

DIOCESAN EPOST

Celebrating the Diocese of Islands and Inlets

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

NOVEMBER 2021

Churches mark National Day for Truth and Reconciliation



The altar at Christ Church Cathedral bathed in orange light with an orange floral display. Photo by Mark McDonald.

BY NAOMI RACZ

On September 30, churches across the Diocese of Islands and Inlets honoured the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, or Orange Shirt Day, in a range of ways, including organising and participating in local events and displaying signs and orange T-shirts outside their buildings.

The 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also featured prominently in the day's events. Trinity, Port Alberni, rang its bells 94 times, while in Nanaimo, parishioners gathered outside St. Paul to read the 94 calls to action.

Clara Plamondon, incumbent at St. Paul, noted that the weather seemed to be attuned to the proceedings. "As we started to read, the skies opened and it began to rain. We continued reading while people

walking by paused and listened. As the last and 94th call to action was read, the rain stopped. The sun came out and we paused for a moment of silence just as the clock turned to 2:15 p.m., reminding us of the 215 children whose remains were found at the former residential school in Kamloops earlier in the year."

In Victoria, St. Mary, Oak Bay, posted the 94 calls to action on the church's doors. St. Mary is a founding member of ReconciliACTION Oak Bay, along with Oak Bay United Church and the Community Association of Oak Bay. ReconciliACTION Oak Bay aims to build a relationship with the Songhees and Esquimalt peoples and take action to build a just future.

As part of this collaboration, St. Mary invited community members to gather in front of the Sno'yuythth Welcome Pole to

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PWRDF Refuge Network moves heaven and earth

Where and what is your heaven on earth? Likely, it would involve a place, a place you call home, a place of family and community, work and leisure, a place made up of the things that define who you are.

Read the full story on page 9

Lytton fire update

On June 30, 2021, a devastating fire rushed through Lytton, Lytton First Nation and the surrounding area. From the moment news came of this traumatic event, the Territory of the People's local priests, wardens and members of the Lytton parishes were on the front line, helping neighbours.

Read the full story on page 10



What is postcolonialism?

FROM THE BISHOP'S CHAIR

THE RIGHT REVEREND
ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

At a recent meeting of the Canadian House of Bishops, we were discussing the possibility of asking General Synod 2022 to pass an aspirational statement about being a postcolonial church. While the bishops in my small group, which included Indigenous and settler bishops, wholeheartedly embraced the sentiment behind this statement, there was general agreement that we do not in fact know what postcolonialism means or what a postcolonial church would look or act like.

In the late 90s, I was blessed to be the research assistant for Dr. Kwok Pui Lan as she worked on a book called *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. My part in her research was very small and mostly involved searching library stacks and checking footnotes. But what I learned from her was immensely helpful and is something I am only just beginning to understand.

Pui Lan taught me that to move beyond the colonialism that pervades the church and society, we are going to need imagination. We can't just stop being colonial one day and start being postcolonial another. Rather, it is going to be a journey and it is going to require our God-given imaginative gifts. In her book Pui Lan says that "to imagine means to discern that something is not fitting, to search for new images, and to arrive at new patterns of meaning and interpretation."

I came away from that meeting of bishops feeling that it is, as yet, much too early to claim to be anything even approximating a postcolonial church, but I also came away with a fresh energy and commitment to postcolonial imagination.

The meeting of the House of Bishops happened the same week as the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. As part of marking the day, Archbishop

Bishop's Calendar

November

- 3 Eucharist and workshop, St. Mark, Qualicum
- 4 Meeting with lay leaders, St. John Gualbert, Port McNeill
Induction of Rev. Christine Muise, St. Columba, Port Hardy
- 6 Vocations Day, UVic
Multifaith Centre, Victoria
- 14 Preaching at St. Philip, Oak Bay
- 17 Workshop, St. Philip, Cedar
- 21 Preaching at St. Matthias, Victoria
- 25 Diocesan Council (via Zoom)
- 26-28 Leading Advent Retreat, Sorrento Centre

Please check www.bc.anglican.ca/bishop/schedule for an up-to-date listing.

Mark MacDonald and six other Indigenous bishops in our church talked of the challenges and the hopes of the communities they serve. They also showed us an excellent half-hour film called

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honour residential school survivors and their families. The Sno'uyutth Welcome Pole stands in front of Oak Bay High School and was raised in 2015 as an act of respect towards the First Nations who have been stewards of the land for thousands of years.

More than 500 people attended the event and the attendees observed 215 seconds of silence. Craig Heibert, incumbent at St. Mary, commented that although the gathered crowd initially seemed uncomfortable with such a long silence, "once their discomfort had settled, all they could hear was the rustling and murmuring of the many children who were with us — a profound moment, given the many children who never made it home."

ReconciliACTION Oak Bay also hosted a screening of the documentary *Picking up the Pieces: The Making of the Witness Blanket*, which charts the creation of the Witness Blanket, made by Indigenous artist Carey Newman as a monument to residential school survivors and their families. The Witness Blanket is made from everyday items collected from residential schools across Canada and each item tells an important story.

Christ Church Cathedral decided not to put on any programming for the week of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and instead encouraged staff and the cathedral community to attend events in the city and online, including the Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters ceremony held in Centennial Square in Victoria. Ansley Tucker, dean of the cathedral, reflected that the event had an almost "celebratory atmosphere."

"I heard one person wonder aloud if perhaps the gathering ought to have felt more sombre or penitential. But I don't think so. It is good to celebrate hope; it is good to build on possibilities."

Ansley was also struck by how young and diverse the crowd at the event was. "It is heartening to know that a generation not yet born when the last residential school closed has turned its attention to undoing the wrongs of our past."

Inside the cathedral, there were displays of orange flowers and the altar was bathed in orange light, creating a quiet space for reflection. "Sometimes, images are more effective than words in moving people to action," commented Ansley.

Many churches also held dedicated worship services in the days and weeks leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. On Sunday, September 26, St. John the Baptist,

Duncan, held an Every Child Matters worship service. As part of the service, Charlie Coleman, district principle of Indigenous education in the Cowichan Valley school district (SD79), spoke about the priorities for Indigenous education within SD79.

These priorities include ensuring all Xe' xe' smun'eem (sacred children) succeed by creating a school system that feels safe, welcoming and culturally relevant for all; and ensuring that the Hwunitum (the non-Indigenous population) in the school system know the truth about what has been done to Indigenous people, so that they know why they need to work towards reconciliation. Kathy Mills, a member of the parish council, commented that "Mr. Coleman spoke simply and with great love and kindness. We were encouraged and blessed by his presence and words shared."

Trinity, Port Alberni, held a worship service focused on truth and reconciliation on October 3. Irene Robinson, a Tseshaht person and member of the Nuuchah-Nulth Tribal Council, spoke at the service about the mistreatment of her relatives who attended the Alberni Indian Residential School. Brenda Nestegaard-Paul, incumbent at Trinity, said Irene's story brought many to tears.

"The abuse was hard to listen to. The

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A group gathered outside Christ Church Cathedral to walk together to Centennial Square for the Every Child Matters ceremony. Photo by Alex Harvey.

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grace filled moment for me was when Irene said, 'Now don't be feeling guilty. It wasn't your fault. You didn't do these things.' The power of those words took my breath away. The silence in the air was electric. And then Irene said, 'But here's my challenge: tell others what you have heard. Find your voice. Now you know what happened. You can help us by telling others. Use your voice.'"

Music and singing, where possible, also featured in the worship services and events, whether hymns, such as "For the Healing of the Nations," or the Secwepemc Honour Song. Andrew Twiddy, incumbent at St. Anne and St. Edmunds, Parksville, also shared with the *Post* a hymn verse that he wrote on the theme of reconciliation:

*settler peoples with First Nations,
listening first, to make amends.
as Creator makes us neighbours,
with new honour, we find friends.
prism spectrum of all nations,
sharing light beams from the Sun,
now confess Great Spirit's rainbow,
"Love refracted: many, one."*

Many churches will be displaying their messages of support and orange T-shirts long after September 30, and indeed, the work of truth and reconciliation continues.■



Orange t-shirt flags hanging outside Trinity, Port Alberni. Photo by Brenda Nestegaard-Paul.



Oak Bay community members gather in front of the Sno'uyuth Welcome Pole to honour residential school survivors and their families.



Church members and passers-by gather outside St. Paul, Nanaimo, to read and listen to the 94 calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



The 94 calls to action posted on the doors of St. Mary, Oak Bay. Photo by Craig Hiebert.

Order of the Diocese of British Columbia investiture



Honorees file into the cathedral. Photo by Catherine Allen Whale.



Honoree John James Dol of St. Mark, Qualicum, gives his medal the thumbs up. Photo by Catherine Allen Whale.



Nazmudin G. Rayani (left) receiving his letter patent from Ven. Penelope Kingham (right). Photo by Catherine Allen Whale.



Dr. Bonnie Henry receives her medal from Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee. Photo by Catherine Allen Whale.



Order of the Diocese of British Columbia honorees on the steps of the cathedral following the investiture service. Photo by Catherine Allen Whale.

The John Albert Hall Lectures return with in-person events this fall

BY BRENDON NEILSON

I am thrilled to have joined the John Albert Hall organizing committee as co-chair and to participate in curating conversations on topics of mutual concern to the Diocese of Islands and Inlets and the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Ian Alexander for his leadership and service to the John Albert Hall lectures over the last few years.

Last year, the pandemic forced a shift to offering the John Albert Hall events online. Lectures from across disciplines and locations culminated in a “dinner table” conversation related to the “values for a new world.” This year, the lectures will be offered in person but will also be livestreamed.

This year’s John Albert Hall events will engage with the theme of climate change. There is arguably no greater concern facing our communities than the changing climate, its effects and the innumerable crises that it will create.

In the fall semester, join us on Thursday, December 2, as we welcome

Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, professor of theological and social ethics at Church Divinity School of the Pacific. Cynthia will offer a short lecture and will be joined by David Seljak, chair of religious studies at the University of Waterloo, who will engage her in conversation on the themes of climate, structural evil, economics and ethics. Cynthia and David will invite us into a conversation regarding interrelated concerns that either justify inaction or catalyze change and are essential to consider.

A group from across the diocese read Cynthia’s *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological-Economic Vocation* through the season of creation. The group members were challenged by her analysis of our current situation and were inspired to expand their notion of neighbour love and to face structural evil with concrete action.

On Saturday, December 4, Cynthia will be offering a workshop to allow participants to engage further with her on the themes of her lecture and on what a faithful response looks like. You can register for the workshop on the diocesan website: www.bc.anglican.ca/events/resisting-structural-evil/



Cynthia Moe-Lobeda.

We are grateful to the John Albert Hall endowment for the legacy and contribution to our communities at the intersection of faith and contemporary thought. We look forward to these events and once again seeing you in person!

For more information about the John Albert Hall lecture series, visit www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/events/john-albert-hall/index.php ■

Brendon Neilson is the vision animator for the diocese and co-chair of the John Albert Hall committee.

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The pity of war

Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

In 1697 Henry Maundrell, academic of Exeter College in Oxford and Church of England priest, was acting as chaplain to the new Levant Company based in Aleppo, Syria. Perhaps realizing that his term as chaplain might soon end, he sought and obtained permission to assemble a small expedition and set out on a journey south to Jerusalem. With him were fifteen companions.

As they travelled down the Syrian coast, they eventually came to the north bank of the Dog River — its Arabic name is Nahr el-Kalb — where it entered the Mediterranean. An ancient bridge linked the high, dark walls of a steep-sided gorge. As they crossed the river, Maundrell noticed that there were large stone plaques built into the walls of the gorge, accessible only by an obviously ancient narrow path. They camped on the south bank and investigated.

To do so was not without danger. Maundrell has left us a vivid record of the area:

You have a path of about two yards wide along the side [of the cliffs] at a great height above the water, [this] being the work of the emperor Antonius... In several places we saw strange antique figures of men, carved in the natural rock, and in bigness equal to the life.

What Maundrell discovered when he and a few companions explored that path is today on the UNESCO Memory of the



Commemorative stelae of Nahr el-Kalb. Image by Onceinawhile used under a CC BY-SA 4.0 license.

World Register. Maundrell had discovered what is perhaps the world's most sustained record of conflict between warring empires.

The earliest plaque told the travellers that an army of Ramses II of Egypt had come here over 3,500 years before them. The army had arrived to establish Egyptian dominion over this area and to define the northern border of Egypt's imperial territories.

Ramses used these great natural walls to boast of his conquests in many wars. By doing so he set the tone for a series of plaques that would tell the story of war for the rest of the historical record, down to very recent times. Century after century, armies will march through this area, pausing to get their engineers to cut into the cliffs a record of their passing, marking their ephemeral victories.

Twenty-five centuries after Ramses, Esarhaddon, king of the powerful Assyrian Empire, will march through here as conqueror in the 7th century. In that same century, Nebuchadnezzar, king of the newly victorious Babylonian Empire, already the conqueror of both Assyria and Egypt, is returning north through this pass to his imperial city of Babylon. He is so proud of his conquests that he places his plaque on the north side of the river opposite that of Ramses, sending the clear message that he has humbled the power of Egypt.

On and on the plaques go, each in its own stage of surviving the ravages of time and weather.

In 1861, Napoleon III and his French regiments cross this bridge to intervene in the Lebanese civil war, once again instructing his engineers to record the event.

In 1918, in their final drive to end the Ottoman Empire, British and French armies mark their triumphant passage on the walls of the pass.

A plaque tells us that in 1919 the British Desert Corps have taken Damascus, Homs and Aleppo. In 1941 troops of the Free French tell us in stone that they have liberated Damascus from the forces of Vichy France, marking their victory on these ancient cliffs.

There are others but that must suffice. Why tell this story? The simple answer is that it is once again the month of November, and our thoughts turn to memories of war. Those memories of war are not of war's triumphs, as those ancient plaques of Nahr el-Kalb were originally intended to express. Our thoughts are of the futility of war, of its cost and of its terrible sadness.

The English poet Wilfred Owen wrote of what he termed "the pity of war." In a memorable poem, written after a gas attack on the western front, he wrote:

*If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face...
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori. ■*



Postcolonialism, language and resistance

Diocesan Theologian

BY JOHN THATAMANIL

I speak, write and think in English far better than I do in my mother tongue, Malayalam. I cannot formulate abstract ideas — or write articles like this one — in any Indian language. That raises a troubling question: What does it mean for an Indian to speak about “postcolonialism” in the language of the colonizer?

I am not alone. Virtually all Indian postcolonial theorists of whom I am aware not only write their major works in English but speak it with a posh British accent. Why? There’s no mystery. Elite educational institutions in India have histories that can be traced to colonialism. Even my Indian Christian church, the Mar Thoma Church, established, according to tradition, by St. Thomas himself, came under the influence of the Anglican Church Missionary Society. What, then, is the “post” in “postcolonial?” If my speech, my thought and even my faith have been shaped by histories of colonialism, how is resistance possible and what shape can it take? These are hard questions with which folks on the underside of colonialism routinely wrestle.

Perhaps it’s not surprising, then, that postcolonial thinkers prize hybridity — we the colonized are hybrids because we have been compelled to acquire complex identities composed of many strands, my braided English- and Malayalam-speaking

way of being Indian, for example. This inner complexity makes it impossible for me to draw a sharp line between the oppressor and the oppressed; after all, the oppressor lives inside me and partially shapes my own identity.

So what forms can resistance take? Mischief, playfulness, turning tables, knowing the opponent from within and deploying their ideas and idioms against them for the sake of all. Take language. Indian writers of English have proved to be some of the most creative voices in literature in recent decades. Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and many others are writing novels and non-fiction that transform the language, that fold in Indian words and phrases and that deploy regional vernacular to give voice to the experiences of a formerly subjugated people. The Empire writes back.

Meanwhile, postcolonial thinkers writing in a critical key use English to contest taken-for-granted ideas and lifeways. Whether it is Mohandas Gandhi writing in India or Richard Wagemse writing in Canada, new experiences, new stories and new spiritualities are mobilized to contest what colonizers take for granted.

Just two quick examples:

1) First Nations authors like Vine Deloria have long been calling us all to reassess the Western and Christian notion that the sacred is met in time and history alone but not in place and land. Postcolonial writers the world over have played a role in challenging the notion that nature is either reducible to natural resources or a scenic view.

2) First Nations voices and colonized people from many quarters contest Western notions of individualism by appealing to interconnectedness. We are who we are in relation not only to each other but also to our animal kin and our place. We do violence to ourselves and most certainly the colonized when we sever these relational ties long cherished by the Indigenous peoples of these lands.

What role must a colonial institution like the Anglican church in Canada now play? Listen, establish equitable relationships, gratefully receive wisdom when such wisdom is extended and change. Our first obligation is to counter the missionary impulse to speak, to erase and to convert. For centuries, Anglicanism focused on propagating Christian faith, which, of course, meant propagating a specific European version. We worked to erase other identities and spiritualities. The effect was nothing less than soul-deep violence.

The time has now come to turn the tables. We must now practice the hospitality of receiving. Accord others the dignity of acknowledging the power and wisdom of their ways of being and living. Counter erasure with deep listening grounded in abiding relationships. Address material inequities that make equitable relationships difficult if not impossible. Every incremental step along this trajectory will be meaningful. We might even find that we are the ones who have been converted and even saved, saved from an idolatrous form of Christianity so wedded to nation and empire that it has forgotten the way of the lowly Galilean. ■

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CYNTHIA MOE-LOBEDA

PWRDF Refugee Network moves heaven and earth



Photo by Arindam Banerjee/Shutterstock.

BY SUZANNE RUMSEY

Refugee (noun): a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster (Oxford English Dictionary); someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (1951 UN Refugee Convention)

Afghanistan Evacuation Air Traffic Control, August 16, 2021: “Okay, how many people do you think are on your jet?... 800 people on your jet? Holy f---, holy cow.”

Where and what is your heaven on earth? Likely, it would involve a place, a place you call home, a place of family and community, work and leisure, a place made up of the things that define who you are. Imagine for a moment that you have become a refugee, defined by loss of place, home, community and possibly even family. You have been forced to flee and are now faced with the daunting task of moving heaven and earth to find safety, shelter, a new place to call home.

In a web summary of its 2020 report *Global Trends: Forced Displacement*

in 2020, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that “[d]espite COVID-related movement restrictions and pleas from the international community for a [global] ceasefire that would facilitate the COVID-19 response, displacement continued to occur – and to grow. As a result, above one per cent of the world’s population — or 1 in 95 people — is now forcibly displaced. This compares with 1 in 159 in 2010.”

Despite the growing numbers of those seeking asylum, the UNHCR also reported that “only 34,400 refugees were resettled to third countries in 2020... This compares to 107,800 the year before and marks a dramatic 60 per cent decline — at a time when 1.4 million refugees are estimated to be in need of resettlement.”

In mid-August, 640 Afghans crowded onto a U.S. Air Force CF-18 in a desperate attempt to find safety in another country. It was five times the plane’s passenger capacity. The image flooding news broadcasts and social media feeds was a searing definition of moving heaven and earth.

Here in Canada, there is a small group of Anglicans who, in less dramatic but no less committed ways, go about

the work of moving heaven and earth to bring to Canada those who have lost their heaven on earth. They are the refugee coordinators for the 15 dioceses that hold private sponsorship agreements with the federal government’s Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada ministry. Some of them are lay people, others ordained; some are paid, others are volunteers. PWRDF provides modest networking and advocacy support to this group known as the PWRDF Refugee Network. Since COVID-19 hit, the group has gathered regularly on Zoom to check in, to offer mutual support and mentoring and to strategize.

In the Diocese of British Columbia, the refugee coordinator is Tony Davis while Kimme Russell is on leave. Since 2015, parishes and families have welcomed 333 refugees to the diocese, 12 in 2021.

When representatives of the refugee network gathered in July to discuss what key messages they would like to share with Anglicans in Canada, they talked about the enormous global need for refugee sponsorship, a need they are confronted with on a daily basis in the form of appeals for asylum. As Jane Townshend of the Diocese of Huron noted, “During COVID, three or four parishes in my diocese have come forward to say they would like to consider sponsoring a refugee family. I have a waiting list of 300 refugee cases looking for a sponsor.”

The refugee coordinators also spoke about the complexity of the needs of those seeking asylum. No two cases are alike. This is compounded by a labyrinthine and painfully slow sponsorship process. “What is discouraging is the three-year wait that can be soul destroying for family members and individuals overseas,” said Davis.

Yet this moving heaven and earth, this welcoming the stranger, can be transformative for refugees and sponsors alike. “It is an opportunity to encounter ‘the other,’” explained the Rev. Scott McLeod, who coordinates refugee

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Statement on the Lytton fire



St. Mary and St. Paul Anglican Church, located on Lytton First Nation land, was totally destroyed in the fire.

**BY ARCHBISHOP LYNNE MCNAUGHTON,
SEPTEMBER 24**

On June 30, 2021, a devastating fire rushed through Lytton, Lytton First Nation and the surrounding area. From the moment news came of this traumatic event, the Territory of the People's local priests, wardens and members of the Lytton parishes were on the front line, helping neighbours. The parish hall at All Saints Church, Shulus, near Merritt stayed opened 24 hours a day to provide a gathering place for families and a place to get a meal. Discretionary funds from Territory parishes, the wider church and an emergency grant of \$5,000 from PWRDF have been disbursed to ensure the Anglican community responds to the needs of people we hear about or to those who have asked for help. This includes cash for gas, food, meals in restaurants, furnishings and rent. Offering rides to people without vehicles and transporting

furniture has also become an important part of the ministry.

The fire forced people to scatter in all directions to Merritt, Kamloops, Chilliwack, Abbotsford and other communities. More than 1,200 people took refuge with family and friends and in hotels, evacuation centres and campgrounds throughout BC. This spreading out has made it hard for people to stay in touch with family and friends. Those who lost their homes have no central place to gather or to learn what is going on back home in the Lytton area. The scattering has challenged the leadership team in the parish and Territory to respond to those in greater need. Lytton parish leadership — despite losing their own homes and all financial and parish records — have been among the scattered and have found creative ways to visit with neighbours and offer support to those who need assistance across the province.

Those left behind in the surrounding area and on the west side of the Fraser River also lost their community. All their central services were located in the village of Lytton. A trip for groceries or to the bank now means a drive of an hour or more. Those without transportation and resources are finding it a challenge to just maintain day-to-day life, and parish leadership continues to provide transportation whenever possible.

Those who didn't lose homes are also feeling the effects of this trauma. "This is our home, and what makes it special is the people," says Pastoral Elder (in training) Ernie Michelle. He wondered, with the Territory interim steering committee, how we can give leadership to ensure that all people affected will be heard and their needs considered as we begin the rebuilding of a new community. The Pastoral Elders have reminded us that the whole community needs our support and friendship. We know that prayer, alongside the practical help we can offer, is vital. The needs of those who lost everything are our priority, but we are aware that people who lost their community are also hurting.

Those in leadership in the village of Lytton and Lytton First Nation have also lost homes and livelihoods, making the long-term planning more challenging. The loss of the town and band offices has made the work of rebuilding and resettling community members a slow process. Provincial and federal responses seem to be slow, adding to a difficult and perplexing response.

Housing in the area was already limited, and now finding homes for more than 1,200 people is extremely difficult. With winter coming, summer temporary homes will not be adequate, emergency funding for hotel rooms is coming to an end and finding suitable rentals is almost impossible. Lytton and Nlaka'pamux people are dispersed and have huge needs. It will take a coordinated effort by many to assist with the rebuilding of their community.

An increased number of COVID-19 cases in the Lytton area this fall has focused the need for stronger restrictions

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Displaced

Clare Attwell is a textile and multimedia artist. Clare created *Displaced*, a hand-painted, hand-dyed print following the “heat dome” in June 2021. The piece is a reflection on the many communities affected by the fires that raged across British Columbia and the Cascadia coast, communities that lived with the tension of having to flee at short notice. Many in those communities were displaced and lost their homes and livelihoods.

In her artist’s statement, Clare asks, “As we taste the chaos of complex systems

reaching tipping points, will humanity on a global scale begin to urgently seek out ways to live in right relationship with Earth?”

When she is not working on her own art, Clare works as a community artist, using the arts in imaginative ways to help community groups explore complex issues such as cultural and spiritual identity, including community visioning. Clare is especially interested in exploring what makes complex systems functional and, in particular, how they relate to organizations and social systems.

Clare has been the artist in residence at Broad View United, Victoria, since 2014. ■



Statement on the Lytton fire

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on people in the area. This has also posed a problem for those who have been displaced and are looking for housing and employment. It has also added to the challenges of responding.

We continue a ministry of presence, listening and giving help where we can, no questions asked. More often than not, we hear from people, “We are okay now but we will need help to find housing soon” or “Can you help my friend, family or neighbour who has greater needs than me?” We are aware that many do not have access to a phone to communicate with the wider community, and local folks are doing their best to help connect people with family, friends, potential landlords, the bank and employment.

From the experiences of the 2017, 2018 and 2019 fires, we learned that it is not long before funds from the

Red Cross and other organizations run out. The Territory was most effective in supporting people’s longer-term needs. With this knowledge, the administration committee at its September 23 meeting approved a mandate setting up a Lytton Fire Fund committee. The committee will be made up of local people who know the community and local partners and will together disburse funds in a fair, open and transparent process. Please pray for this special group of people who, despite great personal hardship, are willing to reach out to all who need help at this time.

As this update is being written, the people of Lytton and the surrounding area have not been allowed back into the community due to unsafe conditions. The Territory received news from the insurance adjustor that St. Barnabas Anglican Church, parish hall and rectory remain standing with surprisingly minor damage to the outside. It appears that as one of the few buildings left in the community, it will become an important gathering place for the community.

Sadly, the historical St. Mary and St. Paul Church, located on Lytton First Nation land and known locally as the Cathedral of the Nlaka’pamux, was totally destroyed. A great many artifacts and a piece of Anglican Church history were lost in the fire.

We are grateful for those who have donated to support ministry to those affected by the Lytton fire. We were blessed to have funds come immediately from General Synod, dioceses across the country, the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Province of BCY Synod and many other individuals and organizations. We thank you for the trust you have placed in us to continue the ministry in this fragile area of our church. We are grateful to PWRDF, who immediately sent us \$5,000 through their In-Canada Emergency Response program. We continue to work with them to develop a plan for the other funds (approximately \$45,000) that have been raised. We are confident that the Lytton Fire Fund committee will give appropriate ongoing support to the people who need it.

K^wuk^wsteyp

Thank you! ■

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FROM JANUARY 2022 THE DIOCESAN POST WILL BE FULLY DIGITAL.



A strong call to service

My Journey

BY MARION EDMONDSON

What made you decide to pursue the role of deacon?

I cannot really say that I decided. I had a strong call to service in the church, and I realized that the call was to the community first. I was torn between working with the local soup kitchen and working with seniors.

How do you see the role of deacon within the church?

The deacon is the liaison between the community and the local church. The

deacon is a prophet who has to bring the needs of the community to the attention of the church. Often that is not something the congregation wants to hear!

What have been your posting highlights so far?

I did an internship in Port Alberni. That is a joint Anglican-Lutheran parish led by Brenda Nestegaard-Paul. It was interesting to see the similarities and differences in the different liturgies. I also had some wonderful mentoring from Brenda, lessons that will always be with me.

What studies have you done and what route did you take for your studies?

A few years ago, Bishop Logan recommended I take some theology courses. I enrolled with Thorneloe University and just finished the requirements for my Diploma in Theology in May of this year. I also completed the Education for Ministry program in 2020. I have since enrolled with Vancouver School of Theology to embark on my master's. I am enrolled in the Master of Arts in Theology program, but I may change that to an MDiv later.

What do you see as the greatest challenge in the Anglican church?

I think our biggest challenge is

letting go of tradition (small t). We sometimes cling to it so hard that we lose sight of the big picture, which makes us more inward looking than we should be. If we are busy wrangling over whether we should get rid of pews and use a circle of chairs, that is taking our focus off the things that really matter. Local churches need to be seen as members of the community with the needs of the community at their heart.

Tell us something about your background.

I was born in Calgary. My family moved to Courtenay when I was twelve, so I guess I did most of my growing up in a small town. I went to the University of Victoria and met my husband a few years after graduating. We ended up moving around BC a lot as a result of his job, so I got to see northern BC as well as the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island!

Tell us something interesting or unusual about your life now.

I wish I could point to something really exciting, but I can't. I can only say that a few years ago I decided to learn how to play the piano and work towards a master's. Given that I am a senior, I guess you are just never too old to learn. ■

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What is postcolonialism?

Continued from page 2

Reclaiming Our Spiritual Wholeness: Our Journey to Self-Determination. I commend this film to you as it sparked my imagination and helped me see with fresh eyes and an open heart.

I would also encourage you, if you haven't already, to read *Challenging Racist "British Columbia"* (www.challengeracistbc.ca) and to join in one of our upcoming facilitated sessions (watch the diocesan website for details in the new year). Part of the journey to postcolonialism must include understanding our colonial history and then trusting God to help us imagine and incarnate a new postcolonial way of being. ■

PWRDF Refugee Network

Continued from page 9

sponsorship in the Diocese of Niagara. The professional, cultural and other gifts that refugees bring to Canada, the group noted, are beyond measure. "Resilience," said Townshend, "is a key word when it comes to refugees."

At the same time, they are keenly aware that some refugees arrive in Canada deeply traumatized and in need of large measures of compassion and practical support. This can make for some very challenging sponsorships, said McLeod. "But that does not negate the legitimacy of the refugee sponsorship program, which is legitimate in and of itself."

Indeed, long before the United Nations defined who is a refugee, Jesus'

"The Judgement of the Nations" spelled out clearly what our response needs to be to those who have moved heaven and earth to begin anew in Canada:

"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25: 34b-36, 40)

To learn more about refugee sponsorship in your diocese, please contact Tony Davis at refugeecommittee@bc.anglican.ca. ■

Suzanne Rumsey is the PWRDF public engagement program coordinator.



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