

The *Diocesan Post* becomes *Faith Tides*

BY NAOMI RACZ

The start of a new year seemed as good a time as any to re-launch the *Diocesan Post* under a new name and in a new format. The *Diocesan Post* is now *Faith Tides* and will be published exclusively online, on a web platform developed by the national church. The *Anglican Journal* and *Rupert's Land News* will also be launching their web presence on this platform, which was developed partly in response to the fact that Canadian Heritage will be phasing out funding for printing costs over the next few years.

The decision to be an early adopter of the platform was motivated by the fact that the *Diocesan Post* had already started to transition away from print in 2020 with the introduction of a "digital" version of the newspaper — a PDF version of the paper laid out with three columns, which saw its debut in October 2020. The move to a digital paper was motivated by the September 2020 Synod and election of a new diocesan bishop. Given that the deadlines for the print edition of the paper are five weeks in advance of their publication, the print paper wouldn't have allowed the news of the Synod and election to be shared in a timely manner.

In 2021, the *Diocesan Post* was only published in print three times. The last



The front page of the first issue of the British Columbia Diocesan Post, published in June 1963. Photo by Chance Dixon.

ever print *Diocesan Post* was sent out to readers in December 2021. Catherine Pate, director of communications for the diocese, commented on the need to move to an online format: "When I started in this position in 2016, we talked about how long it would be before we'd be ready to move the *Post* online. It seemed then like that day was a long way off. But so much has changed, and particularly since 2020, our way of relaying information has turned the digital corner, practically overnight.

"This has been no less true for the church and how we communicate — even

livestreaming our worship services. We know that there are still places in our region where the Internet cannot be counted on, and this impacts a smaller and smaller, but no-less important part of our population. However, continuing to absorb the costs associated with printing and mailing copies to our 1,500 subscribers — a number that represents a 50 per cent decrease since the General Synod began requiring "opt-in" subscriptions rather than relying on parish lists — is not faithful financial

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Humility and hope

FROM THE BISHOP'S CHAIR

THE RIGHT REVEREND
ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

“Liminality: A quality of ambiguity and disorientation that occurs in transitory situations and spaces, when a person or group of people is betwixt and between something that has ended, and a new situation not yet begun. During liminal seasons, we occupy space on both sides of a boundary or threshold. We have one foot rooted in something that is not yet over, while the other foot is planted in a thing not yet defined, something not yet ready to begin.” — Susan Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*.

We are living in liminal times. In so many ways, “what was” is passing away and “what will be” has yet to emerge — as church, as society, as children of God. To live in liminal times is often disorienting and anxiety producing. We have a tendency to try and resolve liminality either by trying to go back to what was or rushing our way out of it and, by our will alone, creating the new.

But as our scripture teaches us, God does God's best work with people in liminal space. Moreover, God often asks us to live in liminal space far longer than we would like. When the people followed Moses across the Red Sea, they probably thought they were signing up for maybe a week's journey to the promised land. Nobody had any idea it was a forty-year journey that lay ahead of them.

As we begin 2022, I am aware that the liminality of 2021 has not been resolved. COVID-19 is still with us. We are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to transition to a new way of living — post-colonial and carbon-neutral should be our top priorities — but we are not quite sure what that will look like or how to get there. The anxiety over what the church of the 21st century

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Bishop's Calendar

January

- 6 Provincial House of Bishops (Zoom)
- Ordination of Stephanie Wood, St John the Divine, Victoria (in-person)
- 9 Preaching at St Barnabas, Victoria (in-person)
- 14-16 Trip to Cowichan/Malaspina Region for episcopal meetings (in-person)
- 16 Preaching at St Michael & All Angels, Chemainus (in-person)
- Congregational Development Workshop with St Michael & All Angels, Chemainus
- 19 St Matthias Visioning Workshop (in-person)
- 20 Finance Committee (Zoom)
- 23 Preaching at Parish of Salt Spring (in-person)
- 28 Synod Office Visioning Workshop (in-person)
- 30 Preaching at Parish of Pender and Saturna (in-person)

Diocesan Council – 2022

Jan. 27: Zoom Apr. 28: Zoom
Jun. 29: in-person Oct. 20: in-person
Dec. 15: Zoom

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



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September issue (digital)
August 20
October issue (digital)
September 20
November issue (digital)
October 20
December issue (digital)
November 20

All material is subject to editing.

Subscription Changes

To be notified of the latest issue, subscribe to the diocese's newsletter at www.bc.anglican.ca/ subscribe.

Submissions

News, letters and other articles are welcome. Please limit articles to 500 words and letters to 200 words. Submissions must include name and contact information of the author.

Pictures must be a resolution of 300 DPI and in sharp focus. Clearly and accurately identify the name of all subjects as well as the person who took the picture.

Some costs associated with the production of the Anglican Journal and FAITH TIDES are offset by parish contributions to the diocese. In return, parishioners receive a copy of the Anglican Journal, including FAITH TIDES at no cost. Other subscriptions: \$20/10 issues or \$2/issue. The Anglican Journal and FAITH TIDES do not share subscription lists with outside organizations or businesses.

Volume 56, No 1

Projects across the diocese receive AFC funding

BY NAOMI RACZ

The 2021 fall grant cycle is one of the biggest in the AFC's 64-year history, with close to \$650,000 disbursed in grants and bursaries to 110 applicants. The grant program received a huge boost from the AFC's *Say Yes to Kids!* campaign, which saw \$468,000 in funding disbursed. Seven programs in the Diocese of Islands and Inlets received funding in 2021.

One of those projects is the Revitalization of Indigenous Living Languages program run by Aboriginal Neighbours in partnership with First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC). The program pairs a fluent Indigenous speaker with a non-fluent learner. Before the pandemic, the mentor-apprentice pairs would meet in person, often going out on to the land to create what Aurora Skala, who manages the mentor-apprentice program at FPCC, calls a "linguistic emergent environment."

During a short award ceremony held on Zoom to congratulate the grant recipients, Aurora spoke of how mentor-apprentice pairs have worked together to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. In one instance, an apprentice set up their mentor, who is legally blind, with a voice activated iPhone so that they could continue their language lessons together. Aurora thanked Aboriginal Neighbours for their fundraising on behalf of the FPCC: "Your efforts are very much

appreciated and going to very deserving individuals, so thank you."

Ruth D'Hollander also spoke on behalf of Aboriginal Neighbours about the importance of this funding and what it symbolizes: "While the money is really important, the caring, the concern, the genuine appreciation of the need for language revitalization goes along with it. It's not just the money, it's the thought and gesture of reconciliation that counts for so much. It is so important to use the Elders in the communities, their lifespan is short and they're dying. That urgency has shown through, and we really appreciate the continuity that the Anglican Foundation has provided."

Five of the programs that received funding were responses to the *Say Yes to Kids!* request for proposals. Comox Valley Youth (CVY) has been awarded funding during this grant cycle. CVY is a collaboration between St Peter, Comox and St George United Church, Courtenay to provide youth ages 11 to 18 with a space in which to connect and explore faith through the arts, community service and social and ecological justice, as well as connecting to Indigenous neighbours in the church's parishes.

Alison Knowles, who helped put together the application to AFC for St Peter, expressed the church's gratitude for the funding: "We are so grateful to the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and all the parishes and individuals who donated

to it, for the funding of our youth group. The group of youth is getting bigger, and we are all growing as we explore the theme of 'The Ways that God Moves.'"

Christ Church Cathedral has also received a grant to fund an Intercultural Day Camp that will bring together Indigenous and settler children for a week of storytelling, song, dance, games, art, food and outdoor activities. The idea for the camp came out of ongoing conversations between the cathedral and the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations and is intended to sow the seeds of friendship and empathy between the children who attend the camp, as well as addressing a deep longing for reconciliation within the community.

The other projects funded are the pilgrimage program at the University of Victoria's Multifaith Centre, and a pilot project run by the Emmaus Community to offer spiritual direction to kids and youth ages 5 to 15.

In the spring of 2021, two grants were also awarded for infrastructure projects: the painting of St Stephen in the Parish of Central Saanich, which is believed to be the oldest continuously used place of worship in British Columbia, and the replacement of the roof at St John the Baptist, Cobble Hill.

Referring to the latter infrastructure grants during the award celebration, Scott Brubacher, executive director of

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ANGLICAN
FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Behind each grant
is a generous gift.

Thank you to all our donors for making 2021
our most generous year yet.

Reaching out to hospital staff

St Mary, Nanoose Bay sends gift bags to Nanaimo ICU

BY NAOMI RACZ

After hearing reports from two different parishioners of seeing staff break down in tears outside the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, Selinde Krayenhoff, incumbent at St Mary, Nanoose Bay, posed a question to the parish council: “So many of us here have received care and support from those staff in the past. What can we do to show our support now for these overworked, underappreciated staff?”

The parish council decided to put together little bags of goodies with a “bookmark” message. When the idea was run by Marysia, a spiritual health practitioner at the hospital, her response was enthusiastic. “Yes!” she said, “This is exactly what the staff need at this time — a boost, some positive feedback.” Off the top, she thought there might be 25 staff in the unit. But when she checked with the unit manager, the answer was “125.” A tall order!

When the idea was proposed to the parish gathered on a Sunday, the response was similarly enthusiastic. Over \$400 was raised in a couple of days. Mary Holte, the parish council volunteer lead, did the shopping and with three others filled the 125 little treat bags with chocolate, tea, instant coffee, mandarins, cookies

and granola bars. A bookmark threaded through the ribbon that tied the treat bag closed, read:

Many of us at St. Mary's have showed up at your door for medical support and treatment. We are keenly aware of the stress you are under during this pandemic and we're concerned that you haven't heard a balancing voice in these past months. We want to take the opportunity NOW to let you know how much we appreciate your dedication to caring for those with COVID-19 and their families. We realize you put yourselves at risk and that the strain is enormous. To that end, we want to make a little difference and lift the load if even just a tiny, tiny bit. So, we say: THANK YOU. FOR ALL YOU DO. We're praying and rooting for you from the shores of Nanoose Bay. Stay well and know that we notice what you are doing for our friends and family, our community, and our province.

Selinde delivered three big boxes to the hospital and the same day received a message from Kelly McColm, a registered nurse and manager of the ICU: “Marysia kindly delivered the treats from St Mary’s to our critical care teams today. Please accept and share our thanks and gratitude for this. It is a nice morale booster for our teams and we really appreciate this kind gesture. Thank you.”

Marysia also reached out to Selinde by email to acknowledge the impact the gifts had: “I did want to pass along that many health care workers were extremely touched by the gifts from your congregation. I witnessed tears in the eyes of some of the nurses I hand delivered the gifts to. And many were ‘choked up,’ not being able to fully express the words, but saying that it’s been so difficult and that the outpouring of love and knowing that

people in the community are supporting them is so meaningful. Thank you for this generous act of love, care, compassion, grace and kindness.”

Selinde would like to encourage other churches to consider offering a gesture of thanks and gratitude to their local hospital or health clinic and is happy to support and collaborate with other parishes. ■



One of the gift bags assembled by volunteers at St Mary, Nanoose Bay and distributed to health care workers at the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital ICU. Photo by Selinde Krayenhoff.

RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS** RENEWED **PEOPLE**



Kind hearts and busy hands

Dorcas outreach ministry sends much needed items to the Diocese of Caledonia

BY ALICE TRUEMAN

Members and friends of the Anglican Church Women (ACW) met at St John the Baptist Church Hall in Duncan on Tuesday, October 26, 2021, to sort donations and pack boxes for our annual outreach to the Diocese of Caledonia. In accordance with COVID-19 rules, the volunteers were divided into two shifts, the sorters in the morning shift and the packers arriving at noon.

Part of the morning shift left Salt Spring Island on the 6 a.m. ferry and were at work by 7 a.m., the remainder began at 8 a.m. Sets were attached together and donations were sorted into categories, counted and divided into six assortments, each containing a share of sweaters, toques, mitts and gloves, socks, layettes (with baby essentials), other baby items, toys, Joy Bags (containing personal care items), afghans, quilts, new clothing and any other personal household items.

Six packing stations were set up around the hall for Masset, Old Massett, Port



Volunteers Barb Coleman, representative for Cowichan Malaspina; and Katharine Ellis, past treasurer of the diocese's ACW. Photo by Gloria Hockley.

Edward, Vanderhoof, Fort St. James and Fraser Lake. There was an envelope for each station containing a Christmas letter and acknowledgement forms for inside the boxes, and address and return address labels for the outside. The assortments were distributed to these stations ready for the packing crew. The early shift worked so hard and were so efficient that the packing stations were assembled by 10:30 a.m.

The second crew arrived at noon and handled the heavy part of the task. Two husbands (one from Pender Island and the other from Parksville) quickly made up the boxes and then, after they were packed, taped them closed, attached the outside labels and

moved them to the collection point for mailing. The rest of the group packed the boxes tightly, distributing the weight as evenly as possible. This group, too, put in wonderful effort and were finished by mid-afternoon.

The following day, Gail Crawford had her mailing crew deliver the boxes to the post office and she arranged the processing. Fortunately, the boxes were on their way before the bad weather hit. Those being distributed through Vanderhoof arrived at their post office by November 3, followed by those to Port Edward the next day. The ones for Haida Gwaii took longer, but arrived safely. This is record speed for Canada Post.

I want to send special thanks to Gail for the mailing; to Barbara Coleman for unlocking the door for us at 7 a.m. and then staying to work for the rest of the day; to the volunteers who came and worked so hard; to the many, many people who knitted, sewed, crocheted and quilted to provide the donations; and to those who provided yarn for the knitting kits. We need you all to carry out this mission.

Despite this generosity, we were very short of baby sleepers and onesies for the layettes and had none to put in as extras. Because of COVID-19, the usual baby showers, for these and other baby items, could not be held. Please keep in mind during the year to come that these items are very necessary and hard to come by in many of

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Volunteers Carol Shaw, recording secretary; Barb Coleman; and Diane Hutchison, past president of the diocese's ACW. Photo by Gloria Hockley.



Making time to think about place

Diocesan Theologian

BY JOHN THATAMANIL

Come January, we all get to thinking about the passing of time. We look back and look forward like the two-faced god, Janus, after whom the month is fittingly named. Some even wax philosophical about time, only to be frustrated. As Augustine famously put it, “What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not.” I hear you Brother Augustine!

Making matters worse, this year, we are all time addled. For some, time slowed to a crawl during lockdown. We could hardly tell what day it was. Now that we are back to the work and school and church frenzy, we feel sort of like the gym treadmill guy — a common sight gag in comedies — who is pleasantly jogging along until somehow the treadmill wildly accelerates and, finding that there’s no way to stay on, falls flat on his face. Are we really in January already? What happened? Why does 2022 sound like a science fiction year?

This year, I am asking a new question about time: am I too time obsessed? Do Christians think too much about time? To which you might reply: Instead of what? Well, how about place? From the time of creation to the time of Jesus’s coming in Bethlehem to the anticipation of Christ’s return, time is all we think about. To place and land, we hardly grant a second thought.

In much Christian theological imagination, the world as a whole is reduced to playing the role of a stage, a backdrop, for the divine-human drama. God’s saving work in Jesus is only for humans not for birds, animals, and certainly not for lakes, forests, oceans and the Earth itself.

No one has more urgently and insistently put the Christian West’s exclusive time obsession into question than Sioux theologian, Vine Deloria. In his still indispensable and too little read text *God is Red*, Deloria, appealing in part to French philosopher Albert Camus, declares that the Christian West’s failure to take seriously the existence of the world is a kind of madness.

The religious situation today eloquently reflects the American psyche—we create our own reality and we are absolutely free to do so. This condition, however, suggests that there is no reality and that we live in a completely intellectual world where the free choice of the individual determines the values and emotional content of experiences... Reaching into this plate of religious linguini and making an orderly analysis are not as impossible as we might suppose because Camus has properly identified our real choices — history or nature, time or space. While we would like our personal preferences to be realized, if we have any sanity, we must admit that the world outside our perspective has a bit of substance to it and must certainly be constructed on certain principles through which history and nature are related.

“If we have any sanity” — that is the question! Admitting that “the world outside our perspective has a bit of substance to it” has clearly not been a forte of the Christian West. Deloria observes that if we do not recognize that there is a real world outside our heads, then we live in a fantasyland. We can make up our own values (infinite economic growth, for example) without paying attention to the value of and constraints imposed by the material world.

The results of this delusion are predictable. How else to explain the ecological predicament we now face? By

treating nature as an endless reservoir for raw materials but also a vast dumping ground, we have arrived at the brink of species suicide. Deloria insists that we will only escape our predicament if we learn to think history and nature, time and place together.

To change course and save ourselves and a million other imperiled species, we will have to make time to think about place. It won’t do to think about place as an empty grid or geographical coordinates we move through but as the stuff of which we are made. To do that, we will have to remember our true name — Adam, from *adamah*, meaning ground or soil. We are earthlings taken from the earth. Creatures who do not know their true name are, well, not long for the Earth.

So, perhaps this January, we might ask ourselves new questions: How can we learn to wed our thinking about time with our living in place? How might Christian living be transformed if we remembered that, in Jesus, God entered time by taking on flesh and so became an earth-creature, an earthling? We need not only to ponder but also to pray these questions if we are to find our way into a viable planetary future. ■

Projects across the diocese receive AFC funding

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the Anglican Foundation of Canada, commented: “It’s delightful and inspiring to be able to share these stories. Even putting a new roof on a church or painting the exterior, just knowing that it allows safe, meaningful, accessible and welcoming ministry and how important that is for our churches to be open and providing those safe and welcoming spaces to all.”

Faith Tides looks forward to sharing more stories with our readers about these projects as they unfold. ■

FAITH TIDES IS ONLINE. VISIT WWW.FAITHTIDES.CA

ODBC honourees use God-given gifts to serve their parishes

BY NAOMI RACZ

On October 23, 2021, 33 people were invested into the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia. Faith Tides caught up with some of the honourees to find out more about their work within their local parishes and for the church and their communities.

Lynne Downes, St Anne and St Edmund, Parksville

Lynne Downes of Qualicum Beach has been a mentor on the Education for Ministry (EfM) program for the last 14 years, and she is a passionate advocate for theological education.

Lynne was born in South Africa, where she was married and had children. She worked with the Anglican church and ran a nursery school. In a twist of fate, her parish priest was Michael Wimmer, who is now the incumbent at St Michael & All Angels, Chemainus. During apartheid, Lynne woke one morning to see a large dark cloud in the sky, which she later discovered had been due to an attack on a nearby oil rig. Feeling that their family was not safe, the Downes decided to relocate to Canada. They initially lived in Winnipeg, where they attended St Paul Anglican Church, before moving to Cobble Hill, where they attended the now-decommissioned church, St Andrew, Cowichan Station.

While working in Victoria, Lynne began a distance learning course in theology through McGill. This was 1994 and there was no online learning to speak of. Instead, the modules were sent out by post. When she retired, Lynne felt she could put her theological education to good use and so she signed on to be a mentor on the EfM program, which offers a distance learning program of theological education for lay people. The stated aim of EfM is to help participants “encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring



(Left) James “Jim” Moore of St Mary Magdalene, Mayne Island, and (right) Lynne Downes of St Anne and St Edmund, Parksville, wearing their ODBC medals outside the cathedral, following the investiture service.

it into conversation with their experiences of the world.”

Lynne feels that this is very important work. She strongly believes in educating Christians and encouraging them to be thoughtful and reflective. “Theology is never static. I grew up in the shadow of World War II and the world is so divided now. We have to work for peace. When you understand your own faith tradition, then other faith traditions cease to be a threat.”

Lynne feels the students she mentors get a lot from the program. In her time, she’s mentored mostly retirees from a wide range of backgrounds: teachers, nurses, foresters, government workers and an RCMP officer, to name a few. And all were at different places in their faith journey. Lynne describes their experience on the program as an “awakening.” “Suddenly they realize that there is more to their faith than just Sundays. It’s a whole way of living and being. Students always say ‘I wish I’d known this earlier.’”

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PWRDF accepting donations for BC floods

PWRDF is currently accepting donations to support recovery efforts following the flooding that destroyed homes, farms and infrastructure across the lower mainland and Vancouver Island. As of December 1, donors have already contributed more than \$36,000 to the efforts.

Give to PWRDF’s BC Flood Emergency Response by going to www.pwrdf.org/give-today and clicking on BC Flood. You can also donate by phone at 416-822-9083 or leave a voicemail toll-free at 1-866-308-7973 and your call will be returned, or mail your cheque to PWRDF, 80 Hayden St., 3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 3G2. Mark “B.C. Flood” in the memo line.



The epiphanies of life

Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Piano tuners have to hit single notes again and again. However, now and again they play a chord and you realize how infinitely richer a musical chord is than a single note.

Epiphany is like that. In fact, many of the great words of Christian faith — Revelation, Epiphany, Ascension, Resurrection — are much more like chords than single notes. They have all sorts of meaning within them.

Take the word “miracle.” The first thing we think of is Jesus healing, and so he did, wonderfully. But look what a great poet, Walt Whitman, can do with the term “miracle.”

*As to me, I know nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan
or wade with naked feet along the beach,
Or stand under the trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with anyone I love,
Or look at strangers
Or animals feeding in the field,
Or birds...
Or the wonder of the sundown,
Or stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite delicate curve
of the new moon in spring.
These with the rest, one and all
Are to me miracles.*

For Christians, Epiphany refers to the Magi coming from afar to worship Jesus. Through them we think of Jesus as being

shown to the whole world. That's what the Greek word epi-phaino means — to shine upon, to reveal.

But we need to remember that you and I are given epiphanies in countless ways if only our eyes are open to see them. We see something as we have never seen it before! That's an epiphany. Here are two moments when I saw something that will stay forever with me.

I had been involved with a provincial conference of teachers in the Chateau Lake Louise. I had intended to drive back to Calgary that evening, but the weather closed in, and I had to stay overnight. The next morning as I drove slowly out of the hotel parking, dawn was just breaking over a frozen Lake Louise. The winter ice huts that are built on it each year glittered in the darkness.

I was near the end of the hill that goes down to the Trans-Canada Highway when I decided to see what was among the bundle of tapes I had in the car. One happened to be Fauré's Requiem.

The final movement of that beautiful requiem is called *In Paradisum*. It imagines the music of the souls in paradise. It came to me in that dawn light with unusual power. I realized that the real power of that moment was that I was not only listening to a requiem. I was actually driving through a world which was itself a kind of requiem, held in the iron grip of winter. That morning remains in my memory as an epiphany.

Another such moment: I am leaving a city hospital. It is raining as I turn out of the parking lot. Ahead of me, I see her crossing. She is walking slowly because there are now more years than there used to be. She is dressed neatly because she knows that these things are important to someone else. She has ample reason to become careless in these things, but she hasn't allowed that to happen.

She has been coming here for a long time. She will go down familiar corridors and take familiar elevators. When the two of them meet they will not say a great deal. This does not mean — as we say these days — that they are not

communicating. They have shared a long past, and much now flows silently from all their shared experience. There have been three children, now adults; there has been another country; a war; much happiness; no great wealth but much contentment; and a sickness that first came intermittently and is now permanent.

If I passed here later in the evening, I would probably see her leaving. If I hailed her — because I know her — she would probably smile, laugh even, such is her nature. She would laugh even more if I were to say to her that her story embodies that often-misused phrase “great lovers.” Theirs is a loving, both of life and of one another, that possesses great resilience and faithfulness. How often greatness and nobility stand in the rain waiting for the traffic to go by.

I can't help thinking of that magnificent statement of Saint Paul: “Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” For me, that is an epiphany. ■

Humility and hope

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should be like is still with us and there are no clear answers or “solutions.”

But I remain firm in the faith that God does God's best work with people in liminal space. I believe that this liminal space, as uncomfortable as it may be, is a holy place that is full of potential.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as your bishop this past year. As we begin 2022, I look forward to coming to know the people of this diocese, to meeting those I have not yet met and to going deeper with those I am only just beginning to know. We have much to learn, much to discern and much with which to wrestle. May we discern the voice of God and the tremendous potential and promise of our time. May we begin 2022 full of humility and hope. ■

A call to realign Christianity with Christ the revolutionary

Book Review

BY NAOMI RACZ

The Rebel Christ by Michael Coren. Toronto, Dundurn Press, 2021.

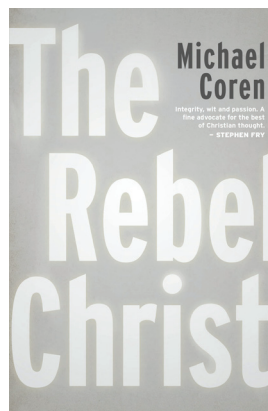
The Rebel Christ is the latest book from long-time writer and broadcaster Michael Coren, who was ordained a priest in the Anglican church in October 2021. As Coren outlines in the introduction to the book, up until 2013, he was an orthodox Roman Catholic who openly opposed reproductive rights for women and equal marriage. However, some years ago he began to question his stance on these issues and ultimately, as he writes in *The Rebel Christ*, “I changed.”

In the introduction, Coren poses the question that forms the starting point for his book: “Why is it that the purest, most supremely liberating philosophy and theology in all of history is now seen by so many people around the world as an intolerant, legalistic, and even irrelevant religion embraced only by the gullible, the foolish, and the judgmental?” After all, Coren points out, “Christ... says not a word about... abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, pornography, or the so-called traditional family, but demands justice, forgiveness, equality, care for the poor and for the marginalized and for strangers, and compassion even for enemies...”

In the next chapters, Coren tackles the ever-increasing alignment of Christianity and right-wing politics in North America. He then goes on to argue that Christianity and Christ’s message are, at their core, socialistic; before looking at the biblical justifications, or lack thereof, for homophobia and the pro-life movement. Throughout, he refers

to Jesus as “the rebel Christ” and though Coren doesn’t elaborate on this moniker, his message is clear: Jesus was a revolutionary and his message of love is still just as radical today as it was when it was delivered two thousand years ago, and just as urgent.

Coren asks, who was Jesus? He was “a gentle rabbi” who sang a “grand, sweeping poem of love, peace, justice, grace, forgiveness, hope, equality, revolution, understanding, and change.” Values that are, Coren argues, at odds with the version of Christianity proclaimed by the Christian right in North America and the politicians, such as Donald Trump, that they endorse. This version of Christianity has coalesced around the key issues of religious freedom, gun rights, resisting LGBTQ rights and objection to abortion.



An exclusive focus on individual rights stands in opposition to Jesus’s emphasis on compassion and the collective. Coren quotes numerous sections of the Bible that showcase this: “...go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;” “...just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me;” “For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” And so on and so forth. Coren argues that these passages and numerous others like them are a call for economic justice and not just individual charity.

Coren also quotes the story of Jesus and the woman taken in adultery. It is a story that conveys not only the importance of not judging others, but the need to embrace

those who are marginalized: “the refugee, the asylum seeker, the trans person, the street kid, the drug user, the sex worker, the slum dweller...” Yet conservatives are anti-immigration and strong supporters of the military and wars that create asylum seekers, and take a firm stance on “law and order.”

However, Coren isn’t calling for Christians to align themselves with one political party or the other, as he points out, William Wilberforce was a member of the British Conservative Party and Mr. Rogers was a Republican (an odd pair to mention in conjunction with one another, but both, in their own way, promoted justice and equality). What he is arguing for is “the blistering calls for change and justice that permeate the Jesus story” and the need to follow that story “with humility, always peppering our confidence in the truth with a commitment to empathy and forgiveness.”

Coren then spends two lengthy chapters on LGBTQ rights and abortion and examines the Bible passages often used to support a homophobic and pro-life stance. As Coren points out, there are “a mere five or six mentions of what can loosely be described as homosexuality in the entire Bible... whereas more than 10 percent is devoted to issues of economic inequality, exploitation, and injustice...” Yet, it is seen as a central cause for many conservative Christians.

Coren’s exegesis of those five or six mentions, and of what the Bible has to say about abortion, is lively and engaging — as is the entire book — but one question in particular that Coren poses has stayed in my mind. The question is posed in a section of the book about slavery: “When we read the Gospels, when we study the life, character, and teachings of Jesus, can we envisage someone who would have tolerated slavery, and who would remain silent in the face of racism and human degradation?” Coren answers his own question: “Everything we know about him would make that impossible.” We can unpick the Bible all we want, but the central message is there and clear to see in the life and words of the rebel Christ: love and compassion for “the least of these;” justice and equality for all. ■



God had his hand on me

My Journey

BY DEBORAH RIVET

I was born in Vancouver, and we emigrated to Southern California in 1960. It was an exciting time to live in California: culture crazes, social justice issues and race relations were coming to the forefront of daily life in my childhood. I was raised in the Anglican Church, and when we moved to Huntington Beach we began worshipping at a local Episcopal church. Church was a huge part of our lives.

Everyone, including both my parents and my two sisters, were very involved: the youth group, altar guild, the grounds maintenance and the choir. And my dad built most of the furniture for that little country parish. It was a wonderful time of my life, and it was then that I felt a tug to religious life. But nothing really materialized until I was in my mid-forties.

Meanwhile, our family emigrated back to Canada. We settled in Nanaimo, attending St James Anglican Church. It was there that my call to ordained ministry really bloomed. I had two children, was part-owner of a career college, owned and sold a catering business and owned a dinner theatre in Lethbridge. But through all the unique and exciting business adventures, I was always called back to the spiritual life. Through the twists and turns of growing pains, learning and growing, God had his hand on me.

I attended the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad, Saskatoon and received my Master of Divinity at 52, served as curate at St Peter, Calgary, did a one-year interim ministry at Holy Cross, Calgary, then was called to St Peter, Qualicum where I served as incumbent for over seven years.

After retiring from St Peter, I served for two years at St Christopher and St Aidan, Lake Cowichan. Most recently I have served at St John the Baptist, Cobble Hill as honorary assistant, and I did an eight-month stint as the office administrator. I am grateful to John Steele, the incumbent at St. John the Baptist, for his patience as he helped me upgrade my computer skills and allowed me to offer pulpit supply for him over the last few years.

Recently, I have been enrolled in the clinical pastoral education (CPE) training program through the

Vancouver School of Theology. I did my on-site chaplaincy at the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, and my classroom training was online.

I will also begin an exciting journey with interim ministry, starting with St Philip, Cedar on January 1. I look forward to walking beside them as they search for their new rector. I see interim ministry to be much like CPE. Our job as hospital chaplains is to walk beside the ill and dying, to be a companion with them in their journey, and that's been my experience of interim ministry as well: to assist and support the people to be ready and open to the wonderful things God can do for them as they prepare for their new incumbent.

The most interesting and exciting sermon I ever heard was during the Festival of Homiletics in 2014, at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Bishop Michael Curry preached the most dynamic and rousing sermon I have ever heard. His enthusiastic, "Baptist preacher" style was most engaging, but the shocking moment was when he jumped out of the pulpit and began a song and dance routine. That was a sermon I will never forget!

As I turn 70, I look forward to new and profound experiences as I serve God, God's people and this diocese in interim ministry and serve at Bishop Anna's pleasure wherever I am called. ■

Deborah Rivet is the interim priest-in-charge at St Philip, Cedar in Nanaimo.

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Kind hearts and busy hands

Continued from page 5

the communities in the northern part of the province, so gather what, where, and when you can. All donations of new items are much appreciated, so be assured that they bring smiles to the faces of young and old.

As many of you know, this Dorcas WA/ACW outreach ministry to the Diocese of Caledonia has been active since prior to 1861. The *British Colonist*, in the fall of that year, published an article about the ladies gathering

at Christ Church Cathedral to pack the bales and enjoy tea together. The ministry is named for Dorcas, who is described in The Acts of the Apostles as doing “many good things and many acts of kindness,” which included sewing clothes for the poor. Many Dorcas societies were established in the 1800s to provide clothing to the less fortunate.

Our diocese chose to help the needy in the early missions in Caledonia and has carried on to this day. However, with diminishing numbers of ACW branches and members, it has become harder and

harder to fulfill this ministry, so please do your best. Recruit friends and neighbours, they don’t need to be Anglican to help. Many people are lonely at this time, and Dorcas can give them an opportunity to feel helpful and increase their human contact. All we need are kind hearts and busy hands. ■

Alice Trueman is the Dorcas Secretary. For more information about the Dorcas outreach ministry please contact Alice by email at truemana@telus.net or by phone at 1-250-538-0211.

ODBC honourees use God-given gifts to serve their parishes

Continued from page 7

Since COVID-19, Lynne hasn’t taken on new students, but she continues to meet regularly with three students who have decided not to graduate from the program (the program is four years long, but students only commit to one year at a time). The students have formed a strong bond and they now have less pressure and more freedom to explore topics that interest them. Lynne reflected on this aspect of continuing education and her own experience of distance learning: “I had to write paper after paper, but I never felt pressured to meet deadlines. I was always supported to get out of it what I needed. Sometimes life happens, during that period my mother died, and I had to go back to South Africa.”

When asked how she felt about being awarded the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia, Lynne commented that she was “totally shocked.” Lynne was able to attend the investiture service, along with four guests. During the service, one of Lynne’s guests turned to her and told her, “Don’t forget to enjoy this.” Lynne took that advice to heart. “I tried to be present. I felt the lay people were really being honoured, which I think is quite rare.”

James Moore, St Mary Magdalene, Mayne Island

Although his official title is “rector’s warden,” Jim, as he’s known, is more than happy

to pitch in wherever and whenever his skills can be put to use. He spent 32 years as a teacher, going from teaching art to physical education to math. He has put this experience to use in the parish of St Mary Magdalene, Mayne Island — Jim’s home for the last 16 years — by stepping in to write and deliver sermons when needed.

During the early days of the pandemic, the parish had to scramble to adjust. The parish is small and didn’t have the technical experience to put together a well-produced broadcast — before the pandemic, churchgoers were still singing from hymn books. Jim helped put together an email list of parishioners, including those who have summer homes on the island and attend the church when they are visiting. The weekly service was then sent out to this list.

Then, another stumbling block: Blair Haggart, the rector of the parish of St Mary Magdalene and St Margaret of Scotland on Galiano Island went on leave for two months. Jim knew he could write and deliver some sermons and another parishioner offered to deliver a sermon every few weeks, but they knew they needed help. So, Jim reached out to Penelope Kingham, who at the time was the archdeacon of Haro region. Penelope offered to put together a sermon for St Mary and continued to do so even after her retirement. Sarah Tweedale, incumbent at St Margaret of Scotland, also stepped in to help and invited the parishioners of St Mary to join her Zoom services.

In recent years, Jim has been helping the people’s warden, who manages the cemetery but was no longer able to do physical work.

Jim now digs graves, mostly for cremations, as well as supporting the families, who often come from other areas. Recently he helped support a man from Guatemala whose mother lived on Mayne Island.

When asked how he felt about being awarded the Order of the Diocese of British Columbia, Jim responded, “I don’t like the word ‘award,’ to me it’s about recognition. We are ministers without a collar. We just do what we do, using our God-given gifts and abilities.” However, he admits that it has been an honour and that the Order serves an important function by recognizing people’s work. “When I first heard, I thought it was just something to go through. But when it was my turn to go up, I was struck by the honour of it. It’s good to recognize people, especially those who do a lot and there’s an assumption of, ‘Oh it’s Ron, he always helps out.’ I’ve not done anything special, but some people really go out of their way.”

Another highlight of the investiture service for Jim was that his three children, who are scattered across the country, flew in to attend the service. “It was nice for us to be together again, just the five of us, without spouses and children and extended family.”

Blair Haggart arranged for parishioners to watch the service online at the church. Thinking people might be interested to see it, Jim took his medal to church with him the following Sunday. “But I guess they’d all forgotten by then!” As if he isn’t humble enough. ■



Diocesan council approves stewardship motions and regulations

Leading Edge

BY CATHERINE PATE

This regular column reports on the activities and decisions of the diocesan council, the “synod between synods” of our diocese. The council meets at least five times each year. Meeting minutes are available for download at www.bc.anglican.ca/diocesancommittees/diocesan-council.

With pandemic restrictions still in effect, the November diocesan council meeting was once again held over Zoom.

Transforming Futures

A motion was passed that the Transforming Futures focus over the next two years will be congregational development and implementing the vision at the parish level. This effectively means that the fundraising component of the initiative will be suspended.

Finance

Cost of living increases of 2.0% are being recommended for clergy and lay staff (based on June 2021 Stats Canada report as referenced in canons).

The consolidated trust fund distribution will be higher for the fourth quarter of 2021 and a new rate in 2022. The CTF portfolio manager provided data

on our carbon footprint in our holdings and the funds were well below the CO₂ emissions of the market indices.

Refugee Sponsorship

Diocesan council received a report written by Scale Collaborative after a review of the structural concerns and possibilities for the long-term sustainability of the Refugee Sponsorship Program. This report highlighted some of the challenges in operating a program like ours, and some of the structural constraints that manifest in the yearly rhythms of being a sponsorship agreement holder.

The report recommended reducing the scope of operations to be more appropriately managed within the synod office, and to find a new steady state within the funding restrictions approved by diocesan council in February of 2021. A motion was passed endorsing this recommendation. Synod office staff will begin working on operationalizing this decision and will be advised by Scale how to do this effectively.

Stewardship

After some discussion about the culture of stewardship in the diocese, council approved a new regulation requiring parishes implement an annual stewardship campaign. Synod staff will work on operationalizing this over the coming months. ■

The *Diocesan Post* becomes *Faith Tides*

Continued from cover

or ecological stewardship. Sharing the stories and news of life in our diocese with every corner of our region continues to be a priority for this new digital platform, and as we have in 2021, we'll work with parishes to ensure it reaches everyone who wants to receive it.”

Why *Faith Tides*?

We wanted a name that would reflect the fact that we are a faith-based publication, hence “faith.” And one that would also reflect the unique character of this diocese of islands and inlets and the straits and ocean that are an ever-present part of life here. Also, an ever-present feature of our lives over the last two years: change. Whether that's on a global level through the impacts of the pandemic; on a national level through an awakening to racial injustice and Indigenous genocide; or on a provincial level through the climate emergency that has cost so many lives and livelihoods in BC.

We also want *Faith Tides* to be a space where people of faith and doubt can walk alongside one another, share their stories and grow together. To this end, we will continue to publish stories from across the diocese about the incredible work parishes are doing to further social justice and live out their faith in these islands and inlets, whether that's distributing food, holding space for reconciliation or hosting talks and book groups. We will also create space for reflections and feature articles.

Faith Tides will continue to publish ten issues from September to June. To be notified of the latest issue, subscribe to the diocese's newsletter at www.bc.anglican.ca/subscribe. You can reach the editor at faithtides@bc.anglican.ca. ■



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