



**So, Someone Is In Your Space!**  
- Page 4



**The History of King's College Chapel**  
- Page 7

**Helping Build Inclusive and Resilient Marriages in the Dartmouth Region** -page 8



# THE DIOCESAN TIMES



**FOLLOW**  
US ON FACEBOOK

[FACEBOOK.COM/DIOTIMES](https://www.facebook.com/DIOTIMES)

MAY 2026 A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

## Therefore We Have Hope: Shaping Our Future Together

BY JOËLLE BADMAN

**An Update:** The conversation is well underway. Over the past several weeks, we have been listening across the diocese, and what we have heard has been rich, thoughtful, and deeply encouraging.

As part of our five-year strategic planning process, rooted in Bishop Sandra's message of "Therefore We Have Hope," we have had the privilege of gathering in person with communities across the region. From P.E.I. to Cape Breton to HRM, people have shown up, shared honestly, and brought their hopes and questions for the future of our Diocese to the table. These conversations have reminded us that even amid real challenges, there is



Photo by Lina Trochez on Unsplash

genuine faith and energy in our communities.

Our work together is not fin-

ished; it is continuing to grow. This month, we are carrying these conversations to Bridge-

water, and we are deepening our listening through a series of online focus groups with

smaller groups, including youth, clergy, and lay leaders. All voices matter enormously as we discern where God is calling us forward.

If you have not yet had a chance to share your perspective, there is still time. The insights we gather in these coming weeks will directly shape the plan we build together. Your experience, your hopes, and your honest observations are exactly what this process needs.

We are grateful for everyone who has engaged so far, and we look forward to continuing to listen, reflect, and move forward, together, with hope.

- Cont. on page 4

## A Holy Week Rediscovered: Walking It Again After Childhood



BY STEPHEN JOSEPH IRÉNÉE (IRENAEUS) WEISS, M.ED. (COUNSELLING)

This Holy Week has been a marvellous time of exploration and new beginnings. I could have written a daily report—honestly, there was something each day worth reflecting on—but if I had done that, this article would have gone far beyond the word count. And maybe that says something in itself. Holy Week isn't meant to be rushed or summarized too neatly. It unfolds, layer by layer, moment by moment.

It began for me on Palm Sunday, March 29, standing at the front of the church as one of the greeters. Not watching from a distance,

but welcoming others in. There was something quietly powerful about that—seeing each person arrive, some joyful, some tired, and some carrying things they didn't speak about. And realizing, as I handed them palms, that I wasn't just attending anymore.

I was part of it.

As the week moved forward, I found myself growing more and more excited. Not in a loud way, but in a steady, deepening anticipation. This was my first Holy Week in the Anglican Church since my childhood in the Roman Catholic tradition, and something about returning to it—seeing it again through older eyes—felt like rediscovering a story I had once known but never fully understood.

Each service added something. Each moment deepened the experience.

And then came the stripping of everything—the altar cleared, nothing left behind, everything either consumed or taken away. I remember thinking how deliberate it

was. How complete. And how it mirrored the story itself: everything being taken, everything being emptied.

Good Friday carried that weight forward. Not just in the readings, but in the very atmosphere. The church felt different. Quieter. Heavier. And then came the silence—the waiting—that space where nothing seems to happen, and yet everything is unfolding.

And then came tonight. Holy Saturday. May the 4.

Without question, this was the most moving moment of my Holy Week.

The fire. The darkness. The slow building of light.

And then something unexpected—something deeply personal.

The Reverend Kristine MacKenzie shared what she called a "bedtime story"—"The Selfish Giant" by Oscar Wilde. I hadn't thought about that story in years. But as she told it, something in me stirred. It wasn't just memory—it was recognition.

That story had meant some-

thing to me as a child.

And suddenly, it meant something again.

I found myself moved—deeply moved. Tears came, not just from the beauty of the story, but from what it awakened in me. I remembered what Christ had done for me five years ago. I saw, in a way I hadn't fully seen before, how my own journey—my struggles, my healing, my second chances—had been walking alongside this story all along.

Throughout this Holy Week, I have seen my journey retold in the story of Christ.

Not as something distant or historical, but as something living.

And then came the renewal of baptismal vows.

There's something about standing there, recommitting, remembering, being invited again into that promise. The tears didn't stop. They stayed with me... even as I stepped forward to serve as Eucharistic minister. And I had to smile a little at that—because there I was, trying to carry

out my role, while still being completely undone in the best possible way.

And maybe that's the point.

It's funny, in a way. This time of year means different things to different people. Some come only on the holidays—Christmas, Easter—marking those moments as their connection with Christ. Others come as often as they can—every Sunday, midweek Eucharist, quiet prayers in between.

And yet, in all of it, God carries us.

Whether we show up once a year or every week, whether we feel strong in our faith or barely holding on, whether we understand everything or nothing at all—God carries us.

That's what I've seen this week.

From the doorway on Palm Sunday... to the emptiness of Good Friday... to the fire and light of Holy Saturday.

This hasn't just been a remembrance.

It has been a becoming.

# Pray as you can

## Where Does Paying Attention to My Soul Lead Me?

BY LINDA LONGMIRE

I was wanting to visit my friend, Buci, who lives by herself on a 500-hundred-acre farm close to her daughter and young family. I felt Buci's was the perfect place to do some writing for my writing course and a perfect setting for meditation and prayer. Not too far from the farm, in the rural town of Antigonish, lives another friend—a 92-year-old Catholic Sister of St. Martha whom I planned on joining for lunch during the week I was at the farm. Sister Dorothy is a deeply respected Mi'kmaq elder about whom a book and a documentary were written/made. She was a strong advocate for bringing a Mi'kmaq curriculum into public schools and universities and spoke widely about Mi'kmaq spirituality. She is a spiritual companion and mentor to me.

When I was visiting Sister Dorothy in her nursing home, she was quietly excited. Her face lit up as she showed me a picture she had painted decades ago and had thought was lost, only to find that it had been in the archives of her religious order all this time. The framed painting was hanging on a wall in her small room where several Mi'kmaq spiritual figurines were placed. From where I was sitting, the painting was directly in front of me. It was a large painting of a solitary, lit, cream-coloured candle against a muted black background. It looked like a professional artist had painted it. I knew my friend had been an artist, but it was the finest painting of hers I had seen. We sat briefly in silence looking up at the painting. Then, I broke the silence, "Sister Dorothy, this is an amazing painting and beautiful for reflection in prayer." Her face was glowing. Something within me knew that this painting was significant for me personally, and my eyes became magnetically drawn to the orange-red colour of the flame closest to the candle. I had never noticed red in a candle flame before.

The next morning, I was sitting in an armchair next to my friend, Buci, in her farmhouse living room, looking out the large window at the snow-laden trees and the sun overhead. There was a comfortable stillness and silence, with the homey smell of woodsmoke from the wood stove and the warmth of the coffee cup in my hands. There was the occasional slow draw of a hot sip of fresh coffee, and I felt my



Sister Dorothy's painting



With Sister Dorothy in her nursing home

whole being settling easily. I kept staring directly at the sun (I know you're not supposed to do that) and was struck by the sun's rays. I noticed something I had never noticed before... the same orange-red colour surrounding the sun with its rays radiating from that innermost colourful space. I was mesmerized. I felt a stirring of curiosity that arose from my soul as I remembered the colours of the

candle flame in the painting just the day before.

Later that afternoon I was lying on the sofa under the warmth of a comforter in the living room of the farmhouse for a rest. I had my eyes closed. Slowly I turned onto my right side and opened my eyes, looking out into the sunlit living room where I could see the wooden rack upon which my friend's hand-dyed wool skeins were drying. As

the sun intensified and settled onto small areas of the rust-coloured skeins, dyed with onion skins, I saw this same orange-red colour appearing, deepening—a rich warm earthy colour highlighted on the wool. The colour felt embracing, and again I was captivated. I was aware of the synchronicity of noticing the orange-red colour appearing in these closely placed experiences. "What is happening?" I wondered. Whatever it was, I was confident that it was Spirit leading me to see and connect these different puzzle pieces. Where this would lead me, I didn't know, but it left me wondering with a sense of subtle anticipation.

Later, alone in the silence of my car, on my long drive home through the countryside, I began reflecting on all of this. My first thought and image that came to my mind was my meditative, mindfulness practice of paying close attention to my heart when I pray for those I love. I experience the energy of my own lovingness in those moments to be warm and radiant.

When I first experienced this, I became curious about radiant energy and what I had felt in my own heart and got up in the middle of the night to seek information about this energy on the internet. What I found was that radiant energy is electromagnetic energy. This resonated with my felt experience of connecting directly to the radiant nature of my own lovingness.

As I visualized the images of the radiant warm orange-red colours of the painted solitary lit candle, and the radiant sun, and the sunlit wool skeins, I thought—rather, I imagined... hmmm... maybe these are the colours of the radiant energy that surrounds my heart when I am connecting to the radiant love within me.

I deeply appreciate my curiosity and imagination regarding my soul and how it so often leads me to connection—to the love within my own heart and to what I believe is the love within the depths of all humanity, whether this is recognized or not. And... I call this love, "sacred."

*Linda Longmire is a feminist contemplative spiritual director and leader of contemplative groups who received her training from The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation.*

*She is a committed Christian whose spiritual life is enriched by some Buddhist practices.*



THE DIOCESAN TIMES

VOLUME 81 NUMBER 05

Jennifer Anandanayagam  
Editor

Also on the web:  
[www.nspeidiocese.ca](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca)

Letters & News Items:  
Editor

1340 Cathedral Lane  
Halifax, NS B3H 2Z1

[diocesantimes@gmail.com](mailto:diocesantimes@gmail.com)

Advertising:  
Angela Rush  
[diocesantimes.ads@gmail.com](mailto:diocesantimes.ads@gmail.com)  
905.630.0390  
(Burlington, ON)

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

Online editions available via the diocesan website:  
[www.nspeidiocese.ca](http://www.nspeidiocese.ca)

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

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

All material subject to editing.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:**

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

**Changes to your Subscription?**

**Either online:**  
[www.anglicanjournal.com/subscribe](http://www.anglicanjournal.com/subscribe)

**Or write:**  
Diocesan Times/  
Anglican  
Journal Circulation Dept  
80 Hayden St  
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2

[circulation@national.anglican.ca](mailto:circulation@national.anglican.ca)  
(416) 924-9199 Ext 259/245

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

\$20 per year  
Single copies: \$2

# Mapping the Ground We Stand On: An invitation to learn, reflect, and reconcile

BY JACQUELINE TINGLE

When Gillian Power and Michael Shapcott speak about Mapping the Ground We Stand On, they do so with a sense of shared responsibility. Both were part of the original cohort that was trained in Winnipeg in 2019 and have spent the last seven years guiding parishes and other groups through the challenging work of reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of Canada. Together they bring perspectives from different parts of the country, shaped by their own experiences.

Mapping the Ground We Stand On is an interactive workshop that was created by Alongside Hope in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 2025 final report. Developed by Adele Finney, Suzanne Rumsey, and Esther Wesley, and advised by Indigenous Elders, the exercise uses a large floor map of Turtle Island/Canada to explore the intertwined stories of the presence of Indigenous peoples on their land and the arrival of settlers.

Participants physically walk onto the map as they hear stories and reflect on historical events. They are called to consider their own place within the shared history. The experience is intentional and invites participants to not just learn the facts but to really feel the weight of Canadian settler history.

Gillian Power, a facilitator from Halifax, N.S., began her journey with a desire to learn the history she wasn't taught in school. A pivotal moment



Standing together in front of the map as we learn and work toward Indigenous reconciliation at St. Philip's, Unionville, in an exercise in June 2025.



Gillian Power

came through the University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada course, a 12-week program that opened her eyes to the depth of Indigenous presence in Canada and the brutal realities of colonization.

"I realized how much I didn't know," Power reflects, "and how much I needed to keep learning."

For Power, the mapping exercise became a way to share that learning with others, not as an expert, but as a companion. Over the past six years, she's facilitated 15 mapping sessions. Historically, her sessions have been within church

communities, dioceses, and regional councils. But recently, she's been making deeper inroads into Indigenous communities themselves.

One upcoming milestone is a session with Every One Every Day, a reconciliation project that works with the Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre in the North End of Halifax and is co-facilitated with Rev. Cate Ratcliff. Together, they are exploring whether the exercise could be offered more broadly to the public through the centre—an important step in expanding the reach of this work.

"To heal, we must know the wound." She says, reflecting on her guiding philosophy. "We have to acknowledge what happened, call it what it is, and then learn how to walk alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters without taking up space—just being there and healing together."

Michael Shapcott's involvement also stretches back to the very beginning. After training in Winnipeg,

he carried the work westward when he moved to British Columbia. He adapted the exercise to reflect the distinct treaty histories and realities of the Canadian West Coast.

"Treaty history in B.C. is profoundly different from Eastern Canada," he explains. "The exercise has to reflect the land and the people where it's being delivered."

The Mapping the Ground We Stand On is an interactive educational workshop that uses a large floor map for participants to walk through history, focusing on truth, reconciliation, and the impacts of the Doctrine of Discovery.

This commitment to local relevance means working directly with First Nations to ensure the mapping reflects regional histories, languages, and experiences. It also means delivering the exercise in a wide range of settings—from churches to community halls to the Sorrento Centre, where Shapcott serves as executive director. Thousands have participated across B.C. and Alberta, many returning multiple times because of the depth and emotional resonance of the experience.

For Shapcott, the purpose of the mapping exercise is clear: it is not shameful. It is about understanding.

His work is also shaped by a global perspective. In 2019, Sorrento Centre joined the Community of the Cross of Nails, an international reconciliation network rooted in Coventry Cathedral's post-war commitment to healing rather than vengeance. Shapcott now serves on its international

board, collaborating with leaders from conflict-affected regions around the world.

Through this network, he has shared the mapping exercise internationally—as a model that can be adapted to other colonial histories, including in South Africa, Palestine, and the United States. The patterns of displacement and cultural suppression resonate far beyond Canada's borders.

At home, Michael's work also includes celebrating and revitalizing Indigenous culture. Sorrento Centre hosts workshops, cultural programming, and interpretive trails that highlight Indigenous plant knowledge and teachings from local Elders—an intentional reversal of historic cultural suppression.

Want to experience the mapping exercise yourself?

The map of truth and reconciliation in Canada is still very much incomplete. Alongside Hope remains committed to being part of the journey towards drawing a more complete map.

Facilitators representing each of the four ecclesiastical provinces have been equipped with a large floor map of Canada and are ready to bring this education for reconciliation resource to you. It is ideal for a synod, clergy retreat day, youth gathering, or Indigenous awareness event in your parish or community. To book a mapping exercise for your community, visit [alongsidehope.org/mapping-exercise](https://alongsidehope.org/mapping-exercise) or contact Abdi Ali at [aali@alongsidehope.org](mailto:aali@alongsidehope.org)

## Last Chance to Register for Pathways to Peace Retreat

May 15 is the last day to sign up for our Diocesan retreat weekend.

Pathways to Peace takes place May 29 to May 31 in Sackville, New Brunswick.

There is a limit of 120 people who can attend. HURRY to register!

Visit [www.nspeidiocese.ca](https://www.nspeidiocese.ca) and click the top yellow and green banner titled "Deepening Faith – Pathways to Peace RETREAT."

Step away from daily demands and settle into a quiet, beautiful setting where God's presence can be experienced in restorative and life-giving ways.

This year's retreat features teachings inspired by Henri

Nouwen (1932–1996), the beloved spiritual writer and pastor who spent his final years at L'Arche Daybreak in Ontario. Bishop Sandra Fyfe, postulant Ken MacIntosh (Berwick), Rev. Cathy Pharo (Summerside), and postulant Rob Paddock (Dartmouth) will lead the main sessions, joined by additional clergy and lay leaders throughout the weekend.

Participants may choose from three types of break-out sessions: Silent guided meditation, imaginative prayer led by a facilitator, and scripture reflection with shared insights.

Over three days, retreatants pray, listen, reflect, and learn in a bright, comfortable envi-

ronment, with good food and walking trails. Small-group table conversations help deepen awareness of God's loving presence and invite exploration of deepening faith.

Rev. Carl Fraser returns to lead Saturday evening worship, including the sacraments of Healing (Unction) and Reconciliation (private confession). All sessions are optional, allowing each person to shape the retreat to their own needs.

**Theme:** Deepening Faith

**Dates:** Friday, May 29 - (evening) to Sunday, May 31 (morning)

(Schedule posted on the Diocesan website.)

**Location:** Mount Allison

University, Sackville, N.B.

Newly renovated guest rooms include elevators. Mount A's campus requires travel between buildings and crossing a street, with a moderate uphill grade. Parking is plentiful and free.

Registration includes two nights' accommodation, five meals, a retreat program, cha-

pel worship, materials, and more. Cost is \$195 (offsite: \$100). (Contact [missiondirector@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:missiondirector@nspeidiocese.ca) for student rate.)

Participants will leave with spiritual practices they can bring back to their parishes and communities—offering encouragement, hope, and renewed inspiration.



# So, Someone Is In Your Space!



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

Driving through the hot, dusty desert in Kenya would prove to be, for many reasons, an out-of-this-world experience. The route from Garissa to Wajir would take all day, although it is only 320 kilometres. This was an area of arid scrub-covered terrain. It was a one-track, one-vehicle-at-a-time dirt road. Upon seeing an oncoming vehicle, we had to be ready to slowly pull off the track if necessary. On this journey there would be no gas stations, no coffee shops, no anything, so our extra petrol and water was stored in several jerry cans at the back of the old 1968 Land Rover. There would be no normal bathroom stops, only boys to the right and girls to the left. Eight of us with all our baggage secured on top were squeezed tightly into the vehicle. We would be as remote in this wilderness region as we could be in any part of Africa and, for that matter, the world. It was also a dangerous place to travel. The Shifta (Al Shabab), a warlike group, had years ago claimed this territory for Somalia,



Photo by Sriram Vijayakumar on Unsplash

bordering it to the direct east. We understood the danger in taking this safari.

Rounding a turn on the route halfway through the journey, we came across a lone Somali herdsman, who at first seemed impervious to us. Stopping, we asked if he wanted a ride. The unspoken rule in African culture is "There is always room for one more!" We were already packed in like New Brunswick sardines, so what would it matter? But I wondered as we rode together: what was he thinking? Certainly, he had never encountered anyone or anything like this in his life. Nor could he completely under-

stand it or us. At any rate, for that moment we and he were locked in each other's peculiar space. Culture, language, and worldviews were universes apart. Dropping him off a few hours later, it was certain that he had a story to tell around the fire that night. Who would believe it?

But for an hour or two he was in our space, and we in his!

At some level this happens every day. Someone else has entered into our space, and we into theirs. It could occur in many ways: a) a knock at the door, and we are asked to buy something, donate something or vote for someone, b)

a phone call inviting us to buy cheaper internet, c) a barista at a coffee shop, d) a doctor's visit, e) a colleague at work, f) a congregant at the parish, g) a homeless person asking for help, and g) a friend or loved one. It can happen virtually or in person.

These momentary incursions into our space or we theirs are so commonplace that we may think nothing of it. But I am arguing that we should! Many years ago a professor told us that at the end of every day, before he went to sleep, he tried to remember every conversation with everyone he had had on that day. Everyone! In so doing, he wanted

to remember how he interacted with them, not how he was treated. It was important that he brought some form of value into their lives. Years ago I once asked a friend what marriage was like. His answer intrigued me then; I understand now. He said, "Someone else is in your space."

People enter into our spaces. No matter who, we cannot always know what distracts them in their inner world. We might get a glimpse through body language, word clues they give off, or direct communication. At any rate, everyone we meet, whether we know them or not, has a story that they are currently living, good, bad, or ugly. Some of that narrative has been imposed upon them; other aspects come from their choices. Upon interacting with them, if ever so briefly, we can enter that narrative as a positive influencer with value attached.

So someone is or will be in our space today. Some of those people we choose; others we do not. And we don't necessarily know who it will be! However, the question remains, what emotional value are we leaving behind?

Relationships are integral to our mental well-being. Several Christian virtues act as a guarantor of emotional value. They are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, [and] self-control."

A ripple effect, a wonderful wake of influence, is left behind with this value system!

## Therefore We Have Hope: Shaping Our Future Together

- Cont. from page 1

### Have You Completed the Strategic Planning Survey?

There is still time to make your voice heard. Our strategic planning survey gives you space to share your experiences, hopes, and ideas in your own words, and it only takes a few minutes to complete.

Whether or not you've joined us at an in-person session, the survey is a valuable and easy way to contribute to the future of our diocese.

How to participate:

Online: Complete the survey online using the QR code or by visiting our website at [www.thereforewehavehope.com](http://www.thereforewehavehope.com). Deadline: June 19, 2026

By mail: Complete the hard copy that was printed in the

April issue of The Diocesan Times and mail it to the address below, postmarked by June 5, 2026:

Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Re: Strategic Planning Survey

1340 Cathedral Lane  
Halifax, NS

B3H 2Z1

All questions are optional, and your feedback will help shape a shared, hopeful, and faithful vision for the next five years. Thank you for your participation!

### Host a Listening Session of Your Own

Some of the most important conversations about the future of our church happen around kitchen tables, in

church basements over coffee, or within the groups and communities you are already part of. We want to make it easier for you to have them.

We have created a dialogue guide for anyone who feels called to host their own conversation and listening session with friends, neighbours, fellow parishioners, colleagues, or people outside the church entirely. The guide gives you everything you need to get a good conversation going: prompts, a simple structure, and space for honest reflection. You don't need to be a professional facilitator—you just have to be willing to create a space for others to share and be willing to listen with an open heart and spirit to what they have to say.

When you're done, we ask

that you share a few insights back with us through a short Google Form so that what emerges in those conversations can help shape our shared future.

You don't need to be a facilitator or a leader to do this. You just need people you trust and a willingness to ask some good questions together.

Visit our website [thereforewehavehope.com](http://thereforewehavehope.com) to download the dialogue guide and get started!

### Questions or Want to Learn More?

For full details about the strategic planning process, including information on engagement opportunities, registration links and ongoing updates, please visit [thereforewehavehope.com](http://thereforewehavehope.com)

If you have questions or need support accessing any of the engagement options, you are welcome to reach out by email at [thereforewehavehope@gmail.com](mailto:thereforewehavehope@gmail.com). Our aim is to ensure everyone who wishes to participate is able to do so. The strength of this process depends on broad participation—the more voices we hear, the richer and more faithful our shared direction will be. Every voice matters.



# Resurrection and the Work of Unbinding



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR  
ANGLICANS POWERING POTENTIAL

**“Resurrection is God’s work. Unbinding is ours.” - Sylvia Parris-Drummond**

“It is time to abolish human exploitation once and for all and to recognize the equal and unconditional dignity of each and every individual. Today, let us remember the victims and freedom fighters of the past so that they may inspire future generations to build just societies.” – Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

While it is officially spring, the grey sky over a grey ocean and a whitish, snow-covered landscape, with more snow falling, would suggest that winter is very reluctant to leave! Maybe the early morning weather and waterscape of this day of writing, March 25, are intentional, as they encourage reflection on the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

This morning on the CBC radio program Information Morning, Dr. Afua Cooper, scholar and curator of the exhibition “A History Exposed: The Enslavement of Black People in Canada,” spoke about the exhibition being showcased now at the United Nations in New York, marking its first international appearance.

How many of us are aware of Canada’s legacy with the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the reality of slavery in our country? How many of us are aware that this exhibition was not only available at our own Pier 21 but was, indeed, cre-



Photo by Cam Ferland on Unsplash

ated by the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 in partnership with guest curator Afua Cooper and the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia? Do we know if any of our educators were able to make it possible for their students to experience a field trip to take in this exhibition when it was available at Pier 21?

Inaugurated in 2024 and scheduled to travel to nearly 20 locations across Canada through 2029, “this powerful exhibit sheds light on the complex realities and long-silenced histories of enslavement. It honours the resilience, creativity, and enduring cultural traditions of communities that sustained their humanity in the face of profound injustice and unimaginable hardship.” (press.un.org)

“A History Exposed: The Enslavement of Black People in Canada” reveals more than two centuries of slavery in Canada under French and British colonial rule, examining the country’s involvement in the enslavement and trade of Africans... [while] demonstrat[ing] how slavery operated as a legally sanctioned institution across the

colonies that would later form Canada. It incorporates powerful storytelling that humanizes this history.

“The history of the enslavement of Black people in Canada is a painful reminder of the injustices and cruelty inflicted on generations of human beings. As we confront this history, we honour the resilience, courage, and dignity of those who suffered, and we reaffirm our commitment to truth, justice, and equality. Exhibitions like this challenge us to remember, to educate, and to ensure that the legacy of slavery never defines the future of our societies. Together, we must confront the past in order to build a world rooted in human rights, inclusion, and dignity for all.”

*António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations*

It is very easy to dismiss the value of these many international, world, national, and provincial special days of recognition and remembrance that encourage us to pay attention to key realities, many of which represent painful moments of history, many of which still remind us that the legacy of pain is still with us

in one or more ways.

Sylvia Parris-Drummond reminded us of how easy it is to treat such days as an item to be checked off as one would with a grocery list. Sylvia, the CEO of the Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute, Excellence in Africentric Education & Research (dbdlica) offered an inspiring homily at the Cathedral Church of All Saints on March 22 as “we gathered in the shadow—and the hope—of March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.”

Shadow and hope are reflected in what I view from my expanse of windows. In the course of writing this column, the shadow is now visualized as hope, as the snow has ceased, the ground is bare, the sea and sky are blue, the latter with white, fluffy clouds, and the sun reveals itself.

As Sylvia notes, “The significance of March 21 must not be relegated to merely something that becomes a date to checkmark. Indeed, we must hold it as a spiritual summons, fully embrace it with the approach to reflexive engagement toward the realization

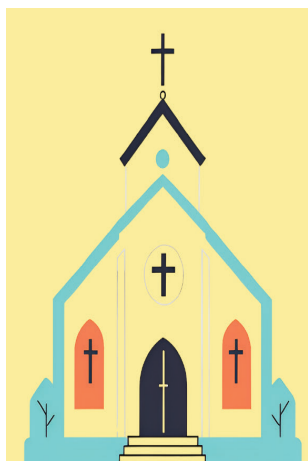
of the elimination of racial discrimination. Champion it as a call to remember! A call to respond! Racial discrimination extends beyond a political or social issue; it wounds the spirit and our quest for wellness. Because anything that denies someone’s humanity contradicts any articulation of faith, be it words, sentiments, or actions, and denies the value, Ubuntu.”

Ubuntu is a term from the Nguni Bantu languages of Southern Africa, which encompasses a philosophy emphasizing the interconnectedness of individuals within their communities and the broader world. The word “Ubuntu” is often translated as “I am because we are.”

The interconnectedness of individuals is exemplified globally each year with the World Day of Prayer, the first Friday in March. Within our diocese, there were many churches of various denominations that hosted the World Day of Prayer 2026 service designed by the women of Nigeria. Over 170 countries globally, over a 38-hour span, witnessed to the power of informed prayer and prayerful action in support of peace and justice.

On March 22 at the Cathedral, Sylvia skillfully wove the readings for that Sunday into her homily. With specific respect to the Gospel, she highlighted Jesus’ command: “Lazarus, come out.” “Come out of the tomb! Come out of isolation! Come out of silence! Do we hear that call in this time of calls for racial and equity justice? I hear that command echoing today—for churches and communities confronting racism and for institutions courageously naming where belonging has been withheld. But—and this is important—Lazarus does not unwrap himself. Jesus turns to the community and says: ‘Unbind him and let him go.’ John 11:44. Resurrection is God’s work. Unbinding is ours.”

May it be so!



## 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](mailto:diocesantimes@gmail.com)

# Our finest gifts



BY THE REV. MARIAN LUCAS-JEFFERIES  
COORDINATOR, DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENT NETWORK (DEN)

Dear Diocese,

The line, “The church is not the building; the church is the people,” was very popular about 20 years ago. It was a rallying cry at a time when people watched as buildings crumbled and congregations aged.

Although the line that the church is the people is no doubt true, my background in community development caused me to struggle with it only being people and not the building too. Small rural communities need infrastructure. Gathering places. Every time a public space closes, it puts the community under stress.

It also makes me fret about the ease of discounting efforts to maintain “the church” (the building). A group of men, during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the parish, in a student placement,



The Great Hall gathering on Tuesday evening

the people who built the nest, the place where people from the community gathered for worship every Sunday, “the church,” made me very aware of the ministry of the saw and hammer.

For those men, carrying out their ministry and constructing a place for the faith community to gather with their own hands was critical to the life of “the church” (the people). They built a home base. A safe place. A welcoming place where people (“the church”) built memories.

Over the centuries, the building (“the church”) has also been a centre of the broader community it served, playing an important role in the life of

the surrounding community.

During Lent, thanks to Rev. Kate, whose role at the cathedral is inspiring and who is coordinating the ministry of outreach to the broader community, our cathedral played an incredibly important and deeply appreciated role by welcoming people into the Great Hall.

That Tuesday evening, the hall was not just a place to gather but a haven for almost 150 people, many of them young adults who are deeply about both the environment and the well-being of the people of the province. They had no money for rent, but the space, the building, and the people (“the church”) became a safe place where

people could imagine building a fair and just society. Anxious about the future, the cathedral offered them a meeting room and hope for the future that evening.

That’s where the building is also a “church.” After all our own anxieties about the number of buildings that were understood to be a burden in the recent past, others see them as a gift, important infrastructure for carrying out the work of caring.

In the spring of 2004, during the 10th anniversary celebrations of the end of apartheid in South Africa, I sat at the table in the boardroom of the Lutheran Diocese in Soweto.

The office manager who took me there talked about how the church offered space for planning a better life for people. She told me about how leaders in the movement would set open prayer books in front of them so when the police raided the building and barged into the room, the people at the table would be engaged in prayer. When the police left, they returned to planning. The building was as critical to the fight for freedom as the bishop who supported them. History would have been very different without that space and the willingness to offer it for important work.

Looking at the pictures from that Tuesday evening in the cathedral hall, hearing from the people who were in that room, and knowing that Anglicans were scattered throughout the crowd, I feel pride in the gift we offer to people who care so deeply about the future of this province, who want to work with us to make a difference together because during these difficult times, like the early Christians in the Book of Acts, we need to stand “shoulder to shoulder.”

*Easter season blessings,*

*The Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies*

*Coordinator, Diocesan Environment Network*

## For All the Saints, May 2026

BY THE REV. JOHN K. MORRELL  
EXCERPTED FROM STEPHEN REYNOLDS’ “FOR ALL THE SAINTS”.

### May 14 – Saint Matthias the Apostle

Today we commemorate Matthias, who was chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot in the company of the 12 apostles.

We know nothing about his life and ministry beyond the first chapter of the Book of Acts. The 11 apostles wanted a 12th to complete their number, and the lot fell to Matthias.

We never find out what made him the better candidate, nor do we ever hear of him again in all the New Testament. We are left with the impression that he was important only because there needed to be 12 apostles.

According to the Book of Acts, the Apostles were appointed for the sake of proclaiming Jesus to the children of Israel. “Israel” was originally the name of a person,



Photo by The Cleveland Museum of Art on Unsplash

and that person was Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. He had 12 sons, and they became the patriarchs of the 12 Hebrew tribes that Moses led out of Egypt into freedom. That was the reason for having 12 apostles. They were meant to be the 12 patriarchs of the new Israel, who would lead all Jews out of this present age into the glorious liberty of the kingdom of heaven.

Matthias was chosen to fill up the ancient number of 12 and thus fulfill Israel’s heritage by helping to beget

the new Israel “in the Spirit.” By honouring him today, we commit ourselves to a similar task by enabling others to become children of the new Israel, begotten in the Spirit through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

### May 31 – The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth

The visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth is recounted only in Luke’s Gospel, where it serves as the link between two earlier episodes. The first episode had

to do with the birth of a son to Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth. His birth was specially heralded because, as John the Baptist, he would be the forerunner of the Messiah. The second episode is the Annunciation, when an angel brought tidings to Mary that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus, the Messiah himself. Luke tied these two episodes together through the story of Mary’s visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who was already six months pregnant.

As soon as Mary greeted her cousin, the child leaped in Elizabeth’s womb, and Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, even before his own birth, John the Baptist bore witness to Christ; and his testimony was received by his own mother, a woman of true righteousness under the Law of Moses. She blessed Mary as the mother of Israel’s salvation, and Mary responded to her cousin by blessing and praising God, saying, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my

Saviour.”

Luke meant this story to serve a still greater purpose. It dramatizes the encounter between the covenant which God made with Abraham and Moses and the new covenant which God has made in Christ. In Luke’s eyes, there is no conflict between these two covenants because, truly understood, the old covenant points to Christ; indeed, it leaps to life at the presence of Christ, just as John the Baptist did when his mother heard Mary’s greeting. By the same token, Christians cannot dispense with the witness of the old covenant because it is the very thing that Christ came to fulfill; and though Elizabeth needed the Holy Spirit to interpret what the child’s moving in her womb truly signified, she still would not have understood its meaning or had joy in it except for her faithfulness to the Law and the Prophets.

# From New York to Windsor to Halifax: The History of King's College Chapel



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

While recently researching graduates of divinity at the University of King's College, I was reminded of the College Chapel, which has been the spiritual home for many students since 1929. The present-day chapel, located just off Coburg Road, is part of a longer history together with the university that it serves.

Since its founding in New York, under a Royal Charter from King George II in 1754, King's College has maintained close ties with the Anglican Church. The founder of the college, Rev. Dr. Samuel Johnson, stipulated that the President "...is to be always a member of the Church of England, and the prayers of the church are always to be used in it." As well as producing Anglican Divinity students for ordination up until 1971, student life at King's has always included Anglican worship. For over 250 years and through two major relocations, Anglican worship at King's has been based in at least seven different locations!

The first King's College, New York, students studied in a building near the original Trinity Church, which had been built in 1697 on Wall Street at Broadway. Trinity Church itself served as the college chapel. After fewer than 40 years in New York, however, the backlash against supporters of the Crown after the American Revolution resulted in the removal of King's College to Nova Scotia. The Anglican Church itself became more firmly established in Nova Scotia around that time, with the appointment of



Bishop Charles Inglis in 1788. Inglis was actively involved in plans to raise funds to establish a new King's College in the town of Windsor.

The new college was founded in 1789; however, a royal charter was not obtained until 1802. Christ Church, Windsor (built in 1790), became the temporary chapel for the new college. The Right Reverend Hibbert Binney, Bishop of Nova Scotia from 1851 to 1887, became president of the Alumni Association in 1854 and helped to raise funds for the construction of a separate chapel building, which was completed in 1877. It was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Hensley, Professor of Pastoral Theology, who had promoted the building of a chapel.

The Hensley Memorial Chapel reflects the early English Gothic style of architect David Sterling. The Gothic features visible from the outside include "... slender lancet windows and a large rose window," with stained glass typical of the period. (The side windows of the nave feature more recent stained-glass work.) The design was typical

of the period, with a majority of the seating in the nave, to the "ecclesiastical west" of the transept, and facing forward in the manner of most parish churches. Two single rows of seating face inward in the chancel. Like many other Nova Scotian churches, however, it is not oriented on a traditional east-west axis (with the altar "pointing towards Jerusalem").

A photograph of the chapel taken in 1910 clearly shows many interior Gothic features, including Gothic arches, carved pews, and other woodwork, including the rood screen. The original oak and ash altar donated by alumni would be later widened (from three panels to five) after it was moved to Halifax following a fire in 1920 that destroyed much of the main building in Windsor.

Following the fire, in 1923, King's was re-established in Halifax, but without any new buildings; instead, it moved into Birchdale, one of the large estates on the Northwest Arm. A temporary chapel was established at Birchdale, which housed various pieces

of original furnishings from Windsor, including the eagle lectern carved from English oak.

Eventually, the construction of new college buildings on Coburg Road was completed. They were designed by Andrew Cobb, the Halifax architect who had planned the rebuilding of the Windsor campus (later rebuilt as King's College School, and now King's Edgehill School). The present University of King's College Chapel was built in 1929-30. The building was constructed primarily with bluish-grey quartzite, with some red stones scattered into the exterior wall surface. The peak of the roof featured a neolithic-style cross similar to the one on the roof of the Hensley Memorial Chapel. In King's College: A Chronicle, Fenwick Vroom praises the fact that the altar faced east (at least by Halifax street standards)—in contrast to the chapel in Windsor!

Jean Weir has noted the way in which Cobb interwove the two very different Gothic and Georgian styles. (Such "fusion" architecture would not be uncommon in the 20th century!). Thus, the current chapel has a hammerbeam trussed roof reflecting the Gothic influence but with classical round-arched windows. Classical arches are also found in the rood screen. The pews are less ornate than those in Windsor, featuring flat tops and traditional rectangular panelling. As in Windsor, there are three windows above the altar, but they are set in Palladian-style mouldings with miniature Doric pilasters rather than the Gothic lancet arches. Probably the most significant difference between the two chapels is in the seating.

Brian Cuthbertson observed that in the present King's Chapel, "... the floor plan is modelled after those of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges in the

tradition of medieval monastic chapels," with the pews facing inward. In effect, the chancel occupies the majority of the floor space, leaving a small nave at the back, where movable seating is normally configured facing the altar. The balance of chancel vs. nave seating is almost the reverse of the Hensley Memorial Chapel—perhaps reflecting the increased numbers of members of the college requiring seating! What the two chapels have in common is a very traditional "high church" focus on the altar—the absence of an equally prominent pulpit perhaps reflects a focus on the function of administering the Sacrament rather than on that of preaching.

Chapel furnishings today include the lectern and altar from the Windsor chapel, as well as a font made from the ship's bell of HMCS King's, the "stone frigate" naval training unit that was based in King's during the Second World War. The White Ensign from HMCS King's is laid up in the Chapel, together with the colours of the Halifax Rifles (RCAC). The chapel features various memorials, including plaques to commemorate the dead of both World Wars and in honour of the original founders of the [llege.college](http://llege.college).

Although no longer offering degrees in divinity (now offered through Atlantic School of Theology), King's still maintains a tradition of Anglican worship. The King's Chapel continues to hold daily offices and regular Holy Communion services.

#### Sources:

*Berrian, William Rev. Dr. An Historical Sketch of Trinity Church, New York. New York: Stanford and Swords, 1867, p. 104.*

*Cuthbertson Brian. A Journey Just Begun: A History of the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, 1710 - 2010. Halifax: Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, 2010, p. 140.*

*Hathaway, Janet, et al. "University of King's College Architectural Records Collection."*

*Vroom, Fenwick Williams. King's College: A Chronicle. Halifax: The Imperial Publishing Co. Ltd.*

*Weir Jean B. Andrew Randall Cobb, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Association of Architects, Museum Assistance Programmes (Canada), Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 1990*

# Helping Build Inclusive and Resilient Marriages in the Dartmouth Region



BY JENNIFER ANANDANAYAGAM

For Katie and Matthew Sponagle, facilitating the Dartmouth Region's Marriage Success Course several times over the last 10 years has provided an opportunity for them to learn and grow in their own partnership.

"As a married couple ourselves, we have found great success in reviewing these questions and conversation starters at different stages of our own marriage," shared Katie Sponagle.

"Whether it is changing jobs, supporting illness in the family, having children, dealing with financial pressures, or more, we as individuals and as a couple change throughout our marriage. Having the opportunity to have these deeper conversations and see where we've changed, where we can adapt, and where we are still the same, has helped us to become stronger in our own marriage."

This year, the workshop is going to take place on May 2 at St. Luke's Church on Veteran's Avenue, where Rev. Matthew Sponagle is rector. The course, which is offered for couples of all genders and sexual orientations and completes the requirement of participating in marriage preparation to be married in an Anglican Church, covers topics like communication, conflict, finances, spirituality, family of origin, and sexuality.

*Here are some excerpts from an interview with the Sponagles on the inspiration behind the course and some of the more pertinent challenges facing marriages today.*

**What inspired the Dartmouth Region to create a course that so explicitly emphasizes marriage equality and inclusivity?**

*Katie and Matthew:* We are very intentional in the advertising for the marriage success program. Being clear that this is an inclusive program starts with the advertising, in words and photos on the poster. We hope to break down walls that people might have concerning inaccurate perceptions of the church and marriage and also create a safe community for



Photo by Sandy Millar on Unsplash



Katie and Matthew Sponagle everyone who's attending.

Many of the parishes in the Dartmouth region are affirming churches that support marriage equality. In turn, we want to represent that in the images and language of our advertising. We also represent diversity in the facilitators of the session. We hope people feel seen and safe in participating in these conversations.

**After years of running this program, what is the most rewarding success story or moment of breakthrough you've witnessed with a couple?**

*Katie and Matthew:* The marriage success program is simply a jumping-off point for key conversations couples benefit from having prior to, and throughout, their marriage. We do not have time for in-depth conversation with each couple. Topics such as spirituality, sexuality, finances, conflict, family of origin, and communication are encouraged through quizzes, group and private discussion time, and a binder of information to take home to continue these conversations. We feel successful when a group creates a sense of community in which they share their experiences and knowledge with each other.

We cannot speak to individual stories or how this program may impact each couple, but we believe that supporting this ministry has enriched our own marriage. Even after facilitating this workshop

several times over the last 10 years, we continue to learn and grow and benefit as we hear people share their experiences and as we continue to have discussions between us.

As a group, one of the biggest successes we've had is seeing the community come together to help facilitate this event. We have priests and lay people from various parishes in the region. We have people speaking about their experience of being married and their experience in their jobs in hospitality, finances, medicine, and more. Everyone comes together and shares what they can. Whether someone has been married for one year or 50 years, it is a great community learning experience.

**What is the biggest challenge in modern marriage preparation? Is it harder to get couples to talk about finances, sexuality, or something else entirely?**

*Matthew:* I think one of the biggest challenges for modern marriage prep is that couples come with a greater range of experience than they would have decades ago. We now have couples who have been married before, who aren't married but have been living together for decades, who already have children or homes, as well as couples who have never lived together. At times there may be an attitude of 'what can we possibly know or learn because we've already had so much experience?' But many of these couples say that there was great value in this intentional time to dedicate to their relationship.

A difficult topic for people seems to be spirituality. A lot of people are cautious about it. They don't know what to expect. They perhaps don't have a common spirituality in their relationship. Maybe one

person is "spiritually single," where one partner participates in spiritual practices and one partner does not. There may be a history of hurt around spirituality, or simply a lack of experience. This section of the program is about learning to find a way to communicate their needs and make space for respecting each other's practices. It is not about conversion to one view or the other.

**For Anglican Christians in Atlantic Canada, what unique pressures do you see couples facing today? (e.g., economic stress, rural vs. urban church life).**

*Katie and Matthew:* We in the Dartmouth region are seeing and supporting the same needs and diversity across Atlantic Canada. Participants in the marriage success program come from a variety of demographics and socioeconomic statuses. While there is a cost for this program, the fee is not meant to be an obstacle for participation. There is assistance available for those who want to participate if costs are a barrier.

**The course requires four couples to run. Why is the group aspect of this preparation so important compared to a couple just meeting with their priest one-on-one?**

*Katie and Matthew:* We require a group of four couples for a variety of reasons. The main reason is financial, as we cannot break even with less than four couples due to the cost of supplies, even with all the facilitators volunteering. We recognize a need to ensure the cost of the course is not a barrier for participation. We have also discovered that when we have facilitated the course with three couples versus five or six couples, there is a very big difference in participation and discus-

sion. The more couples that are present, the more diverse the information shared and the more capacity to hear both the loud and quieter voices in the room. We don't believe that we are marital experts; this program is a process of encouraging discussion and sharing the knowledge in the room to help each other on their marital journey. The course is also beneficial for people who are already married and wish to improve on these various topics and have these discussions within a community. Our setup allows individual couples to have private conversations as well as have group shares. People need only share what they are comfortable with, and again, the idea of the group is to have the opportunity to start conversations that can then be finished in a home environment. If further support is needed, they can connect to their church and community for further clarification on specifics.

**If a couple is on the fence about whether they need a course like this, what would you say to them?**

*Katie:* As a married couple ourselves, we have found great success in reviewing these questions and conversation starters at different stages of our own marriage. Whether it is changing jobs, supporting illness in the family, having children, dealing with financial pressures, or more, we as individuals and as a couple change throughout our marriage. Having the opportunity to have these deeper conversations and see where we've changed, where we can adapt, and where we are still the same, has helped us to become stronger in our own marriage. We hope that for others as well.

# Work and dignity

By Andrew Sherin

Work contributes to the dignity and worth of a person by providing autonomy, purpose, and the means to support themselves and their families. It fosters self-worth through accomplishment, professional development, and fair treatment, enabling individuals to contribute to society.

On the surface the obvious pathway out of poverty is through employment, but there are barriers. The 2025 Report from the National Advisory Council on Poverty listed “limited employment opportunities in their area, having a criminal record, a lack of guidance, discrimination, and a lack of specialized skills or credentials.” The report goes on to say, “Several populations experience particular difficulties, newcomers, youth (especially 2SLG-BTQIA+ youth), older adults, and Black and racialized people.” The report also noted that “Canada’s growing digital economy could leave behind many individuals living in rural and remote communities” due to limited access to high-speed internet.

People who are out of the workforce need more targeted and proactive support to re-enter it—if and when they’re able. Many individuals experiencing poverty emphasized the importance of employment services that not only connect them to opportunities but also help them build confidence and apply their skills in meaningful ways.

Some participants shared with the Council positive experiences with employment and training programs offered by community organizations and service providers. These services help people identify job opportunities, prepare applications, and navigate the hiring process. However, they also noted that these resources are limited in availability and poorly promoted. As a result, many people are unaware these services exist, which delays or prevents them from accessing the support they need.

The report recognized several federal government employment programs, including the Community Workforce Development Program, Sustainable Jobs Training Fund, Union Training and Innovation Program, Early Learning and Child Care Agreements, Skills and Partnership Fund, a project-based fund that supports partnerships between Indigenous organizations and industry employers to provide skills training for Indigenous people; Opportunities Fund

Photo by Marten Bjork on Unsplash

for Persons with Disabilities, Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) and the Canada Learning Bond, which provides financial support for post-secondary education for low-income families, including youth in care.

Many individuals the Council spoke with described challenges and barriers to joining the labour force, remaining employed, or obtaining work that can provide them with a living wage. More on the living wage later.

The report states, “To make employment a pathway out of poverty, the Government of Canada must take action to remove the barriers that prevent individuals—particularly those made most marginal—from accessing and maintaining decent work.” To that end, the Government of Canada should: invest in wraparound supports for people transitioning between benefits (for example, social assistance) and employment; incentivize employers to prioritize recruitment and retention of individuals from groups made most marginal, including increasing opportunities for youth to join the labour force; continue to increase access to employment benefits (such as employment insurance and paid sick leave) for self-employed workers or workers in the gig economy and part-time workers; invest in language, literacy, numeracy, and other essential life skills training programs to increase work readiness and mobility within the labour force; enhance and reinvigorate trade skills training programs; and build clear and accessible

pathways for skilled migrants to enter the labour market in their field.

The Canada Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)-N.S. report 2025 “Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island” states, “Too many workers in Atlantic Canada earn less than what it takes to make ends meet.”

The living wage is designed to:

- Enable working families to escape poverty
- Foster healthy childhood development
- Encourage gender equality
- Alleviate severe financial stress and provide some level of economic security; and
- Allow active participation in the community’s social, cultural, and civic life.

A living wage, calculated on the needs of a reference family of four, reflects what workers need to cover the basic costs of living and participate fully in their communities. The 2025 report highlights significant challenges for workers and families, particularly in the face of rising housing costs and continued high costs of food and other household essentials. A weighted average living wage for N.S. was reported to be \$27.60/hour, and in P.E.I. \$22.77. The minimum wage in N.S. is \$16.75, and in P.E.I., it is \$17.00. By the CCPA analysis, working minimum wage is not a living wage. A living wage can be a combination of earned wages and government supports such as \$10-a-day child care.



Employers need to be encouraged to pay their employees a living wage. Are we, the church, as employers, paying a living wage? It is the policy of the Halifax Regional Municipality to require those they contract to pay their employees a living wage. Do we insist contractors for our churches pay a living wage? If we own a business, how can we organize the finances to pay a living wage to our employees and to ourselves?

In their own words as reported in the 2025 Report from the National Advisory Council on Poverty:

*“I never really learned the skills to work. I grew up with an alcoholic father who never worked.”*

*“I’ve had four interviews at Walmart in the last month but can’t get a job because I have a criminal record.”*

These quotes from the persons interviewed by the Council made me reflect on my own experience with work.

Both my grandfather and my father were farmers; my grandfather growing grain in Saskatchewan and my father shipping cream in Southern Ontario. They knew work, long hours of hard work. My

father left farming when I was five years old before supply management in the dairy industry. He built our family two homes, and he worked for Bell Canada until he was forced to retire at 65.

I started work with babysitting for our neighbour with partial compensation in homemade bread. I picked fruit and, unlike the provider of the second quote above, worked as a store clerk for a department store as a high school student. I entered my professional career after graduating from university. Then followed 35 years working for the federal government.

My working life was based on a family legacy of hard work, and I encountered few barriers to employment. Many people experiencing poverty don’t have these advantages and need support to find and maintain employment if they are able and, of course, compensation that enables meeting their basic needs and allows participation in their community.



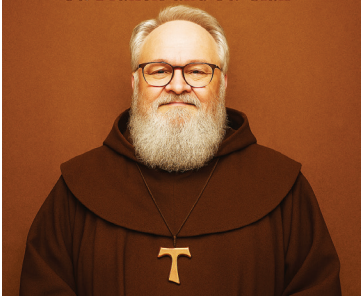
## Find Yourself at Parkland

- ✓ Beautiful suites
- ✓ Exceptional dining
- ✓ Vibrant community

Call 902-406-8900 to book your tour  
[experienceparkland.com/atthegardens](https://experienceparkland.com/atthegardens)

**Parkland**  
 RETIREMENT LIVING  
 AT THE GARDENS

# When Angels Stop Being Cute: What Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and the Angel of the Lord Might Still Be Saying to Us



BY STEPHEN JOSEPH IRÉNÉE  
(IRENAEUS) WEISS, M.ED.  
(COUNSELLING)  
(ÉTIENNE JOSEPH IRÉNÉE  
WEISS)

There was a time when angels felt simple, almost comforting in a predictable way—soft wings, gentle music, the kind of presence you might expect on a greeting card or in the background of a Christmas pageant, standing quietly and waiting their turn—but if we take Scripture seriously, if we actually listen instead of smoothing it out, angels are anything but simple; they are not decorations, they are interruptions, and if we are honest, they still interrupt us today.

The Bible does not give us one neat, organized picture of angels but instead opens up something far more alive and unsettling, a layered reality where heaven is not silent and God is not distant, where we encounter Michael the warrior, not gentle or passive but standing in that space between chaos and protection, holding a line that often feels invisible yet necessary, and we encounter Gabriel the messenger who does not bring vague reassurance but words that rearrange lives, who speaks and suddenly plans collapse and callings begin, and then Raphael, less familiar to some traditions



but deeply grounded in the human experience, walking with, guiding, healing, not from afar but alongside in the slow and often unnoticed work of restoration, and finally the Angel of the Lord, the one who refuses to stay within our categories, who speaks as God, acts as God, and yet appears as messenger, a presence that unsettles our need for clarity and reminds us that God does not always arrive in ways we can easily explain.

Biblical scholars, including voices like Michael Heiser, have helped us recover something the ancient world

seemed to understand far more naturally than we do, that heaven was never imagined as empty space but as something structured, relational, even active, a living reality in which God's will is carried, contested, and embodied through spiritual beings, and while that may sound distant from our everyday lives, I'm not convinced it is, because when we step back from the imagery of wings and fire and visions, what we see are patterns that feel deeply familiar.

Michael becomes less about celestial battle and more about the quiet but stubborn

reality that there are things worth defending, not in a loud or aggressive sense but in the steady refusal to let injustice, indifference, or cruelty define the world we live in, and we see this every time someone stands beside the marginalized, every time someone chooses not to look away, every time someone says, even quietly, that something is not right, and that is the echo of Michael whether we name it or not.

Gabriel reminds us that truth does not always arrive gently, that sometimes it disrupts us, unsettles us, and pushes us out of what we thought was certain, because when Gabriel speaks in Scripture, lives do not stay the same, and we recognize that in those moments when something hits us unexpectedly—a conversation, a line in a sermon, a realization that feels like it came out of nowhere—the kind of moment I have often described as being hit by a two-by-four upside the head, not to harm but to wake us up and call us into something we had not planned.

Raphael speaks into something we often struggle with the most, the slow and relational nature of healing, because healing rarely looks like the dramatic transformations we hope for; more often it looks like walking with someone, staying present, listening, guiding gently, allowing time to do its work, and in a world that wants quick answers and visible results, Raphael reminds us that some of the most important healing happens quietly, almost unnoticed, in the space

of relationship and presence.

And then the Angel of the Lord draws us into a deeper awareness that God is not confined to our expectations, that divine presence often appears in ways we almost miss, in interruptions we might otherwise dismiss, in people we might overlook, in moments that do not announce themselves as sacred until we look back and realize they were.

So what do angels look like today? Perhaps not wings or halos but moments, decisions, disruptions, the choice not to turn away, the truth we did not want to hear, the presence that stayed when everything else fell apart, and while there is a danger in reducing angels to mere metaphor, because Scripture insists that reality is larger than what we can see, there is also a danger in leaving them locked in ancient texts, disconnected from our lives, because then we miss what they are revealing, that God is active, that truth interrupts, that healing takes time and relationship, that justice requires presence, and that we are never as alone as we sometimes feel.

And maybe that is where this reflection lands for us, not in trying to prove whether angels exist, but in asking whether we recognize their echoes in our lives, in the ways we are called to stand, to listen, to speak, to heal, and to remain present, because if angels in Scripture are messengers, then at some point, whether we feel ready or not, we are invited into that same calling, to carry something of that presence into the world around us.

## The Right Environment

If we want to attract birds to our garden, we must create the right environment for them. We do this by planting native trees, hanging feeders, and placing bird baths to encourage them. If we maintain this environment, it won't be long before a variety of birds come to visit looking for refreshment.

We may wonder why so few people come into our lives—maybe it is because we don't have the right 'environment of soul' (Matthew 5:43-48). Wherever Christ went, people gathered around him. They were attracted to his graceful compassion, inner peace, and integrity. We should be imitators of Christ—His characteristics attracted people seeking God's grace.



Have we made the right environment for God to bring others to be refreshed?

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

When we stop being judgmental and develop a Christ-like environment in our soul, it won't be long before people seeking grace begin to visit. When this happens, we will soon learn a truth: a beautiful garden attracts desirable birds like wrens, honeyeaters, and doves, but it also attracts undesirable birds such as crows and ravens. Likewise, a graceful soul attracts desirable people, but equally, it attracts annoying and unpleasant people in need of refreshment.

We will be tempted to shoo away those undesirables from our garden, but by doing so we can subtly become like Pharisees snubbing the tax collectors, adulterers, or gentiles.

We should ask ourselves how we are refreshing the people in our lives right now. Are we getting frustrated with family, neighbours, and work colleagues, or are we uplifting them with prayer and a graceful, Christ-like attitude? When we start developing the right environment of soul, it won't be long before God brings a variety of people into our lives to be refreshed. When this happens, we become missionaries in our own circumstances. Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

# A Hug and a Mission

## Founders of Saint John's Pennies and Sparrows Named 2026 Recipients of The Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award

**Atlantic School of Theology Press Release/Halifax, N.S.** – “Most recently, we watched as one of our staff members (Jennifer) held a guest at our drop-in program tightly in her arms, hugging her for ten minutes straight as if she were a small, hurting child,” shared Rev. Terence Chandra, who makes up one half of the husband and wife clergy team that founded Pennies and Sparrows.

Pennies and Sparrows is a special place. With operations based out of Stone Church in Saint John, N.B., this community care organization seeks to serve the downtown core of Saint John with a drop-in program, adult English language classes for newcomers, summer day camps for newcomer children, a cooking class, a seniors' social group, and more such relationship-focused programs.

“I knew that, for at least a few minutes on a Thursday afternoon, our guest—a woman to whom the world had been unspeakably cruel—felt safe, loved, and valued. I'm convinced that Jesus himself was involved in that hug,” continued Chandra.

It is this dedication to “faith in action” for those in un-



Rev. Terence and Rev. Jasmine Chandra, founders of Pennies and Sparrows

stable circumstances and on the margins of society that has earned founders Rev. Terence and Rev. Jasmine Chandra the 2026 Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award, presented by Atlantic School of Theology (AST).

Faith in Action. That is the simple yet powerful premise behind The Honourable Mayann Francis Faith in Action Award. This award recognizes individuals across Atlantic Canada whose religious commitments have been translated into tangible, positive change, significantly benefiting the wider community and improving the quality of life for those they serve.

“We are both deeply

honoured to receive the Faith in Action Award from Atlantic School of Theology,” shared Chandra. “We hope that this award will bring attention—not to us—but to ministries like Pennies and Sparrows, thereby inspiring others to step out in faith and launch similar initiatives of their own.”

Terence and Jasmine met while studying theology at Wycliffe College. During their time in seminary, the Chandras became involved in Sanctuary—a Christian ministry based in Toronto and committed to serving the most hurting and vulnerable people of the city. Their involvement with Sanctuary would serve as an inspiration for the kind

of work they would later do in N.B.

After serving in various parishes throughout the Diocese of Fredericton independently of one another for a while, in the summer of 2014, with the support of the ninth diocesan bishop of Fredericton, Rev. Claude Miller, the Chandras launched Pennies and Sparrows. The Chandras were nominated for the Faith in Action award by Canon Shawn C. Branch of the Diocese of Fredericton, with the full support of their current bishop, Archbishop David Edwards.

In Archbishop David Edwards' own words, “Pennies and Sparrows is demonstrably not a ministry focused on quick results but on being a faithful presence and building long-term relationships. Jasmine and Terence lead with humility, courage, and perseverance, remaining committed even when the work is challenging or costly. Their ministry reflects a lived theology—one that seeks empowerment over dependency and long-term commitment over short-term answers.”

AST President Rev. Dr. Heather McCance, commenting on the recognition, said, “The Christian faith is often

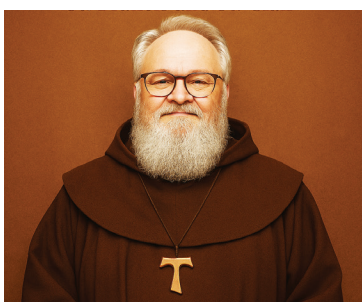
judged by its misuses, but the example of Jasmine and Terence Chandra reminds us of its enduring power to inspire compassion, service, and profound good in the world. We are grateful to them for their work and to Dr. Mayann Francis, whose founding of this award allows AST to be part of recognizing such inspirational people every year.”

The award will be formally presented during the 2026 AST Convocation on May 9, 2026, to be held at Cathedral Church of All Saints in Halifax. In addition to the Faith in Action recognition, AST will also be awarding its 2026 Honorary Doctorate and the Associates of the University. This year, John Roberto, Executive Director of the National Community of Catechetical Leaders (NCCL) in the United States, is the recipient of the degree of Doctor of Divinity (honoris causa), while the title of Associate of AST, which recognizes outstanding service to the university, is being conferred upon The Rev. Dr. Linda Yates and Dr. Robert (Rob) Summerby-Murray.

*The Convocation event will also be available for public viewing via a live stream.*

## Amen and the ground beneath our feet

### A reflection on prayer, trust, and what holds us

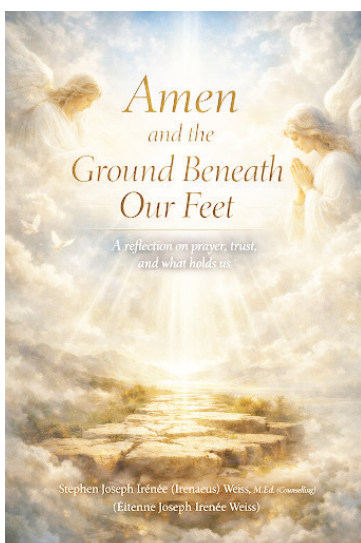


BY STEPHEN JOSEPH IRÉNÉE (IRENAEUS) WEISS, M.ED. (COUNSELLING) (ÉTIENNE JOSEPH IRÉNÉE WEISS)

Dearly beloved,

I've come to realize over the years that words really do matter.

And maybe I'm more aware of that than most, because I've always had a complicated relationship with words—especially written ones. But I've learned this: words do things. They stir something in us. They carry love. They turn into poetry and songs. And sometimes even a word that



doesn't seem to mean much at all can mean everything to the person who hears it.

And then there are words we say all the time...

So often that we stop paying attention to them.

One of those words is Amen.

Most of us think of Amen as the thing we say at the end of a prayer—almost like saying, “Okay, I'm done now.” But

here's the part that stopped me in my tracks: Jesus often begins what he says with “Amen, Amen.”

Not the ending.

The beginning.

That caught my attention.

“Amen” comes from Hebrew, from a root that means “firm, reliable, trustworthy, steady.”

Think solid ground—not wishful thinking.

Years ago, when I was finding my way back into Christianity, someone asked me what “Amen” meant. I didn't know the theology. I hadn't looked up the Hebrew. I just answered from the gut and said, “It means stable. Solid.” Only later did I realize that instinct was exactly right.

I started picturing “amen” not as the end of a prayer but as the foundation underneath it. Like walking through a building—down the stairs,

through the door—and when your feet finally touch the ground floor, you say: Amen.

This holds.

This can carry my weight.

And that's something I think we need to remember.

We say many holy words by heart.

The Lord's Prayer.

The creeds.

The responses we've known for most of our lives.

And that's not a bad thing—unless we stop listening to what we're actually saying.

Because even the most familiar prayer can become background noise if we don't pause long enough to feel its weight.

Faith isn't just about saying the right words out of habit. It's about knowing why we say them. Because our relationship with Christ—and with one another—isn't casual.

Everything we do rests on something.

A foundation.

Something you can trust.

Something trustworthy.

Something you can stand on.

So when we pray—when we reach out to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—we're not just wrapping things up neatly. We're standing where Paul points us: on the cornerstone.

“Amen” is not the word that tells God we're finished speaking.

It's the word that tells us where we're standing.

“Amen” isn't the end of the prayer.

“Amen” is the place where the prayer begins to tell the truth about us.

# The Changing of Seasons

PHOTO AND STORY BY ALLIE COLP

As I'm writing this, it's a picture-perfect winter day outside. There's a fresh cover of snow, and everything looks sparkly and a little bit magical. I might say that is more than a little bit magical, except that a week ago it was warm and sunny and felt like spring was finally here. Hopefully, as you are reading this, spring has sprung, as it always does, and we are all enjoying the warm sun and signs of new life all around us.

As the seasons change outside, they also change in the church as we move through the liturgical year. And more than likely, in the same way that I am waiting impatiently for winter to end, while I am writing this, there are people waiting impatiently for the reflective penitence of Lent to wrap up and give way to the joy and celebration of Easter.

Of course, we all know that it is the cold of winter that allows much of nature to rest and be renewed in the spring and that the happiness and celebration of Easter only become joy because of the experience of Lent and Holy Week.

The pattern of the seasons, both in nature and in the church, helps give rhythm to our lives, and by being intentional about marking liturgical seasons, we can draw nearer to God and grow deeper in our faith. Year after year, the



rhythms of the season become familiar, and we get to revisit familiar stories, patterns of prayer, or other practices that are part of marking the seasons as people who are one year older, and so all of those things are both familiar and new again each year. Just like when you pull out beloved Christmas decorations and think back on your memories from past years, you can foster that same connection with the ways you mark the seasons of the church year.

These kinds of rhythms and seasonal traditions can serve as anchors for families. Whether children are toddlers, elementary kids, tweens, or teenagers, establishing meaningful ways to practice your faith as a family year after year can provide a sense of consistency and

help faith stay present in your day-to-day life. Here are some tips for how to incorporate seasonal ways to practice your faith into your family's daily life:

- Choose a word or theme connected to the season for your family to focus on. This can help give some direction and set the tone to whatever it is that you decide to do to mark the season. There are lots and lots of books and other resources about liturgical seasons that you can look to for inspiration! (Hint: there's even some on the Youth and Family Ministry section of the diocesan website!)
- Keep it simple. It's better to do something small that your family can keep up with than to come up with something that is so involved or complicated that you can't keep it up. Connecting with God and with one another is what matters, so praying together, reading scripture, talking about when you felt close to God, or other simple practices can be meaningful without much effort!
- Consider setting up a small altar in your home that you change with the seasons. Again, it doesn't have to be big or fancy, but having a visual reminder in your home of the season and the way you've chosen to mark it can be meaningful. You could use pieces of felt or coloured napkins as a sort-of altar

cloth, and then put a cross and symbols of that season on it, or maybe you add to the altar as you move through the season—whatever works and makes sense for your family.

- Use resources that you are familiar with. If you worship using the Book of Common Prayer, use prayers from there to guide your family's at-home practice; if you use the Book of Alternative Services, use that!
- Find ways to link your seasonal faith practice to things that your family already does together to help make it stick. If you eat breakfast or supper together each day, consider adding prayer or reading a Bible story to that time that you are already spending together.
- Let the change of season be a chance for a reset and redirect as needed. Because no season lasts forever, you've got a chance to try out new things knowing that it is only for a set amount of time. Maybe doing something different every season is too much, so you just choose a few seasons to be really intentional about and have a bit of a rest for other seasons—it's up to you!

## World Day Of Prayer 2026

World Day of Prayer Nigeria welcomed and led people in the 2026 prayer service, which was held at Cathedral Church of All Saints on Friday, March 6, at 6 p.m. Parishioners and visitors reflected on the theme of "I will give you rest: come" and learned about Nigeria's history, culture, and concerns. The scripture base was Matthew 11:28-30.

World Day of Prayer is an international, ecumenical movement that enables us to hear the thoughts of women from all parts of the world: their hopes, concerns, and prayers. The preparation for the day is vast; the service begins with the selection of a country and theme several years in advance. Once written, it goes to the WDP International Committee in New York for translation and is then disseminated to the National Committee in each participating country. The service is then discussed and edited by the Women's

Inter-Church Council of Canada before being presented nationally, regionally, and locally for branches to make their plans. Finally, at a church in your community, on or near the first Friday in March, people are invited to gather and celebrate the service prepared by the women of Nigeria. The World Day of Prayer is celebrated in over 120 countries. On March 6, 2026, it begins in Samoa, and prayer in native languages travels throughout the world—through Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas before finishing in American Samoa some 38 hours later. A worldwide wave of prayer... Some communities will choose a date other than the first Friday of March to host a World Day of Prayer service in order to best suit their worship needs.

Photos © Jennifer Anandanayagam



# Sacred Art: Needlepoint in the Cathedral



BY CYNTHIA PILICHOS FOR  
THE CATHEDRAL NEEDLEPOINT  
BOOK PROJECT

It is fascinating to learn about the saints of the early English church with their symbols carved both in the wood of the cathedral's canon stalls and beautifully stitched into the needlepoint cushions that grace the seats of the canon stalls. As we have a region of our diocese named Northumbria, I have chosen to give a glimpse of four of the saints so memorialized in wood and textile, whose ministry is central to the history of Northumbria, England. These four saints are chronicled here in order of their birth.

The fascination with these cushions, the saints associated with them, and their stories was also experienced by Margot Peluso-Pope, the cathedral's intern during the summer of 2025, as it is Margot's research and text that are reflected in these



text "snapshots." The current needlepoint book project team is indebted to its two summer 2025 interns: Margot Peluso-Pope and Tideal Andrew.

**St. Paulinus of York** (585-644) was a Roman monk and missionary who converted many Anglo-Saxons from their native paganism to Christianity, including King Edwin of Northumbria and Saint Hilda of Whitby. King Edwin promised St. Paulinus that he would baptize his newborn daughter, Princess Eanflæd, if he won a battle against the West Saxons. The King did not immediately make good on this promise, but when Paulinus displayed an uncanny knowledge of Edwin's dreams, the King allowed his daughter to be baptized as a Christian. It is fitting, therefore, that St. Paulinus' cushion, stitched by Millie Gallop and consecrated in 1986, depicts a baptismal font, representing the baptisms of both King Edwin and Eanflæd. These baptisms

constituted significant turning points in the evangelization of the Anglo-Saxon pagans, as well as representing the many other Northumbrians that St. Paulinus baptized. In 625, St. Paulinus, whose feast day is October 10, was consecrated the first bishop of York, and he held that post until 633.

**St. Aidan** (aka Aidan of Lindisfarne), the Apostle of Northumbria (590-651), was one of St. Columba's monks from the monastery of Iona. King Oswald of Northumbria summoned St. Aidan from the monastery to serve as his bishop and missionary, and Aidan became the first bishop of Lindisfarne, Northumbria (what is now Northern England and Southern Scotland), in 635. Lindisfarne is now known as "the Holy Island" because it welcomed many important figures of Celtic Christianity, including St. Aidan and St. Cuthbert. St. Aidan, whose feast day is August 31, energetically spread the Gospel to the socially disadvantaged and converted many Northumbrians to Christianity. His cushion, stitched by the late Hilda Edwards of the Cathedral and consecrated in 1988, depicts a torch, representing the way that he brought the light of the Gospel to the world, and

liturgical cords, symbolizing his monasticism.

**St. Oswald, King of Northumbria** (604-642), was born heir to the throne of Bernicia in Northumbria but was excluded from his inheritance by King Edwin. St. Oswald and his brother spent 17 years in exile at the monastery of Iona, founded by St. Columba, where they were baptized as Celtic Christians. Following exile, St. Oswald returned in 634 and re-established Christianity in Northumbria, making St. Aidan Bishop of Northumbria and giving him the island of Lindisfarne as his domain. Associated with Celtic Christianity, St. Oswald, whose feast day is August 5, is also associated with Christian resistance to Viking invasions. As the patron saint of soldiers, St. Oswald's cushion, stitched by Marjorie Ball and consecrated in 1990, depicts a shield encircled with a ring of Celtic designs and with a lily at the centre. The shield symbolizes St. Oswald's battle victories and the triumphing of Celtic Christianity over paganism. The central lily is taken from the coat of arms of Scotland, which depicts a lion inside a red border framed with lilies.

**St. Cuthbert, patron saint of Northumbria**

(634-687), whose feast day is March 20, was a hermit, monk, missionary, bishop, and evangelist of the people of Scotland. He was the Bishop of Lindisfarne, then of Durham, both located in Anglo-Saxon Northumbria, earning him the title of Patron Saint of Northumbria. St. Cuthbert's symbols include the St. Cuthbert's cross; the fossilized shells known as "St. Cuthbert's beads," which are found on the beach of Lindisfarne and which he is rumoured to have strung together as a rosary; and three Scottish tams, one of which is said to have been buried with him. St. Cuthbert's cushion was stitched by the late Betty Morrow of the Cathedral and consecrated in 1998.

The architectural style of the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax, carries several names (e.g., Gothic Revival, Neo-Gothic, English Perpendicular) and is associated with the style of architecture, or features of the architecture, of many cathedrals in England. It seems very fitting, therefore, that the saints of the early English church are memorialized in the woodwork and needlepoint cushions of our diocese's canon stalls in the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax.

St. George's Anglican Church in Parrsboro celebrated the Baptism of the Lord and the Renewal of Baptismal Vows at a special service on January 11. From left to right are Dr. John McIntyre (Warden and Director of Music), John Crant (cantor), Bishop Sandra Fyfe, Rev. Dr. Brian J. Spence (Rector), Colleen Yorke (Licensed Lay Minister), Grace Elkin (violinist), and Sandra Hendren (choir member).



Respect... for you, your family  
and your community

**Personalized support and customized  
services for small or large gatherings.**

- Providing traditional, cremation & memorial services
- Personalized support and customized services for small or large gatherings
- Serving all faiths and budgets
- Funeral Pre-Planning service provided



**ATLANTIC FUNERAL HOMES**

HALIFAX  
453-1434  
6552 Bayers Rd.

SACKVILLE  
864-1434  
125 Sackville Dr.

DARTMOUTH  
462-1434  
771 Main St.



www.atlanticfuneralhomes.com

PROUDLY CANADIAN

HERITAGE OAK  
— columbarium & memorial garden —

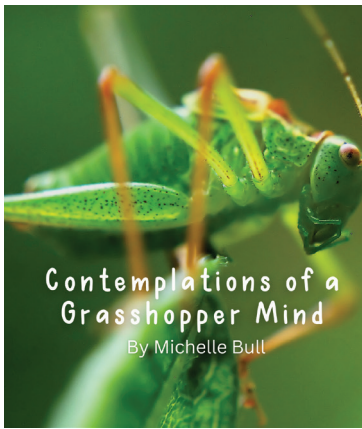


Housed in a secure and dignified  
building in the heart of downtown  
Dartmouth with a peaceful  
memorial garden

**Heritage Oak Columbarium**  
Open to all faiths.

52 Wentworth St, Dartmouth, NS  
902-466-2443 www.HeritageOak.ca

# Retreats



BY MICHELLE BULL

I have just returned from a retreat (at the time of writing). I spent five days at St. John's Convent in Toronto, home of the Sisters of St. John the Divine.

So what, exactly, is a retreat? My parishioners used to say to me, when I told them I was going on a retreat, "Enjoy your vacation!" Well, it's not a vacation. It might be a holiday, as in holy days, but it's not a vacation. It's actually hard work, spiritual work. It's listening to God, and it's hard because we often aren't keen on hearing what God might be saying. We can usually find a lot of distractions.

So, every now and then, it's good to get completely away from the house, family, and job and go somewhere on a retreat. This removes the distractions of endless house chores, errands, emails, etc. I like to go to a religious house, because they have a wonderful atmosphere of silence, prayer and daily worship, so I can just join in.

Sometimes we might go on a guided retreat, such as the ones the diocese is organizing for clergy and laity in the next little while, or the ones organized by religious retreat houses. Or we might go on a private retreat. These are my favourites. And the best of all is when I spend most of the time in silence. Best, not easiest.

These things help to remove distractions. It's important to turn off our phones, not check email, not check Facebook, and not even read the news. Then spend that time intentionally with God. Pray, worship, read the Bible, read other useful books on the spiritual life, see a spiritual director, go for a walk, even get some rest, and spend the time listening to God. And talking. But mostly listening. We are often so distracted that it's hard to hear what God might be saying to us. So we clear the schedule, go on retreat, and pay attention.

At the Convent, I attend all the worship services. There is Morning Prayer, Eucharist, Evening Prayer, and Compline. And I just show



The Convent also has a labyrinth. A labyrinth, unlike a maze, only has one route.



up and participate. And you know, when I have been there a couple days and my mind has slowed down, I am often astonished at how one or two verses of the Scriptures will stand out, or perhaps a hymn or Canticle, or a prayer. It's as if God is flashing it at me. I pay attention to these things. I believe they're God's word to me.

I continue my usual daily prayers and Bible reading in addition to this. This time I started reading a book on spiritual gifts. I write in my journal. I find that journaling is very good for processing and remembering all the ways God is trying to get through to me when I finally start paying attention.

The convent also has a spiritual director on staff, someone we can talk to about our spiritual life and how it's going. I found him very good at helping me see what was sitting there in front of me, things I'd seen but not recognized, not realized their significance. After talking to him, a lot of

things started falling into place, and I realized what it was that was making me feel blocked, and I was able to deal with it. I went back and he helped me answer the question, "What now?" So helpful.

The Convent also has a labyrinth. A labyrinth, unlike a maze, only has one route. You start, and the path twists and turns and gets closer to and further from the centre until finally you are there. And you can sit on a bench in the centre, in the heart of God (so to speak), and pray, and then you walk out, strengthened and refreshed.

I love labyrinths. For me, they are a metaphor for the spiritual path, with endless possibilities. Sometimes I weed the labyrinth, weeding my spiritual life. This time, it was covered in snow when I arrived, and it wasn't possible to follow the path to see the twists and turns. That was about how I was feeling, lost and not knowing where to go. By the end of my time, the snow was gone, and I had

found some clarity.

As Christians, we have committed our lives to God, to following Jesus. In any relationship, we need to spend time with our beloved, or the relationship suffers. Christians need to spend time with God, preferably daily in

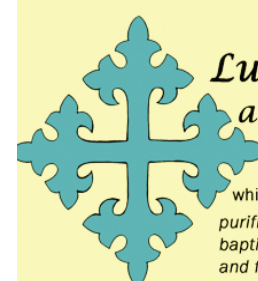
prayer and at least weekly in worship. And a couple times a year, get away on a retreat, kind of like going away for a weekend with someone we love for an intense time together, only the someone is God. It is always worth the effort.

## Letters to the Editor

The editor of The Diocesan Times welcomes letters on any relevant subject but reserves the right to condense them. Letters, including those sent electronically, must include the name, contact information and telephone number of the writer. Pen names may not be used.



Email: [diocesantimes@gmail.com](mailto:diocesantimes@gmail.com)



**Lucy's Sewing Group**  
at Christ Church Cathedral  
Fredericton . NB . Canada

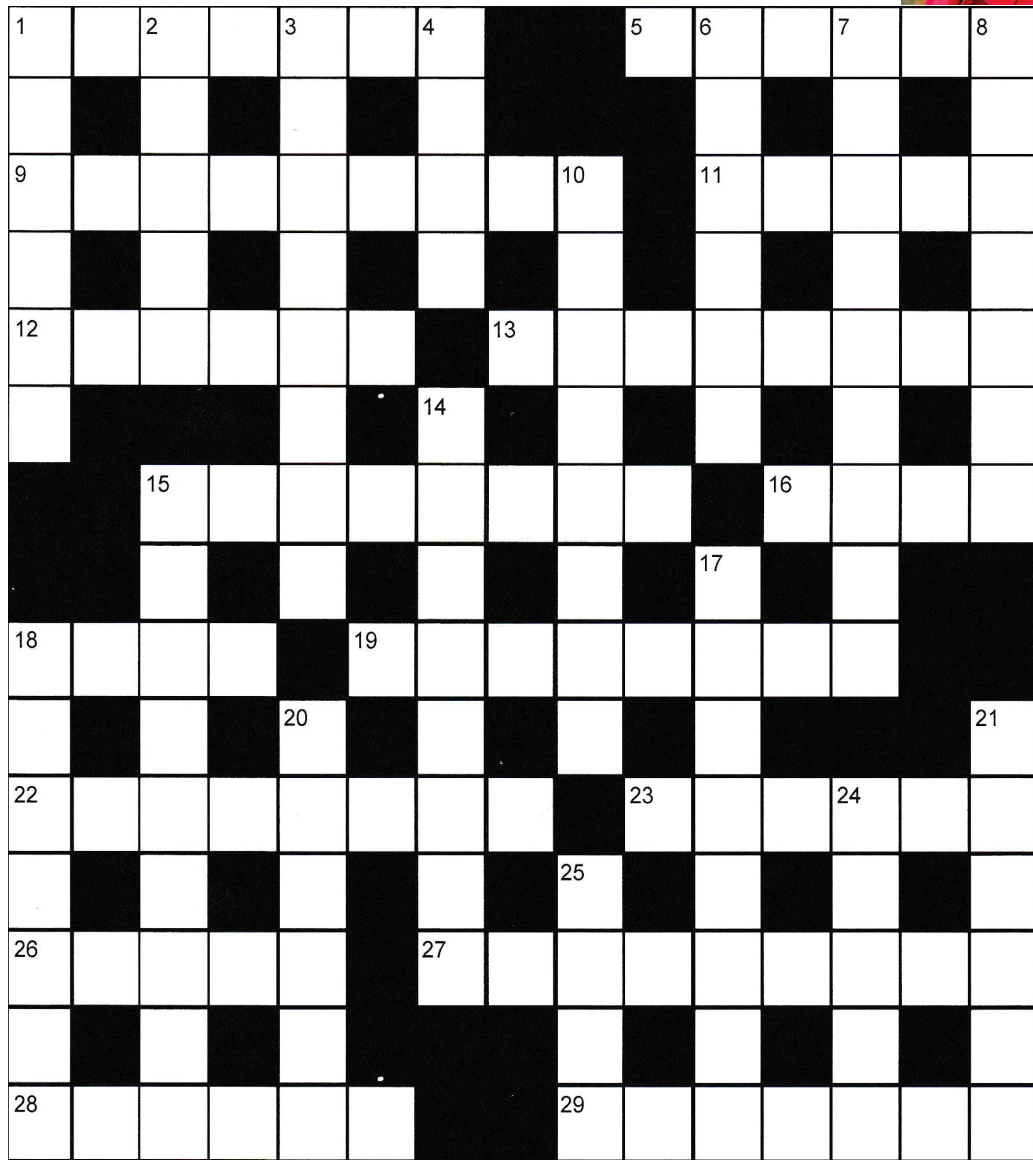
white-on-white embroidery for all your liturgical needs  
purificators palls corporals veils credence cloths  
baptismal and lavabo towels

and fair linens custom-fitted to your altar  
hand-sewn on quality Irish linen

contact [lucyssc@gmail.com](mailto:lucyssc@gmail.com) to order, receive our price list, or ask for advice .

# May Bible Crossword

BY MAUREEN YEATS



## May 2026 Puzzle Clues

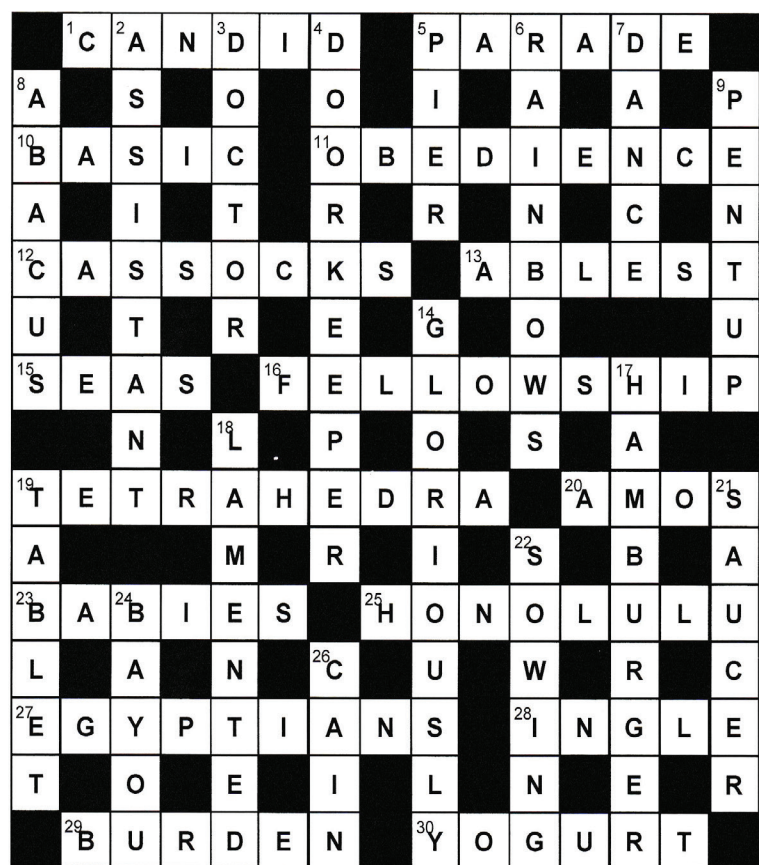
**ACROSS:**

- 1- Ronald Reagan's daughter (7)
- 5- Unpleasant in odour or taste (6)
- 9- Standard of judgement (9)
- 11- 1972 Olympic silver medalist in figure skating, \_\_\_\_\_ Magnussen (5)
- 12- Capital of Greece (6)
- 13- "He must \_\_\_\_\_, but I must decrease." (John 3:30) grow (8)
- 15- People who guard buildings at night (8)
- 16- Determines the sum (4)
- 18- Continent that includes China and Laos (4)
- 19- "Supposing him to be the \_\_\_\_\_ ..." (John 20:15) one who tends the soil (8)
- 22- Diseases (8)
- 23- Type of ammunition (6)
- 26- Elevate (5)
- 27- "A \_\_\_\_\_ woman came to draw water..." (John 4:7) resident of Samaria (9)
- 28- Calm (6)
- 29- Formal speech (7)

**DOWN:**

- 1- A wife of David (1 Sam. 18:17-27) (6)
- 2- First husband of Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:3) (5)
- 3- "For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits \_\_\_\_\_" (Isa. 57:15) endless existence (8)
- 4- Place where Jesus raised a widow's dead son (Luke 7:11-15) (4)
- 6- Capital of Turkey (6)
- 7- An herb (9)
- 8- Ballet or tap \_\_\_\_\_ (7)
- 10- Japanese video game company (8)
- 14- "like a sheep that before its \_\_\_\_\_ is silent" (Isa. 53:7) those who harvest wool (8)
- 15- Tornado (9)
- 17- Asked (8)
- 18- Regards with wonder (7)
- 20- Church season before Christmas (6)
- 21- Makes reparation for sins (6)
- 24- Woodworking machine (5)
- 25- Girl's name (4)

## April Puzzle Answers



### Anglicans Powering Potential

Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

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



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

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

**MONUMENT CENTRE & DISPLAY**  
171 Steeles Street, **NORTH SYDNEY**  
A Cape Breton Industry Since 1896  
Office: (902) 794-2713  
[johndsteeles@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:johndsteeles@ns.sympatico.ca)

# Before Mary

BY ANGELA RUSH

Welcome to the month of May. It is the month we celebrate our cherished mothers. For many, it is a time filled with gratitude and joyfulness. Yet for others, it carries the weight of those heartbreaking reminders of love touched by loss. Some grieve the child they hold now only in memory, while others long for the embrace of a mother who has gone home to the Lord.

Loss, in its many forms, is a part of our earthly journey. Though it comes at different times and in different ways, it is something we all encounter. The bond between a mother and child is one of God's most profound gifts. When that bond is broken, the ache one can feel is beyond words. I know this sorrow personally. Nearly 19 years ago, I lost my daughter, and in that same moment, my own mother felt the deep loss of her granddaughter. In grief, our hearts were united yet held gently in God's care.

Today is Palm Sunday as I create my May article. My mind is taken to a time when Jesus was taking that ride on the donkey as his followers greeted him with palms waving and singing songs of joy and praise to their king. His life was a predestined journey for all of us. A week would unfold into a tragedy that would, by destiny, change the world forever. In this week a mother, Mary, would lose her child.

In my home, since I was a teenager, or maybe even before that, we would always watch *The Ten Commandments* as we would head into Easter. I have likely seen this movie over 50 times, but every time I am drawn to a love between a mother and a son. She was the mother of Moses, another son who had a predetermined life. A life to lead and destined to change lives forever. Before Mary, yes, there was another very significant mother; her name was Jochebed.

Jochebed gave birth to a baby boy, and it was love at first sight. The Bible says that when she saw Moses, she described him as a "fine child" (Exodus 2:2) and hid the baby for three months. This could not have been easy for her and her family because babies are not quiet. But she did it, and it is a testament to her faith in God and His love for them.

The Israelites had grown in numbers in Egypt, which was fulfilling God's promise to Abraham that his descendants would become as "numerous as the stars" (Genesis 15:5). This rising population did not



Photo by Dan Meyers on Unsplash

sit well with the pharaoh, who viewed them as a threat to his kingdom. He ordered the death of every newborn Hebrew boy. The midwives were instructed to kill the boys at birth. I think there were actually two separate orders from the pharaoh to kill newborn boys. The first was given to midwives that if a Hebrew boy were born, they were to kill him at birth. The midwives, being of strong faith, could not carry out this murderous plan and would say that the women were strong, that they often gave birth before their midwife arrived, and so the male infants were not killed. This act of defiance was a profound act of courage and faith that challenged the pharaoh and saved the lives of their people. The second time the pharaoh ordered the killing of Hebrew baby boys was the Nile Decree after the midwives disobeyed his order. All newborn Hebrew boys were to be drowned in the Nile River.

Jochebed was not having any part of this. She got "crafty" and crafted a basket that would keep Moses dry and afloat. She then set him into such a basket made of papyrus (wicker) and coated with tar and pitch and hid him in the reeds, setting him on his journey. Miriam, his sister, followed and witnessed the

story unfold as he was found by the princess of Egypt, and she named him Moses, which means "out of the water he was drawn." Miriam was instrumental in this next chapter of connecting mother and child. She asked the princess if she could get a "wet nurse" for the baby, and she then reconnected Jochebed with her son Moses. Moses, of course, as we know the story, was raised as an Egyptian prince, who would one day be completely reconnected to his roots and follow a path that God laid before him. This is the same God that gave us Jesus, who walked a path for us.

This same loving God, who guided Jochebed, who strengthened Mary, and who walked beside Moses, is the God who walks with us today. He is the author of our stories, the keeper of our hearts, and the One who calls each of us by name. He chose Mary. He chose Moses. And in His infinite love, He has chosen you.

Each of us has a purpose, uniquely woven into God's greater plan. Even in seasons of sorrow, He is present. Even in loss, He brings hope. We are never alone. Like those faithful mothers before us, we are called to walk forward with courage, trusting Him step by step.

The journey is not always easy, but we are reminded that the way forward is through—and we do not walk it alone. With God's grace, we will endure. With His love, we will be restored. And with His promise, we hold onto the hope of reunion.

I miss my daughter deeply, but I trust in the promise that this separation is only for a time. One day, by God's grace, we will be reunited. Until then, I walk in faith—one step, one day at a time—trusting that He is leading me home.

## QUACKENBUSH THOMSON LAW



### Practice Areas

**Corporate Law - Commercial Real Estate  
Residential Real Estate - Wills & Estates**

Our lawyers offer a diverse range of services, coupled with a wealth of experience.

2571 Windsor Street - Halifax - NS - B3K 5C4

T: 902-492-1655 F: 902-492-1697

ethomson@qtrlaw.com