

JUNE 2026

FAITH TIDES



Photo: J. Abrams Photography



Bishop's Column: Join us to celebrate the priesting of women in the ACC

Cathedral precinct rezoning application approved by city council

The world calls the church to act

Join us to celebrate the priesting of women in the ACC



Pictured (l-r) are Lynn Mills, Trish Vollman-Stock, Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee, Jeannine Friesen, and Leslie Flynn. Image credit: J. Abram Photography.

By Anna Greenwood-Lee

While it's only June, I'd ask you to please mark your calendars for Nov. 24-25, when our diocese will be hosting celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada. It's an honor and privilege that our diocese is hosting this event and I am grateful to Jeannine Friesen, who stepped forward to put together the national committee to organise this event.

Registration for this event and more information, including the schedule and information about accommodation, [is on our website](#). If you need financial assistance to attend, you can apply to the [Education Trusts Committee](#).

Even if you're not able to come to the whole event, I would very much encourage you to join in, in person or online, for the closing worship of the conference that will be held at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 25. This eucharist service will have a coast-to-coast theme with Bishop Ann Martha Keenainak from Iqaluit serving as our celebrant and Kay Short, who serves at the cathedral in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, preaching.

We are having the service at 4 p.m. so that people from coast to coast to coast can join the livestream. I've already had messages from Sandra Fyfe, the bishop of Nova Scotia and PEI, about organising a watching party in her diocese. I hope that there might also be some watching parties in the outer edges of our diocese and some folk who travel to the cathedral to join us in person.

A quick google maps search suggests to me that if you were to draw a triangle from Victoria to Iqaluit to Corner Brook and then back across to Victoria that would be a total distance of about 10,000 km. The Anglican Church of Canada truly is vast and diverse, and it will be a privilege to host people from coast to coast to coast here in our diocese.

The format for the event will include four panels of four women, with each panel representing something of the diversity of women priests in our church. It will be a fascinating reflection on how the church has changed and continues to change and how God is always and everywhere doing a new thing in our midst.

I hope you will mark the dates and consider joining us in person for this milestone event.

Cathedral precinct rezoning application approved by city council



Image credit: FaulknerBrowns

By Jonathan Thomas

During his visit to the cathedral in 2009, then Prince Charles is said to have commented, “it’s not quite finished, is it?” That is the story of Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria. It has never been finished. The design for the present cathedral was commissioned in 1893 but then shelved for a generation until the 1920s. The cornerstone was laid in 1926, and the building consecrated in 1929, with construction cut short of completion by the Great Depression. The bell towers were completed by the next generation. The proposed central tower that would connect the cathedral to

Memorial Hall never materialized, so in 1969 a residential tower was planned in its place but never built.

Over the decades and generations, houses on the property became homes for the cathedral staff and synod offices, and Memorial Hall was converted to a permanent space for Christ Church Cathedral School. The east wing with the Chapel of the New Jerusalem was added in 1991. Internal renovations to the cathedral, like the Hellmuth Wolff organ, and external additions to the property, such as the labyrinth, have been added over the years to enhance the ministry of this cathedral, never completing the work but always furthering the mission. In the present, a hundred years after the original construction began, we have dreamt of what our generation’s contribution to the development of the cathedral and its precinct would be. We have called this work “Building for the Future.”

The vision of this project is to secure the cathedral and its place in the community of Victoria and the Diocese of Islands and Inlets for generations to come. That vision is not just about financial security but about expanded mission and engagement with the city, making the cathedral a hub of activity and a center of community life.

The initial phase of the plan includes consolidating the synod and cathedral offices into one new building called Cathedral House, allowing for greater efficiency and aligning our vision and ministry. That building will also house meeting spaces and amenities that will keep us connected to the needs of the community we serve and the realities for which our ministries exist. The plans for the grounds also include new playgrounds and teaching gardens for the school’s use as we continue to support that aspect of our ministry.

There will be housing of various types, price points and configurations on the property, from grand towers to streetside apartments. This aspect of the project is meant not only to produce income but to use this land to do our part to alleviate the housing shortage facing Victoria. It is missional in its nature and not just a source of funding for future ministry.

The south lawn will remain public green space at private expense — a place for people to relax, meet together or connect to God. We are planning to mark the space as Lekwungen territory with artwork we co-commission with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and by replanting with native flora marked with their Indigenous names. The hope is for this space to be a sign of what it means to acknowledge the history of the land under the cathedral and a demonstration of how we can learn to be in conversation, recognize each other's contribution and live together with the First Peoples of this land. We are also budgeting for a payment to those Nations from the proceeds of the property as a recognition of that history and support for their resurgence.

There will be designated walkways across the property both north-south and east-west to encourage foot traffic. The bottom of the residential towers will be used for shops, restaurants, cafes and other commercial enterprises. With enhanced community spaces, we look to restore the grounds to a place of real relationship-building for the community, and place the cathedral at the center of civic life as cathedrals have been for centuries. We want to live more fully into the promise of “a cathedral for the city.”

To realize this vision for the cathedral commons, we submitted a rezoning application to the city to allow for a greater density of buildings on the site and to allow

for residential and commercial land uses. Throughout 2024 and 2025, the rezoning application went back and forth between the diocese and cathedral and the City of Victoria as revisions were made to the plans to accommodate the city's requests and recommendations. Finally, at a committee of the whole meeting on May 28, the city council voted 6-2 in favour of rezoning the precinct. We have received positive feedback from councilors and civic leaders that makes us think they believe in the vision of this project and the importance of the cathedral in civic life.

The remarks of King Charles still ring true — the cathedral is not finished; and it still won't be after this project is actualized. We believe the cathedral is not finished yet and will not be until the dream of God is realized and tangible for all in our community. There is still much work to do, and Christ Church Cathedral has a central role in that work in this diocese and this city. That is why we are building for the future.

The world calls the church to act

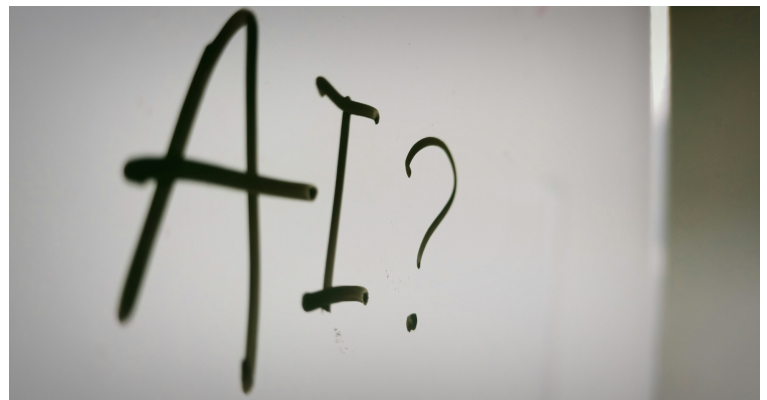


Photo by [Nahrizul Kadri](#) on [Unsplash](#)

By John J. Thatamanil

The church has seen better days. It stands as a bruised and battered institution with diminished moral credibility. The Anglican Church, as well as every other Canadian church body, still has a long way to go to rectify its complicity with colonialism and Indigenous erasure. And the global Catholic Church is reeling from its systematic complicity in child sex abuse. Given these realities, churches might understandably turn inward, give ourselves over to licking our wounds, and doing the hard work of cleaning up our own houses and making reparations for the harms we have caused.

But over the last week, our diocese and the global Catholic Church, under the leadership of Pope Leo XIV, have dared to do something radical. Even as the church does the much-needed work of housekeeping and repair, it has refused to crawl away and skulk or presume that it can no longer tackle the major challenges of the day.

Last month, our diocese, under the leadership of our dean, Jonathan Thomas, hosted a major conference on homelessness in Victoria. The following week, Pope Leo XIV released *Magnifica Humanitas*, an encyclical on artificial intelligence.

Both events made it clear to me that the church can still act decisively and meaningfully and that the world still wants and needs the church to be active, to convene conversations and to be a prophetic voice for our time.

Let me start locally. Dean Jonathan Thomas played a visionary role in bringing together priests, theologians and leaders of local service agencies, as well as a city council member, to think together about the problem

of homelessness. Dr. Siobhán Garrigan is perhaps the world's foremost theologian on homelessness and has worked with unhoused persons in New York, England and now Ireland. Her experience is vast, and her book *A Theology of Home in a Time of Homelessness* is a treasure chest for every Christian who wants to think seriously about what home means in this time of global dislocation, a dislocation destined to worsen because of the climate crisis and the immense refugee crisis that will follow in its wake.

What was astonishing about this conference was that we were also listening to and learning from local leaders in the fight against homelessness. Those voices of courage and passion included Julian Daly, chief executive officer of Our Place Society; Cheryl Diebel, director of New Roads; Krista Loughton, city councillor and documentary filmmaker; and Clint Kuzio, a director at Victoria Cool Aid Society, among others.

I left deeply encouraged. The scale of the problem confronting Victoria may seem insurmountable, but the assembled leadership argued that homelessness can be overcome if the public can be mobilized to focus the minds of local, provincial and federal elected officials on this issue.

Clergy and lay leaders heard one urgent message: the churches can and must make a difference. Letter-writing to local politicians matters, and organized, aggressive advocacy from churches is indispensable for change to materialize. We are very much wanted and needed, even as we were reminded by Cree speaker Clint Kuzio that the problem of Indigenous homelessness is, in no small measure, our fault. The generational consequences of Residential Schools persist—even more reason to be part of the solution for

a problem we helped to create.

Meanwhile, this week Christopher Olah, a Canadian computer scientist and co-founder of Anthropic, had this to say at the release of Pope Leo's encyclical:

“We need more of the world—religious communities, civil society, scholars, governments and indeed all people of good will—to do what His Holiness has done here: to take this seriously, to look closely and to push events in a better direction. We need informed critics who will tell the labs when we are failing. We need moral voices that the incentives cannot bend.”

A leader of one of the world's major AI labs is pleading for the church and other religious communities to be voices of clarity, conscience and discernment about just what is going on in these AI models that, Olah argues, are beginning to show “internal states that functionally mirror joy, satisfaction, fear, grief and unease.”

In an age in which many in the church are rightly concerned about dwindling numbers and our damaged credibility, key voices from the secular world do not want the church to shut up, sit down or go away. Instead, we are hearing from the most unlikely voices that they want and even need the church to be on the frontlines of activism and the cutting edge of theological and philosophical reflection. With due humility and chastened but not silenced by our past failures, we must answer the call.

Rest in love and work from that love



Archbishop Shane Parker delivers a sermon at Christ Church Cathedral in November 2025. Image credit: J. Abram Photography

By Lisa Alexander

Stepping into parish leadership can be daunting at the best of times and particularly challenging in today's climate of less financial resources, competing priorities and people weary and frightened from the chaos in the world. Leadership transition arising out of vestry meetings is more or less complete now, and new wardens, treasurers and parish councils are down to work. Bless each of you in new roles. May you know God's calming and energizing presence as you serve.

Archbishop Shane Parker was in the diocese in May, and I had the pleasure of hearing him preach twice. Each sermon was different, but the common thread in both was his plain and powerful words reminding us that in Jesus, God is with us and we are transformed by this love; in turn, we participate in the transforming work of God when we offer this love to others.

As Archbishop Shane has written: “If you pay attention to Jesus, you will see that the way to God is found in living your life with kindness, courage, gentleness, justice, faithfulness, compassion, mercy, self-control, generosity, goodness, prayerfulness, forgiveness, patience, trustworthiness, peace, hope and, above all, love.”

People of God, what do we need to live into the way of Jesus in our leadership situations? How do we offer loving hospitality to the preschools in our basements? To the AA and NA meetings we are honoured to host? To the dance and yoga classes, to the grieving, to the hungry, to those whose behaviour doesn't conform with our expectations, to the volunteers who don't do the tasks, to those who do too much—how do the ways of Jesus get embodied so that deep, real, healthy love is truly the centre of our churches?

A non-exhaustive list of things we need to live into the ways of Jesus:

- A reminder that people, not buildings, leases, gardens or efficiency, are the most important thing
- Skills to listen deeply to each other in non-defensive ways
- Courage to speak up when things do not feel loving
- Ears to hear life giving critiques
- Knowledge deep in our bones that we are loved beyond all measure by God

Rest, dear ones. The ways of Jesus are not found by working harder, thinking faster or feeling overwhelmed. Rest in love and work from that love. May it be so.

A note from the editor



By Naomi Racz

Dear Readers,

I wanted to remind you all that *Faith Tides* will be taking it's usual summer break. We will be back in September and if you would like to submit a news article, story or photograph for that issue please send it to faithtides@bc.anglican.ca by August 15. We also welcome [letters to the editor!](#)

Thank you to everyone who has submitted to *Faith Tides* this year or who has shared their story with me. Here's just a few of the stories shared in these pages so far this year, in case you missed them.

This year we've been joined by two new regular contributors. Canon Lisa Alexander has been sharing monthly articles on how parishes can learn to communicate better and build trust. [Have a read of Canon Lisa's articles.](#) Justine Soles, our diocesan archivist, has also been offering some [glimpses into the](#)

[archives](#).

Other highlights have included parishes sharing their experiences with [lay leadership](#), [feeding the lonely on Christmas Day](#), [fundraising for new keys](#), [building safe havens for queer asylum seekers](#) and [ministering to young adults](#).

I hope you all have a lovely summer!

Naomi Racz (editor)

Ripples: June 2026



Archbishop Shane Parker (centre) with some of the attendees at the John Albert Hall lecture, held at Christ Church Cathedral on Thursday, May 21, 2026. Image by Jenny Replegle.

By Faith Tides

Primate visits the diocese

In May, Archbishop Shane Parker visited the diocese. On Wednesday, May 20 Archbishop Shane preached at evensong at the cathedral. On Thursday evening and Friday, Archbishop Shane took part in the conference on homelessness hosted by the cathedral. Thursday night's event was a John Albert Hall lecture by Dr.

Siobhan Garrigan. You can watch a livestream of Siobhan's lecture [on the cathedral website](#). On Friday, Archbishop Shane spent time at St. John the Divine, Victoria to see their food bank ministry. On Sunday, May 24 the Primate took part in worship at St John the Divine, Victoria and delivered a sermon. You can watch that service [on the St. John's website](#).

St. Luke's cemetery in bloom

In May and June, St. Luke's cemetery is a sea of orange and yellow when the California poppies are in full bloom.



We held a

Image credit: Barb Prescott



Image credit: Barb Prescott

community cemetery cleanup on Wednesday, May 13 and will hold our next cleanup on Saturday, June 13 from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Everyone welcome. Many hands make light work! It takes a community to help

maintain a cemetery.

By Barb Prescott
