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THE DIOCESAN TIMES



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DECEMBER 2025 A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Nightlight at St. James: When faith opens its doors

BY STEPHEN I. WEISS, M.ED.,
DISCERNER FOR HOLY ORDERS AT ST. JAMES ANGLICAN CHURCH, KENTVILLE

Outside St. James Anglican Church in Kentville, the stone walls catch the first pale light of a winter morning. Snow settles quietly on the benches by the front steps, and the bare branches of the old maple hold a lace of frost. It's a postcard scene of Nova Scotia calm — except for what's happening inside. There, faith is taking on a warmer shape.

Beginning November 1, St. James again opens its doors for the Nightlight Shelter, a ministry that transforms the parish hall into a haven for those with nowhere else to go on cold nights. When temperatures dip below freezing, volunteers roll out cots, brew coffee, and prepare a space where anyone without a home can rest in safety and dignity.

How it began

The idea came knocking — literally. "We were approached



Winter at St. James: The church's stone exterior on a cold winter day, a reminder of the warmth found within.

by the Valley Connect Outreach group," says the Rev. Kris MacKenzie, priest-in-charge at St. James. "They had started this initiative outside Kentville, but the location made it hard for guests to

reach. Our parish has space, showers, and accessibility — so they asked to move here."

That December 2023 conversation became the seed of Nightlight. "I knew right away

this was important," MacKenzie says. "We'd been discerning how to connect with the wider world, and I've always felt a strong call to justice issues."

When council debated the

logistics — insurance, safety, volunteers — one longtime member cut through the noise: "Well, are we Christians or not? We have to do this." Within days, the doors were open.

Faith in motion

Since then, Nightlight has become a nightly rhythm of compassion. "We're open seven nights a week," MacKenzie explains. "Volunteers arrive at nine, guests come in at 9:30, and stay until eight in the morning. We've hosted anywhere from one to 15 guests."

Cots are set up each night and stored each day; guests receive bedding, showers, toiletries, and light snacks. "The most important trait for volunteers is compassion," she says. "They need boundaries and the strength to stay awake." Training and clear protocols help the team keep everyone safe and welcome.

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The quiet tears of Christmas: Understanding and acknowledging holiday grief

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

Christmas merrymaking can often be so "loud" that we might not have seen the quiet tears that welled up in a loved one's eyes or heard the catch in a friend's throat upon the mention of the season.

A Blue Christmas doesn't only refer to the beloved seasonal song by Elvis Presley. There's more to it than that.

For some people, especially those grieving the loss of a loved one, Christmas can bring about feelings of grief. Some of this grief might be tied to memories of the traditions that were vs. the traditions that now are — how things have changed since their dear one's death.

Knowing and understanding



Photo by Matteo Raw on Unsplash

grief that is particular to the holiday season

According to The Rev. Canon Dr. Jody Clarke, Professor of Pastoral Theology at Atlantic School of Theology, who has written and spoken extensively on grief, the second Christmas after a loss, is often more challenging than the first. There are several

reasons for this, per Clarke, who specializes in pastoral psychotherapy, death and dying, trauma and trauma recovery, guilt, forgiveness, and peace.

"First of all, the people tend to be less numb, and if they changed their rituals to accommodate the grief in year one, they may want to return to older traditions; this would

spark fresh grief reactions," shared Clarke.

"For example, one family decided that after the death of their daughter, they would go down south for Christmas — and 'try to avoid it altogether.' But the following Christmas, they ended up doing a lot of the grieving work they put off. This was associated with getting the decorations out, readying the house, even buying presents."

Do we, as Christians, fellow parishioners, family and friends, have a role to play when it comes to noticing and acknowledging such grief?

Clarke thinks we do, but it might not be as clear cut as you think.

"Generally, people who have

experienced a death in the past year do not mind holiday cheer," shared the professor.

It would also help to invite someone who you know is grieving or lonely to a more intimate gathering by telling them you'd love to have them over for a light meal and glass of wine, per Clarke. Phrase the invitation with a, "I will pick you up" instead of a, "Let me know if there's anything that I can do to help."

The goal is to not place the onus on the bereaved, according to Clarke.

"They do not need more pressure. Rather say, 'I am going to the grocery store, and I will pick up some seasonal things for you.'"

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Pray as you can: On the threshold

BY SUSAN DRAIN

In olden times, the Angelus bell rang three times a day when the Angelus prayer, celebrating the visitation of the angel Gabriel to Mary, was offered. Hearing the bell, the faithful in their kitchens or fields or workshops would pause to remember the gift of the Incarnation — a moment of prayer for everyone in the workaday world.

Once at a workshop on prayer, we were encouraged to practise our own moment of mindful prayer in the middle of our busy lives, by taking the ringing of the telephone as our own Angelus. Before answering, said our prayer guide, take a moment to breathe and remember that you are more than a worker at your desk; you are a soul in God's world.

That worked better for me when I did work at a desk most of the day; now I find that the ringing phone is always at the other end of the house from where I am, and it is a struggle



to get out of my armchair or set down my garden rake or kitchen spatula and get to the phone before it goes to voice-mail.

So I turn to another practice encouraged at the same workshop: the threshold prayer. Every time we walk through a door or gateway, we are invited to pause to breathe and say

a word or two of whatever is in our hearts — a thanksgiving, a confession, a hosanna, or a plea. There is something fitting about threshold prayer: as we move from one room to another, in or out of a building, we are briefly, in a literally liminal space, an in-between space which is neither here nor there. It is akin to a thin place, where this world and the world of the spirit are so close that they seem to touch, and we can feel, even if we can't see, the realm that is God's. A threshold is always an invitation to something more. As Richard Rohr warns, "If we are unwilling to live askew for a while, to be set off balance, to wait on the ever-spacious threshold, we remain in the same old room for all our lives."

Moreover, threshold prayer reminds me of the poem "God Knows" which you may know by its first line. King George V quoted it in his Christmas broadcast in 1939, when the world was newly at war and

the future frighteningly unknown.

"And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'Give me a light, that I may tread safely into the unknown.' And he replied: 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'"

As we step into Advent and a new year, I will try to remember that stepping over any threshold with a word of prayer is a small way of putting my hand into God's.

References:

Rochard Rohr and Andreas Ebert, *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* (2001)

Minnie Louise Haskins 1875-1957

(Susan Drain is a member of the congregation of the Cathedral Church of All Saints in Halifax)

Helping local community organizations



Nadine Sabeen and friends with the Beehive van outside All Saints Church, Kingston

After holding a very successful summer yard sale and raising over \$2000, All Saints Church in Kingston was still left with a basement filled with quality items. Instead of hauling away these items to the landfill, they put them to good use.

In response to the Long Lake wildfire in West Dalhousie, three vanloads of items were donated to the Salva-

tion Army Thrift Store in Bridgetown to assist families who had lost their homes. More items were donated to The Beehive Adult Service Centre in Aylesford, a vocational training centre for people who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Nothing went to waste and everyone had a smile on their faces.



Robert Byleveld with the Salvation Army van outside All Saints Church, Kingston

Postulant Wade Seymour receives King Charles III Coronation Medal



From left: Second Vice President Harry Jackson, Recipient Wade Seymour, and President Don McCumber.

In April, Postulant Wade Seymour received the King Charles III Coronation Medal from N.S./Nunavut Command President Don McCumber at the Royal Canadian Legion in Freeport, Digby County.

Wade is the Chaplain at the Kingston Legion Branch #908 and received the medal for the work he does at the legion and in the community.

Wade is also seeking ordination as a CAPP priest. He assists with services in the Parish of Wilmot and leads monthly services at the Veterans' Wing at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital and at the Heart of the Valley Nursing Home — both in Middleton.

Congratulations Wade!



The Licensed Lay Ministers of N.S. and P.E.I. held their conference at the Debert Hospitality Centre from September 26 to 28. There were 22 attendees, and they were led

by The Rev. Dorothy Miller, where faithful preaching was the focus. There was a video screening documenting the traditional Indigenous Blanketing Ceremony.



THE DIOCESAN TIMES

VOLUME 80 NUMBER 10

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Published monthly except in July and August by The Diocesan Times Publishing Company.

Online editions available via the diocesan website:
www.nspeidiocese.ca

Printed by and mailed from:
Webnews Printing Inc.,
North York, ON

Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, the management board of The Diocesan Times, the diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island or any representative thereof, except where expressly stated.

All material subject to editing.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

The first day of the month BEFORE the month of publication: e.g., the deadline for the November edition is October 1st.

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Subscription rate for both The Diocesan Times and the Anglican Journal:

\$20 per year
Single copies: \$2

BISHOP'S COLUMN

Journeying together in expectant hope



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

If there's one word I've come to associate with the season of Advent, it's waiting. We wait for the glory of the Lord to be revealed in the birth of the Christ child at Christmas. As one sign of our waiting, we stop saying or singing the Gloria during our worship throughout the season of Advent. We, then, proclaim it joyfully on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We also wait for the second coming of Christ, to judge the world with mercy, and as we wait, we take time to reflect on how we are bringing God's love to birth in our own lives.

Our waiting during Advent is not passive. "Advent" comes from a Latin word which means coming or arrival and in the Anglican tradition, we journey through this season in a spirit of expectant hope. This is a hope that calls us to prepare, and so we make

our church buildings ready, we make our homes ready, and we make our hearts ready to receive the gift of God's love in Christ. We also light candles to dispel the encroaching darkness and to be reminded of the light of Christ coming into the world. We begin by lighting one candle on the first Sunday in Advent and then light an additional candle each week. Each candle reminds us, respectively, of the hope, peace, joy, and love that Christ brings into our lives and into our world. While the days grow darker and shorter in this part of the world, the light intensifies. Even as our world appears to grow increasingly polarized and divided, we are drawn to live in the light that unites us in Christ, a light that draws us outwards to reflect it wherever we may be.

While it is easy to become overwhelmed and frantically

busy during this season (the opposite of waiting passively for things to unfold), this is not what our Advent preparations are about. Rather, we are invited to watch and wait for signs of what God is already doing to bring the Kingdom that Jesus spoke about to birth, and to become active participants in it. The former Provost of Queen's College in St. John's, N.L., The Reverend Dr. A. Boyd Morgan, writing about the season of Advent, describes it as a time of "creative waiting." He writes:

"Waiting creatively, we take up the challenge of living the Kingdom of God as a present reality within our lives and within our communities. We may choose to think of the Kingdom of God as a place or even a state of being we inherit after our death, but the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed is here and now.

When the hungry are fed, when the oppressed are treated justly, and the downtrodden are given hope, there is where we find the Kingdom of God, the presence of God."

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, may our lives continue to reveal the Kingdom of God to a weary and discouraged world. Through our worship and our witness, may we share in the work of bringing the light and life of Christ into our homes and communities. May this Advent season of "creative waiting" fill us with hope, peace, joy, and love, for those are gifts worth waiting for – and working towards.

With gratitude for the light you embody in Christ, I wish you and your loved ones a happy and holy Christmas. With you, I am watching and waiting in expectant hope.

Sandra

Nightlight at St. James: When faith opens its doors

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Most guests are men, some women, ranging in age from early 20s to mid-70s. All register through Valley Connect Outreach and sign an agreement on expectations and conduct. "True hospitality," Kris reminds us, "means meeting everyone where they are — not where we want them to be."

Challenges and grace

"Homelessness is a huge problem in Kentville," MacKenzie says. "Our unhoused neighbours have faced backlash from people who'd rather they not exist than help them. Since aligning ourselves with them, we've had many difficult conversations."

Sharing the church for both worship and shelter requires careful coordination. And not every need can be met within the walls. "Sometimes guests need addiction or mental-health support we can't provide," she explains. "Still, there are wonderful stories



Inside St. James: The parish hall and worship space where volunteers prepare the Nightlight Shelter each evening.

— people from our first and second season now living in stable housing. I pray for that each winter."

The gospel in action

Asked what scripture guides this work, MacKenzie quotes Hebrews: "Show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it."

"At St. James we talk so much about God's love — it's the whole Gospel," she says. "This is a way to live that call to love one another."



The Rev. Kris MacKenzie, Priest-in-Charge at St. James, who helped launch the Nightlight Shelter ministry.

The shelter has changed the parish itself. "It's broadened our scope beyond the pews, given us a tangible sense of God's call, and challenged us to confront our biases. We keep finding creative ways to open the doors again and again."

Stories that stay

One memory remains close to her heart. "A former guest died sleeping outside last winter," she says quietly. "It shaped my passion to not only provide shelter but to use our voice to push for better resources



Front of St. James: The church doors that open nightly to welcome guests seeking safety and rest.

in town." The next Sunday's Gospel — John the Baptist crying in the wilderness — felt like a divine echo: a call to hear the cry of the community and act.

There are lighter stories too: "Our volunteer known as the CLO — Chief Laundry Officer — worked full-time, but washed bag after bag of bedding, returning everything clean. That kind of care reinforces the dignity everyone deserves, even for one night."

Looking ahead

Nightlight is supported

through grants from the Anglican Foundation and the Diocese, funding new heat pumps and an accessibility ramp. Valley Connect helps cover costs, and the parish now budgets for its share. "Volunteer burnout is real," MacKenzie admits, "but new people keep showing up, called to the work."

Her hope is to expand — partnering with more groups to address homelessness at its roots. "This isn't an us-and-them ministry," she says firmly. "Everyone is God's beloved. Serving is a privilege, not a burden."

As dawn returns to Kentville, guests gather their belongings and step out into the day. Volunteers fold cots and sweep the hall. The smell of coffee lingers; morning light filters through stained glass. Faith doesn't always sing in hymns — it sometimes hums through open doors and a community that refuses to let anyone face the cold alone.

Changing the channel



BY BRYAN HAGERMAN RCT

ST PAUL'S OUTREACH COUNSELLOR

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Kaleb was a successful golfer. In the game of golf, there are a multitude of spoken and unspoken rules. For example: 1) Don't place your golf bag on the green. 2) The longest putt goes first. 3) Don't ground your club in a trap. 4) Don't ever touch another's golf ball. 5) Don't talk or move when someone is about to hit or address the ball. 6) If you accidentally move your ball while on the surface, let your playing partners know. And we could go on.

Kaleb was playing for his club's championship on a beautiful autumn day. As he was about to hit his ball on the first hole, a squirrel ran in front of him while in the middle of his swing. The squirrel scampered off into a forest, the ball went into the deep rough. This single distraction affected his swing, subsequent second shot, and golf score.



Photo by Erik Mclean on Unsplash

A distraction can be a negative in day-to-day life that we all, sometimes, endure. They can create a difficulty in concentration and in focus, negatively affecting all of us at some level. Our thinking becomes scattered, making it hard to carry out life's important functions. There are positive distractions too, that ironically help to push the negative ones aside, improving our mental health and life experience.

Distractions are all around us, positive and negative. When we are concentrating on something, or someone, another sound, internally or externally enters into our ear and our emotions, diverting our attention. Sometimes we get distracted while driving. We need to be alert to pedestrians, stop lights, animals, the unexpected, the weather, and other vehicles. For some who suffer from issues around focus, and concentration, any negative distraction can make life difficult. They can be of a

physical, visual, mental, or auditory nature. They can come from cell phones, social media, noise, wandering thoughts, hunger, fatigue, hurtful comments, and internal dialogue.

We also get distracted when we are tired, emotionally spent, agitated, anxious, grieving, when relationships are out of wack, or in the midst of a disappointment. We can get badly distracted when overly concentrating or obsessing on an important assignment, life event, or goal. A form of trauma can distract us, on some level, for years.

Jesus must have been distracted from time to time, even in his global awareness. He explained clearly to his disciples, more than once, that they were going to Jerusalem where he would be given over to the authorities and where he would die. This knowledge must have been a huge difficulty in the life of the human Jesus. And yet he was not deterred in his focus — in his

overall movement towards our redemption. He found ways to keep focused.

Positive distractions distract us from the negative, enabling us to concentrate and focus. Anyone who has watched the recent baseball playoffs in Canada have been buoyed up by the enthusiasm for Canada's team. These types of diversions take us temporarily away from the stress, the pain of existential living. This is not denial, but an important focus on things that make us happy and glad.

Sally was nervous about the final job interview. She had been successful in the process thus far, but she was anxious because this was a job she really wanted — a dream job. And she did not want to do badly in the last interview. The days before the event were difficult. She woke up every night at 3 a.m. with dreaded 'what if' thoughts. 'What if I appear nervous?' 'What if I don't answer the questions correctly?' 'What if I don't get the job?' 'What if, what if, what if?' Her mind could not get off the negative and anxious obsessive track. Then she was helped with some positive ways to distract herself in the early morning when she awoke in the thought loop. She learned to change the channel, to positively distract herself. She could: 1) Get up, make a cup of hot milk or herbal tea, 2)

Work on a puzzle, 3) Play with the dog, 4) Read a book, 5) Watch the news, or 6) Work on her stamp collection.

Sally was able to create some positive distractions. Tired, she went back to bed, and to sleep. She successfully moved away from the thought loop by replacing her internal focus. She found some positive distractions to combat the negative ones. It worked.

Life can present us with a multitude of distractions that inhibit our day-to-day life, sabotaging our inner world, and affecting our outer world. We can easily be overwhelmed and obsessed by the stresses and duties of life. Just like we change the unwelcome channels we come across on TV, we can do so with inner troubling thoughts.

A focused diversion can implement the opposite of the unwelcome one that hinders our day-to-day life. Prayer is a wonderful way to divert our attention away from unhelpful and unhealthy concerns. Reading scripture can remind us of who we are and to whom we belong. Friendships, family, exercise, hobbies, reading, study, and nature serve as wonderful coping mechanisms for the thoughts that drag us down.

Just change the channel. Divert yourself away to a helpful and healthy thought world.

The quiet tears of Christmas: Understanding and acknowledging holiday grief

Cont. from page 1

A visit can go many different ways. Aside from the practical help, there is emotional support you could be offering too.

"Ask if you can ask about how they are feeling," shared Clarke. "They may not want to talk about their feelings, in part, because they are too large, but in most cases, they do, and the listener needs to hold what the person says and not try to make it better or offer statements that try to minimize the pain."

The professor added: "Struggling may be an act of coping, and they may be doing reasonably well. It is just hard."

Being curious about grief and learning as much as you can about it can also help, per the professor.

Visits, drop-bys and cold calls can be powerful forms of connection that clergy and lay leaders can turn to as well. Again, it is important

to phrase your offer as, "I would like to connect, what day works for you?" instead of "Would you like a visit?," shared Clarke.

"Grief is close to the surface during Advent and Christmas, because of all the features of the season that trigger grief reactions such as carols, Christmas lights, the cheery ads, shopping, and the parties," explained Clarke. "Let the bereaved person know that you are interested in what they find hard about the season."

Clarke emphasized, however, that holding the tension between the joy of the Nativity story and the very real pain experienced by those in our pews doesn't necessarily have to mean that we have to hold back the joy.

"Every situation is different," shared the professor. Someone who is bereaved wouldn't necessarily want you to hold back the joy, per Clarke. "They may or may not participate the way

they once did, but that is a choice that they can make."

Grieving the loss of a pet

Monica Ebsary of the Anglican Church of the Holy Spirit in Dartmouth, is holding space for grief this Christmas. Her pain is, no doubt, something many have felt acutely when the gift wrap paper and decorations come out.

"Our family is still going through the grief process of having Venti, the Leonberger, cross the rainbow bridge," shared Ebsary. Each family member is dealing with the pain in different ways. Venti was Ebsary's daughter's dog, but she was also a family dog.

"She watched over all of us, comforted us, and made us laugh, and at 138 pounds, she was a large but calming presence in our home."

Ebsary thinks that grief isn't handled well in Western society. "Workplaces expect someone to return too soon,

whether they've lost a family member or their fur baby," she shared.

The process of grieving the loss of someone cannot and should not be reduced to a timetable, per Ebsary.

Then there are the comments, which are meant to be helpful but hurt instead.

What a co-worker, neighbour, or friend says to someone in grief can arise out of not knowing "what to say."

When results, then, is the unfortunate situation where you say something that compounds the grief, per Ebsary. For example, asking someone the question, "When are you going to get another dog?" might feel harmless to you, when in fact, it would be incredibly painful for the griever to hear.

"Listening and just being there can often be the most healing act of compassion."

Ebsary has become aware of a void in our churches, after

losing Venti.

"I believe our churches can support those of us going through the stages of grief," she shared.

"Perhaps a region of churches in larger centres can offer one special service in each church. One church could offer a service for those who have lost a spouse, partner, or friend, another church in the region could offer a special service during the Advent season for those who have lost a child (infant/teen/adult), and another for the region for anyone who misses their fur babies."

Grief is not a comfortable emotion. It is messy, non-linear, and often alienating.

Learning about it, however, might better equip us to support someone or to go through the process if we were to find ourselves grieving someone during Christmas.

A story fit for Christmas



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR ANGLICANS POWERING POTENTIAL

While we never tire of the original Christmas story, there are others that are very different in their details, but give evidence of the beloved Christmas spirit. Here is one that involves a host of characters to bring to life the saying and metaphor that “it takes a village ...” Who would have imagined that when Jemimah J. and her two children, Mark and Marlene, arrived at St. Luke’s Anglican Church in Dartmouth early in 2025, recently arrived from Nairobi, Kenya, that their journey in Nova Scotia would involve so many in the months to follow?

Jemimah had a lab technician job waiting for her in Shelburne that would not be available to her for a number of months, so being in HRM in the meantime made sense. The Rector of St. Luke’s, Rev. Matthew Sponagle, organized a furnished rental for this family of three and Mark and Marlene were soon registered in neighbourhood schools. Despite a lengthy bus trip from Jemimah’s rental in Spryfield (Halifax) to Dartmouth, St. Luke’s became the spiritual home for this family of three, the St. Luke’s parishioners, their faith family.

Anglicans Powering Potential became involved in a number of ways to support the family, and readers of The Diocesan Times were introduced to them in the June 2025 issue, which featured the human trafficking workshop at the Church of Saint Andrew, Cole Harbour in April 2025. It was there that Jemimah, Mark, and Marlene were introduced to



Photo by Annie Spratt on Unsplash

a number of workshop participants from the Cathedral Church of All Saints, with one (Laura) who has a home in Shelburne County where she spends time each week. This connection has proved invaluable, as Laura has become more directly involved since the family has lived in Shelburne.

However, residing in Shelburne was still in the future in the spring of 2025, especially as there was a delay in Jemimah being able to take up her lab technician job in that town. However, the lease on the rental in Spryfield was fast coming to an end. There literally was no longer any place at that inn! Bishop Sandra Fyfe was aware of the housing dilemma and a whole cast of other characters became involved in securing two rooms at Atlantic School of Theology for July and August.

Facilitated by Rev. Sponagle, a team of three families from St. Luke’s facilitated the move on Canada Day. What an appropriate day for this two-round moving operation for a family new to Canada.

Meanwhile, the Cathedral was able to employ a recent PR graduate from MSVU, Tideal Andrew, a Cathedral congregant whose refugee status and high marks had earned her a special scholarship for her university studies. Tideal qualified for the federal government’s student job program, but the onsite aspect of her summer employment at the Cathedral meant that child care would be needed. What better candidate than Marlene, who had undertaken a babysitting course at school and was anxious to put what she had learned into practice? Arrangements were made with the Cathedral’s

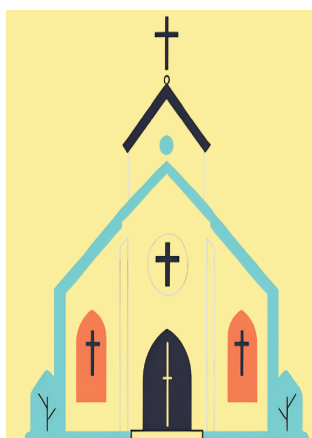
Outreach Committee and St. Catherine’s Group to provide support for the child care.

With the news that Jemimah could be at the Roseway Hospital in Shelburne in early September, the need to find housing in Shelburne and organize Mark and Marlene for school there loomed large. Anglicans Powering Potential again stepped in to facilitate this new set of changes, especially an advance visit to Shelburne Regional High School for Mark and Marlene to meet key staff before the opening day of the school year 2025/26. Rev. Matthew, his wife, Katie (who organized the details of the move), and a neighbouring family, the Aremos, formed a three-vehicle caravan to transport Jemimah’s family and belongings from Halifax to Shelburne, almost like the caravan of sages on camels in the original Christ-

mas story. Many parishioners, friends and neighbours kindly contributed items for their new home. Indeed, “it takes a village ...”

It has been a life-changing nine months for Jemimah, Mark, and Marlene, and the time has provided lots of opportunity for many in the Dartmouth and Chebucto Regions of our diocese to reach out in Christian love to welcome and support this brave family who have launched a new chapter in their lives. The hands and feet of the Prince of Peace, the Light of the World, have been in evidence these many months and we give thanks this Advent season for the opportunity we have been granted to live the Christmas spirit throughout the year.

Thanks be to God!



PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

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Our finest gifts



BY THE REV. MARIAN LUCAS-JEFFERIES

COORDINATOR, DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENT NETWORK

Dear Diocese,

We shall overcome, we shall overcome

We shall overcome someday.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

The song “We Shall Overcome” first published in the 1940s, became a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s-60s. As a child (a teen to be honest) in the 60s, I remember the versions recorded by Pete Seegar and Joan Baez that were played during labour, peace, and anti-war demonstrations.

Imagine my surprise when I arrived for a pastoral care visit for a family I had only met the week before, and I was told by his wife how important music was to her husband and that he had something to share with me.



Photo by yousef naddam on Unsplash

From his hospital bed, he asked for his phone. Then, while searching for music, he told me that he wanted to play a song that was very special to him. How did he know the effect “We Shall Overcome” would have on me?

Tears welled up throughout the room as we all joined Pete Seegar in singing that song of peaceful resistance. As a box

of tissues was passed around, he explained that the song, “We Shall Overcome,” was very important to him and he thought it might be for me too.

The conversation we had didn’t centre on his health but was instead about responding with compassion to the needs of others. My new friend and I had a deeply moving conversa-

tion about a fair and just world and how we can all play a part, no matter how big or how small. He confessed that his faith played a significant role in his attitude.

The family was very clear when they told me, with pride, that he had always been incredibly kind and how he had the gift of turning conflict into peace. They told me that he treated all people equally.

He told me himself, with firm resolve, that it didn’t matter if people were rich or poor, if they had homes, or were homeless, they were all equal in his eyes.

My response? “Well, funny you would say that today. I’ve found myself talking about dignity for the homeless a lot lately.”

His response? “All people should be treated with dignity.”

The day before our conversation, we had a baptism in the church and, as we always do during a baptism, we recommitted ourselves to our baptismal vows, including the one that asks us, “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” (The response is: “I will, with God’s help.”)

We agreed that includes the people asking for money at the intersection or on a street

corner, those living in a tent or under a bush.

An hour later, in conversation with a neighbour, once again, I encountered care and compassion when she told me that she buys sandwiches for the homeless. I told her that I have made it a practice to drop money in the hat whenever I am waiting for the light to change at the corner.

The fear of people “not like us” might come from our biases, or a simple lack of understanding, but that baptismal vow is our marching orders. Treat everyone with dignity. No exceptions.

A long time ago, an innkeeper offered a stable, and dignity, to a young couple expecting a baby — people who had no place to spend the night. Let’s remember that when we respond to the homeless.

We’ll walk hand in hand, we’ll walk hand in hand,

We’ll walk hand in hand someday.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome someday.

Blessings from the outer world,

The Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies, Coordinator, Diocesan Environment Network

For All The Saints – December 2025

SUBMITTED BY REV. JOHN K. MORRELL

Excerpted from Stephen Reynolds’ “For All The Saints”

December 7

Ambrose — Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, D 397

Ambrose was Bishop of Milan and a great champion of the Catholic faith during the last quarter of the fourth century. His election as bishop in the year 374 appeared to be a fluke of providence. Ambrose was the imperial governor of northern Italy when rival factions in the church of Milan began to fight one another over the election of a new bishop. He called the people together and mustered all his eloquence in urging them to keep the peace. Suddenly, from the very back of the crowd, a child’s voice was

heard to cry: “Ambrose for bishop! Ambrose for bishop!” The whole crowd took up the cry — much to the horror and embarrassment of Ambrose himself, for he was not yet baptized. The crowd would not listen to his protests and a week later, after a hurried baptism, he was ordained Bishop of Milan.

Ambrose became a convinced advocate of the Church party which confessed the true divinity of Christ. His position brought him into conflict with the emperor, who sympathized with the opposing party. At one point, the emperor had his legion of bodyguards surround the basilica of Milan while Ambrose and his congregation were celebrating the liturgy. It looked as if they would all be massacred, but Ambrose kept up his people’s courage by preaching to them and leading

them in the singing of psalms and hymns. At nightfall, the emperor finally ordered his troops to withdraw. This event gave Ambrose enormous prestige, which continued into the reign of the next emperor. When the people of Thessalonica were massacred on imperial orders, Ambrose excommunicated the emperor himself and compelled him to do public penance for his atrocity. Because of his orthodoxy and his courage in speaking up for the oppressed, Ambrose became a hero of the western Church long before his death in 397. These same qualities are the reasons why we still honour him to this day, which is the anniversary of his ordination as Bishop of Milan.

December 9

Prophets of the Old Testament

Today, we remember the prophets of the Old Testament and number them among the true saints and witnesses of Christ — not because some of their sayings may be construed as foretelling His birth, but because they recalled Israel and Judah to God’s covenant and uttered the word of God’s justice so that the people might return and seek redemption from the Lord. Prophecy took many forms in ancient Israel and was especially associated with “speaking in tongues,” or the gift of ecstatic speech which could often sound like nothing more than musical babbling, but was in fact uttering praise to God in the power of the Spirit. The first two kings of Israel, Saul and David, manifested this form of prophecy. But so did the prophets of the gods of the heathen — and, as a result, Israel began to look for more in the prophets

of the one true God. They sought qualities like faithfulness to the inner meaning of God’s covenant with Moses and the ability to relate Israel’s contemporary experience of defeat and exile to the great passover out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

These were precisely the qualities found in the writings of the prophets which are included in the canon of the Old Testament; and we honour them during this season of Advent, because they show us how to expect the coming of Christ — in justice, in mercy, and as the fulfilment of the great passover of all creation, when we shall finally return from our exile and enter the true promised land, which is the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ.

The unanticipated call: How spiritual poverty led me to the Nova Scotia Youth Centre

BY KEN MACINTOSH

Having recently submitted a request through Anglican Net News for support for a prison ministry, the editor of The Diocesan Times invited me to expand my outreach via the paper. I agreed, and volunteered to say something as well about my experience as a chaplain at the Nova Scotia Youth Centre, a ministry which is in its very early days.

My original request was for modern, teen-friendly translations of the gospel, wooden crosses for the young people in custody to wear, and artwork to decorate the dark and dismal chapel space. In truth, I was not anticipating the willingness of friends to pay for these items out of pocket; I had intended this as a request for items that were lying unused in closets and bookshelves around the diocese. Thanks to the generosity of Anglicans around the diocese, we now have a good supply of “First Nations Version” and “The Message” translations, and a stock of attractive wooden crosses. I am grateful as well to Alan Syliboy, who responded to my request with a generous contribution of items from his online store.

With the number of church closures over the past decades, I remain hopeful that there may be some artwork or iconography that could be used to make our space a little more conducive to spiritual meditation.

Our chapel space is a good size, and was probably attractive enough in its day, with an abundance of hardwood trim bordering sand-coloured wallpaper and a well-worn earth-tone carpet. Sadly, the overall effect is somewhat dark and dismal, and the space would be made much more attractive with the addition of colourful posters or prints. Uplifting religious themes would be welcome, but anything of an attractive and meditative nature would be appropriate. We are not able to use prints mounted under glass, but art on a wooden or foam-board backing would be welcome. Please keep us in mind if you are downsizing and come across these or other resources, such as educational material, suitable for young people aged 12 to 18.

It is something of a surprise that I find myself a chaplain in a youth detention facility. Being honest, this was never on my radar as something that



Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

I might do, but when considered in the light of my spiritual journey, it makes perfect sense.

I was rather slow to come to faith. Never having been challenged by material poverty, injury or illness in my life, I thought I had everything I needed. It was not until I was in my early fifties, that I was brought low enough to recognize my spiritual poverty, and determined upon a course of academic education as an aid to self-discovery.

That was a good start, but I needed to experience ministry and pastoral work, and to be exposed to missional thinking through participation in Connectors, to get a clearer understanding of what God might be calling me to.

I have discovered that the process of sermon preparation has helped me to hear God's call. As I ponder how scripture selections might be

speaking to the congregation, it sometimes becomes personal; I can't help but hear some gospel messages speaking emphatically to me. Since preaching on Luke 4:16-21, in which Jesus reads the scroll of Isaiah in the synagogue, I have been motivated by the words, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me.”

The Nova Scotia Youth Centre had been without a chaplain for six months before the news came to me by a circuitous route, and after a few phone calls, and an hour-long interview with senior members of the administration, I was invited to accept the position.

This is a ministry that perfectly suits my disposition, my calling as a teacher, preacher, and pastoral care giver, and my particular concern for young people. In this position I feel, more than at any other time,

the potential to do work of a lasting value — kingdom work. And so, I am aware of a certain playful irony in the work of the Spirit, calling me to a position where I announce “liberation” to the prisoner.

This is not the easiest environment in which to work. Security is a principal concern of the institution, which creates some complications. The lives of the young people to whom I minister are so far removed from my own experience that some are difficult for me to reach, and there is a constant turnover as individuals arrive for short visits, pending trial dates, bail hearings, and other forms of processing. In spite of the challenges, I find in general that these young people are intelligent, articulate, and expressive, better informed about Jesus than I had imagined, willing to be honest with me, polite and courteous,

and receptive to a variety of learning experiences. Peer pressure can be a hindrance to participation at times, but in general, there is an appetite for spiritual counselling, religious education, and worship that exceeds my expectations.

A message which has come to me several times in these early days, and which I take to heart, is that the Creator is already present at this facility, eager to call his lost sheep back to the flock, and my task is to support this divine initiative in any way that I can. With gratitude for having been called to this service, I welcome your prayers and support for God's children who pass through this facility.

Ken MacIntosh worships in the parishes of Aylesford and Berwick, and is a postulant for ordination as a Deacon.

The Jesse Tree Project

BY ALLIE COLP

When families show their children that their faith matters in their day-to-day lives at home, it has a bigger impact on how they will practise their faith throughout their lives than anything else. That's not just a made up statement; the 2014 report "Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church" stated just that. This simple piece of information is the foundation for The Jesse Tree Project, an initiative of the Youth and Family Ministry Vision Strategy and Support Team, which is happening right now and will continue through Advent. A Jesse Tree can be sort of an Advent calendar, a way to count down to Christmas, while hearing the stories of the family of Jesus, all the way from the very beginning up to His birth, with



Preparations for the MacKenzie family's ornaments – 24 coats of many colours. © Rev'd Kris MacKenzie

an ornament for a tree each day and a symbol representing that story.

In the Jesse Tree Project, most participating families have been assigned one day of Advent, and they will make 24 ornaments with the symbol for

that day. All of the ornaments will be sent into the Synod Office, packaged into Jesse Tree kits comprising one of each ornament, a booklet of readings and prayers, and maybe a few treats and surprises. These will be redistributed to the

families.

Each day through Advent, families can open one of the ornaments, read the story from scripture for the day, answer a few questions together, and add the ornament to their tree. While the focus of this project

really is families practising their faith at home together, the families gathered for a Zoom call to kick off the project at the end of November, and will gather again to wrap up in January. This is to help all of the participating families connect with one another.

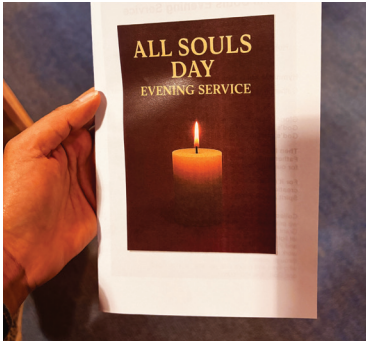
All of the participating families are made up of unique combinations of people or different ages, some including three or more generations. The ornaments that will be made will all be different, and how the Jesse Tree unfolds for each family might be different too. However, all of the participating families will have one thing in common – taking time in this Holy season to make meaning and memories together.

This project was made possible by a generous grant from the Growth for Ministry Fund.

St. Luke's Anglican Church on Veterans Avenue in Dartmouth had a special evening service on Sunday, November 2, at 7 p.m. to mark All Souls Day.

Family and friends of loved ones who died recently came forward to light candles that were placed at the altar and near the chancel steps.

Rev. Matthew Sponagle, Rector at St. Luke's, offered a short yet powerful reflection on grief, and how the magnitude of this emotion is often a testament to just how much we loved our dear ones who aren't here with us anymore.



A Chorister's Christmas 2025

Carols for Christmas, ancient and modern
December 20 at 4 p.m., St John's Anglican Church, Lunenburg
December 21 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m, Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax

Capella Regalis Men and Boys Choir directed by Nick Halley with Maritime Brass Quintet and Paul Halley (organ).

Capella Regalis Men and Boys Choir invites audiences in Lunenburg and Halifax to join them for their 16th annual cherished Christmas concert series, "A Chorister's Christmas". This year's concert program



will reflect Nova Scotia's increasingly multicultural population and celebrate the diverse heritage of the choir's members, with music in languages spoken by the choristers. Performances take place in Lunenburg on December 20 at the historic St. John's Anglican Church and in

Halifax on December 21 at the magnificent Cathedral Church of All Saints. Don't miss this unique musical celebration of Christmas, featuring carols both ancient and modern. For tickets and details, visit: capellaregalis.com/events.



Canon Budgey's vision for collaborative, accessible ministry

The Rev'd Canon Andrea Budgey was appointed Rector/Minister of Word and Sacrament for the Anglican Parish of Tangier and the Sheet Harbour Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, effective December.

In this month's "Conversations with new appointments" column, we chat with Budgey on what excites them most about returning to their home province of N.S. from Toronto and their hopes for ministry in the province.

What excites you most about returning to your home province of Nova Scotia to take on this unique joint appointment?

I've been hoping to move back to Nova Scotia for some time, partly to be closer to my family, but also because I've never really thought of myself as a Torontonians! My vocation was formed in Toronto, and I've always believed I was called to serve where I was, but I'm grateful that circumstances have aligned now so that the same vocation can bring me home. The Eastern Shore is such a beautiful part



of the province, and I'm looking forward to being closer to nature. And the people I've met so far — from both sides of this new partnership — have been incredibly welcoming and positive about making it work.

What initial hopes do you have for your ministry as you serve both the Anglican Parish of Tangier and the Sheet Harbour Pastoral Charge of the United Church?

I'm certain that all the churches in this ministry have

deep historical roots in their communities, and are already deeply engaged with civil agencies and organisations. I also know that there are now many people who have no personal experience of church, and draw their understanding of Christianity from entertainment and news media, which can leave them with an image of Christian faith as conservative, rule-bound, and unwelcoming. My hope is that we can take a fresh look at welcoming "unchurched" and "de-churched" people into our congregations, not by drastically changing our worship, but by making it explicitly accessible — with simple things like clear orders of service and

effective online presence — and by showing our communities, in concrete ways, that the social and environmental issues which concern them are also something the church cares about.

What opportunities do you see for the Anglican and United Church communities to collaborate and grow together in this new structure?

I've worked closely with United Church colleagues, both as a university chaplain and as a board member of the Toronto Urban Native Ministry (an Anglican-United partnership), and I see this ministry as an opportunity for both partners to work together on community outreach and initiatives, and occasional shared worship, while maintaining the distinct traditions which have sustained members in their faith.

How will you draw upon your experience in the Diocese of Toronto to begin this new chapter on the Eastern Shore?

My work as a university chaplain has included a significant focus on ecumenical collabora-

tion, and I've also been part of the Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Committee, engaging with issues of poverty, equity, and ecology — I think some of that experience will serve me well in this new setting. And my current parish, while it's within the bounds of the city of Toronto, is very much a neighbourhood church, working closely with the community around it. I've been blessed with a strong lay leadership team, like the teams I'll be working with going forward, and I've learned that the balance of responsibility and trust in that kind of partnership creates a strong congregational culture which supports everyone's baptismal vocation.

What message would you like to share with both congregations as they welcome you this month?

Thank you all for your welcome and your faithfulness. I'm looking forward to Advent, and the start of a new liturgical year, as we seek God's guidance to chart a course for a new adventure together.

His birth – A Christmas story

BY ANGELA RUSH

In month six, what we call June, an angel spoke to Mary.

You surely can't be real, she thought; it all felt, to her, quite scary.

"Be not afraid," he said. "You are the chosen one."

"To give birth to a baby boy; He will be king, He's God's Son."

That same angel spoke to Joseph saying, "Take Mary as your wife."

"You shall name the baby Jesus," — destined to change the world with His life.

While talking with her cousin — one woman to another,

Mary spoke of that special angel who said, soon she'd become a mother.

Months had passed, time drew near; Mary was soon to give birth.

To Bethlehem they travelled, taxes due depended on worth.

The journey was long for Mary as she rode upon a donkey's back.

Hours melted into each other and the sky soon became black.

As Joseph searched from inn to inn, not a single room could



Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust on Unsplash

be found.

So many travellers had arrived; so many people were all around.

They made their way to a stable; keeping Mary as comfortable as he could.

He gathered up some hay and cloths and found a manger, made of wood.

Gabriel was the angel's name; he still had some work to do.

Shepherds tending their flocks at night would be given

a message too.

As the glory of the Lord shone down, the angel began to say,

"In the city of David, a Saviour is born you will find Him in a manger full of hay."

As the angel then disappeared, the shepherds saw a star,

Shining so high, and brighter than any other seen by far.

Follow the star, its heavenly glow; was the song that the angels did sing.

A Prince of Peace, a Lord of Love, Our Saviour and Our King.

Nestled in His heavenly manger, Mary looked at her baby with pride.

Jesus, we are to call you; God's child that I carried inside.

From the East and from the West, so many travelled to see.

This tiny babe, the heavenly one who was destined to set us free.

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, were gifts that the wise men gave.

Humbly kneeling before the baby who would one day, humanity save.

Christmas is what we celebrate with family and those we love.

Jesus is our gift from our Heavenly Father up above.

“Because there was no place for them in the inn”

BY ANDREW SHERIN

Mary and Joseph had to settle on shelter, for them and the newborn baby Jesus, in a stable, “because there was no place for them in the inn” — Luke 2: v7. They had been ordered by Caesar Augustus to travel 151 kms from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled. Every night, in many places in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, men, women, and families find the shelters full.

As reported in the November issue of The Diocesan Times, there were 1,132 persons identified by Point in Time count as experiencing homelessness (1,009 adults and 123 children) in HRM and 318 persons in P.E.I. and needing shelter. All too often, “there was no place for them” in the shelters. CBC reported on December 3, 2024 that “Haven House, [Truro’s] permanent shelter that can accommodate up to 25 people, is full every night.” Is a shelter adequate housing in any case?

Annual Housing Symposium

On October 20, 2025, the Halifax Housing and Homeless Partnership held the 9th Annual Housing Symposium in collaboration with the United Way and the Nova Scotia Non-Profit Housing Association. The symposium brought together, virtually and in person, many of the stakeholders in homelessness and housing from across the Atlantic provinces. The audience included persons experiencing homelessness, staff from service providers, for-profit and non-market landlords, government employees, at least one politician, and some attendees from faith communities.

The opening keynote speaker was Krissy Fry, CBRE. She led the audience through a short course in Housing Financing 101. Canada has only 3.5 per cent social rental housing compared to the OECD average rate of 7 per cent. (U.K. 16 per cent, France 14 per cent). She stated that there were, at present, about 10,000 rental units being built in Nova Scotia costing about \$450,000 per unit to build new. The break-even rent for these units, which are not luxury units, is \$2,600 a month. Clearly, these units are not affordable, certainly not within reach of persons on social assistance or working for minimum wage. Not-for-profit or government social housing approaches, where rent-gear-to-income is often the rule, is the only way to provide permanent



An illustration of the continuum of housing New Dawn provides: homelessness — transitional housing — forever home (made using an infographic on the Pallet Shelter website).

housing for persons living on low incomes.

Krissy was followed by a panel of Kit Hickey, Housing Alternatives, Saint John, N.B. and Mark Kennedy, Everbloom Homes CIC, presenting innovative approaches to providing affordable housing. Kit’s organization provides property management and development services to not-for-profit housing organizations and housing cooperatives. It has developed relationships with service-providing organizations to provide support services to the tenants of its clients. Housing Alternatives’ Housing First program embraces a person-oriented approach to ending homelessness, which focuses on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional support and services as needed. Providing property management services and expertise to a number of not-for-profit housing organizations allows lower property management costs and access to expertise they could not afford alone.

Mark Kennedy, Everbloom Homes CIC, introduced the audience to the Community Interest Company model (CIC). As a CIC, Everbloom is mandated to reinvest a minimum 60 per cent of its profits back into their community purpose. Their properties are also protected as non-market housing.

Everbloom Homes envisions a Canada where all citizens have access to dignified, affordable homes where they can flourish. There’s a simple idea at the heart of the organization — if the home unit thrives, so does society and local economies.

Erika Shea of New Dawn Enterprises and Megan Peters, Ally Centre of Cape Breton made a passionate presentation

on their work with unhoused persons in CBRM.

New Dawn Enterprises is a social enterprise for community-building, providing a long list of services to CBRM, including meals on wheels, services for children, families and youth, home care, and more. They also support the Eltuek Arts Centre for artists and arts organizations.

The Ally Centre uses a community development and harm reduction approach in providing services, education, support, and advocacy on blood borne pathogens and related issues for the people of Cape Breton Island.

The two organizations provide a robust continuum of housing solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness in CBRM. Erika and Megan shared their excitement as they spoke about watching individuals progress from homelessness to transitional housing in the Village at Pine Tree Park and then to a for-ever home in Eleanor’s Court, a supportive, affordable housing development. The residents of the Village, a community of single person shelters, wanted a door they could lock, a place to use in private, access to showers, laundry, a place to make their own meals, and peace. Both the Village and Eleanor’s Court have support services provided by the Ally Centre.

The closing keynote was presented by Michele Bliss of National Right to Housing Network. She introduced the National Housing Strategy Act. (See the sidebar on adequate housing as a human right)

Everyone is doing their best, Erika said, during her presentation referring to organizations like New Dawn; it is just not enough.

Housing as a human right



Photo by Jakub Zerdzicki on Unsplash

BY ANDREW SHERIN

“Housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person” — the preamble of the National Housing Strategy Act

Canada recognizes “that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law” in the National Housing Strategy Act Section 4a.

What is the National Housing Strategy Act?

The Act, passed into law in July 2019, established an infrastructure to advise federal policies on housing. It established the National Housing Strategy and three bodies, the National Housing Council, the Federal Housing Advocate and Review Panels.

The National Housing Council

The National Housing Council provides advice to the responsible Minister. In its latest report from May 2024, the Chair of the Council wrote to the Minister, “The focus is not just on accelerating housing supply; we also need to look after the most vulnerable members of our community.” The Council’s present priority is scaling up the non-market housing sector, given the sector’s ability to provide affordable, adequate housing for Canadians with low and moderate incomes.

The Federal Housing Advocate

The goal of the Advocate’s work is to drive change on key systemic housing issues and advance the right to housing for all in Canada. The Ad-

vocate receives submissions from people or organizations across Canada on the systemic housing issues they are facing and makes recommendations on how to address them. The Advocate can request the Housing Council to establish a review panel on a housing issue.

Review Panels

A review panel consists of three members of the National Housing Council. A recent review panel made recommendations on the Financialization of Purpose-Built Rental Housing. The financialization of housing was defined as “the growing dominance of financial actors in the housing sector, which is transforming the main function of housing from a place to live into a financial asset and a tool for investor profits.” In May 2024, the Chair of the Review Panel wrote to the Minister: “We must view the right to adequate housing through the same lens as the right to universal health care, ensuring that everyone in Canada has access.” The panel provided recommendations on the supply of adequate affordable housing, including steps to protect existing affordable housing and encouraging the non-market rental housing sector. It also recommended steps to enhance tenant protections. A new review panel (the right to housing for women, Two Spirit, Trans, and gender-diverse people) has completed written and oral dialogues.

P.E.I.'s oldest Anglican place of worship marks bicentennial with joyous weekend

WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED BY
JAN (COX)

Saint John's Church, St. Eleanor's, Prince Edward Island was built in 1825, burned down in 1835, and rebuilt in 1838. It is the oldest Anglican place of worship in the province.

As a "kick off" to our anniversary celebrations, we held a Memorial Hymn Sing on Sunday, August 17, 2025. Candles of remembrance were lit as the names of loved ones were read aloud. Song selections were sung by Rev. Ned Henthorn, local musician Rodney Savidant, the choir under the direction of Sandy Fraser, and the congregation.

The following weekend, the celebrations began.

A Meet 'n Greet Friday evening started things off with special guest, The Rt. Rev'd Sandra Fyfe, Bishop of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Many friends and family from both our parish churches, and from far and near, attended including, Minister of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture, Zack Bell. With an outstanding display of heritage artifacts and exhibits from our past, St. John's was buzzing!

On Saturday, we rolled out the barbecues, set up the badminton nets, and measured out the grounds for some good



Bishop Sandra and confirmands



Cemetery tour



Confirmation service



Danny Drouin



Guided historical walk led by Rev. Ned

old fashioned P.E.I. Washer Toss fun. The community was invited to spend the afternoon with us, and enjoy they did! The highlight of the afternoon was, however, a guided historical walk through our cemetery led by Rev. Ned. He was easily spotted, dressed in top hat and tails, as he shepherded the crowd through the graveyard.

On Saturday evening, many came back to St. John's to listen to talented musician and songwriter, Danny Drouin.



Recessional

Danny's powerful voice filled the church as his words and Gospel songs filled out hearts.

On Sunday morning, we held a combined parish worship service. Bishop Sandra's sermon was uplifting and heartfelt. She spoke of the generations gone before us and the hope they had in their hearts as they built St. John's as a gathering place for the community. That hope continues today, she said, as the next generation and many more to come, carry on in that same spirit.



Saturday BBQ

As if we hadn't been blessed enough during the weekend, four candidates were presented and confirmed at the service. The commitments we made again in the renewing of our Baptismal Covenant, with God's help, seemed extra meaningful, thinking back on the last 200 years.

After the service, Bishop Sandra presented Rev. Ned with a certificate celebrating his 25th anniversary of ordination to the Diaconate. What a joyous time! The service and



Saint John's

the scheduled festivities came to a close with the cutting of a huge anniversary cake.

We want to thank Bishop Sandra, and her family, for spending time with us. Bishop Sandra's sincerity, her generosity of time, and her wonderful smile touched us all.

The entire weekend was a God-centred, overwhelming demonstration of His love and proof that He is not finished with us yet. Another 200 years still to come.

Advent hope in action — "Hope for New Beginnings" benefit concert

BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS, CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS

Hope and new beginnings exemplify the Advent season. It is the start of a new liturgical year, a new beginning, with all its promise and its sense of hope. While hope can feel elusive amidst the challenges of our lives, for Christians, hope is a profound assurance rooted in faith: "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1). Hope rooted in faith inspires believers to look beyond our immediate circumstances and trust God's faithfulness to his promises.

Thoughts of immediate challenges and obstacles were far from mind with the "Hope for New Beginnings" benefit concert at the Cathedral Church of All Saints on October 24. Its purpose was to raise funds for a new beginning, for a renewed hope, for some very special refugees — relatives of



Tideal, Tongol and Malual Banguot

a new family at the Cathedral, themselves former refugees in Uganda, originally from South Sudan. We are very grateful that the Banguot family: Tideal Andrew, Tongol, and two-year old Malual have come to Halifax and made the Cathedral Church of All Saints their spiritual home. A hope for new beginnings has a very special meaning for them: they want Halifax and the Cathedral to be a new beginning for members of their family



(four siblings and a niece) in the same way that Halifax and the Cathedral have been a new beginning for them.

With the inspiration for the "Hope for New Beginnings" benefit concert, and its overall coordination in the capable hands of Margy Withrow, those in attendance on October 24 were treated to an exceptional evening of music and narration, featuring the full Halley family: Paul, Nicholas, Vanessa, Shay and Wyn Burkhart; multi-instru-



mentalists: Graham Berry and Michael Lee; pianist: Caitlin Strong; vocalists: Sam Swain, Jamie Whitley, Irene Wilkinson, and the Cathedral's own Dean Paul Smith and Rev. Kate Heichler. Olga Milosovich emceed the evening, Peter Wilkinson supervised the sound, and Stephen Osler designed the set for the finale number, narrated by Gay Hauser, with "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" sung by the full cast and audience to conclude the amazing concert. It was an unforgettable eve-

ning, thanks to all who made it possible.

If you were unable to make the concert, but would like to contribute to this refugee initiative, that is possible: cheques are payable to the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Refugees in the memo line. Alternatively, an e-transfer can be delivered: treasurercc-cas@eastlink.ca with Refugees in the message field, along with your name and address. All contributions in these ways (cheque or e-transfer) receive an income tax receipt.

With the resilience of the Cathedral's Banguot family as inspiration, supported by the quotation of Plato about the power of music, kindly provided by Dean Paul: "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything," the Cathedral extends an Advent hope, with a sense of a new beginning, to one and all.

Challenging the effects of a scarcity mindset in our parishes

BY P.J. DONAHOE

P.J. Donahoe, retired academic administrator, educator, is an LLM at St. Luke's Dartmouth, and Connectors 7 member.

My parents' generation lived through WWII and Korea; they are people who experienced rationing and folks who grew up with poverty and loss. They often share a common sense that something worse is just down the road. Anxiety like this can be contagious and often manifests itself as a reluctance to take risks, or passive aggression, or making manageable risk seem daunting. It can become part of a family's way of thinking over generations.

What happens when a parish council thinks this way? Being thrifty makes sense until it doesn't. Saving for a rainy day, ditto, until we fail to realize how much sunshine we have. If repairs are left to the last extremity, if the lowest bid always gets selected, and if helpful technical enhancements are ignored, the path to a worn-down, run-down, "slow church" creates a sad impression no one consciously wants, even if the intentions were good.

Where is hope in all this? As our Synod guest, Bishop Deon Kevin Johnson from Missouri told us, "Hope is a radical act of defiance in the face of the seemingly impossible; God breaks into our world, not with strength, or might, or power,



Photo by Akin Cakiner on Unsplash

but with hope."

Having hope means we have a divine, not just a worldly, purpose; it should define us and 'they will know we are Christians by our love.' Our divine lover said: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Are we living and are we acting like we believe the Spirit abides with us, in us?

Where does stewardship come into this equation? It seems to me that real stewardship has to involve farsightedness – the long view, and

careful attention to legacy, commitment to not depreciate the investment of previous generations, even in tough times. Lack seems to say, if it was good enough for us, it should be alright for others. But is it? When the fabric gets shabby, it represents us likewise. It begs questions like, 'Has this church given up?,' 'Is the parish actively living the word?,' 'Are there signs of renewal?,' 'Have they, (to use a TV metaphor), jumped the shark?' And, most importantly, 'What has been created to

attract, sustain, and uplift new members and our neighbours?'

The other side of scarcity is an abundance mindset that fights burnout and loss of energy/empathy. Abundance flips scarcity and looks for positive opportunities. Abundance mindsets are grateful, creative, and cooperative. Abundance seeks renewal through succession-planning, engaging, and coaching others who can take the reins. It asks, "Are we doing everything we can to assure that the building,

its furnishings, and equipment, provide up-to-date support for our holy services and the multiple needs of a changing demographic?" "For a facility like ours to serve the diverse needs of our neighbourhood?"

It urgently matters, in all human endeavours, that we move toward the light — and that cannot happen when we are comfortable with the status quo. Earlier I said, "One of the great enemies of renewal is a mindset of scarcity — a sense of lack or fear of not having enough." When the lens is, 'lack,' what do we need? To let go and let God!

Let go of what lives in the past and let God's evolving purpose flow through us. If your head or heart is telling you something is not affordable, ask why, trust in the creator's abundance, and re-think why there would ever not be enough. A head shake reminds us that procrastination, anxiety's sibling, will not bring miracles, but Hope, in action, certainly does.

As we welcome others, and new ways of doing, as we discover new community needs to serve, here and beyond our doors, let hope shine through and let us experience abundance. In the words of Walter Brueggemann, "The spirit of abundance is recognized in God's people by their relentless faith, valiant hope, unfettered joy, and selfless generosity."

Giving gifts that change lives this Christmas

BY GILLIAN POWER AND LEAH MARSHALL

Alongside Hope, previously known as PWRDF (Primate's World Relief and Development Fund), is gearing up for Christmas.

As the holidays near, it seems the pressure of TV ads, 'prime' days, and social media are laying on the guilt more than ever. Have you found a present for your loved ones yet? Sure, enough here comes the montage of Hallmark movies with a theme of, "Maybe Christmas is about the people we celebrate with; rather than the traditions and consumerism." And yet, here we are ducking through craft sales and keeping our eyes peeled on Facebook Marketplace and sales at

Canadian Tire to cross off lists and make sure there's something for everyone. Yet sadly, while there is truly enough for everyone in our world, not everyone has enough.

In a culture where we are increasingly faced with having more 'stuff' than ever before, it can be hard to know how to give a truly meaningful gift. Giving gifts for the holidays is, for many, a special time of being thankful for what we have and of sharing with others; but with the World of Gifts catalogue, it can also be an easy way to tackle some of the complex global challenges and injustices that can seem so overwhelming.

This Christmas, give the gift of clean water, good soil, food

security, healthy babies, dignity for women and girls, emergency response, and peace. Every gift supports specific projects and partners. Check out Alongside Hope's World of Gifts catalogue this Christmas, to give a gift that truly has an impact on communities and families across the world.

You can go online at: alongsidehope.org/get-involved/shop-world-of-gifts/ and order anything — from peanut porridge to combat malnutrition in Burundi to fish ponds in Zimbabwe, hens in Kenya, beehives in Columbia, new baby kits in Lesotho, rocket stoves, seeds, and trees. The options are endless. When you purchase these gifts online or by phone (1-877-936-9199), an e-mail, or mailed card, will

be sent to the receiver and the donor. What a beautiful way to celebrate our loved ones, by giving to those whose lives can be made so much easier.

Beautiful 2025 Christmas Cards are available for order at alongsidehope.org/christmas-cards2025/

The cards come in packs of 12 and a minimum donation of \$25 per pack is recommended. Donations of \$25 or more qualify for a tax receipt. Please allow 3-4 weeks for shipping.

Alongside Hope is the Anglican Church of Canada's agency for sustainable development and relief. Since 1958, we have worked hand-in-hand with trusted partners in Canada and around the world on a journey of positive

change. Together, we are improving health, food security, and livelihoods where needs are greatest. Alongside Hope receives donations from people across Canada — Anglicans as well as non-Anglicans — and also receives funds from other sources, including Global Affairs Canada and institutional donors. Our volunteers promote Alongside Hope programs in churches and communities, to raise money and awareness about the needs of vulnerable people around the world.

As we walk alongside each of our partners, supporting, listening and sharing with one another, we embrace and embody the hope of a better world.

Remembering the dedication of the original stitchers



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR THE CURRENT CATHEDRAL NEEDLEPOINT PROJECT

Can you imagine stitching a kneeler for more than three years, with over 400 hours of labour, totalling well over 250,000 stitches? That is, indeed, a labour of love!

The scope of the Cathedral's Needlepoint Project in the 1980's/90's was broad. As already noted, many parishes in the diocese had stitchers prepared to do the needlepoint stitching for a kneeler or cushion to beautify the Cathedral. That first Needlepoint Coordinating Committee at the Cathedral had created kits for the participating parishes, complete with all that was needed to undertake the stitching task: the canvas with the design printed in colour on it, the Persian wool threads in all the appropriate colours, and directions for how to do the needlepoint stitches. It is a blessing that there were so many who were prepared to undertake this incredible labour of love, and to do so with such skill, perseverance, and dedication.

One such Cathedral congregant in the 1980s was Robin Biggs. Robin was eager to be involved with the needlepoint project, as handwork



of many kinds was (and is) a love of hers: sewing, smocking, bargello, and cross stitching, to name but a few. Charlotte Cochran of the current Needlepoint Project team was the

second coordinator of that first project team of the 1980s/90s and it was a pleasure for Charlotte to speak with Robin this fall about her experience with the stitching of the amazing

litany desk kneeler.

Robin noted to Charlotte that the engineer friend who asked her about the length of time it took her to stitch

the kneeler did so in order to calculate the total number of stitches involved. Robin has the exact dates of her labour of love: her starting point with the litany desk kneeler was May 27, 1984, with completion on December 27, 1987, totalling an incredible 428 hours. The number of squares on the canvas to be stitched was 129, 600 for a total of 259,200 stitches! These details are recorded on the reverse of photos that Robin has.

When Robin was asked about any challenges she encountered, she did comment on the complex imagery of the design and the time needed to complete the project. A challenge of a different kind was that of holding the heavy and awkward kneeler at the time of its dedication. Robin inadvertently dropped it, but that mishap did not deter the then bishop from continuing with his dedication prayer.

Just as the Cathedral is the beneficiary of Robin's needlepoint skills, her grandchildren are as well: each is a recipient of a beautiful needlepoint Christmas stocking. Robin loves to do her own designs and colour selection for her projects, but appreciates that the Cathedral kneelers and cushions required a coordinated and intentional approach to imagery and colour choices. There is no question that the Cathedral needlepoint kneelers and cushions constitute an amazing story of faith and love, as evidenced by the stitcher Robin's story.

What a blessing!

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The divided heart of December: Reclaiming the reign of God in Advent

BY MICHELLE BULL

Advent is nearly upon us (at the time of writing this in late October), which means that the season of preparing for Christmas is nearly upon us. Or, for some forward-thinking people, almost done. I am not one of those people who has my shopping done, presents wrapped, and cards sent by November. I have to confess that when my mom phones me up and tells me she's just mailed the last Christmas parcel sometime in November, I find it rather annoying. Especially if she asks me if I've finished mine yet. No, no, I haven't.

As a Christian, I find the pre-Christmas season a trifle difficult. On the one hand, I'm preparing for the birth of my Lord. On the other hand, I'm caught up in the secular preparations for Christmas holidays: presents, cards, dinner, guests, family gatherings, overspending, and decorating, all of which are great (except, overspending). However, they can be kind of all-consuming and make it hard to focus on the Christian celebration. What does it mean that the Son of God should have been born as a human baby, so very long ago?

These two celebrations, with the same name, are like living in two different worlds at the same time. In some ways, Easter is easier, because, apart from chocolate and a long weekend, the secular world more or less ignores Easter, so our attention can focus on the spiritual significance of it, but Christmas is so culturally significant that the focus is divided.

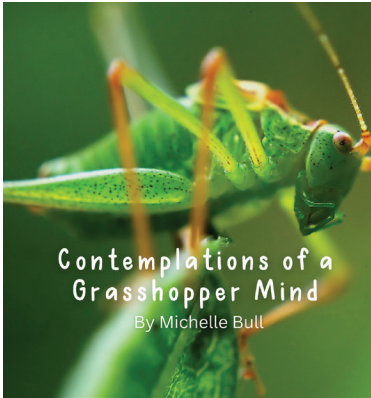
Let me be clear. There is nothing wrong with celebrating Christmas with all the secular and pagan trim. Christmas trees, lights, presents, Santa, Jingle Bells, family gatherings, and a big feast — it's all great.

Actually, some of my Hindu friends tend to think all these things are the heart of the Christian celebration of Christmas, and most of them also put up trees and give presents. And that's great. It's all quite wonderful, a time to be with family and friends and share generously with one another, but it's not the heart of the Christian holy day.

That's quite different. That's about God seeing the mess the world is in, and coming to share it with us, to bring us healing and hope and, above all, God's love. It's about a



Photo by Alvin David on Unsplash



whole counter-cultural revolution, foretold by the prophets and St. Mary in the Magnificat, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when God entered human life in person, and when Jesus proclaimed, "The Reign of God is at hand!"

Advent looks forward to that birth and also, as all good Anglicans should know, to the second coming, when the Reign of God will come in full, when lions will lie down with lambs, when we will beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks, and retool our munitions factories to make cultivators and combines. When everyone will sit down under their own vine and their own fig tree and have enough to eat and the peace to enjoy it. Where children can play without fear.

Advent, for us Christians, is a time to prepare for this second coming, for the coming of the Reign of God, when all things are made right in the world. That means preparing

our hearts to love God and our neighbours more than we already do. It means doing our best to live here and now under the reign of God, by the principles Jesus taught us, instead of by worldly principles, whenever those two disagree. They often do.

It means working for peace in our hearts, our homes, our neighbourhoods, our country, and the world — real peace, with justice. It means living by our baptismal promises (see BAS p. 159). That means respecting the dignity of every human being (even the ones we dislike), sharing with people, helping them, spending time in prayer, caring for the earth, working to dismantle unjust systems, etc.

Most of us don't want to be thinking about stuff like that at Christmas. We do usually give a bit more to food banks and maybe collect presents for underprivileged children, which is great. However, we don't want to think about unjust systems and bad political decisions and whether our country is complicit in any shady overseas activities. It's unpleasant. We'd rather decide who to invite to Christmas dinner.

Yet, Advent calls us to this — to actively seek to make this world more like the way God would like it to be and to live

and proclaim the reign of God. Every year in Advent, that's the question I contemplate: how can I more faithfully work for the reign of God, here and now, and so help fulfill the promise of the Incarnation? I do this, at least, when I can

spare time from deciding what to get my sister for Christmas.

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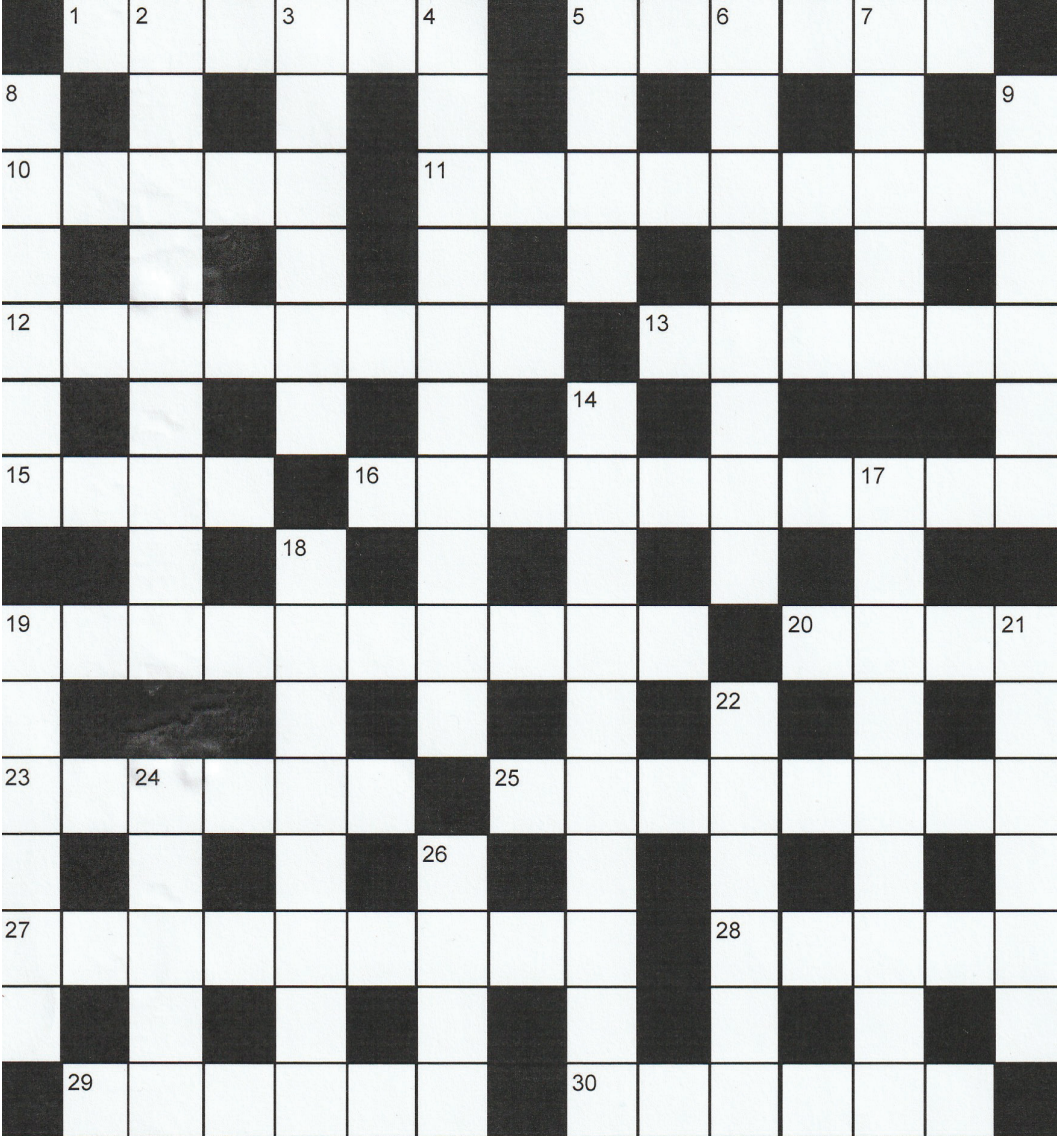
4. YOUR GIFT of \$120 gives a family of 4 a new oven.
With match = 2x supplies

Find **Alongside Hope's** World of Gifts in your Anglican Journal, scan the QR code to browse our guide online or visit alongsidehope.org/worldofgifts

December Bible Crossword

BY MAUREEN YEATS





December 2025 Puzzle Clues


- ACROSS:

 - 1- Carnation, rose, or peony, etc. (6)
 - 5- Prophet who anointed Solomon king (see 1 Kings 1:28-45) (6)
 - 10- He helped carry Jesus' cross, _____ of Cyrene (Luke 23:26) (5)
 - 11- Edible fruit that grows in bogs (9)
 - 12- Frozen dairy dessert (3,5)
 - 13- Mercury, Jupiter, or Mars, etc. (6)
 - 15- One who inherits (4)
 - 16- Adaptable (10)
 - 19- Curry favour (10)
 - 20- Group of three (4)
 - 23- Given a title (6)
 - 25- Old Testament major prophet (8)
 - 27- Unfortunate happenings (9)
 - 28- Disciple whom Jesus renamed (see John 1:42) (5)
 - 29- One of the Twelve Disciples (see John 1:40) (6)
 - 30- A type of fortified wine (6)
- DOWN:

 - 2- Moving heavily (9)
 - 3- Place where grapes are processed (6)
 - 4- English King, died in battle 1485 (7,3)
 - 5- He built the ark (see Gen. 6-7) (4)
 - 6- Arrange in a systematic form (8)
 - 7- Priest and brother of Moses (see Exod. 4 +) (5)
 - 8- Old Testament major prophet (6)
 - 9- European evergreen shrub (6)
 - 14- External props (10)
 - 17- Lawyer who works in a courtroom (9)
 - 18- System of reckoning days, etc. (8)
 - 19- Person from Madras (6)
 - 21- Additional people (6)
 - 22- Men and women (6)
 - 24- Part of a BLT (5)
 - 26- White flakes that fall in winter

November Puzzle Answers

1	B	E	A	R	A	B	L	E		5	E	L	I	7	J	A	8	H
	L		N		M		I		9	P		A		A		A		A
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19	C	A	R	E	20	D		21	T	H	E	O	22	R	E	M	S	
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24	A	B	25	E	N	A	K	I		26	C	A	N	I	N	E	S	
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27	P	I	E	C	E	M	E	A	L		28	E	X	I	L	E		
	E		C		N		D		E		A		N		N			
29	D	E	T	E	S	T		30	A	B	O	U	N	D	E	D		



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Facing the hate: Christian leaders on speaking out against antisemitism and prioritizing interfaith dialogue

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYA-GAM

Playground equipment at Hemenway Elementary School, a public school some 20 miles west of Boston.

A heritage-listed pub in Melbourne.

A Brooklyn Yeshiva.

The Kehillat Shaarei Torah synagogue on Bayview Avenue, Toronto.

Chabad-Lubavitch of the Maritimes Rohr Family Institute, Halifax.

Shaar Shalom and Beth Israel synagogues, Halifax.

These are some of the venues and places that were targeted by antisemitic vandalism in the recent past.

Members of the Christian community came forward to share how discouraging such acts of violence really are. To most, the acts of hatred brought deep sorrow.

According to The Rev'd Nichola Cumine, Rector of the affirming church St. John the Evangelist, Middle Sackville, the sorrow that was felt was not just for the Jewish community, "but for all of us."

"Hatred like this wounds the soul of a city. It's a violation of the sacred dignity we all share as children of God," added Cumine.

The Rev. Dr. Paul Friesen, Rector at St. Paul's Halifax, referenced what Rabbi Yakov Kerzner of Beth Israel said in his CBC Interview.

"It's very discouraging that after some decades of challenging centuries of antisemitism, that this can keep rising up again," shared Rev. Friesen.

"And it's really unfortunate that some members of the public can't distinguish between criticizing a political state, Israel, and demonizing Jewish people around the world."

The role of interfaith dialogue in preventing and responding to acts of hate

The Rev. Dr. Ranall Ingalls,



Photo by Alexander Grey on Unsplash

Chaplain at University of King's College in Halifax shared that "face-to-face" interactions can go a long way.

"If we want to resist hatred, we must practise being face-to-face," shared Ingalls.

Hatred breeds and grows in our silos or echo chambers, per Ingalls, and the world offers a lot of opportunities for this to happen.

"We resist, above all, by taking on the discipline of being face-to-face with people who make us uncomfortable when there is opportunity. Christians should know this above all." We are transformed as Christians when we are face-to-face with Christ in repentance and adoration, according to Ingalls.

"We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This stance is often uncomfortable."

Friesen added that it is not enough to just think that civil dialogue between religious communities can challenge

problems of hate. These efforts need to be ongoing, per the priest.

"And frankly, it's the members of the public that would never support interfaith dialogue, that are the biggest part of the problem. In fact conspiracy theories about racial or religious minorities are now often detached from active, formal affiliation with majority religious groups."

Cumine furthered that interfaith dialogue is not only about talking.

"It's about building trust, understanding, and shared responsibility," added the minister. "When we know each other's stories, we're less likely to fall for the lies that fuel hate."

Addressing history

You cannot talk about interfaith dialogue or Christians speaking up without acknowledging the "elephant in the room," so to speak — historically, there has been Christian prejudices against Jewish people, both in sermons and teachings. However, those in

ministry can address this.

Cumine names the sins of the past in sermons. "I remind my parishioners that Jesus was a Jew, and that our faith is rooted in theirs. I teach the Golden Rule as it appears in all major faiths, and I have a poster of it prominently displayed at the front of our church. It's a daily reminder that love is not optional — it's foundational."

Being extremely careful in your approach is critical, per Friesen, and part of this has to do with educating yourself.

"One understands that the way 'Jew' was used in our first century Scriptures (when the first 'Christians' were Jewish followers of Jesus, and a small and despised minority themselves) was not the tragic way it was used in antisemitic 'Christian' Medieval Europe or in 20th Century antisemitism, before and after the Holocaust," shared Friesen. "And one communicates this clearly, and insists on it in the Church."

What's more, Anglicans

can get to know their Jewish neighbours, added Friesen, and seek to understand their point of view.

"And they can distinguish between a particular government of a particular political state, Israel, and the person standing in front of them."

Message of hope to people who might be exposed to hate speech online and in their communities

Cumine wants to tell young people that they are not powerless. There is a choice. "You can choose love over hate, truth over propaganda, and courage over silence. Don't let the loudest voices drown out the wisest ones," shared the priest.

Ultimately, hope is not a product of pretending that cultural and religious differences don't matter, and shouldn't exist, per Friesen. "[Hope] comes from a deep appreciation of one's own tradition and a simultaneous deep respect for the tradition of the other."



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