# DIOCESAN



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Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

# Take a book, share a book

Southdale Spirit Little Free Library



Pictured from left to right: Monica Ebsary, Judith Evans, Kim Carver, Joyce Baxter and Ethel Nelson holding their favourite books for the LFL. Not in the picture: Melannie Burke

know someone else has read before you, you've joined an invisible community – a community of readers, like yourself, who've pored over the same words, found meaning in the book's contents and possibly even been changed in some way after reading the book.

Books have a way of con-

necting people. You might

think this sentiment ques-

tionable if you've ever spent

time in a traditional library,

mainly because silence is a

standard feature in most of

Even so, when you come

away with a book that you

them.

When Monica L. Ebsary started telling me about the Little Free Library, I couldn't help but be reminded of this community aspect that's intricately woven into books.

Ebsary is the steward of the Southdale Spirit Little Free Library, which is a part of the international non-profit organization Little Free Library, based in St. Paul, Minnesota. You can find registered LFLs (over 200,000 of them) spanned across 128 countries with a total of 400 million books shared.

The Southdale Spirit Little Free Library charter number is #191044 on the international LFL map.

# Southdale Spirit Little Free Library: Origin story

"On September 8, 2024, International Literacy Day, this bright blue three-storey LFL became an addition to our neighborhood on the church property of the Anglican Church of the Holy Spirit [1 Regency Dr., off of Gaston Rd.]," shared Ebsary.

Isolation and loss were inescapable features of the Covid-19 pandemic. "During and after the Covid pandemic, our communities fundamentally changed,"

said Ebsary.

Many individuals within society, including churches, were looking for ways to reconnect, added the Southdale Spirit LFL steward.

"Our parish, the Church of the Holy Spirit, had a tremendous impact for many years with the Helping Hands Food Bank, part of the FeedNS program prior to the pandemic," explained Ebsary. "The parish has also welcomed The Ukrainian Store in our church hall when it was urgently looking for a new location for donations of furniture and household necessities for the influx of refugees coming to N.S. after Russia invaded."

It wasn't long before some parishioners realized that a Little Free Library could also make a positive impact in the neighbourhood. These church members, like many other readers across the globe, are well aware of the joy and power of reading. They also know how books and reading can revitalize connection.

So on September 9, 2024,

a day after the Southdale Spirit LFL was launched, there was a celebration to commemorate the special event. The theme for the day was reading and books (quite naturally), and there were games and prizes catering to all ages.

"A 'Spelling Bee' mascot bumble bee buzzed around," recalled Ebsary. "A Dartmouth firetruck and team joined the opening day, creating awareness of fire safety ... [the] young and young-at-heart asked questions [and] sat in the truck, and fire hats and stickers added to the smiles."

There were donations from the LFL committee in the form of books about first responders.

"Sobeys Penhorn Bakery decorated our cakes beautifully with our logo and colours," added Ebsary.

She called the support they've received from so many people in the wider community "amazing and heartwarming."

## Take a book, share a book

"Take a book. Share a

book" – this is the simple yet powerful philosophy behind LFL.

"Our bookmarks and bookplates reflect the LFL concept," shared Ebsary.

"If you see something you would like to read, take it. When [you've] finished, share it with a friend, bring it back here or leave it in another LFL. If you treasure it, you can keep it! It is up to everyone to keep this Library full of good reads, so please bring books to share when you can."

You'll find all genres at the Southdale Spirit LFL – mystery, suspense, romance, cookbooks, anime, local history and authors, and spiritual, to name some.

"We won two copies of 'Count My Lies' by Sophie Stava," shared Ebsary, adding that Good Morning America, and their GMA Book Club, partners with Little Free Libraries as well.

"We also have won the children's book 'Storyteller Skye: Teachings from my Ojibway Grandfather' arriving soon from Medicine Wheel Publishing."

The Southdale Spirit LFL has a unique design. In addition to its welcoming blue hue, there's a cubby that's positioned at children's height level so little visitors can pick out books easily. There is also accessibility for walkers, wheelchairs and strollers.

The Southdale Spirit LFL committee is made up of an eclectic bunch. Two of the members – Judith Evans and Ethel Nelson – are retired teachers. Another member - Melannie Burke - studied library sciences. Joyce Baxter is a retired nurse, while Kim Carver works at the Woodside Community Centre. There are three grandmothers in the team – Nelson, Baxter and Carver. Monica Ebsary, the LFL Steward, is also known as the 'Spelling Bee'.

An LFL can often be a gateway to more initiatives, per Ebsary. "Opening a LFL can open possibilities anywhere, [in] any neighborhood – from book clubs, author readings, special events for families, teddy bear picnics, etc."

The Southdale Spirit LFL committee along with parish council and church members hope to expand on this neighbourhood placemaking project, according to Ebsary. The goal, this year, is to add an accessible picnic table near the LFL.

The picnic table is "for all to enjoy a cup of coffee with a neighbour, to read a book side by side with a member of the family or enjoy a picnic lunch while picking out a book," shared Ebsary.

The church website www.holyspirithrm.ca contains more information about the project along with donation details for anyone who might be interested.

# Pray as you can

BY HEATHER CARTER
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF
PRAYER

The joy of the Easter season brings about a lighthearted outlook that is matched in our hemisphere by the unfurling of spring foliage, chattering birdsong, colourful kites and the promise of abundance, and we celebrate spring's renewal. After the long discipline of winter, we are unshackled and free.

Easter calls us to immense gratitude for God's gift of an earthly Jesus – "Emmanuel" or "God with us" who frees us from death and shows us how to live; in community; with laughter and tears, service and praise and most of all, dependence on God for guidance and strength.

Throughout the Easter season, we praise and glorify, singing psalms and hymns and rejoicing. And we remember:

God of loving care,

You spread before us the table of life,

And give us the cup of salvation to drink.

Keep us always in the fold of your Son Jesus Christ,

Our Saviour and our shepherd.



Photo by Jonathan Kemper on Unsplash

Prayer over the Gifts,
 Fourth Sunday of Easter,
 Book of Alternative Services

As we emerge from our winter cocoons, we become more active and quiet prayer time may diminish. A sacred word or mantra may be familiar to us as used in meditation or centering prayer, designed to lead us into silence but there is also an active prayer which uses a phrase of six to twelve syllables, taken from scripture, which can become part of our inner landscape. This active prayer is detailed in "Open Mind, Open Heart" written by Fr. Thomas

Keating, Trappist monk and priest, and I paraphrase.

This active prayer is repeated over and over in our daily lives as we remember to pray it. Synchronizing the phrase with our heartbeat gives it weight and intention and over time, it becomes embedded in our subconscious. It becomes a resource in times of uncertainty or stress, creating a pause or space before an automatic response, eventually replacing previous wellworn unhelpful thoughts. After many repetitions, it will arise without effort, "One may wake up saying it or it may accompany one's dreams." Just as old thoughts have taken time to entrench themselves, it may take up to a year for the new phrase to become automatic. It is suggested that one phrase be used rather than several. Examples of active prayer are:

"O God, make haste to help me."

"Open my heart to your love."

"Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

"My Lord and my God."

"Bless the Lord, O my soul."

The active prayer practice is similar to the Jesus

Prayer, sometimes known as Prayer of the Heart, traditionally recited as, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner." This prayer may have originated in the Gospel of Mark with blind Bartimaeus crying to Jesus, "Son of David, have mercy on me." Another possible source is found in the Gospel of Luke when the tax collector humbles himself saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

The Jesus prayer gained popularity with the publication of the book 'The Way of the Pilgrim,' translated from Russian, that narrates the journey of a poor pilgrim endeavouring to live out Saint Paul's instruction to "pray without ceasing" while practising the Jesus Prayer. This prayer, too, leads to an inner silence or spaciousness. Many today shorten this prayer to 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy'. The latter would make it an active prayer as defined by Thomas Keating.

As we are kept in the fold of Jesus Christ, let us rejoice in the Lord and offer repetitive prayer as we create space and silence within, while being active in the world. Alleluia!



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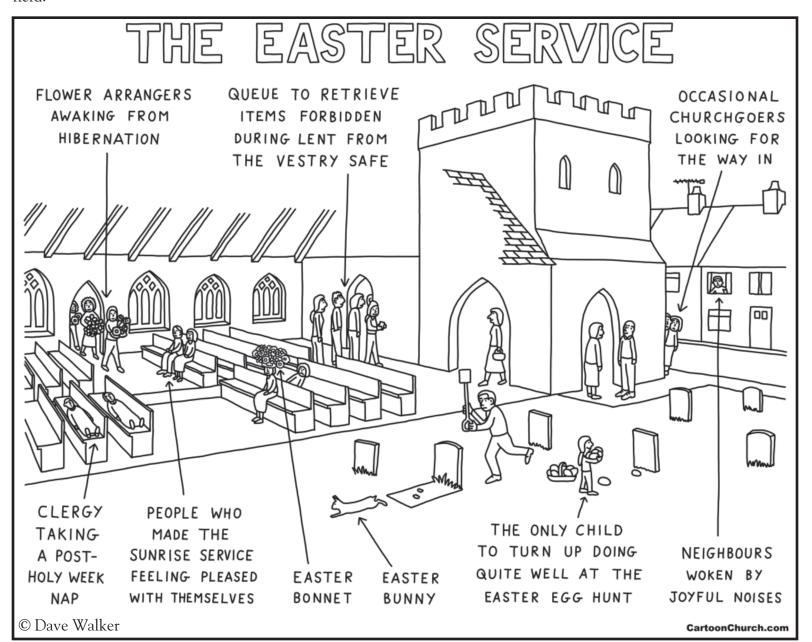
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THE DIOCESAN TIMES - MAY 2025

# Ordination of Blane Finnie and Ruth MacNeil to the Sacred Order of Deacons



The Ordination of Blane Finnie and Ruth MacNeil to the Sacred Order of Deacons took place on Tuesday March 25, on the Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax. *Photos* © *cathedralchurchofallsaintshalifax* on YouTube and Jennifer. A







#### Happy 100th Birthday, Betty

Church of the Holy Spirit in Dartmouth celebrated the 100th birthday of Betty Pitt on Sunday, Feb. 16.

Peter 4:10 – "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

And so she has. She has been an inspiration and encouragement to those around her.

We could say, "Well done faithful servant" but she's not done yet.

Congratulations on this milestone and know that she is loved, above all by Jesus Christ.

Betty was born in Swindon, Wilts, U.K. in 1925. She grew up in a Congregational Church. Betty was a WREN (Women's Royal Naval Service) from February 1944 to September 1946. She came to Canada in 1948 and was confirmed in the Anglican Cathedral



in Calgary.

Betty and Petty Officer (A.A.4) John Pitt were married in Swindon, on September, 24, 1946 and raised four daughters, Margaret, Kate, Evelyne and Vicky. Betty has six grandchildren, three of whom are happily married. Betty became a member of the IODE and held offices at the primary and provincial level. She also became a member of the Mothers' Union in May, 1979, where she served in the branch, diocesan and national levels.

When John retired from the Navy, he entered AST

and was awarded a BTh and was subsequently ordained. He spent much of the next 15 years as a hospital chaplain. John passed away in 1992.

Betty received a Diploma in Theology and Ministry from AST in April 2000. Betty and Ethel Nelson take the Reserved Sacrament to residents in The Berkeley once a month and lead a Service of the Word.

Betty is a longtime member of the Church of the Holy Spirit and is a Licensed Lay Minister. In turn, she reads the lessons and psalms, proclaims the Gospel, prepares Prayers of the People and occasionally preaches a sermon.

To mark her 100th birthday, Betty received a letter from King Charles III. She also received a Certificate from the Lay Ministers Association and a certificate from Bishop Sandra Fyfe.

We are so grateful for her presence among us and wish her many more birthdays.

# Mothers' Union longtime service awards



St. Francis By the Lakes Mothers' Union Group celebrated Mothering Sunday on March 30. Various members read the lessons and took on sidesperson duties. Patricia Rideout gave the homily.

Three members received service awards. Pictured left to right: Elaine Laurie (presenter), Alice Hennigar (50 years service) and Mona Harrod (40 years service).

Not in the picture – Evelyn Perry (40 years service). In the background is Archbishop Ron Cutler.

Do you have photos from your own parish events that you'd like to share with us? Email them to us at diocesantimes@gmail.com along with a small description. We'd be happy to publish them.

# Creating a safe space

BY BRYAN HAGERMAN RCT OUTREACH COUNSELLOR ST PAUL'S CHURCH, HALIFAX WWW.BRYANHAGERMAN.CA

The importance of a human connection upon meeting someone cannot be understated. I understood this importance in Kenya when meeting someone even on a daily basis. Swahili greetings are either Hujambo or Habari. The first is a Bantu phrase, the other is an Arabic word. Hujambo literally is a question meaning, "What's the matter with you?" Habari is translated as "news" or "what is the news?" The answers for each are "sijambo" and "nzuri." These greetings are the dynamic equivalent of "hi" or "hello" in Canada, and will always, in the African context, accompany a handshake.

I realized the importance of these greetings in the staff room of the school where I taught. Shaking everyone's hand when entering the room was of cultural importance. It looked like organized chaos as everyone went around the room making certain to shake everyone's hand. Later if I saw someone on the school compound who had not been in the room, we would go to each other with the greeting, and sometimes, would say, "O, I haven't greeted you yet."

In Canadian society, greeting, saying hello with a handshake or a hug, is also important. Making eye contact, smiling, listen-



Photo by Harli Marten on Unsplash



Bryan Hagerman

ing to the other and taking an interest is a part of our civil society. Words of encouragement, interest, empathy and validation are welcomed. There is also the crucial aspect of letting the other know you are listen-

Beyond the simple greetings that we use daily, how we communicate with others is more than important; it is foundational. We have learned that in the world of diplomacy, civil greetings, warm gestures and commonalities help make it better to begin difficult discussions. But again, beyond the greetings, how do we engage in successful communication generally with people – either through emails, texts, in person, on the phone, zoom or by way of social media?

In many ways, it could be argued that we are not as successful as we once were in communication/conversation. There is a lot we can learn when it comes to engaging the other.

In our busy world, how we treat each other is still important. In a political race to discover a new slate of leaders, the real art of conversation or debate could be overshadowed by misinformation and anger. Even so (and again), how we speak to each other beyond the simple greetings is crucial. No doubt, social media has enabled many

to hide behind technology and to express themselves in uncivil ways. The amount of anger and rudeness found on the internet is astonish-

Three negative forms of communication come to mind. They are passive aggressivity, micro aggression and gossip.

Passive aggression is a negative style of communication – conveying negative feelings indirectly. They may often be difficult to identify and can test relationships generally. Simple examples are avoidance, procrastination, the withholding of critical information, sarcasm, manipulative comments, silence and subtle digs. It could be in a phrase like, "I wish I could afford a car like yours, but unfortunately all my extra cash goes towards my student loans."

Then there is micro aggression. According to Webster's dictionary, this is "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group." Some examples are, "Where are you really from?," "But you don't look [nationality]," "Your English is so good!" and "You speak without an accent."

Gossip is easy to define. It is when we speak about someone we know in a negative fashion when they are not with us.

There are other forms of negative communication like direct rudeness, name-calling, criticism,

defensiveness, dismissal and contempt.

We have all faced some sort of hurtful and negative communication in all or some of the mediums mentioned earlier. These will come from strangers. colleagues, friends and loved ones. All communication, positive and negative, comes from a behaviour formed deeply within the heart. We can change our behaviour to communicate in a Christ-like fashion.

The scriptures affirm a way of being – a behaviour that can enrich communication. For example, the Fruit of the Spirit – this is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. Imagine any or all communication coming out of our hearts to our lips fuelled by this fruit. It would have to begin with an inner spiritual desire – a behavioural change. The nine "fruit" would pass through our inner world into the outer one in a way that would make everyone around us feel safe, comfortable and secure. This fruit would not only enrich our conversations and our way of communicating but it would also help us to positively respond when we are on the receiving end of negative comments, no matter the medium.

Imagine a world, an office, a home, a parish or any place where discourse is bent towards building up, and most of all creating safe spaces. The Holy Spirit has given us the fruit to do so. He will enable us.



#### JUNE RETREAT

Join us for a three-day retreat focused on deepening your prayer life through time-honoured spiritual practices. From June 6 to June 8, we will explore rich traditions such as Benedictine Spirituality, Ignatian Spirituality and the wisdom of Julian of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen.

Through guided meditations, music, water, art, movement and scripture reflection, we will embrace

various approaches to prayer especially the quieter, contemplative disciplines.

Jesus invites us: "Come away with me. Let us go alone to a quiet place and rest for a while." (Mark 6:31)

Hosted on the beautifully landscaped campus of Acadia University in Wolfville, N.S., Pathways to Peace offers an oasis of stillness and spiritual renewal. Designed especially for laity, clergy are warmly welcomed.

(Note: The clergy retreat is June 9 to June 13 in P.E.I.)

#### Retreat Highlights:

Inspiring talks from diverse voices on prayer practices

Creative and engaging approaches to prayer

'Wild Worship' outdoors (weather permitting)

Ample time for silence, reflection, and walking

#### Registration Includes:

Five meals (Friday dinner

to Sunday breakfast)

Two nights' accommodations (private and double rooms available)

Free parking

Retreat program and materials

#### Registration Fees:

\$180 (includes accommodations)

\$110 (for those staying off-site)

Registration closes May 20 Come away to a quiet

place. Slow down, be open to the Spirit and listen.

For details and to register, visit: www.nspeidiocese.ca.

Got questions? E-mail Lisa at missiondirector@ nspeidiocese.ca



# **Empowerment for Hope**

BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR ANGLICANS POWERING POTENTIAL

One experiences spiritual, emotional and psychological "whiplash" with the daily news jolts from south of the Canadian border. This is intensified with the ongoing realization of the impacts on Canada and, indeed, the rest of the world, with what appears to be a dismantling of most of the elements that make for a democratic society, one guided by the rule of law and the upholding of basic civil rights.

We have all heard of the "rags to riches" stories in some form or another, some literal and many figurative. What is taking place south of the border seems to be the reverse: a figurative "riches to rags" display. With all of this daily onslaught, we draw to "good news" stories as though we are grasping a lifeline.

Well, here is one that will inspire you – the story of Halifax resident, Wyndolyn Brown, and the birth of Empowerment for Hope. It is clear that Wyndolyn's story and trajectory to overcome barriers has inspired those involved in news reporting, as Wyndolyn Brown, a certified child and youth care worker, has been the recent subject of a CBC documentary (award winning reporter, Elizabeth Chiu). Also, Wyndolyn was invited to the Nova Scotia Legislature on March 18 by her MLA (NDP) for Halifax-Armdale, Rod Wilson, to be recognized in the Gallery with a standing ovation.

Wyndolyn Brown, the CEO and Founder of Empowerment for Hope, was recognized in 2023 as one of Canada's top 100 Black Women in Excellence for her advocacy of survivors and victims of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking. A survivor herself of the foregoing, as well as having the experience of homelessness in both Halifax and Toronto, Wyndolyn, an African-Canadian from a marginalized Black community, acknowledges that it is her personal experiences that have ignited her passion to "give back" through

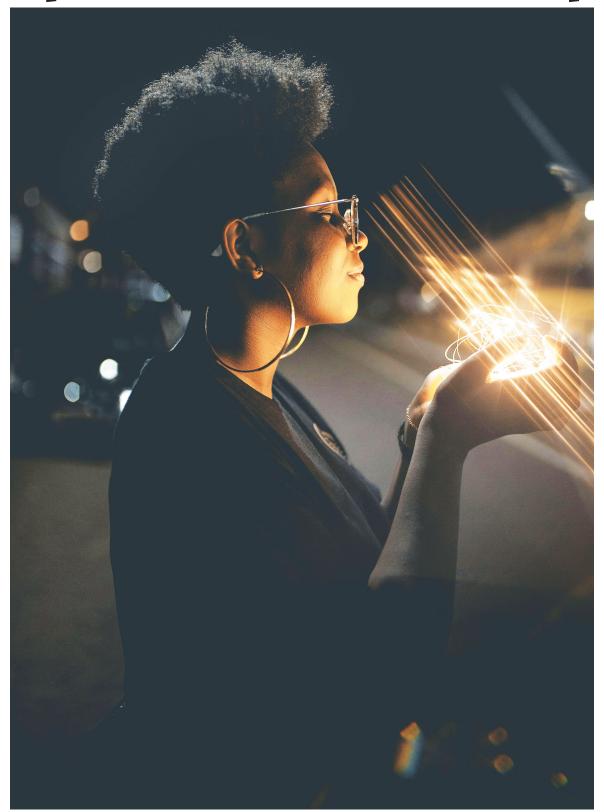


Photo by Guilherme Stecanella on Unsplash

her not-for-profit, Empowerment for Hope (EFH).

It is through EFH that Wyndolyn wants to help families break cycles of violence, abuse and trauma. Wyndolyn knows that breaking the silence that so often accompanies sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, along with increased awareness in the community of these realities. coupled with resources, can be empowering for those who have been victimized. Hence, her Empowerment for Hope.

I am happy to say that the entity, Anglicans Powering Potential, is initiating collaboration with Wyndolyn in support of Empowerment for Hope and APP invites others to come on board. Just send an email to: app. nspeidiocese@gmail.com

And here is the link to a great video of Wyndolyn

and EFH – search for 'She survived domestic violence. Now she's giving hope to others' on Google.

A significant social justice issue marching alongside gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and human trafficking that came to the attention of Anglicans Powering Potential in September 2024 was that of the pervasive misuse of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), the legal silencing of victims of harassment, bullying, abuse, sexual misconduct and related forms of mistreatment. I noted in the April 2025 issue of The Diocesan Times that I had been unaware to that point of the extent of their misuse. Subsequent to that panel discussion that was so revealing, the co-founder of Can't Buy My Silence, Dr. Iulie Macfarlane, reached out to APP about the possibility of the Diocese of N.S. and P.E.I. adopting a Faith Pledge, a joint effort of Can't Buy My Silence and the Daughter Project Canada, the latter's mandate being to help children and youth at risk of sexual exploitation through awareness-raising, prevention and advocacy.

With the foregoing in mind, I had noted in the April 2025 APP column in The Diocesan Times that Anglicans Powering Potential had prepared a Resolution regarding the misuse of NDAs for presentation at our Diocesan Synod 2025. During further discussion with the planners of the Synod, it was agreed that an Endorsement of the Faith Pledge at Synod regarding the misuse of NDAs was a better route, as an endorsement would confirm and reinforce the Diocese's

current practice, which is one of not misusing NDAs: NDAs are not used to cover up sin, silence victims or avoid accountability in N.S. and P.E.I., thankfully.

Faith Pledge: We pledge never to request another party to submit to a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with the goal of stopping them from raising complaints or discussing incidents of sexual harassment, misconduct or abuse, discrimination, retaliation, bullying or other harassment in any instance, including pre-hiring and severance agreements. Therefore, we pledge to continue the practice of the Diocese not to use Non-Disclosure Agreements in settlements so as to cover up sin, silence victims or avoid accountability.

The Can't Buy My Silence campaign is pursuing legislative and regulatory change to make Non-Disclosure Agreements "unenforceable for anything other than their original purpose – the prevention of sharing confidential business information ('intellectual property') and trade secrets." Legislative efforts to ban the misuse of NDAs have been successful in Prince Edward Island, but not yet in Nova Scotia, despite the First Reading (Apr. 7/22) of Bill 144 in the Legislature to regulate the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements. So, with the endorsement at Synod 2025 of the Faith Pledge of Can't Buy My Silence, in collaboration with the Daughter Project Canada, the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island demonstrates its commitment to ensuring justice, respect and dignity for all, according to our baptismal covenant.

Along with the very practical help that Wyndolyn Brown's Empowerment for Hope provides to its beneficiaries, her not-forprofit organization conveys a welcome message of intrinsic value, worth and dignity to everyone it touches. It empowers beneficiaries and offers hope in the midst of challenges. Bravo to Wyndolyn for her vision, confidence and perseverance!

# Our finest gifts



THE REV. MARIAN LUCAS-JEFFERIES, COORDINATOR, DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Dear Diocese,

Be part of "Faith in Motion!"

Is your parish interested in contributing to the local community while having

a positive impact on the environment?

We are off and running and your parish is welcome to join us in this endeavour.

Thanks to Nova Scotia Low Carbon Communities funding, the Diocesan Environmental Network (DEN) is offering this opportunity in partnership with the Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action in N.S. (SCOCANS), Navigate Energy and the Ecology Action Centre.

It is becoming more apparent that people of faith can be leaders in the fight against climate change lo-

cally as well as nationally and internationally. Led by our Diocesan Environment Network, this EV charging station project is not only an ecumenical but also an interfaith effort that can benefit all faiths and the communities we serve.

A significant number of faith buildings, including Anglican church properties throughout the diocese, are uniquely placed to support Nova Scotia's transition to electric vehicles. Installing a charging station in your church parking lot can offer an important service to the local community, providing

electric vehicle charging, strengthening the community's charging network and reducing our carbon footprint.

To provide support to a limited number of parishes, we will be offering:

An information session on the basics of electric vehicle chargers and their installation at places of worship.

Free electrician site assessment and project pricing for up to 30 buildings across N.S.

Access to educational resources to help inform your faith community and others

in the community about the opportunities and benefits of electric vehicle chargers.

Information about financial support that could help make EV charging station installations possible.

Please help us learn about your space by answering a short survey: https://forms.gle/DisoeajtaqbAvmEN9

If you have any questions or want the name of your parish added to the list, contact:

Rupinder Kaur, Navigate Energy Rupinder@navigateenergy.ca

Hannah Minzloff, Ecology Action Centre Hannah-Minzloff.EV@gmail.com

Looking forward to having you join us.







Spiritual Coalition on Climate Action in Nova Scotia

# Empowering Youth in Nova Scotia and P.E.I.



The fifth annual Say Yes! to Kids (SYTK) campaign, led by the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC), is seeing its most participation to date in the Diocese of N.S. and P.E.I., with six teams seeking to raise a total of \$25,000. This remarkable show of commitment reflects the dedication of local churches, many partnering with community agencies, to uplift young people through targeted programming and support services.

SYTK 2025 projects in N.S. and P.E.I. include:

Anglicans Powering Potential (APP) – In partnership with NSTAY (Nova Scotia Transition & Advocacy for Youth), APP aims to support youth who have experienced human trafficking and exploitation. The project focuses on providing safety planning, counsel-

ling, court accompaniment, housing and material assistance for affected youth.

Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax – The Cathedral's 2025 SYTK campaign will support The Youth Project, a longstanding organization dedicated to creating safer spaces and providing resources for 2SL-GBTQIA+ youth under the age of 25. Programs include educational workshops, social support and health and cultural services, along with free summer camps for LGBTQIA+ youth.

Christ Church Amherst – The focus here is the Saturday Supper and Service, a family-centred gathering that combines community fellowship, prayer and a shared meal. Funds will support meal costs and encourage community leadership by offering honoraria.

#### St. Luke's Dartmouth

- This initiative supports Bryony House Shelter, a vital service for women and children escaping violence. The campaign will fund therapeutic play activities and strengthen the shelter's community integration ef-

St. Peter's Anglican Church, Halifax – St. Peter's is launching the Community Roots Camp, a free summer day camp for local children, addressing the high cost of childcare while fostering community connections. The camp will offer nutritious snacks, outdoor activities and structured programming in a safe, supportive environment.

Holy Trinity Halifax – Through the English as a Second Language (ESL) for Children program, Holy Trinity will foster language acquisition through interactive, theme-based activities. Additionally, funds raised through Say Yes! to Kids will support the Vacation Bible School which provides a playful, engaging space for children to learn about the love of God and build community connections.

## A Collective Goal for Youth Empowerment

Allie Colp, Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator for the Diocese of Nova Scotia and P.E.I., expressed her excitement about this year's SYTK campaign, sharing, "The landscape of youth ministry in this diocese is vibrant and evolving. From compassionate outreach initiatives to innovative programming, our parishes are stepping up to meet the needs of young people with creativity and love. It's an inspiring time

to be part of this work."

Together, these projects reflect a united effort to build supportive environments for young people, whether through addressing social issues, fostering inclusion or providing safe recreational spaces. The Say Yes! to Kids campaign in Nova Scotia and P.E.I. is setting a strong example for youth ministry across the country.

For more information on how you can support these initiatives, follow the Diocese of Nova Scotia and P.E.I. on social media or visit www.nspeidiocese. ca/pages/say-yes-to-kids

# **SHINE LIKE STARS: Portraits in Faith**

BY REV. CANON LISA VAUGHN

"You are God's children ... Shine like stars across the land" – Philippians 2:15 b,e

We continue to give thanks and celebrate the ministry of our tireless lay leaders. In this edition, we feature two women with deep Anglican roots in Cape Breton.

Shine Like Stars stories remind us that each of us is an important part of the Body of Christ. As those who are baptized, we live out our ministries, sharing our gifts and skills to bless those around us – ordinary Christians, doing ordinary things, loving God and our neighbours, joining with God in the mission to the world God loves!

NAME: Barbara Patterson

PARISH NAME: Emmanuel, Halifax, N.S. (Spryfield)

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTIVE ANGLICAN/CHRIS-TIAN?

I was baptized and confirmed in St. Mary's, Glace

Bay and attended Church and Sunday School growing up. As I got older, I only attended on special occasions. When I married my husband, we moved to Halifax. It wasn't until we had two children that we wanted to bring them up in the Christian faith. We started going to Emmanuel Church since it was close to home. I became quite involved in Mothers' Union. That was the start of my faith journey.

# WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MINISTRY?

While I love them all, my favourite ministry would be pastoral care work. It feels like a tangible way that I can help the people of my community. Ironically, I feel I get just as much or sometimes more out of these home/hospital visits, and the offering of communion, as I am able to give to the people I'm there to help. I find it very rewarding.

# WITH WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES ARE YOU ENGAGED?

Licensed Lay Minister,



coordinator of Mothers' Union Branch, Altar Guild, Parish Council, Spiritual Development Committee, Prayer Chain and food bank volunteer.

# WHY DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITIES?

I really enjoy all of these ministries. They can be time-consuming, but when I consider cutting back, I find it impossible to choose one. I love what I do and I get so

much from it.

I must admit that without encouragement from ministers and leaders, I probably never would have taken on these roles. Thanks to Rev. Michelle Bull for encouraging me to take the Lay Ministry Course and the Pastoral Care Course and to embark on this journey. Her encouragement, support and

cheerleading were incredible.

# WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE STORY OR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE? WHY?

The story of Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) has always resonated with me. Left to my own instincts, I feel that I am much like Martha – always busy, getting things done. This passage has

helped me to understand that busyness is not always the most important thing. It can cause me to miss out on just being with someone and listening. That is one of the things I love so much about pastoral care work — the opportunity to just listen and be with people is so rewarding.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN/ CHRISTIAN SONG? WHY?

'Because He lives'. I love the lyrics and the music. It gives such hope.

#### IF YOU HAD THE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY YOU WANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR COM-MUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

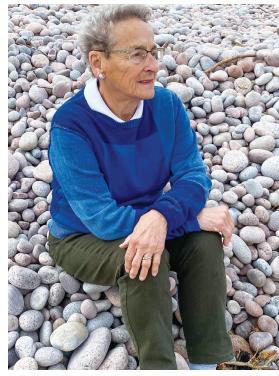
In our community of Spryfield, I would love to see more affordable housing and more housing options for the homeless. My dream would be to see an end to homelessness and hunger.

**NAME:** Selma Doucet **PARISH NAME:** Parish of the Resurrection, Christ the King, Sydney

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTIVE ANGLICAN / CHRISTIAN?

I was born on Sept. 16, 1935 into an Anglican family and baptized on Sept. 24, 1936, in the Parish or Mission of Musquodoboit by my uncle Rev. A. E. Kingsbury (my dad's brother-in-law). He also had a brother Rev. Franklin Rudderham. I was surrounded by Anglicans, all of whom were great influences in my growing years.

I was born in the family homestead on Mt. Pleasant St. in Whitney Pier, Sydney, right beside the Jewish synagogue. Next door families were Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, Croatian, Lebanese, Syrian, African Canadian and a large number of Newfoundlanders, Irish and Celtic Scottish. We participated in each other's activities. We were ecumenical. We even marched and sang with the Salvation Army



and their band on Sunday evenings. We were one happy gang.

# WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MINISTRY?

As a young one, I was in Junior Auxiliary (JA), Girls in Action (GA), Women's Auxiliary (WA), ACW and Diocesan representative for Cape Breton Region.

# WITH WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES ARE YOU ENGAGED?

Through the years, I served on committees for Administration and Finance, Planned Giving, Parish Relations, Friends of the Bishop and Diocesan Council.

In 2007, I attended General Synod in Winnipeg, at which time our Bishop

Fred became Primate and I became a director of the Anglican Foundation.

# WHY DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITIES?

I love what I do. I love what I have learned from them and being able to share with our Anglican Foundation members about grants or bursaries for the needs of their parishes. This Diocese has taught me

so much that I will never be able to say thank you enough for pushing me ever onward.

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE STORY OR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE? WHY?

One is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." The other is The Great Commandment, Matthew 22:34-39. "Jesus said, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these. To me, they say it all.

# WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN/CHRISTIAN SONG?WHY?

There are too many of them to mention, but 'How Great Thou Art,' and 'Here I Am Lord.'

# IF YOU HAD THE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY YOU WANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?

If I had the money, then my community would have no need. They would have homes, food, jobs – whatever is necessary to live a good productive life. No one should be suffering from this sort of crisis in today's world.

Shine Like Stars profiles are examples of scores of local Anglicans serving like Christ. Do you know of someone who would be a fitting portrait in faith? Let us know: missiondirector@nspeidiocese.ca

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### BISHOP'S COLUMN

# Therefore we have he



BISHOP SANDRA FYFE, DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

In April 2020, when Covid cases were surging in Newfoundland and Labrador, the province's Minister of Health, John Haggie, spoke about hope, saying memorably, "Hope is a girl's name, not a strategy."

Not long after this, a colleague and I began a Bible study on Peter's first letter which was called, "Hope is not just a girl's name." While I doubt Minister Haggie ever watched any of our videos that introduced each week's theme as we journeyed through First Peter chapter by chapter, he might have found it informative. We spent a lot of time looking at our faith in context, comparing our current situation to the time when Peter's first letter was written. It resonated deeply. We came to understand that Christians of every time and every age have faced hardship and adversity and, at times, persecution.

The Church has been under threat before.

Christians have felt uncertainty before.

Christians have been worried about the future before.

#### Christians have wondered before whether the faith will survive beyond them.

That's not to minimize the circumstances we find ourselves in now, but simply to help us place ourselves within the greater span of time. There was reason for people in those first decades and centuries of the Church's existence to be hopeful, and there is reason for us to be hopeful today.

#### Our Synod theme: Therefore we have hope

In the Book of Lamentations (3:21-24) we read,

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;

they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

It is from this passage that our theme for the 152nd Session of Synod has been drawn. However, recognizing the need for us to reclaim the collective voice of the people of God in a time of rampant individualism, we changed the word "I" in verse 21 to "we" so that our theme becomes: Therefore we have hope.

As we gather in community for Synod from May 23 to 25 at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish. Nova Scotia, we will explore the theme of hope and how adopting a posture of hope might equip us well for these times. Our theme will be incorporated into our worship, plenary sessions, keynote presentations, Bible Study and the Bishop's Charge to Synod. The logo, designed by Leah Marshall, presents images of a seed breaking forth to produce what will eventually become a tree and finally, a stump. We see how the tree that emerged from a tiny seed becomes the source of new life, even after it has been cut down. We are reminded that even as we embrace change and the death of some of what we have known in the life of the Church, life still bursts forth. We are a people who believe in the resurrection of the dead.

# Our Keynote Speaker – The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson

To assist us in exploring our theme, I have invited The Right Reverend Deon Kevin Johnson to join us as our keynote speaker. Bishop Deon was consecrated as



The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson

the 11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri on June 13, 2020, at Christ Church Cathedral in St. Louis. I met him during the 'Living our Vows' program for new bishops offered by the College for Bishops in the Episcopal Church. I have found him to be an inspiring person of unre-

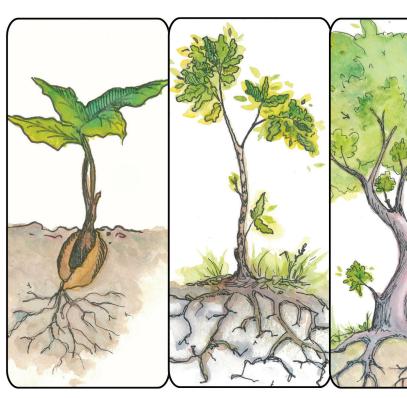
lenting hope.

Born and raised in a small village on the Caribbean Island of Barbados, his faith was formed under the watchful eye of his maternal grandmother who taught him how to pray and how to listen with his heart; she also introduced him to the beauty of worship in the hymns and spirituals she sang throughout Deon's childhood. His grandmother's presence and prayers continued to influence him

and Prayer Book Revision and the Office of African Descent Ministries. Bishop Deon also serves on the advisory boards and councils of Sewanee: The University of the South and General Theological Seminary.

The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri elected Bishop Deon as its 11th diocesan bishop on November 23, 2019, just before the Covid pandemic hit. He became the first Black, first gay and first immigrant to lead the

#### THEREFORE WE HA



as he immigrated from Barbados to New York at the age of 14.

After receiving Bachelor of Arts degrees in English and

History and an Associate degree in Biology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio (2000), he went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from The General Theological Seminary in New York (2003), where he also received an Honorary Doctorate degree (2021).

as Associate Rector at Christ Episcopal Church in Shaker Heights, Ohio (2003-2006) and as Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brighton, Missouri (2006-2020). His service to the wider church community includes the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, the Taskforce for Liturgical

Diocese of Missouri. His ordination was postponed and downsized for safety reasons due to the pandemic, which shaped much of his early years as bishop. Throughout the health emergency, Bishop Deon led with compassion and hope.

"I see my role primarily as pastoral in this time in the church and the world," Bishop Deon said. His passion for social justice and racial reconciliation has formed his ministry. He authored an anti-racism covenant, established diocesan missioners to lead advocacy ministries and established a racial reconciliation fund to help heal the divisions throughout his diocese.

In the first of a series of devotions for 'Forward Day by Day: Devotions for Disciples' in December, 2024, Bishop Deon wrote this:

"Hope is a radical act of defiance in the face of the impossible.

God breaks into our world

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## ope

not with strength or might or power, but with hope."

Bishop Deon Johnson,
 as shared in 'Forward Day
 by Day: Daily Devotions
 for Disciples,' December 1,
 2024

(Biographical information adapted from The Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, Bishop's Biography)

Maximizing our Time Together – Webinars on Resolutions

Of course, there will be

## VEHOPE



business to attend to as we gather in Synod. Recognizing the need to maximize our time together as we discuss important ministry priorities facing us in our parishes and diocese, we will be hosting pre-Synod webinars on submitted resolutions. These sessions will give delegates the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and engage directly with those submitting the resolution. While resolutions cannot be amended until Synod, these webinars will ensure delegates arrive informed and prepared to vote or for any potential amendments to be discussed on the Synod floor.

# During Synod in 2023, a motion was made and carried stating:

A working group consisting of at least one Archdeacon, one Regional Dean, the Bishop, the Executive Director and five additional members (clergy and lay) from across the Diocese,

is to be charged with the following tasks: a. To reexamine Canon 11: The Diocesan Council, Canon 20: Regions and Regional Deans and Canon 35: Parochial Government and any other associated/impacted Canons to review personnel (volunteer and stipendiary) requirements. To streamline the process, we will be hosting a separate webinar to explore proposed changes to each of these canons, featuring committee mem-

bers who will explain, clarify and answer any questions delegates may have. We encourage everyone attending to be better prepared and to help make our time at Synod more efficient. The dates and times for these webinars have been shared with Synod delegates. All webinars will be recorded.

#### Don't forget to register by May 8

Synod Registration opens on April 24 and will close promptly on May 8 to meet St. F.X.'s catering deadline. The registration link will be sent to delegates and posted on April 24 under the Synod 2025 tab on the website. If you are a delegate and haven't received this

email with a registration link, please reach out to execsecsynod@nspeidiocese.ca or call the Diocesan Office at 902-420-0717.

#### Youth at Synod attend free

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Ecclesiastical Insurance, all of the registration fees and costs of accommodations and meals for our youth delegates will be covered. They will be responsible only for travel to get to Synod. In preparation for Synod, in addition to the new delegate and resolution webinars, we will also coordinate a zoom call for youth delegates to discuss whatever is of interest. The date and time for this will be set based on youth delegate availability.

We will also have a daylong youth delegate orientation road trip on May 3. It's going to be a fun-filled day. We will journey to Antigonish together to check out St. Francis Xavier

University, get to know the spaces that we will be in for Synod and get to know one another a little better. There will be no cost to youth delegates to participate in this and our Youth and Family Ministries Coordinator, Allie Colp, will send out details about timing and registration after AGMs have wrapped up and we know who our youth delegates will be.

On the Friday before Synod begins, we will also have one more youth delegate gathering, with time to ask any last-minute questions, talk through anything from new delegate orientation that people are curious about and eat lunch together. We'll send along details about this when youth delegates register for Synod.

#### Free childcare and children's activities at Synod

To help make it easier for those folks to be able to say "ves" to being a Synod delegate for their parish, we are offering free childcare for children aged 2 to 12 who have a parent or primary caregiver who is participating in Synod. This is again thanks to the sponsorship of Ecclesiastical Insurance. We'll have a team of screened and trained staff who will offer fun and engaging activities for your children while Synod is in session so that their grownups can be fully focussed on the work of Synod. To make sure that we have enough staff and snacks and fun and engaging activities for the kids, we need anyone who will be bringing their children to register them by May 2. Delegates can indicate whether or not they would like to make use of this program when they register for Synod. While we hope to be able to accommodate anyone interested, spaces may be limited so be sure to register early.

We look forward to welcoming delegates to our 152nd Session of Synod in May. By the end of our time together, may the delegates be able to say without hesitation, "Therefore we have hope."

Blessings in Christ, who is our hope.

# Summer activities for your parish

BY ALLIE COLP

Summertime is just around the corner, bringing with it all kinds of possibilities for

fun and fellowship with the children and families in your community. We are called by our faith to love our neighbour, and this is a tangible (and often joyful) way of doing just that.

If this isn't something your

parish has done before or if you used to do things but haven't in a while, it can be a bit daunting to think about where to even begin. Even if it's a standard part of the life of your parish to do something like this, it can be helpful to have some new ideas, so here's a handy list of ideas – all of which you have plenty of time to make happen for this summer.

#### Day camp

Full-day or half-day day camps are a big time commitment and can mean a lot of logistical arrangements, but when it comes to connecting with children and families in your community, there's nothing like it. Day camps offer an opportunity to really get to know kids and to help them get to know God in a deeper way. There are lots of resources in the Youth and Family Ministry Office to help you make it happen.

#### Family fun day

Think of this as a fair of sorts. You can plan a variety of activities – bean bag toss, face painting, a BBQ, sack races or whatever other activities make sense, given the skills and gifts of people in your parish and the resources that are available to you. Many municipalities have equipment available to borrow, like jumbo Connect Four games or obstacle course kits, so you can take a look at what might be available locally to level up what you have to offer. Then pick a day, spread the word and have some fun together.

#### An old-fashioned church picnic

Most people can call something to mind in their imagination when they think of a church picnic – it's a classic kind of thing for a church to do in the summertime. If you are doing one as a way to reach

out to the wider community, it's worth giving some thought to how you can provide the food, and then people can just come and share in your outdoor feast. This doesn't need to be elabo-

rate – sandwiches, cheese, crackers and so on. If you plan for this to happen in a park with a playground, you can take advantage of that as a fun activity for kids. If that's not possible where you are, there are other simple outdoor games that you could plan for – maybe even a candy scramble.

#### An ice cream social

An ice cream social is about as simple as it gets. Get some ice cream and maybe some syrup and sprinkles, and invite your neighbourhood to come and share it with you.

# Support community organizations as they support families

In every corner of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, there are incredible community organizations doing meaningful work to support children, youth and families, and often, they are very keen to partner with other organizations who also want to offer that same kind of support. So take a look around your community and call up folks who are doing good work for children, youth and families, and ask how you might be able to support what they are doing or work in partnership with them on something new.

Hopefully, there is something in there that is a good fit for you. As always, there are lots of resources and support available through the Youth and Family Ministry Office to help make meaningful ministry happen in your community.

You can email Allie at youthandfamily@nspeidiocese.ca any time. And stay tuned next month for a few stories of summer fun from parishes just like yours.

# Be bold in your thinking

BY ANDREW SHERIN

"That this House express its concern for the more than one million Canadian children currently living in poverty and seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000" – 1989 Motion in the House of Commons passed unanimously.

We have failed. Our social safety net has a gaping hole impacting the youngest and most vulnerable in our communities. This failure demands action. Despite the introduction of the Canada Child Benefit and other benefits, too many children still live in families whose income is below the recognized poverty thresholds. In Nova Scotia, 41,550 children live in families experiencing poverty. In Prince Edward Island, 4,090 children live below the poverty line. Poverty is about more, much more, than just not having enough money. Experiencing poverty means a never ending struggle to provide appropriate and safe shelter, adequate nutritious food, medications, etc. It also means no money for school trips with classmates or a gift for a friend's birthday party. Living in poverty also means poorer health and reduced life expectancy. A faithful response to addressing poverty must go beyond the call for more money for families, although that call is necessary.



One solution to inadequate income was a private member's bill in the House of Commons (C-223) that called for the Finance Minister to develop a framework for a guaranteed liveable basic income (GLBI). The bill was defeated in September 2024 on first reading. FACE sent an email congratulating the only Nova Scotia MP that voted in the affirmative. Implementing a GLBI would be complicated but the success of GLBI pilot projects in Manitoba and Ontario and the impact on poverty levels from the financial supports provided during the COVID pandemic suggest it was at least worth considering. Laurie Michael from the P.E.I. Livable Income Network stated during FACE's webinar on the Social Determinants of Health that "40 per cent of Islanders would qualify for the basic income."

#### Our modest response

The Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island established a task group, Fairness in Basic Needs, alongside groups for PWRDF, Refugees and the Environment. The ministry of this task group has been executed primarily through participation in the Face of Poverty Consultation (FACE), a faith-based group focused on the elimination of poverty with membership from Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and United Churches.

FACE has three pillars to its mission, alliances/solidarity, education and advocacy.

Alliances: FACE maintains communication with and/or participates in Citizens for Public Justice, the Atlantic Advocacy Network, Nova Scotia Action Coalition for Community Wellbeing, the Affordable Energy Coalition, the Community Society to End Poverty, KAIROS and the Disability Rights Coalition. Often, this means participating in actions such as letter writing or campaigns initiated by one of these

organizations.

**Education**: FACE has been holding webinars for the last three years on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, October 17. The webinars have been advertised in the Diocesan Netnews. The webinars have dealt with the Social Determinants of Health, Housing and Community and Hunger for Change: Striving for a food secure Nova Scotia. These webinars are linked to the Diocesan website; search the news section by typing in FACE.



Advocacy: FACE monitors the deliberations of provincial legislative committees, particularly the Standing Committee on Community Services. Some decisions or discussions at the committee level moves FACE to write letters. The most recent letter sent by FACE to Premier Houston called for him to make his ministers' mandate letters public. The letter states that making the mandate letters public "allows those who put you in power to determine how your government is progressing," meeting the needs of the province.

FACE meets virtually since the pandemic every month in the fall, winter and spring and begins with a reflection prepared by one of the members. The reflection for the February 2025 meeting centred on Galatians 5-13, "Brethren, you were called to freedom. However, make sure that you do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh. Instead, serve one another in love." The agenda covers reporting on activity with FACE's various allied organizations (see above) and actions FACE wants to take related to current issues in the community (e.g. recent government announcements).

FACE invites new members to join, participate and contribute ideas on how FACE can better deliver its mission. In particular, FACE welcomes suggestions for the topic of the next webinar on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, 2025.

Contact FACE at nspeijustice@gmail.com

FACE closes it meetings with the following blessing:

"As we go from here, let us carry in our hearts the needs of our brothers and sisters, the resolve to do our part to make this world a just and caring home for all, and the willingness to be bold in our thinking and acting. Peace and blessings be with us all."

#### We need your photos

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Middle Sackville is researching pictures/drawings/paintings/photos of past rectors who have served here at St. John. If you have any images for the following rectors, we would appreciate your help as we move forward with our "Memory Wall".

The Rev. Jerome Alley, D.D. 1819 – 1820

The Rev. Thomas H.C. Parsons, Deacon 1821 – 1824

The Rev. John Connolly 1828 – 1832

The Rev. Archibald Gray 1833 – 1851

The Rev. Thomas Maynard, D.D. 1851 – 1856

The Rev. John G. Mulholland - 1857

The Rev. Walter Gray, B.A. - 1858

The Rev. William Rupert Cochran, D.D. 1858 – 1863

The Rev. John Shaw Smith 1863 – 1873

The Rev. W.E. Wilson 1874 – 1876

The Rev. Newcome Reginald Raven 1896 – 1897

The Rev. George Michael Ambrose 1910 – 1913

The Rev. Charles Henry Fletcher 1913 – 1919

Copies of images can be sent to stjohntheevange-list902@gmail.com attention Murray Watson.



# Diversity has always been a part of Christianity

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

In February every year, Canada commemorates Black History and Futures Month. This year was no different.

According to Irene Moore-Davis, Immediate Past President and Interim Chair of Black Anglicans of Canada, Black History and Futures Month could have a broader scope.

Speaking as an Anglican in Canada who is of African descent, Moore-Davis shared that she'd like for people across the church to understand that people of African descent have been a part of this nation since the 17th century.

"They have critical roles to play in building this nation from the beginning of the colonial period here."

There is sometimes an erroneous perception that people of African descent have only recently arrived, shared Moore-Davis.

The history of Underground Railroad descendants or the history of people of African descent who arrived in the 20th century tend to sometimes be the focus when Black History and Futures Month or African Heritage Month comes along, per the Interim Chair.

"It is very important that we are not merely focusing on the history of people of African descent in the Americas or in the Canadian and U.S. context, but [that we're] thinking about Black contributions to Christianity from the very beginning – those people of

African descent [who] are in the Bible."

The prevailing imagery and iconography that people are exposed to can be very Eurocentric, even in churches. This is something

something Moore-Da-

vis would like to see change.

What's interesting is that Christianity, as a religion, was born in the Middle East. This should, in essence, dismantle the Eurocentric perceptions that we tend to carry around with us, per Moore-Davis.

"And yet, if you were to walk into the average Sunday school [or] if you were to walk into the average church and take a look at the stained glass windows, you would perceive that this is a very North European set of people that we're talking about."

Tied to all of this is the tendency for church leaders or Sunday School teachers to pull from African American examples they can use during Black History and Futures Month, merely because of the availability of resources, explained Moore-Davis. Materials related to Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks are easy to find, and while one can appreciate that they are worthwhile and impressive people, we also have an obligation to



Black Anglicans of Canada first national conference held at St John's College (University of Manitoba), Winnipeg in the Diocese of Ruper's Land

make sure that we don't just look to African American examples, added Moore-Davis.

Highlighting the diversity that exists and looking to leaders that have made a great impact in the countries of the continent of Africa and in the Caribbean can mitigate the issue of providing a false sense that Black communities are monolithic or homogeneous in some way, shared Moore-Davis.

The move from Black History Month to Black History and Futures Month was a relatively recent development. In fact, it's only become pervasive in the last 20-25 years, according to Moore-Davis. However, this shift is encouraging people to think about the present and future and not merely the past.

Narrowly focusing on history sometimes almost shuts down conversations about what's happening in terms of people's lived experiences today, per Moore-Davis. Whether it's exaggerated interactions with the criminal

justice system that continue to affect people of African descent or the inequity that exists when it comes to pay for those of African descent when compared with counterparts with the same educational qualifications, there is a lot that needs to be talked about,

said Moore-Davis. Disparities related to educational attainment and earning levels between Black groups and non-racialized populations have been documented in a Statistics Canada report of 2023.

"People of African descent in this country, who have equivalent education to others, still make far less per hour or far less per annum than counterparts that are of European descent," explained Moore-Davis.

Some other concerns include employment and housing discrimination. What's more, there are things happening within faith-based communities that need to be addressed as well, per Moore-Davis.

"Despite best intentions and the positive moves that have been happening, there are still far too many faith communities in which people of African descent are not made to feel welcome," shared Moore-Davis. "They are told not to sing like this, [they are told] they need to look like this, [that]

they need to talk like this ... they're not encouraged to take up leadership positions."

There has to be better preparation, even at theological training level, so that people are better prepared to work and walk alongside people of African descent, according to Moore-Davis. Cultural competency and awareness are important parts of the process.

An opportunity to tell our stories - that's what's needed, per Reverend Wilson Akinwale, Black Anglicans of Canada's National Board Chair. He referred to the first Black priest in Sub-Saharan Africa – Samuel Ajavi (Adjai) Crowther. "When I read the history [concerning] Crowder, how he became the first Black bishop out of Africa, and some of the challenges that he had, [I learned that] he was [enslaved]. He was an interpreter for the Europeans when they came to our city. And from there, he was able to leverage his own indigenous language to understand English and interpret for the Europeans."

Such stories are the ones we need to tell people, in order to understand where we come from, shared Akinwale, whose own great grandfather was enslaved.

Part of the mission of Black Anglicans of Canada is to increase the participation, representation, empowerment and belongingness of Black people in lay and ordained leadership roles in the full life of the Anglican Church of Canada.

## The Lord in His Prayer

BY ANGELA RUSH

During Lent, I broke down the Lord's Prayer line by line and prayed for deeper insight. Rather than just repeating it in prayer, I wanted to understand it more in my heart. So I asked Him to guide my words to help share with you how it impacted me. I felt His spirit and such love this Lenten season. Be blessed, you're loved.

Our Father...
Father to the living and
Father to those who have
passed.
Father of the first and Fa-

Who art in Heaven ...

ther of the last.

In His home, He waits for us, for all humanity. Blood of his Son shed for all; opened heaven's gate for you and me.

Hallowed by thy name... Our Lord, our Father; holy and sacred is who you are. We speak your name in highest praise; a King born under a northern star.

Thy kingdom come ... In prayer we invite you in Lord, in our hearts you will forever dwell.
Until that day you call us

home. Kingdom bound and to earth farewell.

Thy will be done ... We give ourselves to you Lord, to show us the only vay.

That our daily choices come from you, in what we think, feel and say.

On Earth as it is in heaven...

We will walk a path daily, with each step pleasing to you.

At heaven's gate, we stand; life was the journey, and love was Thy will we knew.

Give us this day our daily bread...

Bread is what will nourish us, but it is not just food we need.

Our minds need the purest of thoughts; our hearts need you as love's seed.

Forgive us our sins ...

How can we ever thank you; for the life of your precious son?

Who died on a cross to take our sins, the forgiving blood shed for everyone.

As we forgive those who sin against us ...
He took our sins for the highest price, but this pass was not for free.
We must also forgive and

We must also forgive and own our wrongs, to receive His grace's mercy.

Lead us not into temptation ...

This is not a question we ask the Lord, He doesn't cause us to stray.
He is love, not evil; it's a loving message we give our-

selves when we pray.

But deliver us from evil

You've invited him into your life; now ask yourself why.

To be your guide, protector, deliverer; feeling His love to Christ testify.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever ....
Nothing I claim is mine.
Alone I will always fall.
You are simply and absolutely everything. Forever the I Am, and the All.

Amen

# For All the Saints, May 2025

THE REV. JOHN K. MORRELL

Excerpted from Stephen Reynolds' "For All The Saints"

May 25

Bede - Priest, Monk, Historian and Educator, D. 735

Bede was an Anglo-Saxon monk who lived in Northumbria, England. He is chiefly remembered as the author of 'The Ecclesiastical History of the English People' – a wonderful account of the Church in England from the arrival of the Roman mission through to his own day.

When he was seven years old, Bede entered the Northumbria monastery of Wearmouth as his parents' free-will offering to the Church; he was later trans-

ferred to the new monastery at Jarrow.

He became a deacon when he was 19 and a priest 21 years later. These two events were the high points of his life.

For the rest, as he said of himself at the age of 59: "I have spent all my life in this monastery [of Jarrow], applying myself entirely to the study of the Scriptures; the observance of the discipline of the Rule and the daily task of singing the Divine Office in the church. It has been my delight to learn or to teach or to write."

This quiet, happy monk became ill shortly after Easter in the year 735. Though in considerable physical pain, his mind remained clear; and as he contemplated going to be with the Lord, his spirit became cheerful.

He died on the eve of Ascension Day, May 25, as he gently sang these words to himself: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be .... "

May 27

John Charles Roper -Archbishop of Ottawa, D. 1940

Today we commemorate John Charles Roper, who was archbishop of Ottawa in the early years of the 20th century and whose leadership was honoured by Anglicans in Canada and around the world. He was an Englishman who came to this country in 1886 as the first Keble Professor of Divinity at Trinity College in Toronto.

Two years later, he was appointed Vicar of St.

Thomas's Church in that city and began his long association with the Sisters of St. John the Divine as their chaplain. He moved to New York, where he taught at the General Theological Seminary for over a decade, but returned to Canada in 1911 when he was elected Bishop of British Columbia.

Four years later, he was elected Bishop of Ottawa, where he was installed on this date in 1915. He eventually became Metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, an office which gave him the title of archbishop.

Roper possessed not only a keen mind and sound scholarship but also an ability to translate ideas into practical action. This gift gave him a unique influence in the counsels of the Canadian Church as it dealt with its

revision of the Prayer Book in 1918 and as the church felt the social impact of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

He also had an important role at international gatherings of Anglican bishops and played a distinguished part at the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, which was a step towards the foundation of the World Council of Churches. But most of all, Archbishop Roper was a man of deep and constant prayer who placed his spiritual resources at the disposal of all the people in his diocese, so that they might be strengthened in their own service of Christ and one another – and it is for this faithful stewardship of God's gifts, as much as for his great public influence, that we honour him today.

#### Liturgical Colours For The Month of May

BY THE REV JOHN K. MOR-RELL

Adapted from the Episcopal Church Calendar 2025

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"As God has flooded the

earth and sky with colour, so the Church has sensed the symbolic use of colour in its worship. As dominating colours in nature change with the seasons of the year, so in the Church Year there is a change in the colours of

the Eucharistic vestments."

Paraments (or altar, lectern and pulpit hangings) change colours to serve as subtle reminders of the importance of church feasts and holy days as we go about our liturgical seasons.

WHITE – For all Sundays and days after Easter including Ascension Day (May 29); The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 31) up to Sunday, June 1, the Seventh Sunday of Easter and the Sunday after

the Ascension. This colour symbolizes joy, purity and

**RED** – For May 1, the Commemoration of Saint Philip and Saint James. The colour of fire and blood.

#### A HYMN FOR THE ASCENSION OF JESUS -**MAY 29**

BY THE REV. JOHN K. MOR-

Adapted from Hymnary.org

#### HAIL THE DAY THAT SEES HIM RISE (Common Praise 1968 #247)

Author: Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)

Excerpted from Hymnary.

Tune: "Ascension" by William Henry Monk (1823-1889)

Charles Wesley was the great hymn-writer of the Wesley family and younger brother to Samuel. Taking quantity and quality into consideration, 'Hail the Day' is considered to be the most popular of all Ascension texts in Englishlanguage worship. It was written in 10 stanzas and published in his Hymns and Sacred Poems (1739). 'Hail the Day' sings out its 'alleluias' for Christ's triumphal entry into glory after he accomplished his saving work on earth (stanza 1-2) and for Christ's work of interceding and preparing a place for his people (stanza

3-4). The text concludes by hailing the momentous day when we shall rule with Christ (stanza 5). There are 16 hymn texts of his in Common Praise 1968, including #88 - 'Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus,' #158 – 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing' and #485-486 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling.'

The tune 'Ascension' is by William Henry Monk. He was an Anglican church musician and music editor who composed many popular hymn tunes. These include Eventide,' used for the hymn 'Abide with Me'. He is best known for his music editing of Hymns Ancient and Modern (1861, 1868; 1875, and 1889 editions). There are 14 tunes in our Common Praise 1968 hymnal including 'Victory' (# 212 – 'The Strife is Over'), Winchester New (# 103 – 'On Jordan's Bank') and 'All Things Bright' [#415 – 'All Things Bright and Beauti-



#### Our name has changed. Our work stays the same.

#### **PWRDF** is now Alongside Hope

After two years of discernment and consultation, PWRDF's members\* have approved a new name. Alongside Hope emphasizes themes of partnership, accompaniment, community and teamwork that have always exemplified the way we work.

With its tagline - Anglicans and partners working for change in Canada and around the world — Alongside Hope honours the legacy of PWRDF as an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, and it will carry us forward into the future.

As we walk alongside our partners and many supporters, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a truly just, healthy and peaceful world.



alongsidehop

Scan the QR code to view a video about our new name and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit pwrdf.org/our-new-name. and read our list of Frequently Asked Questions, or visit pwrdf.org/our-new-name.

 $\ensuremath{^{\star}}$  The PWRDF Board of Directors, Diocesan Representatives and Youth Council comprise the voting membership





## A new lease of life for St. Mark's Anglican Church

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

St. Mark's Anglican Church on Russell Street, Halifax is going through a transition, a transition that has given the church a new lease of life.

According to Steven Beeler, Chair, Buildings Reuse and Redevelopment Committee, a realtor approached the spiritual establishment in February of 2021 on behalf of a developer who was keen to help a parish that might be struggling.

"The developer [has] done a lot of developments in other parts of HRM but was interested in doing a legacy development and he particularly wanted to save a piece of church heritage that might otherwise be in jeopardy," explained Beeler.

Similar to many other Anglican churches in the diocese, St. Mark's was facing its share of challenges, per Daphne Beeler, Senior Warden at St. Mark's. A shrinking congregation and an annual deficit that was eating into investments (despite generous parishioners) were some of the concerns.

"We were facing the prospect that our investments would be depleted within 3-5 years and that a decision to close would have to be made," said the Senior Warden.

"Most of our energy was being spent on fundraising to try to keep the building open and dealing with issues related to the building, which meant there was little time, energy or resources left to work on mission initiatives that might help us grow the congregation and do the core work of spreading the good news of the Gospel."

The developer's interest to buy and redevelop the property couldn't have come at a more opportune time. Media reports of the partnership indicate that the site is going to house a 10-storey high-rise apartment building, whilst also preserving the church.

After the initial meeting, an agreement was reached that the church would be retained, the basement would be demolished and fully renovated and a portion of the 1961 annex to the church would be removed to make the property square, explained Steven Beeler.

"The hall would be removed from the site and replaced with a residential development ... The design of the new building will contain architectural design elements of the church at the streetscape level."

The lease is long-term so the church and developer have many years to work out the dynamics of a working relationship, per Beeler. "Ultimately, the success of our relationship will be based on an open and honest continuous dialogue for the discussion of topics of mutual concern. We have every confidence, based on the relationship to date, that that will be the case."

The sales agreement is such that St. Mark's will retain full autonomy on the use of the church building, added Daphne Beeler. The renovated basement level will house new washrooms, a new kitchen and a new meeting space, all of which will be designed in consultation with the parish, shared the Senior Warden.

"St. Mark's has been unable to use the basement space since the Covid-19 shutdown because the extended period of disuse caused the moisture and mould issues in the basement to grow. The renovation will rectify that issue and make a new, clean space where we can host community gatherings, and we can also offer the space for community rentals."

Rev. Tammy Hodge Orovec, Incumbent Priest at St. Mark's Anglican Church joined the parish in 2022 and was given a two-year contract. Two years of pay for the priest was what was foreseeable, parish financeswise, at the time.



Rev. Tammy Hodge Orovec and Rev. Vivien Hannon, Assistant Priest, St. Mark's Anglican Church

"We as a parish feel truly blessed to have been approached by a developer, who was both interested in developing housing, but also recognized the historical and ministry value of St. Mark's parish to the wider North End Halifax Community," shared Hodge Orovec.

At a time when churches are closing down for various reasons, partnerships of this nature can be a sign of hope, and Hodge Orovec views it as such. The parish is dreaming about how the building could be a community hub and how the ministries could expand and continue to serve the North End, per the priest.

"St. Mark's has made some great connections with new immigrant families through our Community Roots Summer Camps and food bank. We are hoping that we can find creative ways for this community and others to call St. Mark's home, not just to participate in activities, but to become a new branch of our family tree, gathering to love, support and respond to the Gospel in ways beyond our imagination," added Hodge Orovec.

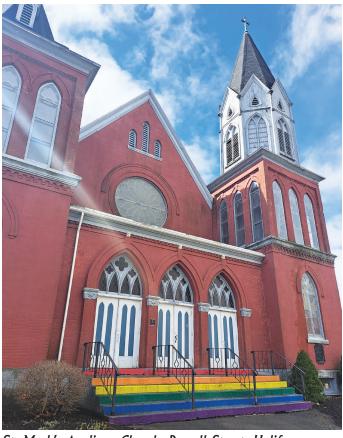
Although the specifics of this particular partnership

might be hard to reproduce elsewhere, there is a lesson to be learned here, shared Daphne Beeler. One should keep one's eyes, ears and heart open for where God might be leading them, per the Senior Warden.

"At first, the idea of giv-

parish going forward. There is still a lot left to be done.

"Some of our operating costs will disappear but certain fixed costs will remain," explained Steven Beeler. "The parish needs to find ways to make the church more useful for the



St. Mark's Anglican Church, Russell Street, Halifax

ing up full ownership of the building was a terrifying thought, but after prayer and discernment, we recognized that it was a Godsend and that it was less terrifying than having to close the parish and walk away."

The solution might look different for another parish that's in a similar situation but it's important to avoid closing one's mind off to radical ideas, per Daphne Beeler. "It might just be where God is calling us to go."

The sale of the church property doesn't necessarily mean easy sailing for the community so that it can be used more fully during the week."

With this in mind, some of the pews have been removed and the remaining ones have been shortened and made movable, added the Chair of the Buildings Reuse and Redevelopment Committee. They're also looking at further upgrades to the nave level, per Beeler.

"The church has fantastic acoustics and could be [retrofitted] to stage movie nights, concerts or other events."



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PROUDLY CANADIAN



# A word from our faith community

BY REV. MARIAN CONRAD

We have sold our beloved church building St. Nicholas – Westwood Hills, Upper Tantallon

We are a traditionally committed group of church folks. We have a rhythm of work and prayer. After years of informal conversations and 18 months of intensive listening and discernment, we decided to sell our church building – a three-year financial projection really focused on our realities.

Some comments that we shared with one another the week of the sale ranged from sadness to relief. One said, "I am attached to these people and not this building." Another said, "We live in such a transient community," another, "Wherever I worship, I want to do it with this group of people" and another, "Had we waited for five years to make this decision, I think we would have been too tired to tend to everything so carefully."

It is very easy for me as the Intentional Interim Priest in Charge for a Listening and Discernment process to shine the light on an incredible group of parishioners who have bonded well with every priest appointed to them. Many parishioners have had incredible careers and they brought their competencies to the task. They identified 11 options for the future, finally focusing on three and then on one, to ask our Diocesan Bishop for permission to list and sell our church building and to consider meeting in a small rented space or joining with another congregation.

I once asked my dear friend, Canon Russell Elliott what motivated him to keep going in his 100th year. He responded, "I have so much to learn." We have learned much in the process. We have sought to bring the teaching wisdom of Jesus to our conversations



Photo by Darryl Spidell

and to focus on our scriptures in liturgy and to let the business of discerning where to worship next for parish council meetings.

Sunday after Sunday, after worship, we gathered to review motions, to report on council meetings, to consider together. Many questions were clearly focused on the authority of a Priest and the ownership of our financial assets. I reminded our faithful parishioners that the authority of a Priest is the role of the Chief Liturgical Officer of the parish in the place of our Bishop and that all financial matters are to be discerned in council. One of the places we learn to share authority is in a faith community and it is more about mutuality than anything else. There is a universality of questions about authority and finances and it is in a faith community that we can learn from one another.

To the best of my knowledge, our Anglican parishes in Nova Scotia own their financial assets; we are separate legal entities. However, and there is often a however, we are bound together as a diocese and parish, seeking to strengthen one another for service. We are congregationally led and episcopally governed. Perhaps this is one of those times that we choose to live

in the Spirit of the Law and learn to balance the autonomy of our local congregations with the oversight and guidance of our broader church, that is our diocesan leadership.

Gratitude is a pretty basic Christian virtue and we have been thankful for those who supported the building of our church building some 20 years ago. Our Anglican Foundation gave us a grant of \$7,500 when we began, our Diocesan Growth for Ministry gave us a grant of \$13,500 when we began and our sister parish and St. John the Evangelist shared the proceeds of a land sale with us. We have returned \$7,000 to our Anglican Foundation, \$13,500 to our Diocesan Growth for Ministry Fund and \$5,000 to St. John's in this their anniversary year.

A beloved parishioner from a previous parish noted that when it comes to selling a church building, we need to remember that Anglican parishioners gave, often sacrificially, to the building up of the Anglican presence in our communities. It is in that spirit that the net sale proceeds have been deposited to our Diocesan Consolidated Trust Fund for parish ministry.

We had an incredible learning in regard to HST being charged on parish rentals and on the sale. We had fun consulting;

our financial controller advised us to consult with a lawyer who advised us to consult with a tax lawyer who advised us to consult with a tax accountant who advised our Treasurer to get a ruling from CRA Ruling Directorate. All's well that ends well. We received a clearance letter from CRA after hundreds of hours on the phone by our parish treasurer.

We ensured that our process had transparency with our parishioners through special meetings of our congregation, weekly for the past few months. If motions needed to be considered, we did that after worship and then ratified them in a later council meeting. I kept a timeline of all significant decisions for quick review and a journal of all emails, phone calls and correspondence. It certainly helped for quick reference.

Our national church has a resource called "The Deconsecration of a Sacred Space". In the introduction, we are reminded that we gather as a diocese when we close a church building, "a profound symbol of the fact that the diocesan family – the wider church around this particular local worshipping community – is just that: a family in which all are affected by this local change, and all are bound in mutual love and common discipleship." Our church

building had not been consecrated as our diocese still held our mortgage, however, the spirit of the resource was clearly evident as we gathered for those last few liturgies. Thanks to regional colleagues and parishioners from sister parishes who gathered with us. And what a blessing that so many of our sacred vessels, church furnishings and vestments have been gifted to our sister parishes in our region.

We have been on the move, from the early days of sharing a priest with St. John the Evangelist to our first few church buildings on the Hammonds Plains Road to Upper Tantallon. We are on the move again. One of our beloved parishioners has gathered together memories and is publishing a memory book for us all to enjoy. We are presently worshipping at St. John's on Larry Uteck Drive and will engage in a mutual discernment process at some point.

It has been a privilege and blessing to have shared leadership with an incredible group of faithful people at St. Nicholas. They have indeed looked after God's house. And it has been a blessing to have been a priest in our diocese, sharing leadership and knowing that I have been so supported in ongoing professional development and sabbath leaves throughout the years.

# WANTED: PARISH NEWS!



# Something going on in your parish? Why not share it with the rest of the diocese?

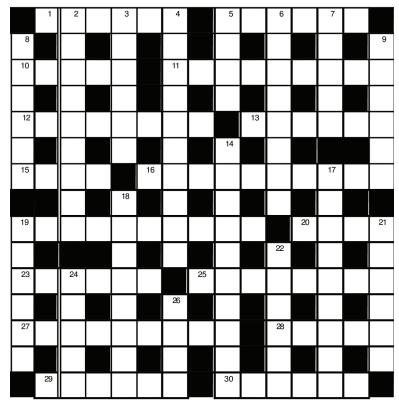
We are looking for news items, events and activities from around the diocese.

Send your contribution (with a photo or two if possible) to: DIOCESANTIMES @GMAIL.COM

### May Bible Crossword

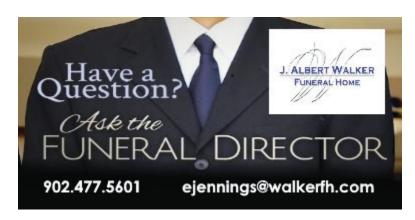


By Maureen Yeats



## **April Puzzle Answers**

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#### MAY 2025 Clues

#### **ACROSS:**

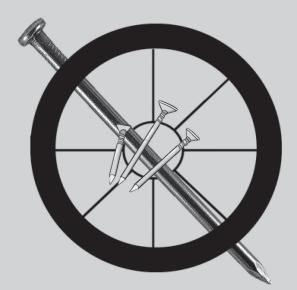
- -1- "The sea \_\_\_\_ from its raging" (Jonah 1:15) stopped (6)
  - -5- Away from home (6)
  - -10- Wife of Abraham (Gen. 17:15) (5)
  - -11- A convert of Paul (Acts 18) (9)
- -12- Large elephant-like extinct mammal
- -13- South coast English county (6)
- -15- Baby beef (4)
- -16- Greek island where Paul briefly stopped (Acts 16:11) (10)
- -19- People who bear witness (10)
- -20- Pole, such as a mast or boom on a sailboat (4)
- -23- Perceive (6)
- -25- Resident of Cairo (8)
- -27- Lowest female singing voice (9)
- -28- Maidservant at the home of John Mark's mother (Acts 12:13) (5)
- -29- The child of my aunt (6)
- -30- More miserable (6)

#### DOWN:

- -2- Ancient people of Tuscany (9)
- -3- Place of learning (6)
- -4- Tactful (10)
- -5- Opposite of alkaline (4)
- -6- Dress again (8)
- -7- Book of maps (5)
- -8- American science-fiction writer, Isaac
- -9- "Who will get ready for \_\_\_\_\_?" (1Cor. 14:8) conflict (6)
- -14- "Stand firm in your faith, be \_\_\_\_\_" (1Cor. 16:13) brave (10)
- -17- A mineral (9)
- -18- Perceives clearly (8)
- -19- "All the widows stood ... showing \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 9:39) outer garments (6)
- -21- Paved strip at an airport (6)
- -22- Refrained from harming (6)
- -24- Latin American dance (5)
- -26- Group of people of common ancestry (4)

# Anglicans Powering Potential Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Anglicans Powering Potential (APP) of the Diocese of NS and PEI, under the overarching 4th Mark of Mission for Anglicans: to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation, encourage and remind us that no matter the size of the nail, or our ability, even in a small way, we can help to disable the Wheel(s) of Injustice.



"We are not simply to bandage the wounds of the victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spike in the wheel itself" Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

In enhancing capacity for creative ministry, Anglicans Powering Potential are re-imagining Bonhoeffer's spike as a series of nails of varying sizes and shapes . . . to remind us that we can make a difference, that small things can have a big impact! Interested? e-mail: app.nspeidiocese@gmail.com

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# Theology on Tap

# Extending church beyond the traditional four walls

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

For most of us, church is a building we frequent on Sundays. Some of us might stay for coffee and fellowship thereafter; some of us might come to the building at different times of the week for extra activities like Mothers' Union meetings or Bible study groups.

When a parishioner at Christ Church Dartmouth invited me over to Theology on Tap at Pilot's Pub in Dartmouth – a monthly informal gathering of church members – it's safe to say I was intrigued.

Church members at a restaurant, let alone a pub, discussing life questions that relate to our faith and everyday living? It closely resembled a gathering I myself had wanted to start in my home a long time ago but never actually got around to doing.

Upon entering Pilot's Pub, I was directed to the space in which the "church group" was gathered (the server's words). I was impressed with the turnout. Quite a lot of members were gathered around tables, sipping on their beverages of choice, awaiting the start of yet another stimulating discussion.

The topic at this particular session (in February) was how we, as Christians, are responding to Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde's sermon at a national prayer service held at Washington National Cathedral on January 21, 2025.

'How do you define mercy?'

'How safe is your church for the marginalized or vulnerable during this time?' 'What does it mean to be an advocate?' 'How do you love someone you don't particularly like?' 'How are we dealing with the anxiety that comes with the recent tensions between the U.S. and Canada?' 'How do you speak the truth in love?'

These were some of the questions that came up during the discussion, and I was heartened to see the passion in the members. There was a real and palpable desire to make a difference in the world and there was an equally strong desire to hold space for the vulnerable people around us.

It also became quickly evident that these Christians were doers. Not only did the conversations lead to new resolutions but the members were quick to delegate duties and come up with ideas of how to put their ideas into action.

All of this arose from simply engaging with one another over a meal and a drink. The atmosphere was casual, the conversations free-flowing and everyone was allowed to speak their truth without judgement or ridicule.

I also learned that some of the parishioners were already doing their part outside of the church – actively championing the cause of social justice in various fields.

What is Theology on Tap?
For Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner,
Rector at Christ Church

Dartmouth, it was the appeal of how laid-back discussing one's faith outside of church walls could be that attracted him to Theology on Tap.

"I saw how many places in England through the Fresh Expression movement were able to encourage people to talk about their faith in public, in a setting that was safe among friends and neighbours," shared Wagner.

The concept itself is thought to have originated in the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1981. It was only a matter of time before churches in different parts of the world created and executed their own versions of these informal gatherings.

The University of Prince Edward Island's Department of Religious Studies had their Theology on Tap session on February 3 at the Salvador Dali Cafe, The Arts Hotel in Charlottetown. According to the university website, Dr. Peter Koritansky, professor of religious studies and philosophy asked the provocative question, "Does Morality Depend on God?"

As the story goes, it all started when a young graduate asked his priest if the Church could help him find answers to important questions like the meaning of life. What started off as a six-week discussion series for students has now evolved into a global movement of sorts that has found its place in many countries outside of the U.S., including Canada, Ireland, Italy,

Taiwan, Australia and the Philippines.

For Rebecca Vendetti, Master's student in philosophy and a Navigators of Canada intern in Hamilton, Ontario, Theology on Tapwas a way to talk about things that matter outside of a church setting, per navigators.ca. It's also a way to meet people where they're at.

"[Theology on Tap] helped me connect with other Christians and talk about faith. I could ask the questions I needed to ask, like what it means to believe in God, who Jesus was, all these sorts of things ... Places like pubs seem to [have] a different vibe [than a coffee shop]. It's relaxed, it's informal and non-threatening," Vendetti shares on navigators.ca.

"I saw how many places in England through the Fresh Expression movement were able to encourage people to talk about their faith in public, in a setting that was safe among friends and neighbours"

- Rev. Dr. Kyle Wagner

Wagner first approached a few parishioners with the idea. The parishioners he chose to speak with were those he knew liked going out for dinner or a beverage.

"I shared the idea about dining together and talking about things that were important to them and their faith journey. It only took one session at a pub and people heard how fun it was, and we began to grow," explained the rector.

It's been seven years since the first meetup and the gathering now averages about 20+ people, according to Wagner.

Conversational material is drawn from topic ideas that parishioners share with the priest. "[The] topics range from politics, resurrection, death and dying, MAID, the structure of the church, issues of environment/climate crisis, poverty, housing and social justice initiatives in Dartmouth," shared Wagner.

It was impossible not to see the wider appeal of the concept. As noted by Vendetti on navigators.ca and others throughout history, Theology on Tap sessions could also be of interest to non-church-goers and non-Christians too. After all, the meetings are held in restaurants/pubs which people from all faiths and no faith frequent as well.

Wagner expressed a similar sentiment. In addition to a desire that Theology on Tap continues to grow and be a safe space for people to share their faith, the rector would also like for it to be a visible witness of the church in the world.

"That bar patrons will say, 'There are those crazy Anglicans again, maybe we should join them!"