphany Chapel on the UBC campus, as well as live-streamed online. The lecture on Friday evening is free, and the workshop on Saturday costs \$10 and includes lunch.

[Reserve your tickets here.](#)

For more information, including the workshop abstract, visit the [VST website](#).

### **About Carolyn Muessig**

Carolyn Muessig taught for 25 years in the department of religion and theology, University of Bristol, UK, where she was head of department from 2007-2010 and then again from 2016-2019. She has held the chair of Christian thought in the department of classics and religion at the University of Calgary since 2020. Her research areas include medieval religious culture, female spirituality, preaching and sermon history, miracles and heresy and reform in medieval Europe.

### **About the G. Peter Kaye lecture**

For the past 38 years the G. Peter Kaye lecture series has brought to campus "scholars of international reputation chosen for their ability to make a serious intellectual contribution to theological enquiry in a way that nourishes the spiritual life of the church and the wider community."

Gilbert Peter Kaye, a dedicated philanthropist and former chancellor of VST, established the G. Peter and Barbara E. Kaye Fund with the Vancouver Foundation. Since 1987 Peter Kaye's generosity has allowed VST to host the annual G. Peter Kaye lectures, bringing distinguished scholars to Vancouver whose insights deepen the spiritual life of the school, church and wider community.

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## A rite of passage

*By Selinde Krayenhoff*



In the spring of 2024, I became a grandmother for the first time at the ripe old age of 68. I hadn't really been waiting for a grandchild; my life was quite full and blessed as it was.

But when I

*Selinde Krayenhoff (right) with her*

granddaughter Piper. Photo courtesy of Selinde Krayenhoff.

learned that a baby was on the way, my heart soared. Something inside me opened up — my imagination, a deep longing, excitement and room for a new family member. I started praying for her (yes, we knew the baby was a girl) daily and by the time Piper arrived, I was deeply connected to her.

And when I met her, a number of things happened. First, amidst the immense joy of holding my wee granddaughter, feeling her in my arms, and breathing in her scent, I noticed grief well up inside me. That was a surprise. Joy and grief together?

Over the next weeks, exploring that grief, I realized that I had been bumped up a generation. Even though all the family in my parents' generation had died, I had not really made the transition to this new status. As one of my sons stated, somewhat in shock, when his last grandparent died, "There's no one between you and death now. They're all gone. There's no buffer. You're it!" That was 12 years ago, and I hadn't taken his news in fully.

So that reality hit me in a profound way with Piper's arrival.

Not only am I closer to the end of my life (a wake-up call in itself), but I am an elder now. Quickly the questions arose: How do I want to live out my remaining years? What kind of elder am I being called to be? And, critically, what kind of world do I want to leave my grandchild? There is a new sense of urgency, a sharper *focus* to the questions. More clarity. What is *really* important? And what is important *for me* to do? I can't change the world, but I can zoom in on what I can do to make a difference.

I also have realized how important health and well-being are. At my age, I am unlikely to see my grandchild have children of her own. (There's the grief again.) But I want to be a part of her life as long as possible. I want to share my interests and learn from hers. I want to support her and her parents in whatever way makes sense to us all. For this to happen, I need to value my health and take good care of myself.

I started taking much better care of myself during the pandemic and now I'm so glad I did. Weekly strength training classes over the past several years have enabled me to lift this healthy child without hurting my back, help with housework and haul groceries up a long flight of stairs to my son and daughter-in-law's apartment. I want to be able to push Piper on the swing and take long walks with her. I want to be able to stay up late and sleep outside under the stars with her, and to be able to get down on the floor to play with her.

Our culture does not do a good job in helping people transition into grandparenthood. There are few books on the subject and those there are, were written in recent decades. The Hallmark portrayal of a grandparent is saccharine and trivializing. Demeaning in many ways. Often the elderly are the butt of awful jokes. And worse, elder abuse and neglect.

As grandparents, we have much to offer. Contrary to the view of aging as a diminishing process, aging can be a refining process that lays bare our core values and profound wisdom, and offers valuable modelling to those who look to us for how to age well, and die gracefully.

Our churches today are full of grandparents and elders. How much do we reflect on our role as elders in our families, our communities and in the church itself? As

a new grandparent, I'm inspired to do the work of reconnoitering this rich, little-explored territory.

When I hear people voice the well-known refrain "Where are all the young people? Why don't families come to church?" I've always balked. Now I'm clear about why those questions grate. They're the wrong questions.

As elders, we need to be asking our children and grandchildren, what kind of support do you need? What's important to *you*? And we need to ask ourselves, what do I have to offer as an elder? How do I model and talk about my faith in a respectful way? We want easy solutions. We want people to come to us. It's not happening, and I doubt it will happen. At least not as the church is now.

Bums in seats is not the solution. Meaningful connections, respectful communication, curiosity and heartfelt service are. In relationship, we create the church moving forward. Not only with each other but connected to the world around us.

Every Sunday we are sent out after being nourished through worship to "go in peace to love and serve the Lord." So, a good question is, *how* do I serve? Not by telling parents they need to come to church. Not by wanting to return to a past that is long gone.

We need to turn inwards first, to do our own work of becoming the elders the world needs: clarifying our

gifts, and then heading out into the world, to our families and communities asking, how can I best serve?

And then listening, and listening, and listening. To what the young people have to say, and to what the holy spirit is saying to us.

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## Faith Tides is taking a break



*By Faith Tides*

Please note that there will not be an issue of *Faith Tides* in March. *Faith Tides* will be back in April and in the meantime, submissions can be sent to [faithtides@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:faithtides@bc.anglican.ca).

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