

THE DIOCESAN TIMES



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Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island



Photo: The women who attended the conference from the Collieries Parish.

From left: Sharon Wilson, Rev. Dorothy, Debbie Sebastian, Betty Ann Matheson, Mary MacDonald, Lois Sloan, Betty Christoff, Norma Peach and Darlene Mackie.

Sisters in the spirit

Cape Breton Ecumenical Conference for Women

On November 4-6th, the 38th Cape Breton Ecumenical Conference for women was held at the beautiful Inverary Inn in Baddeck. The theme chosen for the conference was "Sisters in the Spirit." Seventy-three Christian women from Cape Breton representing various denominations gathered for a weekend of personal and spiritual enrichment. The weekend consisted of worship, workshops, presentations and social time as we celebrated God's

presence in our midst.

Workshops offered included: Care and Concern for God's Creation, The Work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, Relaxing through Singing, Acrylic Painting for Beginners, Restorative Yoga and Aquasize.

I was honored to be the guest speaker with the opportunity to offer a presentation each day. During the first day the session was entitled "Sensing God- Renew your Spirit" and focused on

the way we experience the sacred through our senses. On day two we engaged in listening to the messages of God in our dreams and we learned a process of Jungian dream interpretation. On the last day since it was it All Saint's Day, the session's focus was on remembering with gratitude all those persons who have inspired us in our beliefs and given us courage to act on what we believe. Through prayer, scripture and a personal ritual involving a guided visualization, a time

to acknowledge the bonds we have with the Saints and the ways they have influenced our faith journey.

Following each session there was time for reflections with questions for each group to ponder and discuss.

Thanks to the volunteers who made this weekend happen. It was wonderfully organized and a meaningful and spirit felt weekend for all those involved.

BY DOROTHY MILLER



Rev. Dorothy Miller
Rector, Collieries Anglican
Parish
Glace Bay, Cape Breton

Answering the call

I was asked if I would be interested in writing about my thoughts on the Diocesan Times (November) article, **CALLING ALL MEN**. One focus was the apparent absence of men in efforts to address and eliminate gender-based violence (GBV), violence against women and girls in particular. Thoughtfully, I agreed to do so.

I taught history, mostly at the Junior High level, for over fifty years. History can teach one a lot about the role of gender e.g. Many Canadian First Nations were matrilineal. Through mothers, descent was passed down – wealth, power and inheritance.

You learn much more about the role of gender from junior high girls and boys. Especially now with matters of gender identity and sexual orientation being openly discussed.

For millennia most male/female roles/behaviours/attitudes have been determined by the culture into which persons were/are born. Included were gender-based roles. Women did this, men that. Alarmingly, there is much about roles concerning which we as individuals and/or societies too infrequently declare, “Wait! Let’s give that the critical eye”: Big boys don’t cry. The bride takes her husband’s name. What?! Female priests?! Practices such as these are ancient. Even though she was pharaoh, a very effective one, Egypt’s Queen Hatshepsut’s official statues and carvings show her wearing the pharaonic beard!

Today, Canadian women and men, in their many roles, – parents, co-workers, churchgoers, etc., live by gender models. Consciously and subconsciously. Not necessarily uniformly.

Recently I had my second appointment with a young, female physician. I regularly derail these visits by chat. I like calling people by their first name and my comfortable chats with her made me want to call her by her first name. I ask all doctors for permission first. Caringly, she said no. Why? Among her female colleagues, especially young females, it is felt that addressing them as Doctor is necessary to establish their legitimacy as doctors, especially with men.

How are cultural practices transmitted? Mimicking is one answer. I once had a student whose voice caught my attention: “What is there about that voice?” Later his Dad came for Parent-Teacher Interviews. In junior high I had walked to school with him! His son unwittingly, copied spoken language as he heard it. No intention on the Dad’s part or his. Just think what else children see and hear, including domestic violence.

Above I have aimed to establish context. All women, men and children live and grow in powerful cultural contexts: family, community, and country. That creates within us the very best and the very worst. Violence against women and girls, primarily by

men, is among the very worst. In Canada it is at its worst in Nova Scotia.

I will not repeat the grim details of the November article. Rather, I shall offer examples of positive action and change that show that our culture need not be static. When it comes to gender-based roles, women, men and youth are integral to change. In the case of GVB, men especially are called to advocate for change. But change can take decades. And not everyone buys into change.

In my 78 years: With both parents working young dads, in many families, have taken a far greater role in parenting and “domestic management”. They bring sharing and relief to their partners and much added joy to them and the children in their lives, publically and in private; hugging, kissing, comforting the crying boy who fell off his bike. Children are more exposed to male lifestyles fashioned by love, respect, and responsibility.

Canada, including Nova Scotia, has done much for the acceptance and integration of diverse personal identities and relationships. Expansion of the original LGBTQ acronym indicates, I feel, that a majority is open to the re-examination of our social cultures, to the point of enshrining change both in law and in personal practice.

The young are finding voices: Pink Shirt Day, Outfest queer theatre festival. Transgender

youth lead public discussion. Trafficked young women are speaking out. Critically, the not as young have opened their ears and hearts to these voices, providing platforms upon which they may express their views.

Proactive leaders in Indigenous, African Canadian, and cultural heritage communities, and marginalized groups such sex workers, of their own accord and with help from the public media, have found the courage to stand up, be counted and define ways forward that can ease the burdens of oppression, racism, poverty, and marginalization. Women especially are victimized under those conditions.

The Avalon Sexual Assault Center, Bryony House, Adsum House: the services provided by these safe havens did not exist in the past. Change through action.

Change does and will occur. As Ecclesiastes states, “For everything there is a season.” We have made progress. When things are extreme, however, such as the level of gender-based violence, change cannot happen soon enough.

JOHN STONE,
DIOCESAN MOTHERS’ UNION
MEMBER



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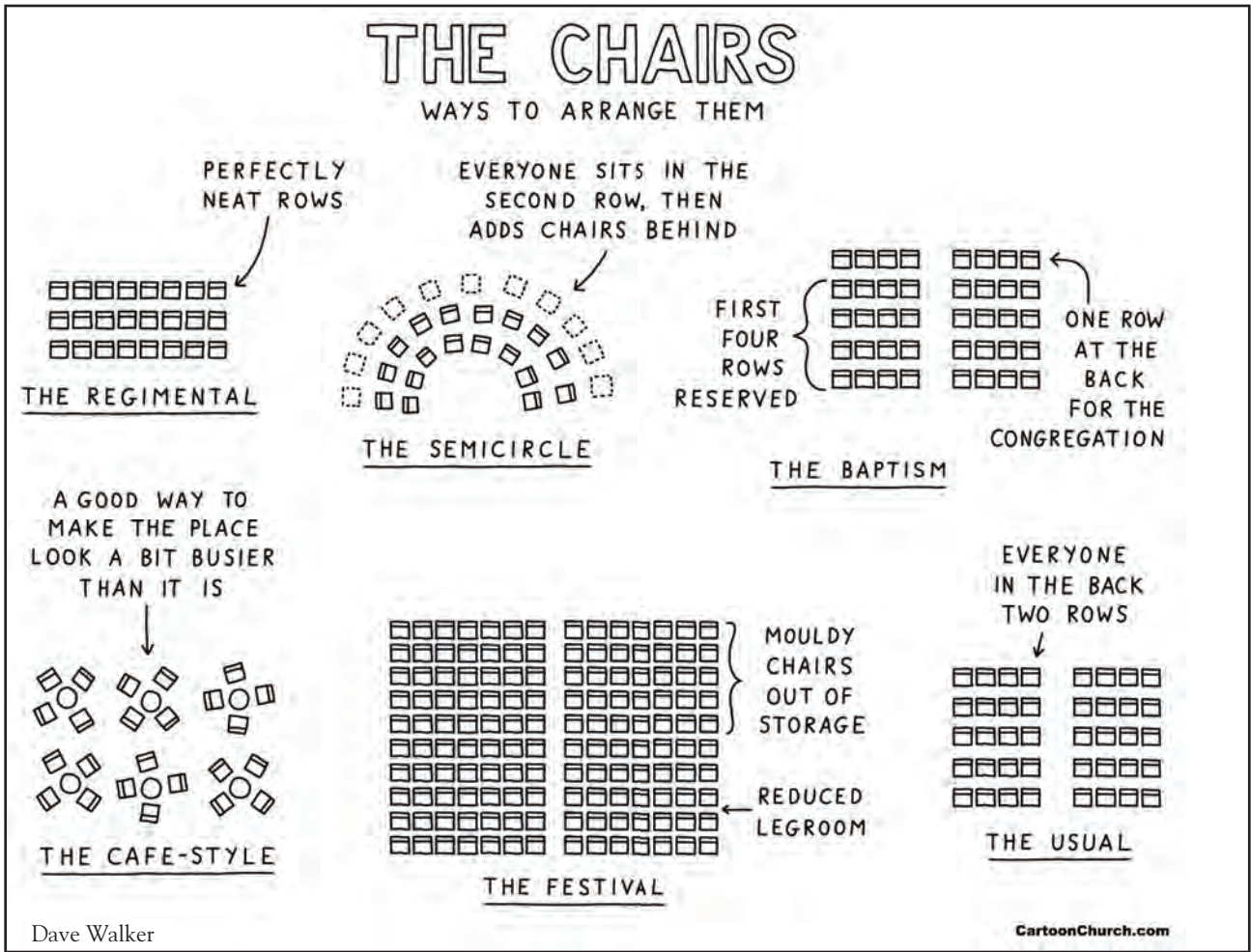
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ARCHDEACON Columnist

Anxiety and Anticipation



Archdeacon Brianna Andrews

BY ARCHDEACON BRIANNA ANDREWS

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began professionals have noted an increased number of those suffering and/or seeking help for their mental health. Many professionals could have anticipated this based upon past research and what we know happens to people who experience a crisis or trauma. As a parish rector I have walked, and continue to walk, with quite a few parishioners and non parishioners alike who have suffered mental health distress to varying degrees. As I talked to a number of these individuals what struck me was that in some cases the thing which was once a source of joy and excitement was now being expressed as a source of anxiety. Perhaps the most familiar example that I can use for illustration is the act of going (in person) to a public worship service.

Our worship services bring us together as a community of faith, strengthening and encouraging us for a week of service and ministry. Often there is fellowship, coffee hour or some other social gathering that takes place around our worship services. There is also the celebration of Holy Eucharist, a sacrament that is central to our tradition in the Anglican Church. These things may have at one time been listed as a “favorite thing about going to church.” During the pandemic and even now these things have been named as a source of fear and anxiety.

There are many reasons why we have been experiencing increased fear and anxiety. The constant media cycle which reports deaths, hospitalizations and virus activity on a regular basis. The lived reality of knowing that people in our communities are dying with no known treatment options available. Daily warnings of hospitals being over capacity and short staffed. We should be concerned about what will happen to ourselves and others should we get sick.

I once heard someone say that if you can change the language you use you can affect your perspective of a certain task. This is an approach that I have taken at times with my own teenagers when they are worried or anxious. Some may have heard of this approach from author and speaker Brené Brown who both writes and speaks about it in her various publications and other media. Rather than saying we are nervous about a school function or big event we try to say that we are excited about that event. Nervous and excited are linked emotions which can illicit similar physical responses in the body. However, mentally our perspective shifts a bit when we change our language from nervous to excited or anxiousness to anticipation.

At the time of writing, we are in the season of Advent. A time when we talk ad nauseum about anticipation. They same could be said as we approach a new calendar year. We look forward to a new year and the promises it holds. For many they would describe their feelings at this time as joyful anticipation. For some though, these same events may be filled with anxiousness. I am not saying that we can cure ourselves of anxiety by changing our language. I am suggesting thought that it may be a helpful and healthy coping mechanism to try and find the excitement in the midst of anxiety. Can you once again get excited about going to weekly worship services? Can we rediscover the joy in gathering together in fellowship and prayer? We have learned a lot throughout the pandemic and continue to learn during this active influenza season. My call to joyful anticipation does not disregard public health directives and good hygiene practices. Rather, it utilizes them as a means by which we can reclaim those moments of joy and anticipation in a safe and healthy way.

If you require more supports to manage your own mental health struggles, please do reach out to a professional or call 1-888-429-8167 in NS or 1-833-553-6983 in PEI.



ALPHA SERIES ONLINE

SHARE THE HOPE YOU HAVE WITH THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE

Alpha creates a space for you to invite someone in your life - whether a friend, family member, or co-worker - to ask questions and explore the hope of Christ, maybe for the first time.

Alpha is a resource congregations use to create a comfortable culture where people are excited to bring their friends for a conversation about life, faith and meaning in a respectful, non-pressured environment. The 8-week series has lasting impact on guests and faith communities, as it nurtures spiritual seekers, encourages discipleship and fosters leaders.

A group of trained, pastorally-sensitive lay leaders and clergy are hosting The Alpha series on Zoom starting January 18th. Each Alpha session includes a time to connect, a short video, and discussion. Ask any question!

If you are longing to nurture faith and energy in your people, encourage them to try Alpha. (Notices and announcements are good, but most effective is a personal invitation.)

This series is hosted by Heart Rock Café, open-minded, open-hearted people from the rock band worship of St. Timothy's, Hatchet Lake, NS. Other facilitators from local Anglican congregations are involved too.

Alpha runs 8 weeks - Wednesdays on Zoom!
Starts January 18 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
(Last chance to join Jan. 25)

Anyone from any background or anywhere may come along.

Have you tried Alpha?
Who will you invite to try Alpha?

SIGN-UP HERE:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/HEARTROCKCAFEALPHA



Getting there, now what?

The scholar finished her several hundred-page dissertations, was successful in her defense, graduated, held the bound copy in her hands, and after all the work, was proud of this singular achievement. However, In the next few weeks she began to experience an unusual emotional low. Having discussed this with others who had her experience she discovered why. It was a natural funk having succeeded in achieving her PhD. She was however now left with the question. "Now what?" The elite athlete had trained his whole life and had been successful in arriving at the peak of his sport. His name was engraved on a trophy that few could boast of. His life achievement as well as his dad's, was accomplished! He had trained his whole life for this moment. At his retirement from professional sports he asked, "Now what." He discovered it was more than a question, but an existential crisis. After three days of climbing, the mountaineer arrived



Bryan Hagerman

at the 18,000-foot summit. It had been a grueling and dangerous climb. He would not know until later that six had died just below him in the same attempt. He came off the mountain with a huge accomplishment under his belt. At the base of the mountain, he was left with a query. "Now what?" The marathon runner finished the 26-mile event. The training leading up to the race was months in the making. She had sacrificed a great deal of time, and energy. Exhausted physically and emotionally

after the race, she wondered, "Now What?" "The recent pandemic has left the world with a Now What moment. We do not know for a certainty what life will be like given the ramifications of such an event. Getting there is what we do in life. We get to work, to the restaurant, to a holiday destination, to a goal or achievement completed. Given the context of what it means to "get there" what comes next looms. Some discover that a huge accomplishment often leads to a temporary depression. Many people look forward to retirement. It is there that they can collect a pension, sit on the sofa, travel the world, pursue other goals that will excite them. That could become old very soon, especially when a thoughtful plan for retirement had not been formulated in the first place. When a major achievement is realized, what happens next may be uncertain. For some the goal was the achievement. Often it is accompanied by a temporary funk. It can

however lead in the pursuit of higher goals. The energy needed to achieve another similar goal may allude. "It was just too much work." Nevertheless, the question is asked; "Now What" One could argue that personal achievements should not be given a higher priority than they deserve. The question "Now What" should be entertained before the goal is set. If a goal is put in perspective, we may discover that unfortunately its value is connected to our personal identity. It could be further argued that who we are is not based on what we do or what we have done. It is based on something much greater. Certainly, achieving a goal can add to our self confidence, to human knowledge, human betterment. So if we pursue a goal, any goal, for the greater good it can achieve, for example, humanity as a whole, then a great and wonderful thing has been achieved. For example, a vaccine created by a team, to aid people with a disease is a great accomplishment. We become victims of an accomplishment

when we do not see the overall greater good, the thing that can benefit many. A runner then who finishes a race, a mountaineer who climbs a peak, an academic who has written a dissertation, can use those accomplishments for others. They can say to the one who wants to accomplish something, "I did it, and you can too with will, perseverance, a strategy, towards a greater purpose. The greater purpose will not be you but seen in those who have benefited from it. But don't make it about yourself. That will create an empty feeling, the What Now question."

Dr Bryan Hagerman RCT
St Paul's Church Outreach
Counsellor
Halifax, NS

For all the Saints (January)

Submitted by Rev. J.K. Morrell

Feast of the Holy Innocents, also called Innocents' Day.

Book of Alternative Services, January 11th ---
Book of Common Prayer, December 28th

Traditionally, the Feast of the Holy Innocents is observed by Western churches on December 28 and in the Eastern churches on December 29. This remembrance was between Christmas and Epiphany, so the Revised Common Lectionary has placed it on January 11th, after the Feast of Epiphany and the Baptism of Jesus.

This is a Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:16-18). Herod the Great was titled "King of the Jews," but he held his throne at the pleasure of

the Roman Emperor. The precariousness of his power made him all the more ruthless in defending it. Thus, when he learned from the Wisemen that Christ, the true king of the Jews, had been born at Bethlehem, Herod wanted to do away with him. But he did not know the exact identity of the child, so he sent his troops to slaughter all the male infants of Bethlehem on the chance that one of the victims would be the Christ-child. Of course, Herod's plan did not work out as an Angel told Joseph in a dream to flee from Bethlehem to Egypt with Mary and their son. There they stayed until Herod died, then it was safe to go back home to Nazareth.

In many ways, the story of the Innocents recounts the biblical story of Pharaoh's attempt to kill the Israelite children in the Book of Exodus. Pharaoh kills the

Hebrew children after his scribes warn him of the impending birth of the threat to his crown (i.e., Moses), but Moses' father and mother are warned in a dream that the child's life is in danger and act to save him.

The slain children around Bethlehem were regarded by the early church as the first martyrs, but it is uncertain when the day was first kept as a saint's day. It may have been celebrated with Epiphany, but by the 5th century it was kept as a separate festival. In Rome it was a day of fasting and mourning. In medieval England children were reminded of the mournfulness of the day by being whipped in bed in the morning; this custom survived into the 17th century.

The day is still observed as a religious feast day throughout the Anglican Communion. The mur-

dered infants never had an opportunity to know Jesus or to confess him in their own right. But they all died for the sake of Christ, and Herod's atrocity sealed the name of Christ on each one of them. The Holy Innocents are therefore considered the prototype of all Christian martyrs.

The Holy Innocents may also be considered the patron saints of our own age. For we live in an age of atrocities, in a time infamous for the slaughter of innocent bystanders who never chose the causes for which they have been made to die. In the past year, we are still startled by the mass shootings in schools mostly in the United States. We pray for the innocent children and parents being systematically killed in Ukraine. We must also remember the children dying of starvation in Somalia and other African Countries.

Canada is not immune to the dying of innocents, for example Aboriginal children in the Residential Schools, murdered young native women, or Jews and Muslims being abused and even killed for their faith, and currently those fighting a deadly respiratory virus in children's hospitals when staff, bed and drugs are at critical levels across Canada.

By celebrating this feast, we perform an office for the Holy Innocents and all other victims of massacre. We become their voice and cry out for God to remember the slaughtered — and to remember them for the sake of Christ, himself the great Innocent who was crucified by "the rulers of that age."

NEWS FROM AWAY

Dear Diocese,

I would like to introduce Dr. Margaret Bateman Ellison, a parishioner at St. Paul's Church Halifax. Margaret has a passion for greening church buildings and I am pleased to say that she recently accepted the position of DEN representative to Net Zero Churches. You can read more about Net Zero Churches below. And please feel free to contact Margaret for more information on energy reduction in our church.

Epiphany blessings,

Rev Marian Lucas-Jefferies

Coordinator, Environment Network, Diocese of NS & PEI

NET ZERO CHURCHES

If you read the Anglican Journal in September you



Photo: Margaret Bateman Ellison

already know a group has been created to erase Anglican churches' 'huge' carbon emissions. The **Net Zero Churches Project** group was formed in January 2022 and their aim is to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from

church buildings to zero.

The first dioceses to join Net Zero Churches were: Montreal, Niagara, Ontario, and New Westminster and other dioceses are considering joining. In October our Diocesan Environmental Network (DEN) committed to participating and **Net Zero Churches** is now truly a coast-to-coast initiative. Hopefully many parishes in our diocese will embrace the initiative as a way to honour the 5th Mark of Mission, "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth."

Mark Gibson, diocese of Montreal, and Sue Carson, diocese of Niagara, both members of the Anglican Church of Canada Creation Matters Working Group, are the co-founders of Net Zero

Churches. By involving volunteer coordinators in each diocese, they are leading the way to addressing carbon emissions. In addition, Net Zero Churches has sought technical guidance from educational institutions and aims to share information gleaned to advise parishes how to reduce carbon emissions. Understanding how to reduce emission of greenhouse gases by addressing type of mechanical systems in facilities and reducing energy consumption are the challenges to be addressed. Participant parishes taking action to create net zero operations will be expected to monitor progress for an extended period. Early findings, according to Gibson, indicate "We are far more polluting than we think." Net Zero Churches aims to advise parishes about options related to location as well as financial

assistance for upgrading. Together there is the potential to reduce creating greenhouse gases. Together we can be good stewards of God's creation.

Questions may be coming to mind:

1. Who should participate?
2. Is it the right thing for my parish to do?
3. How can we find out more about the **Net Churches Project**?

Parishes can learn more by contacting:

Margaret Bateman Ellison, Volunteer Coordinator for Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

briarwoodbob@aol.com

Mark Gibson National Coordinator coordinator@netzero.churches.ca

Changing the narrative

CYNTHIA PILICHOS, ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN DIOCESAN BOARD

Happy New Year! I am writing this column on the eve of the new liturgical year, Advent, but by the time you are reading it, we will be launching the new calendar year of 2023. Advent and Christmas will be behind us and we will be embracing 2023 with the usual sense of hope and anticipation that accompanies each new beginning. May the gifts of the Advent season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, and the light and spirit of the Christmas season not be packed away with the Christmas decorations! Instead, let us embrace the Epiphany season in such a way that we show forth these gifts of the two previous liturgical seasons in all that we do.

We know that the new year is often approached with the ubiquitous New Year's Resolutions that usually involve embracing change of some sort (diet, exercise, sleep, relationships, work and leisure habits, organization, etc.). Would that we could change the reality of gender-based violence (GBV) by adopting some New Year's resolutions that would reduce, even eliminate its pervasiveness. It is a sad reality, however, that the gifts of Advent and Christmas are not the lived reality for those who are victims of gender-based violence and discrimination.

It is all too easy to feel

... You will not always be able to solve all the world's problems at once, but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have, because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own.

Michelle Obama

helpless and overwhelmed when one hears that globally 1 in 3 women will experience gender-based violence of some sort. Learning that there are deep systemic, structural, and cultural roots to GBV may not seem to lessen the feeling of helplessness, but gaining greater knowledge of what fuels GBV does, indeed, help one understand why it is so pervasive. When it comes to perpetrators, it is not a simple matter of a "few bad apples". Gaining a greater appreciation of the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences, coupled with adverse community environments for those who are perpetrators and victims of gender-based violence opens the mind to change the narrative around GBV. It is within our power to increase our awareness of the growing body of knowledge around GBV.

To introduce White Ribbon Sunday (Nov. 20/22) with its pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (Nov. 25 – Dec. 10),

the Anglican Church Women Diocesan Board was invited to co-host with the Canadian Mothers' Union a significant portion of the Mothers' Union virtual Biennial Meeting 2022, dedicated to increasing understanding about the roots of gender-based violence. With the Biennial Meeting 2022 theme, *Hope All Things*, as a backdrop, we were privileged to welcome Sue Bookchin and Dr. Nancy Ross, co-founders of Be the Peace Institute, as presenters and facilitators for an hour and a half session on Nov. 19/22. And, what a privilege it was.

What are some key things we learned on that Saturday afternoon? For starters, the acronym GBV for gender-based violence is an umbrella term for a host of other acronyms: DV (domestic violence), IPV (intimate partner violence), FV (family violence), SV (sexualized violence), SH (sexual harassment), and VAWG (violence against women and girls) to name some of the common terms – there are more! We learned the United Nations definition of GBV and the fact that gender-

based violence can occur in any relationship; however, the predominant victims in domestic violence are women and the predominant perpetrators are men. We looked at statistics and learned of the costs and consequences/repercussions of GBV. It is indeed sobering.

In order to help broaden our understanding of GBV and its structural, systemic roots, we engaged in a poll and discussed our responses. We learned that gender-based violence is much more complex than bad men and weak women. The criminal justice system is not able to successfully address the complexity of GBV. If there is any doubt about this conclusion and the challenge of women leaving an abusive situation, take the time to view the video, *Pathways to Justice*: <https://youtu.be/80hi9LVixw> A pre-alert: the content is difficult. We need to change the narrative around GBV: We need to make room for viewing gender-based violence through a peace building lens where features of safety, belonging, and voice are honoured.

Participants were asked to consider a scenario of an abused woman and in small groups to both comment on how common we felt the description was and, significantly, with the 4th Mark of Mission of the Anglican communion being to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and

reconciliation, how does the scenario inform one's actions and contribution to the bigger picture? This was, and is, a challenge.

Fortunately, Sue and Nancy left participants with a full array of resources for follow-up and further engagement with the complexity of gender-based violence (articles, websites, short films, podcasts, books and the link to the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission). They noted that the Commission Reports and Round Table Discussions specific to gender-based violence are like a master class on the complexities of GBV!

Before we finished our time together, and mindful of the theme, *Hope All Things*, Sue and Nancy offered the following hopeful developments on the GBV horizon: Recent federal and funding announcements regarding gender-based violence and the fact that restorative / transformative approaches to addressing GBV are gaining ground.

You can experience the 90-minute workshop we benefitted from by accessing this link: <https://canadianmothersunion.ca/meeting>

With the theme *Hope All Things* as inspiration, let's resolve in 2023 to change the narrative around gender-based violence as a way to begin to change the trajectory of this scourge.

It's A New Day!

'2023: a new direction for discipleship



By Rev. Canon Lisa G. Vaughn

No surprise. The numbers are gloomy.

Despite Statistics Canada's recent report on religion, there are pathways forward for flourishing church possibilities. Clearly though, for Christian congregational leaders it will require a new emphasis and fresh approach to discipleship.

FIRST, THE NOT-SO-GOOD NEWS

Figures from the 2021 Census related to **religious affiliation** released in late October, show that just over 53% of Canadians identify as Christian. This is down from 67% in 2011 and 77% in 2001. Anglicans have 3.1% of that 2021 share.

Religious affiliation may be defined as having a connection with a particular faith tradition, but not necessarily be considered a 'member', or actively practice spiritual disciplines or regularly attend worship.

Every denomination's numbers were down, with the exception of Orthodox Christians, which may be due to the increasing number of Orthodox immigrants moving to the country.

More than one-third of our nation's population identify as having no religious affiliation. This proportion more than doubled since 2001. Approximately 12.6 million people are what some researchers call religious 'nones.' Some of this may be due to immigration, and also that a growing number of children (age 10 and under) born in Canada have no faith background.

Stats Can's release, 'The Daily' says, "The main reason for

the growth in the population with no religious affiliation is likely related to the fact that many people who reported a religious affiliation in the past now report no religious affiliation."

It is interesting to note that 2.8 million Canadians say they are Christian without claiming a particular denomination. This number, 7.6%, more than doubled from 2011. This could be an indication that a growing number of people still value the faith, but are reluctant to identify with a specific tradition.

Statistics for the Maritimes reflect national trends. In Nova Scotia, with a population of 969,383 in 2021, slightly more than 556,000 people identify as Christian. Those who specifically say they are affiliated with the Anglican Church are just over 73,000. That's about 13% of the province's residents. Religious *nones* in the population are almost 38% and growing. It was 12% in 2001.

Prince Edward Island with 154,331 population in 2021, report just over 5,000 connected with Anglicanism (3.2%). There are almost 102,000 who affiliate as Christians. Some 28% of Islanders identify as having no religious affiliation. Twenty years earlier, only 7% claimed to have none.

For some comparison, our Diocesan Profile prepared in February 2020, reports 21,000 people on our congregational lists for both provinces. These would be our active parishioners who, to some extent, worship, give and serve in various forms of ministry.

NEXT, THE HOPEFUL, GOOD NEWS

Leaps in the numbers of *religious nones* in our communities may mean there is potential for us to offer opportunities to explore Christian spirituality in fresh, relevant ways. Some of those who claim to have no faith tradition may be curious and open to learning and experiencing the holy, especially if they have little or no church background. Our Anglican beliefs and practices may be intriguing and uniquely attractive to some in this demographic.

Our leaders, considering our context and strengths, can host safe spaces for people to dip their toe into spiritual practices, be involved in impactful social justice projects and engage in pertinent educational programs. Keys for us in doing this will be deep humility on our part, highly respectful relationships, and an atmosphere of authenticity and transparency. More people are generally suspicious of institutions these days, especially churches.

Related to the rising number of children born in Canada with no faith affiliation, there can be real possibilities in offering focused ministry with young families. Programs like vacation Bible camps, Messy Church, youth activities, etc., could be of value to those who are spiritually curious.

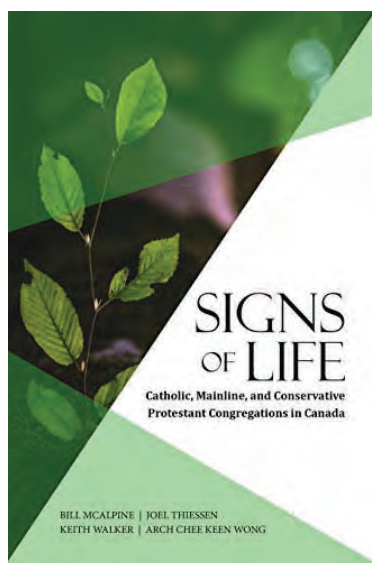
The increasing number of people who say they are Christian and are reluctant to identify with a particular denomination, may indicate that folks are seeking more casual environments for faith engagement. Perhaps some are unfamiliar or lack understanding with our rich Anglican traditions and ancient rituals.

Maybe the place to start is offering environments whereby seekers can safely ask questions and explore the basics of authentic Christianity. This could be things like sessions on how to pray, explore who Jesus is, Bible basics, etc. Additionally our tradition's approach to social issues like Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ2+ inclusion, Indigenous healing and reconciliation, strong marriages, etc. can also pique peoples' interests.

It may also be helpful to host these gatherings in non-church spaces, like a coffee shop, someone's living room, on Zoom or a public park. For some, crossing the threshold of a church door may be just too big of a challenge in the beginning stages of Christian faith exploring.

Discipleship is often defined as being a student or learner in the Christian faith. A more accurate translation of this term is **apprenticeship**. All of us are growing and maturing into the full stature of Christ in our understanding of God, and also in our active serving of the world God loves. How can we open up opportunities for people to discover what it means to be a follower of Christ, a disciple, in the very earliest of stages?

NOW WHAT?



A new book published in 2021 is chock full of promising insights for all Christian denominations in our country. "**Signs of Life: Catholic, Mainline, and Conservative Protestant Congregations in Canada**," names many principles and affirmations for flourishing faith communities today. Written by social scientists, Bill McAlpine, Joel Thiessen, Keith Walker and Arch Chee Keen Wong, the authors outline key practices

and recommendations related to leadership development, organizational structures and processes, engaging laity, radical hospitality, connecting with our neighbours, partnerships and extending invitations.

The text addresses innovation, areas of change and the realities that our congregations will never return to 'normal.'



Rev. Canon Lisa G. Vaughn,
Diocesan Parish Vitality
Coordinator

Signs of Life, rather than asking what is wrong with our churches, takes an appreciative inquiry approach. The researchers, based out of the *Flourishing Congregations Institute* in Calgary, ask questions like, "What is going right and working well?... How... can we build upon our strengths? How can we do our part to make space for more good things to happen? How can we identify the 'thriving virus' (even if in just small things) and see those good things grow and replicate in ways that answer our prayers?"

If you and members of your congregation (or region) are interested in participating in a **BOOK STUDY** with this Canadian text, contact me (lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca). Each chapter has discussion questions and self-assessment exercises.

The authors write, "Like you, we have more questions than answers at this point in time. However, being attentive to the questions and committing to pursuing some answers might be an important trait that distinguishes churches who flourish when COVID-19 is behind us."

Rev. Canon Lisa G. Vaughn is the Diocesan Parish Vitality Coordinator. For additional articles, inspiration and insights on congregational vitality and mission see the Facebook page "Parish Vitality Coordinator – Diocese of NS & PEI", and the Anglican Net News, "Six-Minute Study".

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Permission to Re-introduce the Common Cup

Earlier this month, I notified the clergy of the diocese that parishes now have permission to re-introduce the Common Cup, following a period of consultation and after thorough communication within their respective parishes. The letter sent to clergy can be found by clicking [here](#). Due to staffing shortages, we have not yet had an

opportunity to update the Covid-19 guidelines on the diocesan website as indicated in the letter, but that will happen within the next week. In the meantime, I wanted you to be aware of this update to our Covid-19 protocols. When feasible, I would encourage you to begin consultation and conversation in your parishes about re-introducing the Common Cup. While I do not anticipate that all parishes will choose to do so, it is

nonetheless important to have these conversations. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to our office. Thank you.
– Bishop Sandra

■ Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith resigned as Vocations Coordinator, effective December 31, 2022. At this time, Frances will move into retirement.

■ Mrs. Edith Marshall appointed as Interim Executive Director (half-time), effective December

1, 2022. Edith will be working in the diocesan office in-person for two days per week on alternate weeks and will otherwise work remotely while our Executive Director, the Reverend Ann Turner, is on medical leave. She will monitor the executivedirector@nspeidiocese.ca email account. Edith can be contacted at the above email address or by calling 782-641-1795. Rev. Janet Hatt appointed as priest-in-charge of the

Parish of Hatchet Lake and Terence Bay effective Dec 1st, 2022.

■ Executive Secretary of Synod – Expressions of interest for this position are encouraged. A position description is available upon request. Please email Jana at bishopsoffice@nspeidiocese.ca for more information.

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Survive, thrive, lead: spark joy



BY CATHY LEE CUNNINGHAM,
RECTOR, CHURCH OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD, BEAVER
BANK

This month, when our dear editor, Paul Sherwood, asked us to write our articles with a focus on bring new possibilities and hope for the new year, I began to recall all of the recent conversations I've had with ordained colleagues in ministry, active lay leaders in our parishes, and on Diocesan Council.

One thing that everyone seems to agree on is that we are facing unprecedented, post-pandemic (if we are even in the "post" part of the pandemic yet!) challenges — across the board — in the parishes entrusted to our care. We are collectively tired and under great pressure to find new ways to be Church in the world.

Budget shortfalls. Lack of regular attenders returning to in-person worship. Borrowing from Peter to pay Paul by drawing on funds that we used to hold as untouchable in the past. Parishes are doing it. The Diocese is doing it. And it is not going to sustain us for the long term.

While reactionary solutions to complex existential church challenges may buy us some time in the short term, they will not save us in the long term.

It is God who has the plan for that.

It seems to me that one of the greatest dangers for us as Christians under all of this duress, is that we will lose our joy. And we know that our joy was at the heart of Jesus's final prayer for us the night

before His crucifixion, after he reminds those with Him in the Upper Room that they are called to embrace their mission in a world full of darkness and challenge:

"I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature."

So, perhaps it's time to stop — for a time — worrying about where the money will come from, or if we will survive this time, and start thinking about God's hope for our life as God's children on this planet in peril, which is built on the foundation of the JOY OF JESUS. As we find and center ourselves in that joy, nothing will be impossible for us.

When we start with the hope for joy that Jesus expressed for our life, there is but one conclusion to make:

JESUS WANTS THE MISSION HE ENTRUSTED TO OUR CARE TO SPARK JOY - IN OUR OWN SOULS AND IN THE WORLD

MEET MARIE KONDO

Which brings the chain of my thoughts to a beautiful, joy-filled Japanese woman named Marie Kondo. You have likely heard of her by now. She is a spritely spirit, has written four books on her tidying method (the Kon Mari Method) which have sold millions of copies around the world. And this January, as so many of us look for decluttering and organizing guidance from the experts, she will probably sell thousands more!

At the heart of her decluttering philosophy is one question: Does it spark joy?



Rev. Cathy Lee
Cunningham

In an article written for the Apartment Therapy blog, Nicoletta Richardson went on a mission to find the true meaning of the phrase "spark joy," based on the translation of the original Japanese word:

spark joy, from the Japanese word tokimeku

1. Enjoy [be in] great prosperity; be prosperous; prosper; flourish; thrive; have one's day; be powerful; be influential; be in power.
2. Throb; palpitate; pulsate; pulse; beat fast.

- Nicoletta Richardson, "Tokimeku Means So Much More than 'Spark Joy' in Japanese,"

on the Apartment Therapy Blog, January 9, 2020

As we face the challenges of these times, and try to find a way forward to fulfill the joy of Jesus, to regain our excitement for the mission of the Church, it seems to me

that a little time spent asking the same question of each of our endeavours in the Church, will lead us straight back into the heart of Jesus, straight into the heart of God's will for flourishing in our life together in community, and prosperous in our mission through community, to the world:

- Does it spark joy?
- Does this budget spark joy?
- This strategic plan spark joy?
- This fundraising effort spark joy?
- This gathering spark joy?
- This meeting spark joy?

And this is not to evade the hard work and reflection that we need to do, first. It will be our undoing if we try to blaze past the grief and pain of what we have lost and try to get straight to the joy in a hurry. Jesus's joy was made complete on the other side of the brutal last days and hours of His earthly life.

To quote our beloved David Reid,

"It's Friday, but Sunday's a comin'!"

THE KON MARI METHOD In her book entitled, Spark Joy: An illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up, Marie Kondo begins the section on her Six Rules of Tidying, with these words:

"The tidying process you are about to embark on is not about decluttering your house or making it look neat on the spur of the moment for visitors. Rather, you are about to tidy up in a way that will spark joy in your life and change it forever." (p.3)

As a side note, she recommends taking at least

6 months to a year for the process. No rushing! Followed by these Six Rules of Tidying (Spark Joy, pp. 3-8, with my additions after the dashes below):

1. Commit yourself to tidying up - Revisit our Baptismal Covenant, the foundation of our joyful practices for God in the world.
2. Imagine your ideal lifestyle - Imagine your ideal service of God's mission in your life and the parish.
3. Finish discarding first - Go into the grief, name what you need to give gratitude for from the past and let go of, to move into the joy of the future.
4. Tidy by category, not location - Again, revisit the Baptismal Covenant and use our Baptismal Vows as headings for the "tidying" categories.
5. Follow the right order - Jesus gave us His teaching on how to manifest for God in the world: Ask. Believe. Receive. (Read: Mark 11:22-25)
6. Ask yourself if it sparks joy - as Jesus hoped for all of us.

DOES OUR MISSION AND MINISTRY SPARK JOY?

In the parish, the community, the world?

May we all do the hard work that leads us to spark joy and be changed forever.

WATCH MARIE KONDO EXPLAIN "SPARK JOY"

At the Wisdom 2.0 Conference in 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLe9BX71m6M>

READ Spark Joy: An illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up

https://www.amazon.ca/Spark-Joy-Illustrated-Organizing-Tidying/dp/1607749726/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=SPARK+JOY&qid=1670345550&sr=8-1

READ ARTICLE

BY NICOLETTA RICHARDSON

<https://www.apartmenttherapy.com/marie-kondo-tokimeku-spark-joy-translation-266496>

I'll see you back here in the February Issue!

Photo Credit: Jonny Gios, Unsplash

If you need any help, assistance or resource suggestions to move through this time of post (?) pandemic, contact me directly at cathylee@cathyleecunningham.com and find me on social media @vocapeace.

Teach us to pray:

Ring out the old, ring in the new



When our children were 8 and 5, they begged us to let them stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve. It was, after all, not only the turning of the year, but also the turning of the century, when 1999 would roll into 2000. The city organized a special firework display down on the waterfront, and, thankfully, scheduled it for 7 or 8 pm, so families could attend. We parked in downtown Dartmouth and walked down to Alderney Landing. It was a crisp, cold, cloudless night – the kind of winter night when your nose and toes tingle, and your breath hangs for a few seconds in the air. The fireworks, launched from a barge in the harbour, were loud of course, but spectacular

– we were not disappointed. I thought the kids would be tucked out but when we arrived home at 8:30 pm or so, they were ready to keep going! Several board games, snacks, crafts and movies later, they finally began to fade – we have pictures of us waking them up to “see” the clock tick past midnight. Truth be told, that may have been the last time I managed to stay awake to see the new year in!

I guess I've always approached the turning of the year with mixed emotions. While it is essentially just another day on the calendar, it's also symbolic of a new beginning, a fresh start. Oh, I have some regrets for sure, of “things done and left undone”, but on the whole, with a sense of



Rev. Frances Drolet-Smith
Diocesan Representative,
the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

hopefulness.

There's a chapter entitled “Holy Habits of Prayer” in St. Augustine's Prayer Book, that defines prayer as more

than the mere reciting of words – it is a way of life that strengthens, deepens and sustains our longing for the Divine. The pocket size volume includes a form of the Daily Office as well as a selection of prayers, litanies and seasonal devotions.

First published in 1947 by the Order of the Holy Cross, an Anglican monastic community, it's been reprinted and revised several times since. It's emphasis on – and invitation to – establish “holy habits” is one of the reasons it has remained a devotional classic. For instance, the form of Evening Prayers, includes this guiding rubric: “If possible, get your evening prayers said early in the evening. Don't wait until bedtime. That would mean giving the last, tired minutes of the day to God”.

Following the Lord's Prayer, is an invitation to “examine your conscience”, offered along with some gentle prompts:

“Was I lazy in rising? Did I say my prayers? Have I done my work diligently or have I been idle and wasted time? Have I judged my neighbor: given way to unkind feelings?” and so on.

In reflecting on the day past, there comes the freedom to ask forgiveness, to prepare for a fresh start tomorrow. This day's end review offers the possibility of a clean slate, a resolve to begin again. The practice is reminiscent of The Examen, a prayerful reflection on the events of the day to detect God's presence and discern God's direction.

This practice is described by Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. He encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend, to end the Examen with a conversation with Him, asking for forgiveness, for protection, help, and wisdom about the questions and concerns of life, all in the spirit of gratitude.

Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher, theologian, and cultural critic, once wrote “Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.” In a very real way, the Examen is like looking in a rear-view mirror, where, in prayerful reflection, we learn from our missteps and begin to see them as fertile ground for growth, for a sense of God leading us through the things that bring joy and the things that cause us sorrow.

Seems to me that the beginning of a new year is the perfect time to review the one just laid to rest before stepping boldly into the one before us – a holy habit of prayer to strengthen, deepen and sustain us in our longing for the Divine.

REV. FRANCES DROLET-SMITH
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE,
THE ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

Photo by Olga Nayda nsplash



ALL ABOARD for VCM 2023!

Setting Sail! is the theme of our next Vital Church Maritimes conference.

It's time to take stock, climb aboard and pull up the anchor for the adventure of missional ministry in this new season. The winds of change are blowing and congregations are being called to boldly set out in service to our communities.

VCM 2023, set for **April 27 - April 29, 2023**, focuses on spiritual formation and discipleship, as well as present realities and trends for the future. Our keynote speaker is the **Rev.**

Canon Dr. Dawn Davis. She is Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology and Director of Leadership for Ministry Programs, at Huron University College, ON. Dawn is originally from St. Luke's, Dartmouth.

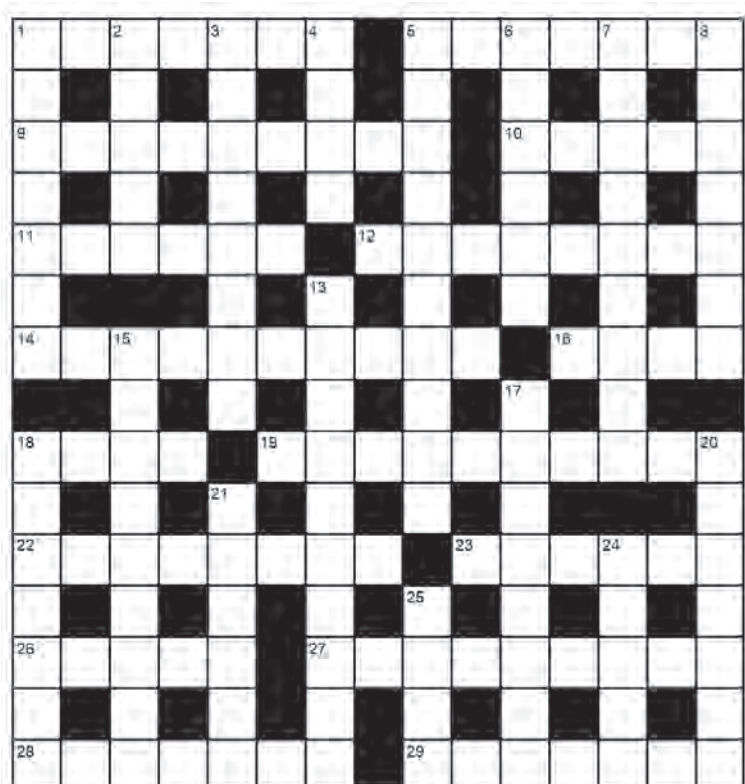
Once again the conference location is the spacious and comfortable **Inn on Prince** hotel in Truro, NS. An **interactive Zoom option** will also be available.

To express your interest in attending, and for more detailed information, visit: www.surveymonkey.com/r/VCM2023



December Bible Crossword

by Maureen Yeats



December Puzzle Answers



JANUARY 2023 Clues

ACROSS:

- 1- "For the Lord himself ... will _____ from heaven." (1Thess. 4:16) come down (7)
- 5- Companion of Paul, recipient of two epistles (7)
- 9- One who sings in a choir (9)
- 10- Songbird (5)
- 11- Small, flat-bottomed rowboat (6)
- 12- Lengthen, stretch out (8)
- 14- Become gradually softer (10)
- 16- Women who live in a convent (4)
- 18- "In a _____ the runners all compete." (1Cor. 9:24) competition (4)
- 19- Easy to use (10)
- 22- Deviating from a straight line (8)
- 23- Device used in an attack, such as a spear (6)
- 26- Boredom (5)
- 27- A medieval royal house of England (9)
- 28- Fell behind (7)
- 29- Dull (7)

DOWN:

- 1- "Solomon _____ to build a temple." (2Chron. 2:1) came to a conclusion (7)
- 2- "He has _____ the mercy promised to our ancestors." (Luke 1:72) displayed (5)
- 3- Feast of the Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles (8)
- 4- Fruit of a certain species of palm tree (4)
- 5- "The voice of the _____ is heard in our land." (Song of Songs 2:12) a songbird (10)
- 6- Pertaining to the sea (6)
- 7- A form of musical notation (9)
- 8- New Englanders (7)
- 13- Brought into agreement (10)
- 15- "Come over to _____ and help us." (Acts 16:9) region of Greece (9)
- 17- Underhand, like a softball pitch (8)
- 18- Clothing (7)
- 20- Sudden burst of ill-temper (7)
- 21- Flat-sided spinning top (6)
- 24- One of the disciples (5)
- 25- Non-metric linear measure (4)

ANGLICAN CHURCH WOMEN BOARD, Diocese of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island

Annual Project 2022/23

All In For Youth!

Let's Send Indigenous Youth to CLAY 2023

High costs of sending Indigenous youth to the **Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth (CLAY) Gatherings** have prevented their attendance in the past.

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MISSION (is) POSSIBLE:

Diocesan Stories of People Responding to God's Call



to engage in missional ministry follows these component basics (below). It is not necessarily a linear process since leaders are listening deeply to where the Spirit is leading and opening up opportunities. The goal is to connect with people who are seeking help, hope and possibly authentic faith community.

Here is a list of *some* of the ministry initiatives The Connectors FOUR

- BTQ2+ people
- Small group discipleship studies
- Exploring green burials for cemetery

Kim Lively, from the Parish of Fall River & Oakfield, says The Connectors FOUR program helped develop her leadership skills for missional ministry.

"I'm so glad I said, 'yes' to attending the Connectors cohort," she said. "I was able to clearly define my spiritual gifts and

the leader at St. Mark's, Halifax.

The next round of the missional leadership cohort, **The Connectors FIVE**, begins in March 2023.

- **Do you sense that God is nudging you to try something new?**
- **To reach out to people who might never come to Sunday morning worship?**
- **To be the hands, feet and heart of Christ to your community?**

COURAGEOUS CONNECTORS CONTINUE

BY REV. CANON LISA G. VAUGHN

Undeniably, ministry is hard these days. Yet despite the challenges participants in our Diocesan missional leadership cohort continue to roll up their sleeves and actively engage their neighbourhoods in word and deed with the Good News.

The Connectors is a peer learning community for laity and clergy who want to explore what mission looks like and how to build bridges with people who are not associated with a faith community. This group of ten eager pioneering-type people, gather monthly over a year for 10, two-day residential and online sessions. Together they foster skills in praying for, recognizing and acting upon missional opportunities.

Kent Gregory, a member of The Connectors THREE and assistant facilitator with The Connectors FOUR, says the cohort greatly broadened his perspective. "Connectors

opened my mind to seeing Church outside the walls of our buildings and being able to bring Christ to those seeking him in their communities and on their terms," he said.

The Connectors FOUR are wrapping up their year with many missional initiatives in the works. They are:

- Loretta Armsworthy Stellarton, ACPC, Pictou Co., NS
- Mary Ellen Finlay St. John's, Wolfville (Horton), NS
- Michael Foley Parish of Port Dufferin, NS
- Pamela Hutchinson Parish of Fall River & Oakfield, NS
- Kim Lively Parish of Fall River & Oakfield, NS
- Valerie Mailman St. James', Kentville, NS
- Robert MacMillan Parish of Blandford, NS
- Melody Rooyakkers Parish of Strait Chedabucto, NS
- Joe Young St. Francis by the Lakes, Lower Sackville, NS

The general approach of prayerfully discerning how

participants are working on:

- Meditation group
- Toddlers Story Programme
- Compline in the Park
- Quilters group to make quilts for youth leaving shelters setting up their own apartments
- Women's retreat
- Food bank/Christmas program
- Driving seniors to medical appointments
- Card making in a local coffee shop
- Praying, talking with people in public parks (unofficial chaplain)
- Composing, publishing Christian music
- Unofficial chaplain to local college students, referrals to local congregations
- Blessing of the Fleet, building relationships with fishing industry workers
- Bicycle ministry, riding around rural community, visiting residents
- Parish affirmation for LG-

understand the missional aspect of my faith as being one sent by God into the world. It provided an environment for intimate and enlightening discussions that deepened my relationship with the Holy Spirit and reignited my joy for all of creation. The bonds of friendship with fellow cohorts will likely be lifelong."

In discernment for ordained ministry, Kent Gregory echoes similar vocational clarity.

"Being a member of a Connectors cohort allowed me to examine my spiritual gifts and then practice those gifts in a safe space so as to be able to use them in missional activities in the greater community," said

Ideal participants are people of prayer, curious learners, willing to push at their growing edges, mentor other leaders and actively innovate in mission. Cohort members commit to participating in all of The Connectors' sessions and an estimated average of three hours per month for study and reflection. Missional initiatives require additional time.

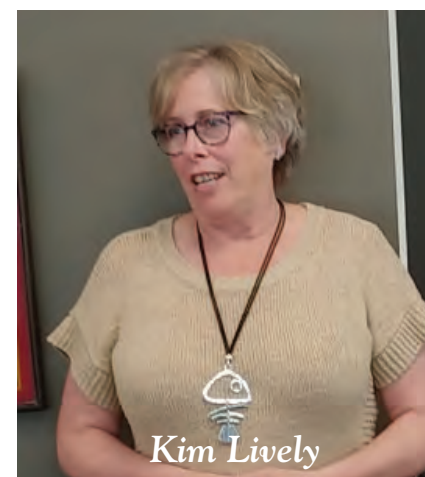
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Joe Young



Valerie Mailman



Kim Lively