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THE DIOCESAN TIMES



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Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Bishop Sandra Fyfe on mission, reconciliation, and the changing face of the diocese

INTERVIEW BY JENNIFER
ANANDANAYAGAM

November of 2025 was a significant month for Bishop Sandra Fyfe. It marked five years since she was consecrated and installed as the 17th Bishop of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Here are excerpts from a thought-provoking interview I had with Bishop Fyfe. We discussed everything from the evolving formation of new clergy to the personal rhythms of prayer and hope that sustain her leadership in an ever-changing Church.

Looking back over your first five years, what is one major diocesan project, initiative, or cultural shift that you believe represents the greatest success or source of hope for the future?

I think the biggest shift in our diocese has been the movement to reclaim our sense of purpose following the pan-



Photo by Taylor Burnfield on Unsplash



Bishop Sandra Fyfe

demic. During that "unprecedented" time, as it has so often been called, new people discovered Anglican churches and a sense of what a hope-filled life in Christ can be like. Many of our parishes quickly migrated to online platforms for worship, and people were introduced to the daily rhythm of prayer that is a hallmark of Anglicanism. Online worship removed barriers and allowed

people "in" so that they could experience the power and presence of God in community. Once in-person worship resumed, we also rediscovered the value of gathering for prayer and fellowship and service as a Christian community and, in many cases, reassessed what was giving meaning and spiritual vitality to our life together in Christ.

The Diocese seeks to create "Christ-centred, mission-minded, ministering communities of faith." What is one practical, everyday action you would encourage every lay Anglican in N.S. and P.E.I. to take to personally live out this mission in 2026?

One personal action I would recommend is the spiritual discipline of the Daily Examen.

This is an ancient Christian practice of prayerful reflection at the end of the day, and it can be done by anyone anywhere. While there are many methods, one is to take time to reflect on moments during the day when you were aware of God's presence and responded to it, moments when you were aware of God's presence and did not respond, and moments where you now see God was present but were not aware of it at the time.

Cont. on pg 3

Renewal and hope in West Dalhousie

BY MARY OLDFORD

On August 13, 2025, life changed forever in the community of West Dalhousie, Annapolis County, Nova Scotia. A lightning strike ignited the woods around Long Lake, west of the community — a tinder box of parched forests and woodlots — during a summer beset by drought. Worry, anxiety, fear, grief, and helplessness besieged the mountaintop community. In response, the Department of Emergency Management, the Department of Natural Resources, tactical coordinators, fire engines from departments across Nova Scotia, firefighters from across the country, water-bombers, and a myriad of volunteers appeared

from near and far, ready to fight the fire, ready to turn a hand to whatever needed to be done.

In total, about 500 civic addresses were evacuated because of the fire, affecting over 1000 people. The Department of Emergency Management and the DNR sprang into action, installing automatic sprinkler systems around each dwelling to protect each house as best it could. Even with this system in place, the fire, capricious and devastating, destroyed 20 homes.

After more than six long angst-filled weeks, the Long Lake wildfire was declared officially under control. Officials reported that this change in

status marked a milestone in the fight against the fire that forced evacuations. Spokespersons specified that the fire remained at 8,468 hectares, with hotspots still threatening to re-ignite. With caution, residents were gradually permitted to return to their homes.

A miracle in the woods: Little St. Peter's spared

Neighboring communities in and beyond Annapolis County reached out to help, surpassing expectations, beyond belief. Secular and religious communities donated food, supplies, and shelter. Churchgoers prayed for protection for those who had lost their homes, for safe refuge, food, provision of basic needs, and shelter for

livestock and pets.

Along with churches of other faiths, the Anglican Parish of Bridgetown helped the community in crisis in a variety of ways: some were volunteer firefighters; others volunteered at shelters for the evacuees and firefighters, and others opened their homes to the evacuees, made food, donated clothing, and donated money. Whatever they could do, whatever was needed.

St. Peter's, West Dalhousie, part of the Anglican Parish of Bridgetown, is a little white clapboard church standing on its own, surrounded by trees. There is a cement walkway up to the front door and a diamond-shaped stained-glass

window above it. For St. Peter's to have survived the Long Lake wildfire is nothing short of a miracle.

That St. Peter's remained standing against all odds was not overlooked by the Rev. Juanita "Nita" Bartheaux, a local retired priest who is still actively involved in the parish. She was thankful that no lives were lost, that the country responded overwhelmingly with supplies and workforce. She was thankful that little St. Peter's, nestled in the woods of West Dalhousie, was spared. She made a proposal to the Parish Council about doing a special Service of Thanksgiving and Gratitude.

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Pray as you can

BY HEATHER CARTER
DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVE
ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF
PRAYER

Imagine grabbing a quick breakfast on your way out the door. Your day is busy. And each day, you don't have time for healthy meals. Over time, how nourished will your body be?

Or imagine spending 10 minutes with your partner in the morning and then nothing for the remainder of the day. How long will that relationship remain intimate?

And, as Christians, Jesus is the foundation stone, our guiding light, and our highest priority so time and space with the Divine is crucial for relationship. We need to be spiritually nourished.

Our culture is speeding up, we are becoming more isolated from one another and it is imperative that we make space and time for actually being with ourselves and the ones we love, especially God.

Brother Lawrence of the 17th century combined his daily work with 'praying without ceasing'. And when I am doing manual tasks, I find this a very calming practice. I find it much more difficult when surrounded by the mental clutter of emails, notifications, meetings, and deadlines. But Brother Lawrence also prayed in a monastic rhythm of communal worship several times a day.



Photo by Jason Abdilla on Unsplash

I was participating once, in a month-long at-home retreat where we were asked to find a specific time each day to find 45 minutes to reflect with a passage of scripture and then do some journaling. The only time I had for this was during my lunch hour at work. I thought it would be exhausting not to have my mid-day break but to the contrary, I still remember that time as joyful, peace-filled, and refreshing. I returned to my desk with a smile on my face.

The point is not that a specific time and a specific practice is necessary, just that we carve out intentional time "to taste and see that the Lord is good". Monastic communities have short prayer services peppered throughout the day and a longer communion service as well.

It is not that they have less busy lives. They are immersed in ministry inside and outside their community but they believe in balance. And so they commit to these practices.

Over the past year, through submissions to the Prayer Around the Diocese resource found at

nspeidiocese.ca/ministries/anglican-fellowship-of-prayer/pages/prayer-gatherings

I have seen individuals and parishes carve out time in so many ways. There are prayer shawl ministries, meditation groups, contemplative groups, scripture study, labyrinth walks, prayer beads, daily offices, Taizé worship, seasonal offerings, and so much more. As well, last year the Diocese offered a retreat, a well-known

spiritual practice where we respond to God's invitation to "come away... and rest awhile" — Mark 6:31.

This year's Pathways to Peace Retreat is May 29-31 and its theme is "Deepening Faith". Join others as we share faith, prayer practices, worship, and music and come away refreshed. Information can be found on the Diocesan website — www.nspeidiocese.ca as well as the Prayer Around the Diocese resource (link shared above).

As we continue our prayer practices, I am reminded of an oft-heard quote on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage that says, "It is not the destination but the journey that transforms us." Let us find ways and carve out time to journey with the Lord.

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Running the victory lap



Is our life proclaiming Christ's victory on the cross and our glorious future in Him?

Free Christian Illustrations, written and illustrated by Ian Coate (www.freechristianillustrations.com)

Thus, as Christians, our lives

should reflect the joyful athlete running the victory lap. When we run around the 'Arena of Life' facing its tests and trials,

we should do it with the full knowledge that the race has already been won. That no matter how we succeed or fail,

our eternal salvation is guaranteed and secured because of Christ's victorious work on the cross. 'For by grace you have

been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.' Ephesians 2:8-9:

We should run proud and carefree and hold high the flag of Christ for everyone to see. When the crowd see our joyful life and our faith that we hold onto (especially when undergoing adversity), they will understand to whom the victory belongs. Happiness is contagious, and people want to celebrate with a winner. A joyous, relaxed, grace-filled life is a beacon to those living in darkness.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" -- Matthew 5:16

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Bishop Sandra Fyfe on mission, reconciliation, and the changing face of the diocese

Cont. from pg 1

You offer the day to God, whatever it has been, giving thanks, letting go of moments of disappointment, and praying for openness and attentiveness to God's presence and promptings. This practice slows us down and reminds us of the abiding presence of God in our everyday lives. Regular practice of the examen shows us how God's presence is often made visible in our interactions with others and how God might be inviting us to respond in those moments.

With the ongoing challenge of maintaining older parish buildings and balancing financial pressures, where do you see the most significant opportunity for parishes to "reimagine" their use of property and space for missional ministry?

Knowing your neighbourhood or community is a great place to start when your parish is reimagining its use of property and space. Who are the people who live here? How might our church buildings be spaces for them to encounter the living God in worship? In fellowship? In acts of Christian love and service and care? Some parishes realized there is no local coffee shop or place for neighbours to gather socially in their area and have created community cafes. Others have recognized the high rate of food insecurity and have invited neighbours to enjoy a hot, healthy meal with others. Some have discovered unused land where new property developments are possible, with options for low-income or affordable housing. Ideally, these initiatives will be partnerships with other agencies working for the common good. They then become powerful, transformative, and collaborative ministries. Such community-based initiatives may also enable parishes to apply for grants from government or community-based organizations. Some of these efforts may result in the planting of a new congregation, with the prompting of the Holy Spirit; others may lead to participants attending worship or other events at our churches or seeking a greater sense of belonging. Each new initiative opens a door and provides another way for our parishes to offer welcome in Christ.

As the Church continues on the path of Truth and



Photo by Olivia Snow on Unsplash

Reconciliation, what is the most important step the Diocese of N.S. and P.E.I. is currently taking to foster authentic and holistic relationships with Indigenous communities?

The most important step to fostering authentic and holistic relationships with Indigenous communities is recognizing our need to be educated. That means getting to know our local Indigenous communities and leaders across the diocese, community by community, listening to their experiences, needs, and concerns, working with and alongside them on issues of common concern, and inviting their participation and leadership wherever possible. There is an incredible willingness to share Indigenous knowledge and such a gracious and generous response whenever we reach out. The same must be true of us when we are asked to support Indigenous initiatives, such as care of these lands and waterways we share. We are also learning more broadly about Indigenous ways of being and knowing from our own model of the Self-Determining Indigenous Anglican Church in Canada. A few years ago, we welcomed our National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper to our diocese and, more recently, the Venerable Rosalyn Elm, Indigenous Ministries Coordinator with the Anglican Church of Canada. As we build relationships, the willingness to listen and learn is critical.

Leading a diocese can be immensely demanding. In the rhythm of your life and ministry, where do you find the spiritual energy and personal sustenance to continue the work of the Episcopacy?

I find spiritual energy in what I see God doing in our parishes and communities and by the number of people I meet who are discerning a call to join in that work in some way,

whether as lay or ordained leaders, or simply by becoming more active in the life of their parish or church community. There is a spiritual hunger among people of all ages, and our parishes have so much to offer to those who are seeking a relationship with Jesus or are simply curious about the Christian faith. It's exciting to be able to support and encourage parishes in their ministries as their bishop, helping them to access resources and discover what God is calling them to be and do. I am personally sustained by my faith, which is deeply rooted in hope; by time for conversation, prayer, and reflection with my colleagues; by our diocesan staff team, who are each tremendously gifted in what they do; and by my family and friends, who love and support me and believe in me. Having sustained time away from the demands of ministry for rest, refreshment, reading, and relaxation with family and friends is critical.

Not everyone sees eye to eye within the Church. As Bishop, what is your approach to maintaining unity, fostering respectful dialogue, and ensuring that all voices feel heard within the diversity of the Diocese?

I think this takes a lot of work and care. One of the defining characteristics of Anglicanism that I value deeply is the concept of being the via media, the middle way. This makes space for unity in diversity. As Anglicans, we don't all worship or pray in precisely the same way, but we do share a daily rhythm of prayer and an understanding of the shape and forms of worship. We won't all agree on every decision made, but because we are episcopally led and synodically governed, clergy and laity have a voice in making many of those decisions under the leadership of their bishop, such as when we

gather for Diocesan Synod. It's my responsibility to ensure that these conversations happen respectfully. Respectful dialogue breaks down when people insist on having their own way or believe that their perspective is the only one that carries weight or truth. Fostering respectful dialogue requires us to value the inherent dignity and worth of every person as a beloved child of God made in the image and likeness of God regardless of gender, race, culture, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. I do my best to model respectful dialogue in my leadership and to create opportunities for diverse voices to be heard. I am collaborative by nature and listen to the views of others, even those with whom I may personally disagree, because I believe God can speak through each of us.

What changes or adaptations do you anticipate for the formation, training, and support of new clergy and vocational deacons in the coming decade, given the shifts in parish size and the nature of ministry?

One of the things I have been pleasantly surprised by is who God is calling to serve and in what ways God is calling them to serve. Not everyone is discerning a traditional path in the ways we have understood that term. Some are called to new, community-based ministries or parish-based ministries "outside of the building." We have already begun to address these shifts by expanding our pathways and educational options for training and equipping those discerning a call to ordained ministry, particularly (at this time) for those in discernment for the Community of Associate Parish Priests. We are also working collaboratively with the Community of Deacons to implement recommendations from the "Statement on the Diaconate and Practices for a Restored Diaconate" passed at General Synod 2025.

In addition, we have developed a collaborative model for our formation program that brings together, both online and in person, those who are being prepared for full- or part-time stipendiary ministry in parishes with those who will become associate parish priests or vocational deacons. Training and equipping and forming people in teams will help to shape the future of ministry in this diocese, which I believe

will feature more intentional collaborative lay and clergy ministry teams.

I also see a shift to some regional or area ministries where parishes will be served by a team of gifted and trained lay and clergy leaders. We have allocated more resources to support this integrated approach, such as a full-time Vocations Coordinator, whose role is to support those preparing for lay and ordained ministries, and a shift in focus from having a Formation Director working primarily with those preparing for full-time ministry in a parish setting to an Architect for Emerging Leadership working with people preparing for a variety of ministry roles and settings. We have also reintroduced a diocesan mentoring program to support those approaching ordination or in the early years of ordained ministry. We hope to expand this to all areas of ministry over time. We fully recognize that more resources are needed to support and equip those discerning a call to intentional forms of lay ministry beyond those of Licensed Lay Minister or serving on Parish or Church Councils.

Beyond the administrative and institutional work, what aspect of parish life, pastoral engagement, or sacramental ministry brings you the most profound personal joy and energy as you travel across N.S. and P.E.I.?

Spending time getting to know the people and clergy in our parishes is a wonderful part of this call. I am an extrovert by nature and enjoy meeting people and learning more about their lives and their faith. When I visit parishes on Sundays, I include a meeting with Parish Council members whenever possible and am glad to have an opportunity to listen to their joys, hopes, concerns, and needs.

I am also inspired by my conversations with Confirmation candidates and those exploring or reaffirming a faith commitment. We typically meet on Zoom or in person beforehand to talk about what has brought them to this moment, after I share a bit about my faith journey. I am always humbled by their thoughtfulness and the care they have put into making this decision.

Old school



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

Sally's life had begun in what we might call an 'Old school world.' Her parents lived in the rural area and had a unique phone system. Upon picking up the phone, an operator asked what number was required, then proceeded to connect the two parties. As technology developed, the number could be dialed by the owner of the phone. With a rural party line, you knew your number was being called by the tone the phone made. Sally's family had a signal which was two long sounds, followed by a short one. Upon picking up the phone, others on the party line (shared by five or six others) could pick up quietly and listen to the conversation. This was called "rubbering". This was old school communication, way before the internet, cell phones, AI, ChatGPT, social media, and the other technology we depend upon and expect today.

Sally's school was another old school phenomenon. It was a one-roomer, with a single



Photo by Muhammad Irfan on Unsplash

teacher and six grades all in the same small room. Some may only have had a grade 12 education, and were given a local license. The school board was made up of local neighbours. In the middle of the room was a big stove fed by wood. The teacher played with the students, and older ones looked after the younger ones. Students could be administered corporal punishment where a leather strap was administered over the hands for serious misconducts. Each grade consisted of a singular row.

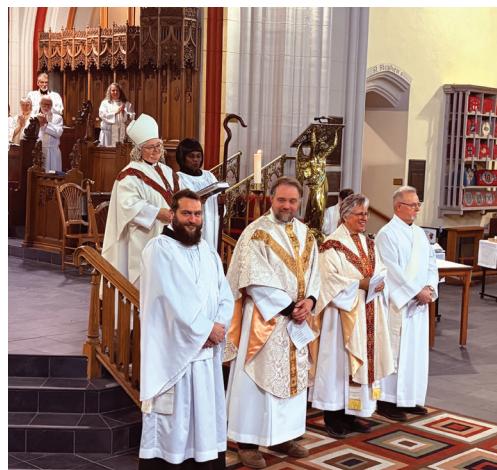
The above may not serve as a concrete definition of old school, but for the most part, there was a sort of charm for Sally and others who grew

up within that environment. Today, many years later she harkens back with some sweet memories. Life seemed simpler, less complicated, more personal, and safer. She and others played outside, in the summer and winter, and read books on rainy days. Then, things changed gradually for Sally. Some changes were great, others were complex. Larger and modern schools were built and big yellow school buses transported students to and from school. Teachers had a higher level of education. The type of fun she was used to slowly disappeared. Technology and human progress seemed to take away the human element slowly.

December 6, 2025 was a day of blessing and spiritual upliftment. On the Feast of St. Nicholas, at The Cathedral Church of All Saints, Bishop Sandra Fyfe ordained four dedicated individuals to serve God and the community. Congratulations to the newly ordained clergy:

- To the Sacred Order of Priests: Blane Finnie and Ruth MacNeil.
- To the Sacred Order of Deacons: Wade Seymour and Christopher Tidd.

Photos © Jennifer Anandanayagam



Old school is defined as "something close to old-fashioned". People who say they like the old school approach are saying they like it the way it used to be, which was better. Some synonyms are: classic, time-honoured, vintage, retro, traditional, timeless, nostalgic, antique, and legendary.

Old school also symbolised different attitudes when it came to emotions. Phrases like, "suck it up," "don't complain," "let sleeping dogs lie," "take it like a man," "swallow the pill," "pull it together," "get it together," "grin and bear it," and "deal with it" could be expressed in the midst of emotional pain. And it was in many instances a normalized approach to life's stresses.

In Sally's day, sharing how one felt was not always an option. One might keep things to themselves. Feelings were not naturally expressed. Difficult emotions weren't always shared nor hurts explained. If you cried, you might have done so in private.

We don't live in that era now, thankfully. This does not mean that much of what we now consider old school was wrong. And we may often wish some of it could reappear.

We can realize in our current era, the natural freedom, the openness to express our emotions with validation and empathy.

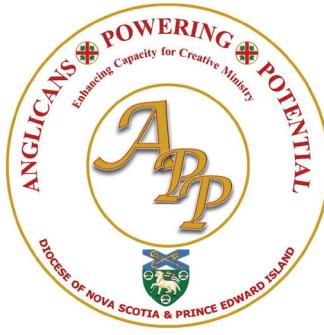
Brene Brown has authored a helpful book entitled, "Atlas of The Heart". In this well-re-

searched book, she explores 87 of the emotions and experiences that define what it means to be human, and how we better cultivate meaningful connection with others. It is her belief that expressing carefully how we feel by defining our emotions, helps others to better know us, and allows us to be better known. Being able to say that you feel shame, depressed, sad, fear, anxious, frustrated, angry, bored, disappointed, or disgusted, unleashes these emotions for others to recognize and to feel. Upon doing this, we express ourselves and befriend our emotions, creating better relationships, and physical health. Upon expressing our emotions, others are given the opportunity to know us better, to communicate empathy, to validate, and to listen. Although a truly vulnerable enterprise, sharing our emotions with those we trust and love, opens up a new depth to relationships. We become open as opposed to being closed off. We are more emotionally attached.

Emotional self awareness and communication leads to better emotional health.

It is important to ready ourselves for those who want to express how they feel. Be quick to show empathy, listen, and validate. And seek out those people with whom you trust to share your feelings. Holding those thoughts in can create deeper concerns.

February: Faith, friendship, and ... 'femicide'?



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR ANGLICANS POWERING POTENTIAL

While not as recognizable as February's Valentine's Day on the 14th, the first week of February is World Interfaith Harmony Week (Feb. 1 – 7), the result of a UN resolution for a worldwide week of interfaith harmony that was proposed in 2010 by King Abdullah II and Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan. As the name suggests, World Interfaith Harmony Week aims to promote harmony among all people, regardless of their faith, with the belief that people of varying faiths can effectively demonstrate values of mutual caring and respect, while honouring the dignity of each person. It is common for communities celebrating WIHW, to have events in both public and sacred spaces that showcase the uniqueness and commonalities of various faiths, a richness that can benefit communities and help build bridges.

Halifax has a history of promoting World Interfaith Harmony Week. At the time of composing this column, no events for WIHW 2026 in Halifax are showing yet on the webpage: interfaithharmony-hfx.org/events/ but they will be featured as they become organized, and one can view, as well, previous years' events on this link.

What is widely recognized among those of any age are the symbols for Valentine's Day: hearts, cupids, bows and arrows, roses, and candies. While Hallmark has capitalized on this 'holiday' with cards and popular romance TV movies, florists and chocolatiers have also benefitted, with the floral arrangers finding Valentine's second only to Mother's Day in

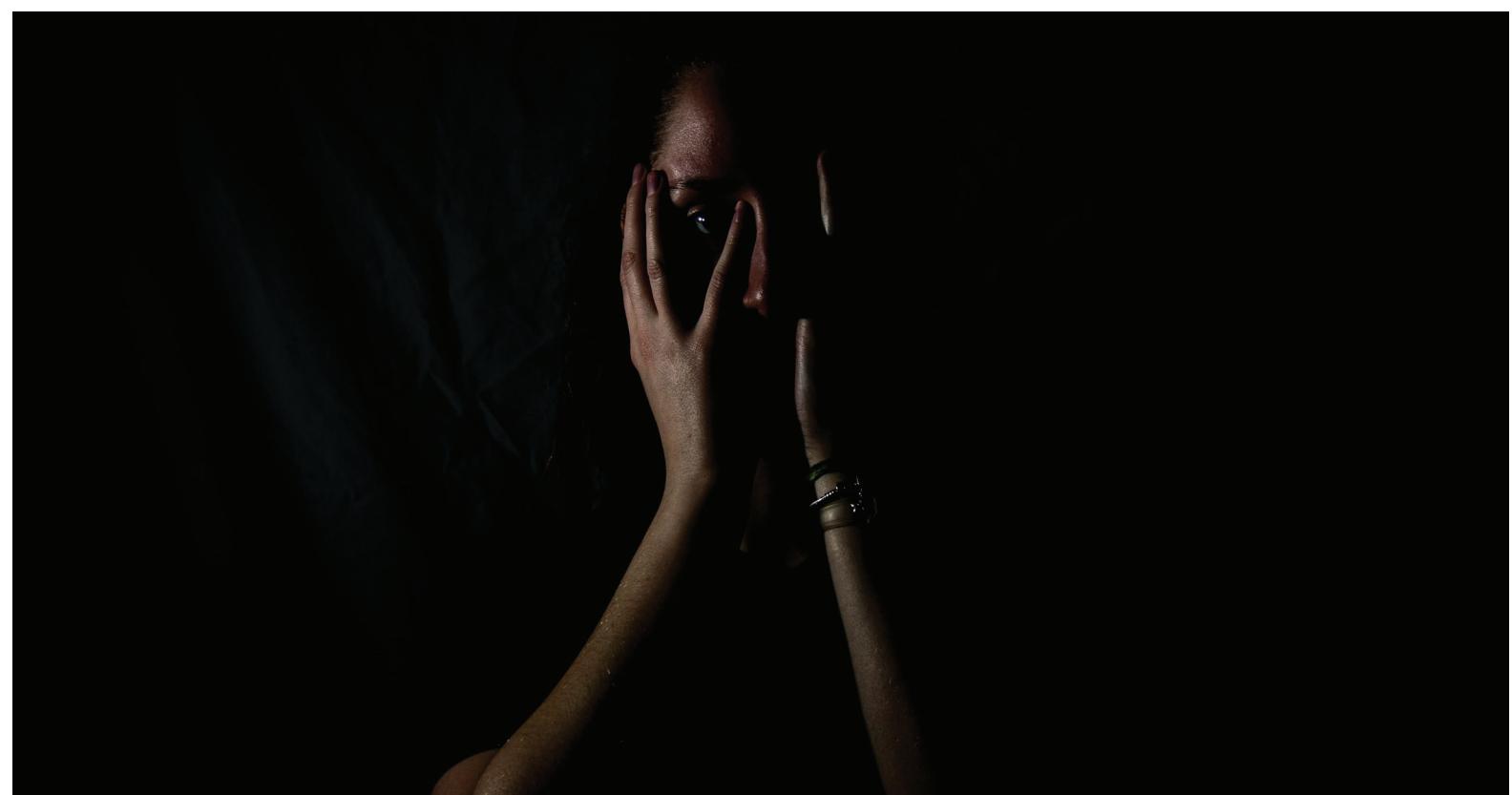


Photo by Melanie Wasser on Unsplash

May for floral bouquet sales. Elementary teachers often promote February as friendship month, providing opportunities for students to explore what makes for a good friend, what kindness and respect look like in word and deed.

With all this 'evidence' of love, caring, and good will, it is hard to absorb the facts and figures that point to what researchers, advocates, and some police officials are calling a Canadian epidemic of 'femicide'. This is a term that the United Nations has defined as the intentional killing of women because of their gender.

On December 9, 2025, Canada's Justice Minister, Sean Fraser, introduced in the House of Commons Bill C – 16, the Protecting Victims Act, with one of its proposals to define murders of women that involve "control, hate, sexual violence or exploitation" as "femicide". The bill, if passed, would allow such killings to be classified as first degree murder, even without pre-meditation, and would add the word 'femicide' to the Criminal Code.

Bill C – 16 is seen by many as a welcome development, but it is also controversial and there are those who are skeptical

of its value, especially with the term 'femicide'. However, 'femicide' is already recognized as a specific offence in more than two dozen countries, most in Latin America, and there is growing support among Canadian police for this distinction. Deputy Chief Patricia Ferguson of the Ottawa Police Service comments on the difference between the murders of men and women: the former has to do with their behaviour (involvement in the drug trade, robberies, or bar fights) while those of women are largely because of proximity to a violent individual. Heather Lachine, Superintendent of criminal investigations for the Ottawa police, notes the differences this way: "Women and girls are killed because they are mothers and ... spouses ... they are sex trade workers ... [they are killed] just for who they are." Moreover, 90 per cent of the perpetrators are male, one-in-three is a current or former intimate partner, and there is a one-in-four chance that he is a family member. The odds are high — over 80 per cent — that police, child services, and judicial or mental health systems were aware of the offender prior to the killing because of previous interaction.

Information in this col-

umn has benefitted from the research and writing of the Investigative Journalism Bureau (IJB) at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health. IJB is a collaborative investigative enterprise supported by Postmedia, partnering with academics, researchers, and journalists. A full-page article, "It's just too easy to harm women": What the numbers tell us about 'femicide' in Canada, authored by Emma Jarratt, Stacey Kuznetsova, Lori Culbert, and Jenna Olsen of the Investigative Journalism Bureau was featured in The Chronicle Herald on Saturday, December 13, 2025 and is available on the IJB website: ijb.utoronto.ca/news. The article provides a much fuller picture.

These news features are challenging, but necessary, to build awareness of not only the horrifying statistics, but the underlying realities that fuel the epidemic of gender-based violence. It is the staggering scope of 'femicide' and the December 2025 tabling in the House of Commons of Bill C – 16 that took priority over the original plan for this column, that of sharing more about the progress and plans of Anglicans Powering Potential (APP). Stay tuned!

If you are left wondering what one can do, APP encourages you to consider the following as a Valentine gift: a contribution to the project, Standing with Survivors, Investing in Hope, a financial appeal of APP's for the YWCA's Nova Scotia Transition and Advocacy for Youth (NSTAY) program in support of youth who have been sexually exploited and human trafficked. See the APP ad in this issue. All contributions are very welcome!

How to contribute

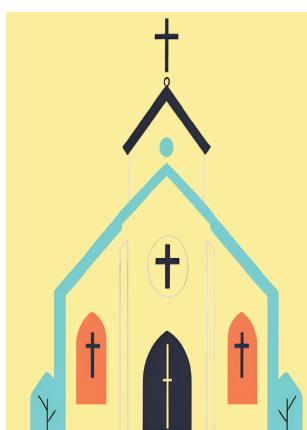
Via cheque . . . payable to Anglicans Powering Potential, NSTAY in the memo line, addressed to Marjorie Davis, 204, 111 Pebblecreek Dr., Dartmouth, NS B2W 0L1

Via e-transfer . . . to app. nspeidiocese@gmail.com with NSTAY and your name and postal address in the message field

The themes for February of faith, friendship, and 'femicide' are a perfect example of the extremes we experience in today's world that challenge us to remain true to our baptismal covenant of striving for justice and peace, respecting the dignity of every human being. Amen.

PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

Do you have pictures or details of events you'd like to see published in *The Diocesan Times*? Email us at diocesantimes@gmail.com



Our finest gifts



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

Dear Diocese,

"Religion and the environment may seem like very different aspects of the world, however, both play a pivotal role in the lives of humans. Religion is an exceptional tool to understand how views and connections influence our own behaviours, practices, and customs. The environment and natural world are all around us, and it too, can influence our behaviours and actions. In today's world, the environment has been subject to immense pressure from humans, and many feel as though through activism and smaller changes to our daily lives, we can aid in the environmental crisis we face. This can be majorly influenced by religion."

(The inherent care for envi-

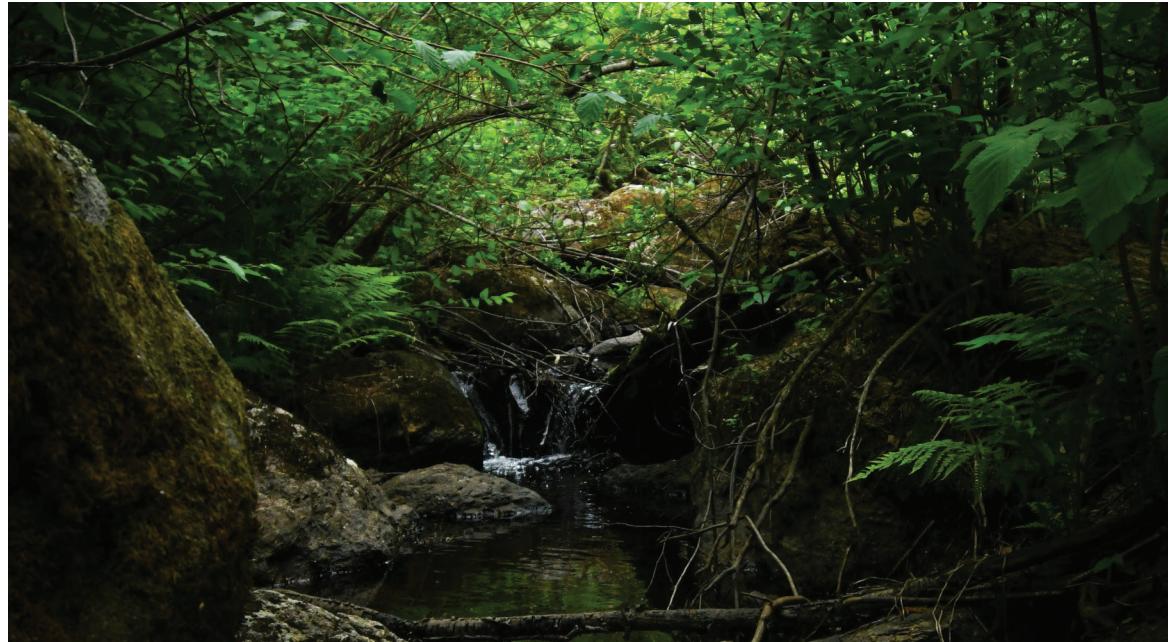


Photo by Jennifer Walker on Unsplash

ronment from a multifaith perspective, Ryan Dickie, RELS 3351, Dec 11, 2025)

I was thrilled to be asked to be interviewed for a student's research paper recently. So, Ryan Dickie, an environmental studies student at St. Mary's University, spent an hour chatting at a coffee shop not far from the university, one November morning. What a delightful and uplifting hour of conversation.

As so often happens these days, Ryan "gets it". He is acutely aware of the connection between his faith and his commitment to the environment AND he is open and eager to learn more about how

our liturgical practices, faith traditions, and theology have an impact on our actions.

In this paper, the big surprise for him were the commonalities between Islam and Anglicanism that he picked up from the interviews. Although there were some differences in the teachings, the ways we express our calls as people of faith can be the same. We are called to take responsibility to care for the gift of creation.

Ryan was particularly interested in the liturgical practices in Anglicanism that can motivate us to care for this planet, especially at those special times of the year, during Rogationtide, Season

of Creation, and Thanksgiving, when we are reminded that this planet is a gift that provides us with all we need if we care for it.

We discussed scriptural references, like the story of creation in Genesis, and the joyful expressions of the blessings of nature found in the Psalms.

We talked about the influence of the saints, particularly St. Francis of Assisi, his love of nature and the way he lived that out. And I shared about the environmental leadership and commitment of more modern-day, less official in the church calendar, saints — Anglicans who were or are

passionate about God's creation, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Elizabeth May, and Jane Goodall.

I told Ryan about the formal commitment to caring for creation that was made a few years ago by 80 million Anglicans through the Anglican Communion, our national church and our diocese, and activities we have collectively committed to like the establishment of the Communion Forest.

But, as I said, what really moves me deeply is how "the rubber hits the road" when local parishes actively engage in caring for creation, each in their own way, sharing their experiences, inspiring others, knowing that once we fall in love with the planet, that wonderful, miraculous gift from God, we tend the garden more intentionally.

Thanks to Ryan for solidifying in my heart and mind the connection between faith and creation care, and thanks to the people of our diocese for all you do.

Many blessings,
The Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies,
Diocesan Environment Network

For all the Saints — February

SUBMITTED BY REV. JOHN K. MORRELL

Excerpted from Stephen Reynolds' "For All The Saints"

February 2 — The Presentation of Our Lord — Luke 2:21-38

According to Jewish rites at the time of Jesus, in seven days after birth, a boy baby was to be brought to the Temple to be offered to God through circumcision and be named. An old man named Simeon visited the Temple every day in hopes of seeing the Lord's Messiah before he died. He took the child Jesus into his arms and gave a song of praise, the Nunc Dimittis — "Lord, now let your servant go in peace." Simeon blessed the child and his parents and prophesied that the child would save Israel.

During my time as Rector at St. Marks in Halifax, we would have a special service to bless all the candles we would

be using in the year. Altar, torches, baptismal, and wedding candles were blessed and everyone in the congregation also received a blessed candle to take home. The following Collect was said by all.

Let us pray: God our Father, source of all light, today, you revealed to the aged Simeon your light which enlightens the nations. Fill our hearts with the light of faith, that we who bear these candles may walk in the path of goodness, and come to the Light that shines forever, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

February 23 — Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, D. 156

The whole Church joins in honouring Polycarp, a bishop who was martyred on this date in the year 156. For over 40 years he guided the Christians of Smyrna, a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, and brought healing wisdom to issues that divided the churches

at that time.

When the Roman authorities suddenly launched a campaign of terror against the Church, Polycarp went into hiding but was soon discovered and brought back to face the pagan governor before a large crowd in the public arena. The governor urged him to renounce the Christian faith and to curse Jesus Christ. Polycarp answered: "For 86 years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme against my King and Saviour?" At this he was bound to a stake and, as he prayed, the wood at his feet was set ablaze. Eyewitnesses reported that the flames did not touch him, but formed a kind of vault around his body, so that a gladiator had to be sent into the fire to kill him.

Afterwards his people gathered his remains and buried them in a cemetery outside the city. Every year, on the anniversary of his martyrdom, they celebrated the eucharist

at Polycarp's grave, "both as a memorial for those who have already fought the contest and for the training and preparation of those who will do so in the future."

24 February — Philip Lindel Tsen, Bishop of Honan, D. 1954

"To me Christianity means a Person, Jesus Christ, who is my Saviour, my Companion, and my Lord." These were the words of Philip Lindel Tsen, who was ordained bishop of Honan on this date in the year 1929 and helped to sustain the Anglican Church in China through the years of crisis that followed. He spent his childhood and youth with American missionaries, but after his ordination to the priesthood, he became closely associated with the work of Canadian Anglicans in Honan, and their influence helped him to be elected as the first Chinese bishop of that diocese.

Nationalists and Communists

were already engaged in a bitter civil war, and the situation was made worse when the Japanese invaded China in 1937. In that year, Bishop Tsen visited Canada and stood before General Synod with Paul Sasaki, bishop of Mid-Japan, to bear witness to the unity of Chinese and Japanese Christians, despite the war between their two nations.

Tsen returned to Honan, where daily Japanese air-raids and the collapse of civil authority tested his authority to the utmost. He proved an effective pastor, sustaining his hard-pressed clergy through all their common trials, and at the end of the Second World War, he emerged as the leader of the Chinese Anglican Church. He managed to attend the Lambeth Conference of 1948, but on his return he was placed under house arrest by the Communists, who had just taken over China. He died in Shanghai on June 6, 1954.

This Month in the Archives: Christ Church, Parish of Shelburne



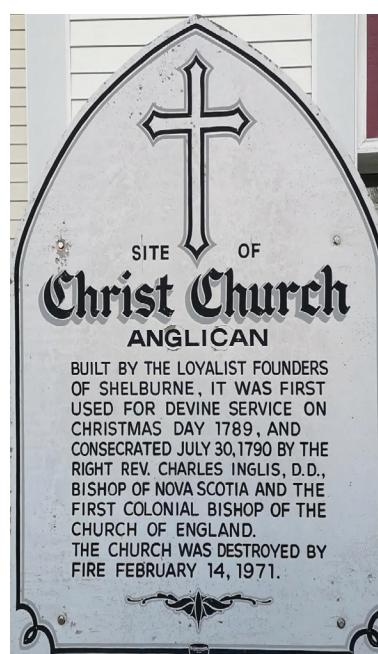
BY THE REV'D TAUNYA J. DAWSON
CHAIR, DIOCESAN ARCHIVES COMMITTEE
DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND P.E.I.

Fifty-five years ago, on 14 February 1971 (St. Valentine's Day), Christ Church in Shelburne — the first Anglican Church to be consecrated in British North America — was destroyed by fire. So, this month is a good time to reflect on the long history of the Anglican Church in the Shelburne community, which has been sustained for nearly 243 years. The arrival of the Loyalist refugees in Shelburne harbour in the spring of 1783 brought to the lands of the Mi'kma'ki a significant number of Anglicans, as well as members of other “dissenting” faiths.

The politics surrounding the Anglican church were complex, especially before the consecration of Bishop Charles Inglis. The settlers included a Massachusetts Loyalist, Dr. William Walter, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). He unilaterally created the parish of Trinity in Shelburne. Meanwhile, Governor John Parr had approved a survey including the designation of Anglican glebe lands and the creation of the three parishes of St. George's, St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's — perhaps suggesting confidence in the spread of Anglicanism in the area, as well as acknowledging the patron saints of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Governor Parr also appointed another SPG missionary, the Rev'd George Panton, as Rector, instead of Walter.

However, under the direction of Walter, settlers had built a temporary church in January 1785, in a central part of the town that technically trespassed on the Parish of St. Patrick. The church was named Trinity after the Anglican Church in Boston, which would likely have had a nostalgic attachment for many of the settlers.

It was a challenging situa-



tion. In 1789, Parr eventually created two separate parishes by an act of Assembly — St. George's and St. Patrick's.

Panton was inducted into the parish of St. Patrick's. Walter would later become the Rector of St. George's. The SPG approved both appointments — evidently, there was enough pastoral work for both of them!

When Panton left, the Rev'd John Rowland became

building, capable of holding 1,000 persons ...the first ever consecrated in British America."

On Christmas Day in 1789, the first service of worship was held at Christ Church and, in spite of a steady decline in Shelburne's population, was reportedly well-attended. Rowland would later become Rector of the united parishes of St. George's and St. Patrick's, which were created in 1793, until he died in March 1795, after which his son Thomas Rowland was appointed as Rector.

The original Christ Church building had had two tiers of windows and a second floor gallery; the windows of the main floor and the gallery would later be replaced with a single tier of taller windows. In a design that would be recognizable in many 18th century English churches, there was a “three-decker pulpit,” with the clerk's pew on the lowest level, the officiant's reading pew on the middle level, and the pulpit on the highest level.

The 1971 fire was not the first. In March 1873, a fire damaged much of the church, but the original frame survived, so the structure could be restored. The congregation had been resourceful, covering the damaged ceiling with plaster and using the old doors of the boxed pews for wainscoting. The Rev'd Dr Thomas White proudly spoke of the restoration of the church at the centennial celebration of the consecration in 1890. However, the reconstruction reflected contemporary design trends; Hildreth would probably not have recognized some of the more 19th century “gothic” influences!

By the time the 1971 fire was discovered (shortly after midnight), it was too late to preserve the structure. So shortly afterwards, the building committee and congregation decided to contract Anthony Halse, of Tantallon, N.S., to design a building, suitable for the same site, that would capture the style of the eighteenth century church that Bishop Charles Inglis had consecrated. Christ Church would return to its Loyalist roots.

On 20 December 1972, in the 183rd year of the Parish, Archbishop William Davis dedicated the newly built Christ Church. This beautiful church continues to be a graceful presence in the town of Shelburne. The congregation strives to, “... live out the life of faith in community, by gathering to worship God, by strengthening the bonds of friendship, and by caring for one another” through all the “changes and chances of this mortal life.”

The present-day Christ Church, re-built just twenty-three months after the fire, still stands as testimony to the perseverance of the Anglican presence in Shelburne, and as recognition of the built traditions that the Loyalist settlers brought with them when they sailed from New York in 1783 to settle Shelburne. Although now rendered in more fire-proof materials, the present Church would be recognizable by Bishop Charles Inglis!

Sources:

Marion Robertson, *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne (Nova Scotia Museum, 1983)*, 180.

Robertson, *King's Bounty: A History of Early Shelburne*, 177.

Renewal and hope in West Dalhousie

Cont. from pg 1

An act of remembrance: Simulating the bitterness of tears

An organizational committee was formed. The dilemma? There are so many people involved in working to save not only St. Peter's Church, but the roads, all the buildings, structures, and the community hall in the Long Lake area: firefighters, pilots, water bombers, DNR, the Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management — unsung heroes who clocked a 24-hour time clock, who did not stop until they dropped, who woke up, had a coffee, and began all over. How does a community show their gratitude for these countless acts of courage and kindness? How do they thank these workers that St. Peter's escaped the ravages of fire?

The committee decided that as soon as officials permitted re-entry to the area, the Service of Thanksgiving and Gratitude could be held at St. Peter's. It should be ecumenical, open to everyone — as many as seating would allow, to thank the firefighters for saving the church. Firefighters and officials would be personally invited. Because seating was limited, it was decided that after the church service, there could be a reception with



PHOTO © Dave Rockwood. Dave Rockwood works for the Nova Scotia Department of Emergency Management

refreshments held at the West Dalhousie Community Hall, a spacious and welcoming facility.

On the afternoon of Sunday, November 30, residents of West Dalhousie, extended family members, family members from away, firefighters, the lead organizers of the DEM and the DNR, and retired

clergy filled the pews of St. Peter's. There were young and old, hushed, and respectful of the place of worship. The keyboardist played selections of music throughout, and hymns from a tiny blue hymnal with tiny print were sung: hymns of olden days like, "O God our Help in Ages Past" and "For the Beauty of the Earth ..."

Appropriately, a Blaze Maple tree to commemorate the Long Lake Fire of 2025 has been planted in the churchyard, and it, and its commemorative plaque were blessed and dedicated. There were readings and prayers. Teenagers from West

Dalhousie read a poem about the fire.

The congregation was invited to join in an "Act of Remembrance." An empty urn had been set up at the front of the church. Cups filled with water, lemon juice, and salt were distributed: water, lemon, and salt to simulate the bitterness of tears.

"Like the water you are holding, our tears are a little salty and bitter. Sometimes life feels bitter. In these moments, when life feels bitter, we often see comfort in God, through community and through prayer."

One by one, the congregation brought their glass of tears forward and poured it into the urn. The little church was silent. Pensive. Reflective. Tears were shed.

Moving ahead: Comfort in the wake of tragedy

Prayers of the People were offered by Licensed Lay Minister, Judy Marshall, the same prayers that were read when the wildfire broke out in August. An offering was taken up in support of the West Dalhousie Relief Fund.

The service wrapped up with The Lord's Prayer and the hymn, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds." Rev. Nita sang a familiar closing blessing, and the congregation joined in. As individuals and families filed out, warmth and fellowship were palpable. Little St. Peter's church, West Dalhousie, provided comfort in the wake of tragedy.

The drive west from the church to the community hall reinforced the words shared at the service. The stark white snow on charred and downed trees, yards cleared of burnt

debris, vacant lots where a home once stood, all poignant reminders of the ravages of wildfire.

There is comfort in family and community getting together to acknowledge sadness and loss. More residents, family, friends, and firefighters gathered at the community hall. A blessing was said, and the line-up for sandwiches and sweets wove its way around the food table. People chatted at the tea and coffee urns. Others went over and shook the firefighters' and the officials' hands, thanking them for their service. Those gathered applauded the announcement of the tree and plaque planted by the church. Kids chatted and busied themselves with treats and games.

Life has changed in the community of West Dalhousie. The tears shed at St. Peter's have become part of the process of moving on, moving ahead for the community as a whole. From the ashes of destruction rise renewal and hope.

Mary Oldford and her husband, Doug, are retired teachers and have been members of St. James Anglican Church, Parish of Bridgetown, for over 40 years. Mary is a Licensed Lay Minister, is involved with Parish Council, and is a member of the Pastoral Visitation team.

Pocket-sized yet mighty

to notice what it is I'm really supposed to be doing with my life?"

In 2025, I felt like God answered (and is still answering) all of those questions in gentle whispers. This is what I love most about God. He doesn't besiege you with responses. His answers often come when you quieten yourself just enough to listen — when the rhythm of your everyday slows down just enough to match his own.

One way in which he answered my question was through a note a colleague of mine had left on my desk. I got to work on 16 December, exhausted from a particularly challenging few weeks at work, to find a simple note on post-it paper — "Your hard work and care for others is so appreciated." Funnily enough, that morning my prayer to God had centred around finding out my purpose and wondering, for the umpteenth time, if I was filling my days with so much "work" and "noise" that I was losing the plot. God reminded



Photo by Mohamed Nohassi on Unsplash



BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

The year 2025 has been a significant year for me. It was the year when I prayed a simple prayer every day — "Jesus, sit on my shoulder and stay close to me through the day. Whisper in my ear if and when I stray from your side because of an unkind thought, word, or deed."

Yes, I visualized my maker as someone who was pocket-sized, yet mighty. Pocket-sized because I could carry him along with me whenever I went, and mighty because he was able to gently realign me in those everyday moments when busyness, tiredness, sleepiness, or being on autopilot threatened to get the better of me.

As a writer, introvert, and contemplative person by nature, I often find myself asking the big questions in seemingly absurd settings in life — at a coffee shop looking at the rain softly pelting the pavement, watching a TV show that isn't particularly engaging enough to keep my mind from wandering, or taking a stroll with my Cockapoo around the block. "Am I living out the purpose God intended for me?" "Am I going to have regrets on my deathbed?" "Am I too busy

me, in a gentle way, that who I was choosing to be (with his help, of course), even when I was busy, was making a difference.

The other reminder from God came from a book I've been reading, titled "Searching for Enough — The Highwire Walk Between Doubt and Faith" by Tyler Staton. One of the lines that stood out was, "For every day of Jesus' life, God was his protector, provider, and the recipient of his exaltation."

It was a simple line yet put things in perspective. Perhaps the "big questions" shouldn't always be about asking God about what my purpose was but about looking at my everyday life and seeing the openings God was presenting for me to be kind, different, or compassionate.

Speaking of "different," 2025 was also the year when I learned to quieten that voice that always told me that I was being "too much." I "cared too much," I shed tears about things that didn't seem to move others, and I wanted

to invite a random stranger to my home just because I felt compelled to, but quickly overthought the wish because I didn't want to seem "too much" or "misunderstood" by those around me. In 2026, I hope to lean into this side of me and talk to that stranger who I feel drawn to or send that message to a person who might reject the gesture. All that matters is that I was living into the person God made me to be.

In 2026, I want to continue with my pocket-sized yet mighty spiritual practice. There is something comforting about visualizing a God that is looking over your shoulder with love and concern. I am going to continue to see "purpose" in my everyday life. What is a spiritual practice that has helped you in 2025? Do you hope to continue it in 2026, or are you adopting something new?

I'd love to hear your thoughts. Write to me at jenjustleft@gmail.com

Not enough

BY ANDREW SHERIN

My columns in 2026 will be based upon the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Poverty's 2025 report, titled "We Can Do Better". This column will explore Chapter 3: Affordability and Income Support.

The 2025 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty stated that "the lack of resources needed to thrive — including income and income supports — and the high cost of living continue to be central concerns for too many people now".

"What an individual gets from social assistance is not enough. You will always live in poverty" — taken from "In Their Own Words" reported in "We Can do Better".

At the meeting of the Nova Scotia Community Services Legislative Committee held on Tuesday December 2, 2025, Craig Beaton, Deputy Minister of the Department of Opportunities and Social Development summarized the programs of the department focused on reducing poverty in Nova Scotia. He mentioned "income assistance, which has increased three times in the last number of years and will increase again in January 2026 in line with the Consumer Price Index; disability support not only from our traditional funding programs, but also with a new disability supplement, which provides an extra \$318 per month to over 15,000 income assistance recipients living with disabilities; the Path Program, which provides targeted financial support and community connections to young people leaving care right up until their 25th birthday; and supportive housing" — From Hansard, Legislative Standing Committee, Community Services, December 2, 2025.

Despite these initiatives, it is not enough. According to the 2025 report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty, Nova Scotia has the lowest welfare incomes for an unattached single person considered employable at just 33 per cent of the poverty threshold and the single parent with one child at 57 per cent of the poverty threshold. In comparison P.E.I. had the highest rate at 86 per cent for the same family.

At the same meeting of the Standing Committee on Com-



Photo by Jon Tyson on Unsplash

munity Services, Dr. Elizabeth Kay-Raining Bird, Chair of Basic Income Nova Scotia (BIG-NS) suggested that the committee recommend that an all-party committee be formed to study how a basic income could be implemented here in Nova Scotia. It should look at how it could be implemented in collaboration with the federal government. Note that Bill S-206, An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income has received second reading in the Senate. Dr. Kay-Raining Bird suggested the committee support and encourage the Nova Scotia government to support the implementation of the P.E.I. Pilot project for basic income.

The P.E.I. project she was referring to is T-BIG, a Targeted Basic Income Guarantee, a provincial program providing top-up payments to a select number of social assistance clients with significant barriers to employment, aiming to lift them to 85 per cent of the poverty line. Marie Burge with the Cooper Institute in P.E.I. also mentioned in a personal email that there was "ongoing advocacy and proposals for a broader, province-wide Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI) demonstration project, with support growing for a 5-7 year demonstration".

In Nova Scotia, Beaton stated at the legislative committee "we will continue to look

at [GBI] when new evidence emerges. It's not something we're considering right now".

Participating in the P.E.I. pilot and forming an all-party committee to study how a basic income could be implemented here in Nova Scotia would be good steps to acquiring the new evidence needed.

The Council recommends the introduction of "a targeted basic income to ensure everyone reaches at least Canada's Official Poverty Line through wages, government benefits or a combination of both." Alternatively, it recommends "reform[ing] and expand[ing] current income supports to more effectively meet the needs, based on regional realities, of those made most marginal."

Is there an example of a universal basic income program that is working? "I have never been so rich in all my life [since going on OAS]" — taken from "In Their Own Words" reported in "We Can do Better". The combined programs of old age security (OAS) and the guaranteed income supplement (GIS) have lifted many seniors out of poverty. However, Max Chauvin, Homeless and Housing Coordinator for HRM told the November 2025 meeting of the Face of Poverty Consultation that seniors were the fastest growing population becoming homeless. "They are running out of money," he

said. Clearly even OAS/GIS is no longer enough.

At the 2025 General Synod, a resolution on the topic of a universal basic income (UBI) was presented to "direct the Primate, on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada, to write to the federal government and urge them to implement a universal basic income, unconditionally, in alignment with the living wage for all Canadians." This resolution was referred to the Council of General Synod (COGS). With the approval of COGS, Archbishop Shane Parker wrote to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister on December 3, 2025. In his letter, he said, "We believe a UBI (Universal Basic Income) would be a valuable initiative that would increase financial security and promote greater equity for all residents of Canada. It represents a positive nation-building policy for today and tomorrow and is consistent with the transformational agenda of your government. It has found support across party lines and in communities across this country. I pray you will make the implementation of a UBI a high priority."

When Archbishop Parker mentioned support in communities in his letter, resolutions supporting UBI have been passed by municipal councils in many communities across Canada including Charlottetown, Summerside,

Kensington, Three Rivers, and Cornwall in P.E.I and 20 municipalities in Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

In a time of rising costs for food, housing and electricity, the need for a more equitable society where all citizens and their families have enough for a dignified life and can meet their basic needs is even more clear. A UBI/GBI needs serious consideration by the government in Nova Scotia. P.E.I. is leading the way with the courage to try a new path and should be congratulated.

In their own words from the consultations conducted by the National Advisory Council on Poverty,

"Social assistance rates need to be increased. I get social assistance, and I get \$700/month for rent and heating. You can't find anywhere to rent for that amount."

"Every place I have looked at is more than my cheque."

"I was getting \$495 a month, and my rent was \$450."

"Because all your money goes to rent, you have to rely on food banks and drop-ins to eat."

"Disability supports have to meet basic needs, and they don't."

"I can't even get my wheelchair fixed at the moment."

Whole-makers in a wounded world: A look at Gregory Boyle's latest wisdom

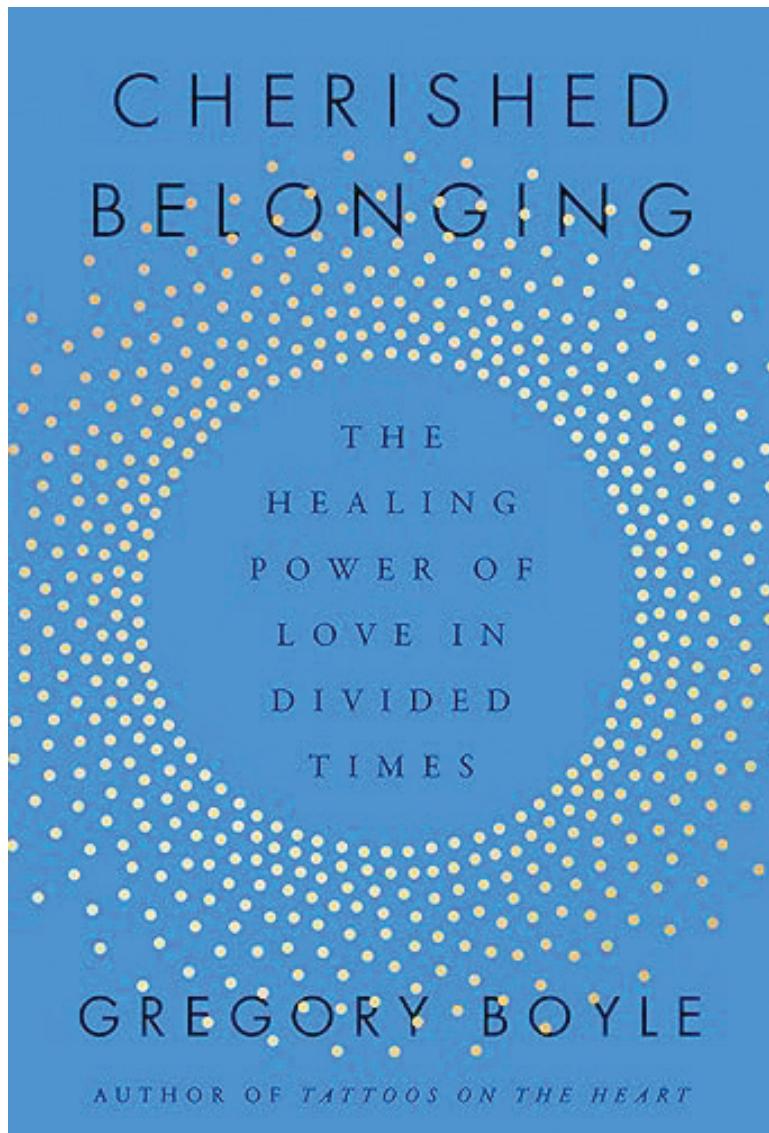
BY P.J. DONAHOE

A few words about Gregory Boyle's "Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times"

This is the latest book from Boyle, a Jesuit priest who has spent his life working with gang members in Los Angeles. Homeboy Industries, which he founded, is the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation, and reentry program in the world. "Tattoos on the Heart" (2010), his most popular offering, captures the challenges of living a credo that "we belong to each other"—"no life matters less than any other."

In "Cherished Belonging" (2024), Boyle continues, in his welcome and highly anecdotal style, to expand on his ethos in the face of an increasingly fractious America, rife with divisive hostility, and manages eloquently to maintain his long-held commitment to support the dignity and humanity of all.

Boyle has achieved his goals at Homeboy Industries by creating a milieu among the former gang member employees, often once deadly rivals, that focuses on values beyond kindness, where people feel seen, known, cherished, and worthy of tenderness. The common profile of a person starting at Homeboy includes childhood neglect and abuse in a familial environmental mix rife with drug and alcohol use, violence, and poor mental health. Completed levels of education are low. Those who survive



Book cover for "Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times"

their teens have often been incarcerated, and most did not see themselves living into their 20s because in the chaos of the 80s and 90s, many overdosed or were gunned down in the hood.

Gregory Boyle is a person whose faith is as deep as his tenacity is strong. He needs to be tenacious to lead, guide, and inspire a multifaceted workplace where workers practise a healing grace rooted in

their own recovery, or should I say redemption. Redemption at Homeboy begins with feeling warmth and acceptance from other "homies" who have discovered that they are exactly what God intended when he made them. From there, they begin to dismantle the ingrained messages of shame and disgrace. This dynamic, and its well-documented unique success rates, goes to the heart of Jesus's mission

on earth: building kinship and connection where no one is left standing in the margins.

One needs the lead-in above to understand the utter beauty of Boyle's collective accomplishment with his colleagues. At the end of this new book's introduction, Boyle does a bit of assessing as he "inches toward death's door" and provides a list of 10 things he believes. They are: God is in the loving. God IS inclusion. Demonizing is always untruth. We belong to each other. Separation is an illusion. Tenderness is the highest form of spiritual maturity. "Kindness is the only non-delusional response to everything" (George Saunders). Love your neighbour as you love your child. We are all unshakably good. A community of cherished belonging is God's dream come true. Every one of these statements is worthy of explication and a weighing of our beliefs in the light of his lived truth.

Of the 10, the belief that "demonizing is always untruth" is the one that intrigues me the most. It seems our default, in many situations, is to blame and label people and behaviours as bad, evil, or wicked; it is often part of "othering." What words have you used lately to describe recent political machinations south of the border? Boyle has a different take that sees God's love as His only power—the only power necessary. Boyle writes, "[He] is the Tender One [who] says so clearly, 'I will carry you and sustain you in love, no

matter what.'" And then quotes Augustine's praise of this loving presence: "You love us like there is only one of us."

Boyle's logic is that a loving God does not create badness. And further on he explains that "perhaps it is more accurate to say that despair, trauma, mental anguish, and plain old distraction can block our view of our own goodness." Certainly, we live in a wounded and wounding world. Boyle's pivot is that we "recognize woundedness in the world" and seek to support pathways back to better health, which includes wholeness and recognizing that we are born of love. "Only love makes progress. Fear and negativity keep us stuck. Demonizing and dehumanizing end all conversations and shut down our hope for progress." Judgmentalism only demonstrates our own self-absorption. Think of the impact if we put the same amount of energy into our relationships, our service to others, all others, as "whole makers"—because there lies joy.

Boyle tells a story of him and his siblings finding an audio recording of their mother singing "O Holy Night" and replaying it endlessly. Looking back, he remembers one line specifically: "Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth." As we move into the season of resolutions, our post-Advent growth spurts, can you think of anything more meaningful than building, with God's help, a world where every soul feels its worth?

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The Diocesan Times 2025 Readership Survey results

Earlier last year (2025), the Diocesan Times Management Board invited you, our readers, to share your thoughts on the future of our publication. We are delighted to report a robust response, with over 50 detailed submissions.

The overarching message was clear: The Diocesan Times remains a vital bridge, connecting individuals to the wider Anglican family beyond the walls of their own parishes. Here is a comprehensive look at what you told us and how we plan to grow.

What you value most

Our readers have a clear appetite for content that is both local and deeply spiritual. The survey identified four key pillars of interest:

*** Local connection:** Parish news and diocesan updates remain the “heart” of the paper. Readers consistently ranked these sections as what they valued most.

*** Spiritual reflection:** Readers find peace and grounding in columns focused on faith formation and spiritual growth.

*** Faith in action:** Social justice, environmental stewardship, and outreach projects resonate strongly with our mission-minded audience.

*** A tapestry of voices:** There is a strong desire to hear from a broader range of contributors from every corner of the Diocese.

The medium and the message

While the digital age is upon us, the tactile experience of a newspaper remains a sacred tradition for many.

*** The print tradition:** The print edition is still deeply cherished, particularly by our older readers, who describe it as a companion to their morning coffee or prayer/quiet time.

*** Digital growth:** Email and website access are gaining traction among those seeking

flexibility and environmental sustainability.

*** The frequency:** The vast majority of you are happy with our current schedule of 10 editions per year, though some expressed a willingness to adapt if it ensures the paper's long-term survival.

*** Social media and apps:** Less favoured overall. Some readers expressed concern that digital-only formats could isolate seniors or those with limited tech access.

In your own words

“I love seeing stories of how clergy and laity are making positive changes in their communities.”

“The columns give me peace and help me reflect spiritually.”

“Please keep the print edition. Seniors rely on it.”

A roadmap for the future

We have heard your suggestions and are already moving

toward several key improvements to better serve you:

1. Modernizing delivery while honouring tradition

We are committed to maintaining a print edition (as a section of the Anglican Journal). To complement this, we are exploring a new email newsletter that links directly to individual stories, making digital reading more user-friendly than scrolling through a large PDF.

We are also using social media to draw attention to specific stories in the paper.

2. Enhancing local coverage

To ensure no parish is left out, we are introducing more support for contributors. This includes:

* Acknowledgments when articles are received.

* Clearer communication on publication dates.

* Editor Interviews: If your parish has a story to tell but

no one to write it, our editor will offer interviews to help get your news into print.

3. Diversifying our perspectives

We are actively seeking new columnists from a variety of backgrounds to ensure The Diocesan Times reflects the true diversity of voices across our diocese.

4. Deepening our connection

Our content will remain rooted in the values you identified as most important. We will continue our emphasis on spiritual growth and social engagement, ensuring that every issue helps you feel more connected to the mission and heart of the wider church.

Thank you!

To everyone who took the time to respond: thank you. Your feedback is the compass we use to navigate the future. We look forward to continuing this journey of faith and storytelling with you.

The Parish of Tangier's ministry in memory of Joyce and Gerald Webb

BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

Most of us have probably heard of the Mission to Seafarers. It is a church-based maritime organization that is a welcome respite to weary seafarers. In existence since the 1800s, Mission to Seafarers provides service in 200 ports across 50 countries.

Closer to home, we have the Mission to Seafarers Halifax, which has been tending to the practical and spiritual needs of seafarers who visit the port of Halifax for 85 years.

Sue Slauenwhite and Heather Cooper from the Parish of Tangier know all about the intricacies of seafaring, which is thought to be one of the world's most dangerous occupations. They've been involved in the parish's contributions to the Mission's shoebox campaign for many years.

The Mission's Christmas shoebox campaign is an annual drive to collect donations in cash or kind to fill shoeboxes with hats, scarves, gloves, socks, wrapped hard candy, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoos, deodorants, lip balm, etc.

The goal is to supply essential items for individuals who work on ships — we're talking deckhands, ordinary seamen, watchkeeping staff, engine room personnel, mechanical

assistants, cargo handlers, oilers, cooks, etc. These seafarers are far away from home for months at a time, and it is undoubtedly a welcome warmth when they are presented with the essentials in the shoebox.

The Parish of Tangier has been involved in this ministry for many years, and what's interesting is the fact that it's a tradition that Slauenwhite and Cooper have been carrying on in memory and honour of the late Joyce and Gerald Webb — the two people who first got involved in the shoebox campaign. Joyce and Gerald's only child, Jean Clarke Webb, is also involved in the parish's efforts.

The boxes are typically handed out in Sheet Harbour, but in December of 2025, no ships came into that particular port. Slauenwhite, who is a member of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, shared that they delivered 70 wrapped boxes to the Halifax Mission instead.

“You can see the joy on their faces,” recounted Slauenwhite, referring to the times when the parish presented the seafarers at Sheet Harbour with the shoeboxes full of items. “They're so happy to see you, and they're so happy to grab their beautifully wrapped box off the table.”

Slauenwhite added that they are honoured to have been chosen by Joyce to continue a

tradition that involves giving back. They hope to continue for many more years to come, hopefully hitting a higher goal

of shoeboxes each year.

The Halifax Mission starts accepting donations in October.



The 70 wrapped boxes that were sent to the Halifax Mission last year (2025)



Joyce and Gerald Webb



Heather Cooper and husband Dale at Sheet Harbour Port, December 2022

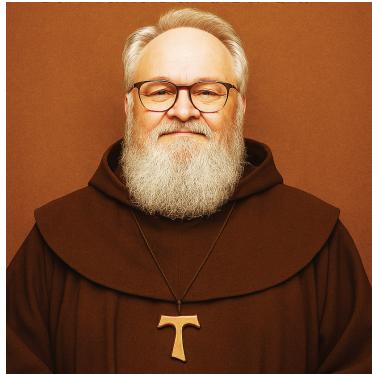


Sue Slauenwhite and husband Stefan in a man basket, being lifted onto a ship at Sheet Harbour Port, December 2023

You can find a complete list of necessities on their website. Visit www.missiontoseafarershalifax.ca.

Faith, family, and a touch of holy humour

— *Celebrating 60 years of ministry with Wayne Hamlin*



BY STEPHEN I. WEISS, M.ED.
RETired COUNSELLOR
DISCERNER FOR HOLY ORDERS,
ANGLICAN CHURCH

St. James Kentville honours longtime Lay Minister Wayne Hamlin for six decades of faithful (and often funny) service to the Church and community.

Wayne Hamlin has been a lifelong Anglican whose journey of faith began in New Brunswick before he eventually settled at St. James Anglican Church in Kentville. Sixty years is a long time to serve in any vocation — especially one steeped in faith, family, and a few too many cups of church coffee. Yet for Wayne, who recently marked his 60th anniversary as a Licensed Lay Minister, those years have been filled with laughter, humility, and devotion.

Last June, St. James held a special service led by Archbishop Ron to celebrate the milestone. After sending Wayne a short questionnaire, I quickly discovered that this was not just his personal achievement — it was a family affair. His wife Marilyn, his brothers, and other relatives have all served in parish life, making the Hamlin family part of the very fabric of St. James.

When asked if he ever imagined serving this long, Wayne laughed.

"I would have to say no, I never gave it a thought. I really didn't expect to live this long. I was told by one of the priests that the only way to retire was to die."

That dry humour, paired with unshakable faith, has carried him through countless changes in both Church and community. "You're right about changes," Wayne said. "One that surprised me was when Licensed Lay Ministers were finally able to take the reserved sacrament to shut-ins."

When asked what traditions have remained the same, he smiled. "At this time, I can't think of any," he said — a fitting answer for a man who has seen the Church evolve and



Wayne Hamlin and his wife Marilyn stand together in front of the Chapel Cross at St. James Anglican Church, Kentville.

adapt through six decades.

Wayne's quick wit has long been part of his charm. He and Marilyn have shared many lighthearted moments during their years of ministry together. "The secret," Wayne said, "is communication — and our belief in God."

Their partnership has been the steady heartbeat of their service, guiding them through vestry debates, bake sales, and more potluck surprises than either could count.

When I asked what St. James might say if its walls could talk, Wayne chuckled again.

"It would probably tell stories about overbearing, 'my way or the highway' types. Then it would ask, 'Is there anything they don't take part in? What

would we do without them?'"

The Hamlins' dedication has touched nearly every corner of parish life, and Wayne's memories carry both humour and gratitude. One highlight was the Diocesan Weekend at the Truro Agri Centre, featuring Rev. Terry Fulon — an event he recalls with joy. Another memory offers a lesson in preparedness.

"I was attending a Licensed Lay Ministers' AGM in North Sydney," he said. "I was supposed to read the first lesson, but the president told me the night before someone else would do it. When the time came, no one moved. The president looked at me and said, 'There's been a change of plans — you're reading.' I had no idea what the passage was.

Let's just say it never happened again."

That experience led to Wayne's enduring advice for future lay ministers:

"Always be prepared. You never know when an emergency might happen, and you could be pressed into a service."

Over the years, Wayne has been asked more than once whether he ever considered full-time ordained ministry. His answer, as humble as ever: "I never felt worthy to pursue it."

That humility captures his ministry's heart. For Wayne, serving God has never been about titles or robes; it's about presence — showing up, listening, and offering compassion

where it's needed most. His quiet faith has shaped the community more deeply than he'll ever admit.

If the walls of St. James could talk, they would echo Wayne's laughter, Marilyn's kindness, and sixty years of prayer, music, and service. They would tell stories of ordinary faith lived in extraordinary ways — one visit, one reading, one act of love at a time.

After six decades, Wayne doesn't boast or seek credit. He simply smiles and says, "It's just what you do."

And perhaps that's the truest definition of ministry — a life lived faithfully, humbly, and with just enough humour to keep the rest of us inspired.

Recognizing the stitchers of Sacred Art: Needlepoint in the Cathedral



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR THE CATHEDRAL NEEDLEPOINT BOOK PROJECT

The ordination in the Cathedral Church of All Saints on December 6, 2025, gave those in attendance an opportunity to appreciate the artistry of the beautiful needlepoint kneelers and cushions in the display case to the right of St. Stephen's Chapel. Those admiring the designs could, and did, appreciate the labour of love and hours of stitching involved in bringing this two decades project of the 1980s/90s to a conclusion.

There was always a dream to honour the artistry and artisans with a publication, but it was a dream only until recently, when a second cathedral needlepoint team was assembled to bring that dream to fruition – to research, prepare, and publish a book of photos and text. Anyone who has been inspired to write and publish a book knows that it is not a project for the faint of heart! Nor is it a project that happens quickly, just as the stitching did not happen quickly.

We need your help in a number of ways; one is with your prayers, and another is whether you recognize any of the stitchers from over 40 years ago. We know that many are no longer with us, but we also know that quite a few are living, and we are making contact with as many as possible.

With these names listed below, it is easier to appreciate the scope of the Cathedral's Needlepoint Project. Please make contact with Elissa Barnard: elissa.barnard@gmail.com if you have information and/or insights to share about any of the stitchers.

Cape Breton Region: Alice Dowling for Neil's Harbour with Ingonish and Edith Proctor for Sydney Mines/Baddeck.

Chebucto Region: Christina Oakley and Grace Hayes for Apostles (formerly St. Philip's); Sally Austin, Mar-



Jorie Ball, Carol Beal, Robin Biggs, Alice Cameron, Jackie Carrington-Smith, Charlotte Cochran, Canon H. Rhodes Cooper, W. Athol Cotton, Rita Creighton, Dora Curran, Diane Davie, Frances Davies, Rose-Marie Dennis, May Dorey, Hilda Edwards, Helen Feindel, Ruth Fleming, Linda Fraser, Norma Fry, Linda Sharon Gabriel, Millie Gallop, Norma Grant, Latta Hall, Mary Jamieson, Barbara Joyce, Nancy Kitchen, Kathy King-Johannessen, Joy Lordly, Harriet Lovely, Millicent McCormack, Betty MacDonald, Heather MacEachern, Mildred Millar, Ena Moore, Betty Morrow, Ethel Nelson, Susie Parsons, Anne Patterson, Margaret Prudence, Eleanor Pyke, Phyllis Ross, Etta Shaffner, Joy Smith, Peggy Thompson and Sheila Tregunno for the Cathedral; Dora Curran, Peg Goodyear and Millie Gallop for Emmanuel (Spryfield); Susan Campbell for St. Augustine (Jollimore, deconsecrated); Eleanor Hope for St. George's; Bernice Mason for St. James

(Armdale); Mary Darrach for St. James (Herring Cove); Emma Organ for St. Margaret of Scotland; Gertrude Nickerson for St. Mark's; and Viola Guest for St. Paul's.

Chignecto Region: Sally Austin for Christ Church (Amherst) and Etta Shaffner on behalf of the ACW for Christ Church (Lantz); June Butler for Maitland; and Lorraine Crossman for St. George's (Parrsboro).

Dartmouth Region: Diana Clarke for Christ Church and St. John's (Westphal); Dora Curran and Ormi Beaver for St. Alban's (Woodside); and Dawn Skene for St. Luke's.

Northumbria Region: Carol Langille for Christ Church (Stellarton); Margaret Smith for the Good Shepherd (Tidnish); Roberta MacKeen for St. Bees (Westville); Edna Naylor for St. James (Pictou); and Diana Clarke for St. John's (Arichat).

Rivers to Trails Region: Kay Jerram for All Saints (Bedford); Marion Old-



shaw for St. George's and Phyllis Rose for St. Paul's of the Parish of French Village; Dora Curran for St. Timothy (Hatchet Lake); Ella Robinson and May Dorey for St. Luke's (Hubbards); and Jean Kelly for Waverly.

South Shore Region: Dora Curran for La Have/Blue Rocks; Ena Moore and Mary Jamieson for St. Augustine's (Conquerall Bank); Elizabeth Miller for St. John's (Lunenburg); Iva Hiltz for St. Martin's (Western Shore); Gertrude Nickerson for St. Michael's and All Angels (Petite Riviere); and Jackie Whynot for Trinity (Liverpool).

Valley Region: Norma Fry and Norma Grant for Annapolis and Granville; Effie Allen for Port Greville; Etta Shaffner for Rawdon; Anne Patterson for St. James (Kentville); Susan Cox for St. John's (Cornwallis); and Roy Loomer for St. John's (Wolfville).

Another way to help with the book publication of Sacred Art: Needlepoint in the Cathedral is

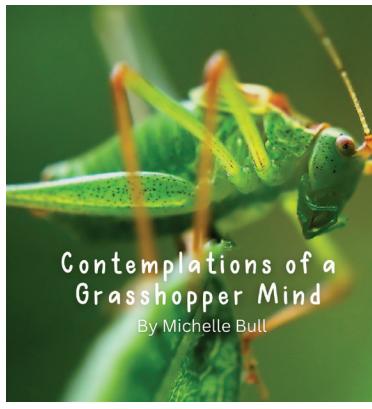
with a financial contribution. Contributions can be made in memory of, or in gratitude for, a loved one. If so, please be sure to include the name of the person(s) being memorialized/honoured with your contribution. Financial support will be publicly recognized (unless otherwise requested). Thank you for your support for the production of this book.

Via cheque: payable to the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Needlepoint Project in the memo line, addressed to the Cathedral Church of All Saints, 1340 Cathedral Lane, Halifax, NS B3H 2Z1.

Cathedral website: <https://www.cathedralchurchofallsaints.com/> Click Give and choose Needlepoint Project from the dropdown menu.

Via e-transfer: treasurerccas@eastlink.ca with Needlepoint Project in the message field. Include your name and postal address in order to receive an income tax receipt.

Invitation



BY MICHELLE BULL

One day, I was having lunch with a colleague, and we were walking along Spring Garden Rd and ran into Archbishop Arthur Peters, out for a walk. We stopped for a chat. Suddenly a guy beetled up to us, thrust some tracts into our hands, and said, "You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved." Then he was off to the next person.

We stared after him for a moment and started to laugh. I said, "Gee, I thought I was saved 50 years ago." My colleague said something. Bishop Arthur capped both of us by saying, "I was saved 2000 years ago." The irony of some unknown guy trying to convert two Anglican priests and an archbishop in a 30-second encounter made us laugh.

So, that would rank very low on my list of possible evangelism tools. One of the problems we Anglicans have with the idea of evangelism is that we tend to think of giving tracts to strangers, going door to door, or standing on a soapbox in the park telling people to repent. And it just isn't our style.

When I was at AST, I did a grad project on why people with no church background sometimes started going to church and kept going and got involved. This involved in-depth interviews with five people who fit the criteria and also reading a lot of studies on church growth. There was substantial agreement among all these studies.

Most people start going to church because someone invites them. It's that simple. Four of my five people first went because they were invited. In three cases, it was a personal invitation from a friend to come with them. In one case, it was an intriguing flyer in their college dorms. The fifth person started going because her five-year-old daughter asked her if Santa Claus was God. She knew Santa wasn't God, but she didn't think she could explain



Photo by Vladislav Anchuk on Unsplash

who God was, so she went to church to find out.

Sometimes it's the pastor or priest who invites people to church, but the most effective invitations come from lay-people, someone's friend. This is partly because all the people in a church combined know a lot more people outside the church than their priest does. It's also because, if your friend invites you, you have someone to sit with and tell you what to do. It's less nerve-wracking.

Lifelong churchgoers have a hard time believing anyone could feel nervous about going to church. For us, it's home, and we feel very comfortable there; why wouldn't everyone? The short answer is because it's a strange place for non-churchgoers. They don't know the rules: How do you dress? Does it matter where you sit? Do you have to kneel or stand, and when do you do that? Are non-believers even allowed to go? It's overwhelming.

If you think this is far-fetched, consider what it would be like for you to go to a synagogue or a mosque or a gurdwara for a service. Some of us went to a synagogue for a service for one of our classes, and we spent an hour on the phone with a retired rabbi before we went, and he met us and showed us around and where to sit and so on. It was very helpful. And we were still nervous and afraid of

offending some custom.

When we invite people to church, it's good to go with them the first few times. Or if there are visitors to church, it's good if someone sits with them and shows them which book to use and answers their questions and so on. It makes the whole experience much less nerve-wracking. Some churches even have people who keep an eye out for visitors and offer to sit with them.

Of course, we don't want to "make friends" for the specific

purpose of converting them. Most people have a pretty well-developed sense of when their new friends have an ulterior motive, and they shy off pretty quickly. But most of us already have a lot of friends, and it's not that hard to talk to them about religion, especially if it's important to us, and invite them to church.

It's good to be genuinely curious about what they believe, too, or what their practices are, before telling them about ours. We could even go to their place

of worship, if they have one. At the very least, we'll know each other better and deepen our friendships. And who knows? They may find a spiritual home.

A surprising number of people are curious about what Christians believe. They might even be looking for a religious practice. Sometimes all they need is a friendly invitation to "come and see."

The Companions Program

September 2026 – June 2027

The residential Companions program is an immersive opportunity to experience a contemporary monastic community rooted in the Benedictine tradition. It is open to women aged 21 and up regardless of Christian denomination.

Companions live, work, and pray alongside the sisters, learning from them but also sharing each companion's own gifts with the sisters and their ministries. They will:

- ↳ Learn to cultivate peaceful and creative ways of living in a diverse intentional community
- ↳ Appreciate silence and solitude as well as community and service for a healthy life
- ↳ Put down deep roots of spiritual intimacy with God and each other
- ↳ Develop a personal path to ongoing spiritual growth



Application start & end (both programs):

January 1, 2026 – May 1, 2026



Cost:
Residential Companions: sugg. \$150/month.
Companions Online: sugg. \$100/month.
If cost is a hindrance, assistance is available.

Open to women of all Christian expressions, **Companions Online** is an opportunity to become "monastics in the world," living a Benedictine rhythm of prayer, work, study, and recreation. Online Companions learn to develop practices that support and nurture their spiritual life from the comfort of their homes.

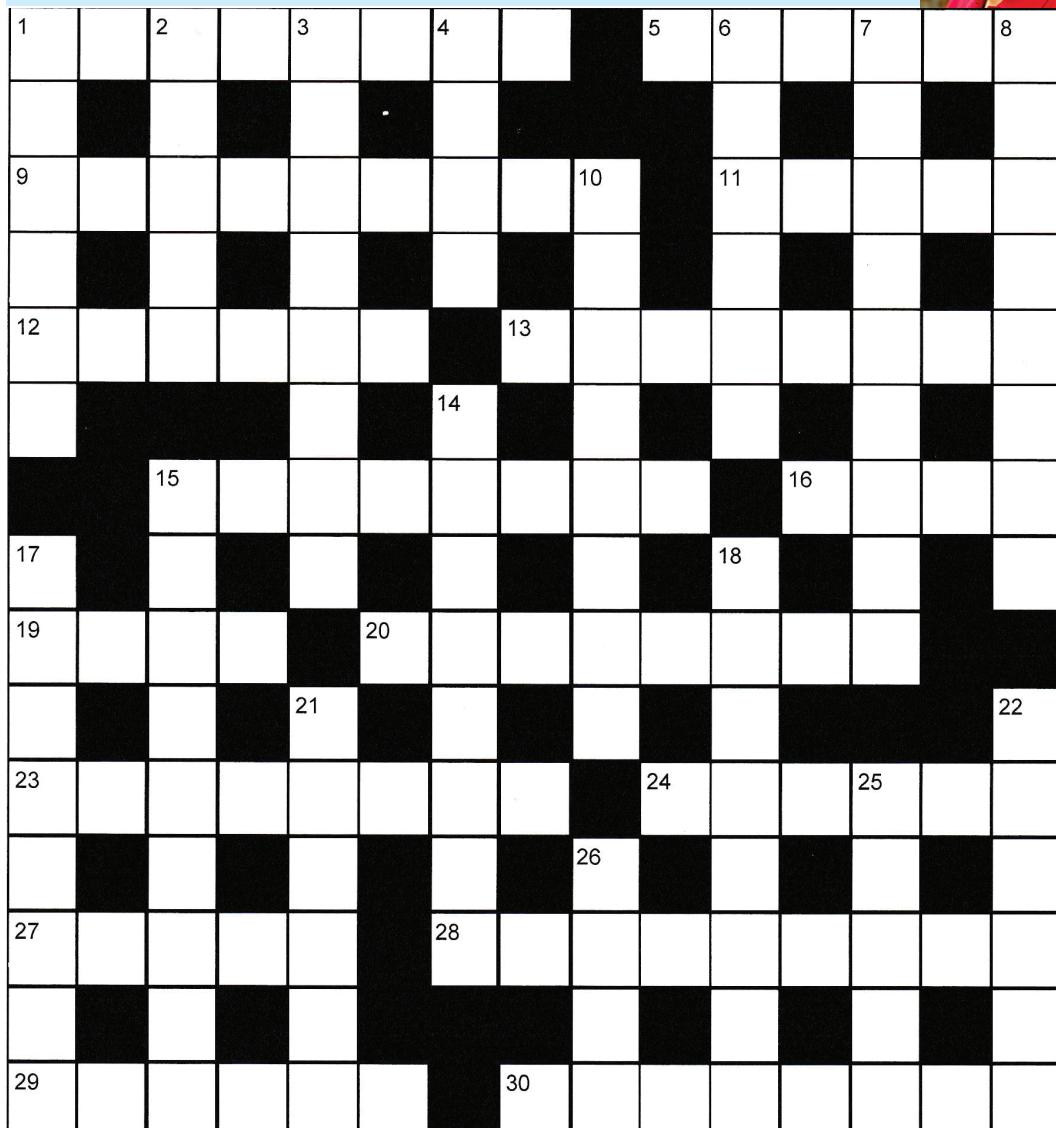
They meet regularly for classes and discussion groups, and commit to times of personal prayer at home. They share in book studies, participate in online worship and sometimes screen a film relevant to spiritual growth and self-understanding. Online Companions also develop spiritual disciplines that follow the liturgical year.

To learn more about either program, or to apply, email:
 Canon Sr. Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, SSJD, at
companions@ssjd.ca, or phone St. John's Convent:
 416-226-2201, ext. 304

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine

February Bible Crossword

BY MAUREEN YEATS



January Puzzle Answers



February 2026 Puzzle Clues

ACROSS:

- 1- Old Testament book of adages (8)
- 5- Successor to Moses (6)
- 9- Epistle addressed to one of the churches in Asia Minor (9)
- 11- Reliance (5)
- 12- Seat of the sovereign (6)
- 13- Boys who share the same parents (8)
- 15- Baptise (8)
- 16- Author of a Gospel (4)
- 19- Old Testament book (4)
- 20- Satisfied, as thirst (8)
- 23- Calm (8)
- 24- Thin layer of wood (6)
- 27- Yogurt-based food from India (5)
- 28- An epistle (9)
- 29- Old Testament major prophet (6)
- 30- Composed of small grains (8)

DOWN:

- 1- Abundant supply (6)
- 2- Orange-yellow colour (5)
- 3- Setting for "Hamlet" (8)
- 4- Canaanite deity (4)
- 6- Groups of eight (6)
- 7- "She is not afraid for her _____" (Prov. 31:21) family including servants (9)
- 8- Skilled craftspeople (8)
- 10- Doctors who operate on people (8)
- 14- Stating with confidence (8)
- 15- Cultivated flower, often pink (9)
- 17- In the middle (8)
- 18- Menace (8)
- 21- Shape with four equal sides and four equal angles (6)
- 22- Piece of rubber used to remove pencil marks (6)
- 25- Electronic form of communication (5)
- 26- Make indistinct (4)

Standing with Survivors, Investing in Hope

APP is inviting you to support **NSTAY (Nova Scotia Transition and Advocacy for Youth)**, a survivor-led program through the YWCA Halifax for youth who've experienced trafficking and exploitation.



NSTAY's work is **non-judgmental, trauma-informed, and rooted in compassion**. Anglicans Powering Potential (APP) is partnering with the YWCA to support NSTAY to help young people take steps toward healing and reclaiming their future. Contributions of \$20 or more receive an income tax receipt.

How to contribute . . .

- ✓ **Via cheque . . .** payable to Anglicans Powering Potential, **NSTAY** in the memo line, addressed to Marjorie Davis, 204, 111 Pebblecreek Dr., Dartmouth, NS B2W 0L1
- ✓ **Via e-transfer . . .** to app.nspeidiocese@gmail.com with **NSTAY** and your name and postal address in the message field



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Love is action

BY ANGELA RUSH

As you read this, it will be the month of love — February. The month when many feel the stresses of having to pay for overpriced gifts or flowers. Some are trying to book a seat at a fancy restaurant that will likely cost more than they can afford. It is so sad that we step into this month knowing that if we have that special someone, then something should happen on that day that tells them, in front of the world, that they are loved. "You are mine; here are some roses that cost triple what they did yesterday." So many things about that typical Valentine's Day experience go against what the Bible says about love.

Let's take a look at 1 Corinthians. Verses 4-7 give us a portrait of love with active qualities. While reading over the verses, the phrases of active qualities struck me. Patient, kind, not envious,



Photo by Sixteen Miles Out on Unsplash

not boasting, not proud, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered, not recording wrongs, rejecting evil, rejoicing in truth, bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring; these all require action. Love is not giving a gift, buying a meal, or having flowers delivered. Love is an active state of being in who we are to who we are with — whether it's in a moment or a lifetime. Love is a constant active state.

We need to act, in love, as Christians every day. This begins with cultivating that relationship with Jesus and following him. God is love; he

gave us his son to prove that. God wants to have a love relationship with each and every one of us.

My personal relationship began when I was a teenager in a youth group at my local church. We had a minister come over from England to speak at our church and in our group. His name was Canon Michael Green. Sadly, he passed away in 2019. In his talk with us, he said something that changed my life and its direction forever. He taught me, basically in one sentence, how to be a Christian. "Love is giving your best self for the

good of someone else," he said — words I will never forget and try my best to apply in what I do. Life has not been easy for me thus far, but it sure has been one of challenge, hardship, change, adventure, and choice. I didn't always handle challenges the best, and I didn't always make the expected decision. I learned, and I loved, and every step of the way, I fell into a deeper love relationship with Jesus.

In April of 2005, my eldest daughter began a journey through two life-threatening illnesses. She battled them with bravery, courage, and a grace bestowed upon her by God himself. She said to me one day that "it's not about how long you live; it's about how you live your life." Sadly, she passed away on April 18, 2007. Meghan, through her struggles and hardships, lived lovingly and taught me again about love by her actions.

Not long after my Meghan's

passing, my youngest, Caitlin, came out to me that she was gay. I handled it horribly at first, and that is me being completely honest. I had a very warped sense of things, and looking back on it, I was an ignorant fool. I judged, and that was not love. Jesus taught me, through her, so much about love. She is the most beautiful person I have ever met. She lives her true self honestly, openly, and lovingly, and I am proud and honoured that she is my daughter. She is more Christ-like and loving than anyone I know. I am blessed to call her mine. Love is love. I love her exactly how she is.

Jesus says to all of us, "I love you — You are mine."

If my life were a play, then every scene that I am in will lead me to the final act. The final act will be that moment when I meet the love of my life one day — his name is Jesus. Happy Valentine's Day. Jesus loves you, and so do I.

"Blue Christmas" service offers hope and healing

A Blue Christmas Service of Hope and Healing was held Thursday, December 4 at 7 p.m. at the Anglican Cathedral Church of All Saints (1330 Cathedral Lane, Halifax). This annual event offers music, prayer, and worship especially designed for people who find "the holidays" difficult because of past losses, current troubles, or anxiety about the future.

The service moved from mourning to hope, and included readings and rituals of remembrance and hope, as well as an opportunity to be prayed for individually. The Cathedral's assistant priest, the Rev. Dr. Kate Heichler said, "This event is always deeply moving — it gives some space for a full range of feelings, and celebrates God's love and presence no matter what is going on." People of all faiths, or "none of the above," are invited to attend, whether they are suffering illness, depres-

sion, or economic hardship, miss someone special, or have difficult memories of holiday times. They will find a warm welcome and space to participate as much or as little as they wish. Some people come just to support others in distress. This year's service featured special music, and an opportunity to engage in different rituals of comfort and healing.

Heichler noted, "Christmas is not 'the most wonderful time of the year' for everyone. The empty chair at the table, illness, unemployment, loneliness, or alcoholism — people's reasons for sadness during the holidays can be many and varied. And this year, many people are experiencing anxiety post-election. But when we bring our light together, we overcome the darkness."

Photos © Jennifer Anandanayagam



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Wealth Management
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