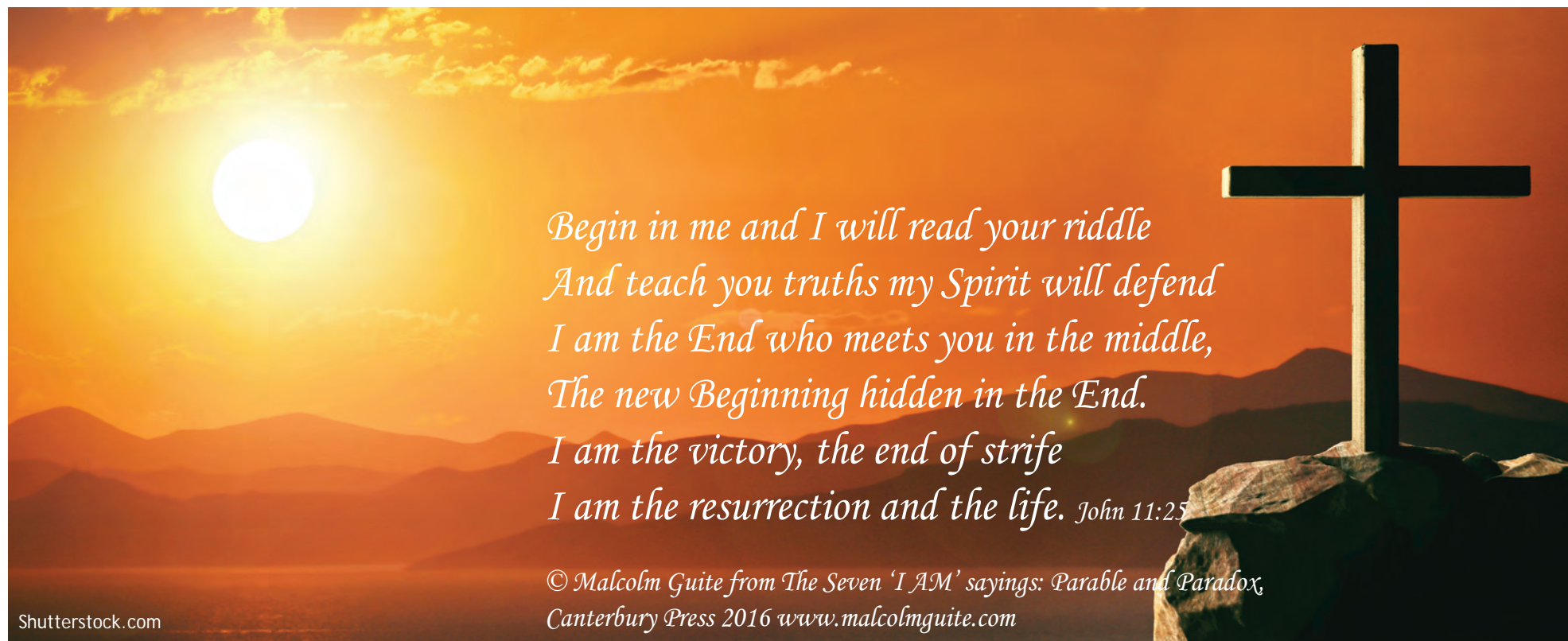




THE MESSENGER

APRIL 2019

www.edmonton.anglican.org



Building compassion - Immanuel, Wetaskiwin ACW hosts day of sharing and learning about women at risk

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

The Anglican Church Women (ACW) of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin welcomed more than 50 people, on February 9, to a day of learning and sharing about ways to build compassion in supporting women-at-risk.

Representatives of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), the Red Dress Photography Project and Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services made inspiring and informative presentations at "Women in Peril: Building Compassion."

For 100 years, the Immanuel ACW has helped address women's issues locally and around the world by reaching out to sisters in their local community, across Canada and internationally in Afghanistan and Burundi.

Immanuel ACW President Betty Anne Greenwall said members felt compelled to raise awareness

for violence against women when they saw a display of red dresses honouring the lives and memory of missing and murdered Indigenous women at the diocesan annual meeting at All Saints' Cathedral.

Eun-Jin Kim, an immigrant from Korea in 2000, and Arzoo Sabour, an immigrant from Iran in 2002, came to Canada as international students. Together the two women have more than 18 years of experience working at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN), where they help people, many of whom are seeking refuge from war-torn countries, face the challenges of a new home, language and culture. In 2018, the center assisted up to 17,000 clients through programs like the Immigrant Women's Integration Network (I-WIN) to help women build confidence and overcome isolation by improving their English language and employment skills; navigating transportation, medical



Red dresses, like this one hanging in the churchyard at Immanuel Anglican Church in Wetaskiwin on February 9, call Canadians to address the national crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

and education systems; and joining supportive community networks. EMCN also offers a program for men focused on healthy relationships.

Established in 1981 to assist Vietnamese Boat People, EMCN has grown to include 250 employees

who are trained in cultural sensitivity, speak a total of more than 50 languages and work in five Edmonton locations.

Continued on page 11.



"Voting is a holy act," Bishop tells Politics of Faithfulness participants

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

As the next provincial election draws near, voters are faced with deciding which candidates will best represent their interests. As Christian voters, we must also determine which candidates represent the best interest of our community.

In a political context what does it mean to be part of the kingdom of God and to carry our faith - the good news of God's love - with us wherever we go?

"Voting is a holy act," said the Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander, Bishop of Edmonton. "It is a time when we can show whether indeed we love God with all we can and love our neighbour as our self. As people of faith we are called into an election through prayer. Think about all the times we pray that God's will be done. We must look around our

communities for ways to bring change to the places where God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven."

Speaking on the topic, "Questions a Person of Faith Might Ask a Political Candidate at the Door," Bishop Jane was one of several faith and community leaders invited to share their insights at the "Politics of Faithfulness or Being Christian Out Loud" event, February 16, at St. Matthias Anglican Church. Other presenters included The King's University professor Stephen Martin, Greater Edmonton Alliance and Industrial Areas

Foundation organizer Joe Chrastil and former political candidate and St. Matthias parishioner Ben Acquaye.

"It behooves me as a Christian to find out how people more vulnerable than me are doing," said Bishop Jane. "Otherwise, I just vote for things that are all



Dr. Stephen Martin



The Rev. David Tiessen



"I don't believe in using public dollars to promote anything but the public good," said Ben Acquaye, a member of St. Matthias, Edmonton, who spoke about his experience seeking the UCP nomination in the rural riding of Vermilion-Lloydminster-Wainwright.

about me. Jesus was always with people on the edges, finding out how things could be better, how things might need to change.

"We know from scripture that Jesus

never shied away from engaging with or commenting on issues of the day. He actively participated in the public square. It is important to prayerfully consider how we vote, whether at the municipal, provincial or federal level, through the biblical narrative we hold so dear,

recognizing that our choice probably won't be perfect, either, in this not-so-perfect world," she said.

"Amidst the turbulent world we live in, we really need to step back and ask 'what is our place as Christians in relation to the events around us?'" said the Rev. David Thiessen, rector of St. Matthias Anglican Church. "In Jesus' terms, the Christian community is in the world and, yet not of or the same as the world," said Thiessen, who led an opening Bible study on the "Politics of Jesus."

"The church and followers of Christ are not determined by the world, though we might very well find a good fit with many things in our politics, in our community organizing, in ideas, principles, and commitments," he said.

Continued on page 12.



Bishop Jane urges participants to be Christian out loud and vote in the best interests of the wider community.

Thoughtful and prayerful preparation for a Jesus shaped vote



The Ven. ALAN PERRY
Executive Archdeacon
Diocese of Edmonton

It is often said that the Church should not be involved in politics. Indeed, until an Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling last year, "political activity" by registered charities was severely limited and actively discouraged by the federal government. The court ruling

distinguished between partisan political activities – supporting one political party over another – and non-partisan political activities – advocating for policies that promote the "welfare of the city." The court ruled that advocacy is a legitimate part of charitable work, though partisan political activity is prohibited.

Advocacy is part of the mission of the Church, and the call to all disciples. There is an important place in the mission of the Church for political activity in the non-partisan sense. Although it would be inappropriate for the Church to endorse

a given political party, advocating for public policies to promote a better society is both permissible and a vital part of our role as disciples of Jesus.

Our baptismal covenant asks "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" When we respond "I will, with God's help" we take on a responsibility to follow Jeremiah's instructions to the exiles in Babylon, to "seek the welfare of the city," or province or country. This passage was briefly studied at the recent "Politics of Faithfulness" workshop at St. Matthias.

The Five Marks of Mission similarly imply a call to be engaged in politics. The Fourth Mark of Mission commits us "to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation." The Fifth Mark is "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." Both of these goals will require public engagement in the field of policy.

From among the several very thought-provoking presentations at the workshop, I came away with three particular thoughts stirring in my mind.

First was a renewed sense of the responsibility

*Seek the welfare of the city where
I have sent you ... for in its welfare
you will find your welfare.*

Jeremiah 29:7

to engage in the world around me, to seek the welfare of the city.

Second was Bishop Jane's challenging call to vote with deference. That is, to vote not only in my own narrow interests, but rather in the broader interests of the whole society. For what seems like it will benefit me in the short term might not be good long-term policy for the wider community.

The third issue I took away was a reminder to treat all candidates with respect. While I might disagree with a given candidate, it's important to assume that all candidates are trying to do their best to improve our society, so that our city, province and country may flourish.

So what would a Jesus shaped vote look like? It starts with prayer: for the candidates, for good policies, and for our society. It emerges from careful study of party platforms, to determine which is most likely to "transform unjust structures," leading to a more just and fair society in a cleaner environment. And it ends with voting: prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Heartfelt ministry to families and neighbours facing hard times



Bishop JANE ALEXANDER
Diocese of Edmonton

I get to look at the big picture of ministry across the whole diocese. As I have been reading reports I realize that the shape of our church communities is changing and new life is appearing. Not every parish is seeing this but, as I said, I am looking at the big picture and a shifting landscape.

Over the next few months I am going to tell some of these stories more fully. In the meantime, let me focus on two things. Firstly, our ministry to and with families and children is increasing; we are seeing the fruits of Messy Churches across

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am finishing up my annual reading of parish AGM packages. Now, before you start thinking that I should get out more, let me just say that this can be a very encouraging time of year; when

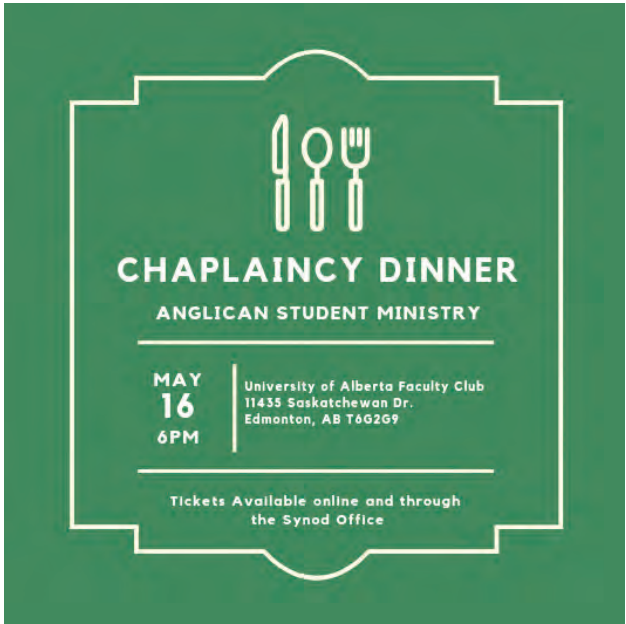
the diocese. In just about every story of a Messy Church service there are reflections on people who have come to the church for the very first time and found a welcoming community in which to get to know Christ. The themes for Messy gatherings have been varied and often profound. If you are reading this and thinking ‘we could try that,’ call me. I’d love to help you get started. If you are reading this and thinking your community has seniors living locally and not young families then call me, as well, so I can share the Messy Seniors programs that are out there which combat loneliness and isolation.

Secondly, I am awestruck by the amount of ministry that goes on with our neighbours who are experiencing poverty, social isolation or grief. As I read the reports, even in parishes where times are tough financially for the parish, heartfelt ministry is still being done in the name of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. I especially want to say a massive thank you to parishes in places where the downturn of the economy has left people feeling stranded and forgotten. This is what we are to be about as the body of Christ.

Check in next month to see how our churches

are stepping into the gap. In the coming year we may see shapes of ministry in some places changing, but I encourage us all to look for where God is calling us to go next, rather than assuming that we are done. I pray for this continuing spirit of generosity and hope to be present in all our church communities.

In Christ, +Jane



Lives transformed by God’s power, peace, grace and joy



Bishop FRASER LAWTON
Diocese of Athabasca

from a life of violence, addiction and crime to the life of a traveling evangelist. Often a miraculous healing or deliverance is part of someone’s story. What has always struck me is the depth of change experienced by each person and the passion they exhibit. They spoke clearly of what life had been like – sometimes with tabloid-like examples – how they made a choice and the transformational change that followed.

What these testimonies display is the sense of revelation and transformation we read about in the gospel reports of Easter. On that morning, and in the days that followed, the lives of the disciples

I have had a number of opportunities through the years to hear people share their testimony: the story of how they met Jesus and how their lives were changed, often profoundly. Some of the stories have stuck with me, like the biker who went

and then others were overturned. For the disciples came the realization that what had appeared to be disaster was actually their victory. Not even death could hold Jesus and because of His resurrection; they now knew life in a whole new way. In fact, the scripture tells us they became “new creatures.” Their lives, transformed, revealed an ongoing experience of grace, peace, power and, especially, joy.

The gospel also tells us that they could not keep from talking about what had happened to them and other people began to have similar experiences. They met Jesus, and everything changed. Their lives became something new. They were filled with power, peace, grace and joy. The story of those people – and their powerful experiences – continues to be shared.

My own story isn’t filled with regrets of wasted years, a criminal past, drugs, abuse or destruction. My life testimony does not contain a story of revelation that brought me from complete ignorance of God to a moment of conviction. In time, though, I have become very grateful for my testimony. At the day of my birth I was joyfully welcomed by transformed believers. I was raised in a faithful Christian home, exposed to the gospel and its goodness and truth my whole life. I learned

to pray, worship and live a Christian life by being with faithful Christians.

My testimony, like everyone’s, contains regrets, errors, mistakes, shameful moments and struggles. Yet none of these has ever won the day because of the power, peace, grace and joy of God. My testimony is filled with thanks to God for all the goodness He has given me, none of which I’ve deserved. My greatest danger, perhaps, is that of familiarity and to take for granted the ongoing miracle of the presence of God throughout my life.

This annual recollection of Easter is a wonderful opportunity to be reminded of the great power of God to change lives. It is an opportunity to give thanks to God for what He has done and will do. I praise Him for the way He has completely changed people in the most dramatic ways, bringing healing and deliverance. I also praise Him for lives that have walked with God for many years in faithfulness.

What is your story? How do you know His power, peace grace and joy? These blessings are available to all. May God fill us with the same exuberance of the first Easter that we cannot help but share our joy.

The Lord be with you, +Fraser

SUBMISSIONS DUE 1 MONTH PRIOR to PRINTING DATE		MESSENGER TEAM	
DEADLINE for May, 2019 ISSUE: APRIL 1		EDITORS Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) Peter Clarke (Athabasca)	A \$15 annual donation is suggested. Please send donations to the Dioceses of Athabasca or Edmonton, c/o The Messenger.
Submissions: We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories (max 500 words), event notices, book reviews and photos.		Read Online: www.edmonton.anglican.ca/blog/ the-messenger	The Messenger is published under the authority of the Dioceses of Athabasca and Edmonton. Opinions expressed in The Messenger are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher.
Send to: Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) anglicanmessenger@gmail.com		Note: All subscribers must renew subscription by sending mailing address by June, 2019 to: yes@national.anglican.ca	The Messenger is a section of the Anglican Journal, printed 10 times a year (no issues July and August) by Webnews Printing Inc. North York, ON.

Recovery from Christendom: Jesus-shaped discipleship



The Ven. RICHARD KING
Archdeacon for
Mission and Discipleship
Diocese of Edmonton

This month we continue our series about recovering from Christendom. We have looked at the lost concepts of mission and church, and at recovering our identity as disciples. In this article I want to write about

reclaiming a Jesus-shaped discipleship.

You might think that an odd phrase. It implies our discipleship may not have been entirely Jesus-shaped in Christendom. I would argue that this is indeed the case! It is an inevitable conclusion if one accepts, as we have seen, that Christendom has caused a loss of our missional calling, has turned our understanding of church into ‘that building we attend on a Sunday’ instead of being truly and fully the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4-7), and has reduced discipleship to a matter of attending Sunday services.

So if we are to re-discover a Jesus-shaped discipleship; if we are to truly live Jesus-shaped lives,

we need to start with Jesus. It must be Jesus who defines what our discipleship is to be, not ourselves. So, who is this Jesus? What picture comes to mind?

For most, if not all of us, the picture is about love. We are often drawn to that picture of Jesus as ‘The Good Shepherd.’ After all, that’s how he describes himself (John 10:11). So let’s start there.

It is in the Old Testament that we see revealed the loving purposes of God fulfilled in Jesus. We cannot understand the New if we ignore or disregard the Old. The entire Bible describes the revealing of God’s good purposes for all creation. These purposes, this Mission of God, is expressed in his covenant calling to

Abraham, a purpose handed over to Israel and then to the church: to go and be a blessing through whom all the nations of the world will be blessed. (We have considered this in previous articles). Where does this mission come from? It flows out of the love and grace of our God who is the creator and source of all things, who wants to gather his creation to himself. He cares for us all and desires all to come to a knowledge of the truth of his love (John 3:16, 2 Peter 3:9).

We see God first revealed as shepherd, not by Jesus, but in the Old Testament as early as Genesis (49:24) and most famously in Psalm 23. It’s no surprise, then, that Jesus uses that term to describe

himself, as one who is “an exact representation of the Father” (Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus is the loving Good Shepherd. So living a Jesus-shaped life must include showing love to others as Jesus defines it. This is not simply our lovely Canadian virtue of being very nice and kind to each other. It is a costly love that is self-sacrificial and reflects God’s purposes (John 13:34-35). It is absolutely essential. But as we shall see, there is much more about our God revealed in Jesus that must inform our understanding and practice of a Jesus-shaped life, and that’s where we’ll pick it up next time.

*May God bless you richly,
Richard*

Stress Relief for Churches: Remember Who You Are



The Ven. TERRY LEER
Archdeacon for
Mission Development
Diocese of Athabasca

I’m not sure we have reached a crisis point, but I am sure we are under stress. The stress looks like finances, or attendance, or volunteerism, or something else we can see or measure. But the actual stress point is

something bigger, more universal and perhaps even eternal: discipleship development.

Oh, discipleship development can be seen and even measured. It is expressed in our practices of:

- evangelism
- immersion in scripture
- leadership
- ministry to others
- prayer
- stewardship and
- worship.

That is, if we are developing as Christ’s disciples, we demonstrate that through the use of these tools. These tools develop our saving relationship with God through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit,

and in a two-fold manner:

1. Our own salvation and its practices are developed: we are empowered and enabled to live out our salvation more fully;
2. Those around us hear God’s invitation to salvation through us: they become the beneficiaries of our development as disciples, which then adds to our own development.

The more universal foundation for our visible and measurable practices is our identity, as disciples of Christ. We are His apprentices, the starting point of which is our own experience of the saving

love of God. Our stress point is our identity in Christ.

We are loved and saved by God, which unites us to His Body, which is the Church. Therefore, we are members of one family, with obligations to one another. “Our” salvation is always experienced in a genuinely plural sense—I am not saved—you and I are saved together. That familial reality obligates us to support and love one another. That is who we are.

That unifying reality also means that we must reach out beyond the family to share our experience of salvation with others. We develop as disciples of Jesus so that others might become disciples of Jesus. Our

discipleship development has as its goal the goal of Christ himself—the salvation of the world. His mission is our mission since we are His apprentices.

The stress point is that many of us have never been introduced to this truth about our identity.

If your parish is experiencing the stressors referred to in the first paragraph, then look towards developing your experience of discipleship. Use the tools highlighted above to aim your development towards the fulfilling of Christ’s mission. Focus on our identity in Christ and use those tools to express that identity. That will relieve the stress and avert the crisis.



New cohort enrolled in Buyé Bible School

Ten students are enrolled in their first year of studies at the Buyé Bible School. Diocesan Secretary of Buyé diocese, the Rev. Dominique Ciza, reports that this is possible because of financial support from the Diocese of Edmonton.

The Buyé Bible School had been closed for some time, but reopened with emergency funding from Edmonton diocese in 2014. In the 2016-2017 academic year there were 17 students enrolled, 8 in first year and 9 in second year. Graduates of that class were ordained in 2018 and have begun serving in parishes throughout the diocese.

World Day of Prayer 2019

CANDACE MAHAFFEY
Christ Church, Grande Prairie



The Christ Church ACW hosted a community World Day of Prayer Service on March 1. The service is always the first Friday in March.

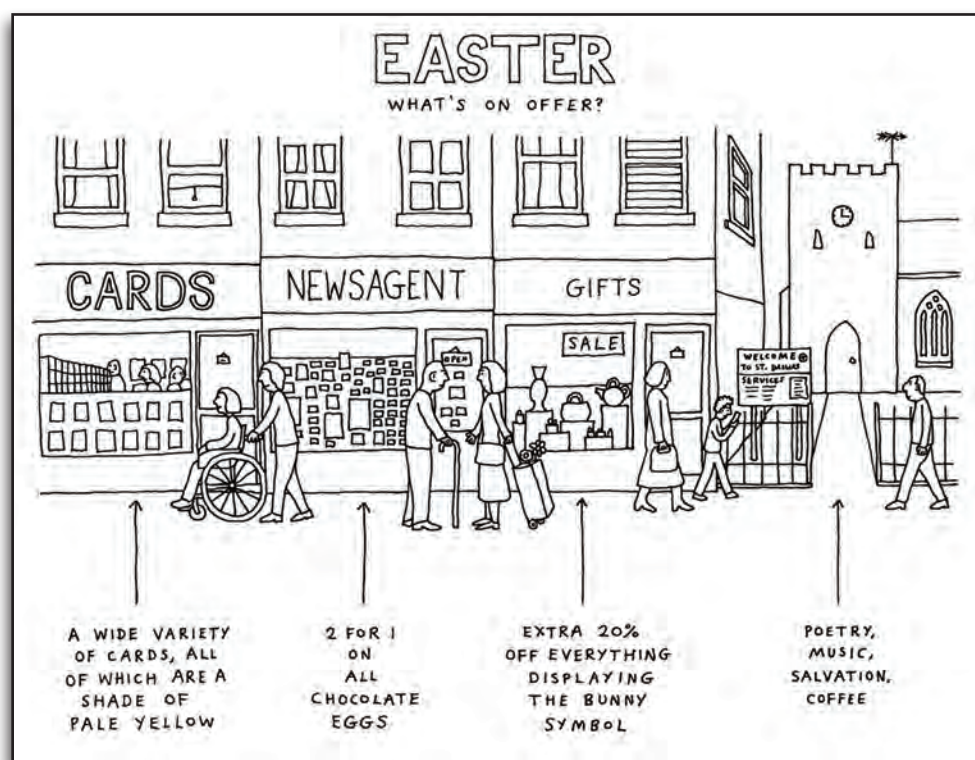
This event is organized by Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and the service is prepared by a different country every year. This year the Republika Slovenija planned the liturgy. There is a video

to teach us about the country and their cultures. I personally love the video each year and I find I learn a lot about the country and the women that created the service.

The event involves five other denominations: Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, United and Lutheran. Every year one of us takes turns hosting the service and we all participate. It is a great opportunity to get to know our brothers and sisters in Christ while sharing our space with our community.



Kathy Greer and deacon Janice Orr prepare for the World Day of Prayer at Christ Church.



cartoonchurch.com

Community welcome to share space at Christ Church

CANDACE MAHAFFEY
Christ Church, Grande Prairie



Christ Church, Grande Prairie hosted a wieners and beans dinner for the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization on February 22, 2019. This is the second time we have offered our space, free of charge, to this organization. They also held a pumpkin carving event in our hall in October.

Parishioners made supper for the group before they played games. We are glad to be able to offer our space to another non-profit organization, and they are very appreciative of having a space to come together.



Photo by Candace Mahaffey: Beth Davis preparing the wieners and beans.

Athabasca Diocese Upcoming Events

* April 26 - 28 ACW Conference at St. James' Cathedral, Peace River. Guest speaker is Judith Packwood and the theme is *prayer*. Cost is \$75. Cheques payable to St. James' ACW. Billeting available. Contact Kathy Budd at kbudd@telus.net for more information.

General Synod Consultations within the Diocese*

- Wednesday May 8, 7 pm, at All Saints' Church, Fort McMurray
- Thursday May 9, 7 pm, at All Saints' Church, Athabasca
- Wednesday May 15, 7 pm, at Christ Church, Grande Prairie
- Thursday May 23, 7 pm, at St. Mark's Church, High Prairie

*All licensed clergy, diocesan synod members and general synod delegates are expected to attend at least one of these General Synod Consultations.

ATHABASCA DIOCESE CONNECTIONS

Diocesan website:

www.dioath.ca

(includes Sunday sermons for lay readers)

The Anglican Centre

(Diocese of Athabasca Archives)

Phone: 780-624-2767

Fax: 780-624-2365

Email: dioath@telusplanet.net

Parish websites

• Peace River:

www.stjamespr.org

• Fort McMurray, All Saints':

www.allsaintsanglican.ca

• Fort McMurray, St. Thomas':

www.sttom.ca

• Grande Prairie: www.christchurchanglicangp.org

• Boyle: www.parishnorthernlights.org

Lay Readers in the Diocese of Athabasca



COMPETENT and CONFIDENT II:

Using Our Tools for Ministry

A conference for all lay readers, lay readers in training and lay reader candidates.

April 5 - 7, 2019 at St. Peter's Ecumenical Church, Slave Lake

Spirituality: learning to listen to the 'still small voice'

In coming months, members of the Diocese of Edmonton Spiritual Direction Network will host a column on spirituality and various spiritual practices. This month we begin with an introduction to spiritual direction.

Spiritual direction has been part of our Christian tradition in various forms for centuries and, in recent years, has been growing in popularity. It is one of few experiences in our church that enables us to devote time to discussing what is happening (or not) in our relationship with God. As parishioners serving side-by-side, we are occupied, and rightly so, with the task at hand. In bible study, our focus is on the bible and what we might be learning. Even in a close group of Christian friends, we may not feel free to admit to doubts, to a lack of prayer, or if we *are* praying, to look deeper into what's happening when we meet with God or whether we are aware of God's presence in our daily lives. If we do share, we run the risk of being met with a blank stare, a "pat answer" or advice that, however well-intended, doesn't hit the mark.

Jesuits William Barry and William Connolly authored *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, one of the most widely used texts in the training of spiritual directors. They define Christian spiritual direction as "help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond... to grow in intimacy with God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship."

A trained spiritual director – in spite of what the title seems to imply – does not tell the person coming (the directee) what to do or how to feel. He or she does not give advice or pat answers. The director relies on the Holy Spirit to speak into the life of the directee and facilitates the directee's ability to pay attention to that 'still small voice.' Listening is a director's primary activity.

People seek out spiritual direction at any stage of life. However, for many the questions come somewhere around mid-life when, having been active in church for years, we begin to wonder: could there be more to my faith? Sometimes our prayers can start to feel dry. Perhaps we are weighed down by a looming decision, a change in vocation, a life transition, or by an experience that needs to be

grieved. It is not uncommon at this stage of life to think there must be more.

"It is a privilege for me to be invited to offer this ministry with someone who is blessed with an "inquiring and discerning heart and the courage to will and to persevere" (Baptismal prayer, BAS), says the Rev. Canon Gwen Bright, one of 12 trained spiritual directors in the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton network. "I love seeing the eyes wide open, the smile of wonderment, the excitement of new discoveries."



Although "spiritual direction can sound a bit top-down or academic, it's really more like the experience of traveling for a while with someone who has a good, working compass," says Bright. "We are never alone and the compass of the Christian faith keeps us on track."

She adds that spiritual direction/guidance may not be for everyone, "But it is worth finding out if this is the right opportunity, and the right time, for YOU."

There are many women and men, ordained and lay, of several Christian faith traditions, practising spiritual direction throughout Alberta, including the 12 practising directors in Diocese of Edmonton network. Watch for future articles in *The Messenger* discussing the process of finding a director. For more information in the meantime, visit: www.edmonton.anglican.ca/what-we-do/spirituality; email the Synod Office at reception@edmonton.anglican.ca or call 780-439-7344.

Experience of Spiritual Direction 'a Gift'

The following thoughts on the experience of receiving spiritual direction were graciously provided by a clergy person in the Edmonton area. This person's name is withheld to protect the confidential spiritual director/directee, relationship.

Messenger: How long have you been in spiritual direction? Have you always had the same director?

Directee: I have been in spiritual direction for 13 years. I've had to change directors because of moves, or because I didn't feel the fit (with a director) was great. That is completely acceptable in the work. A person can see the same director until they feel it is not a help to them any longer. I've had two long-term directors and value those relationships as they get to know me and can speak into my life better and better.

Messenger: Why did you first seek spiritual direction?

Directee: I am a clergyman and was looking for someone to walk alongside me from outside my church and denomination; someone to help me hear what God was saying to me and help me see the ways He was leading me. We are encouraged by our denomination to explore this as a self-care option.

Messenger: What were your first impressions?

Directee: Finding spiritual direction was like finding home. I found someone whose major role each month was just to listen to me and to God in my story and to point that out to me. It's a gift beyond measure.

Messenger: Why do you keep going?

Directee: When we meet to share the space for that morning, I begin to give words to my interior thoughts about life, work and myself. Invariably, when I do, I begin to see God's fingerprints all over my life. I begin to legitimise my feelings or sense of direction. I need a spiritual companion in my life. The practice helps keep me healthy and my spirit whole.

"I always leave hopeful, refreshed and heard."

Messenger: What has this experience been like for you?

Directee: For me it's been a healing journey. It's given me space to process my growing up years, my struggles with my kids, my frustrations at work.

It's helped me to understand and embrace my calling more clearly. Last year when I was hospitalised and nearly died, processing that with God and my spiritual director, left me with a deep sense of gratitude

that has shaped me in such amazing ways. I can't even explain it all, but God is there when we meet. That's as it should be because the director isn't a counsellor and I don't see them as a counsellor. They are there to listen, pray, and discern what God might be saying and leading me to.

My wife says I should have started this years and years ago.

Messenger: What would you say to clergy who might be curious, but a little wary?

Directee: I would boldly say that spiritual direction should be a regular part of your self-care strategy. Having a regular quiet place to meet with God and a witness can actually help you clear out the things you carry emotionally or spiritually. The witness or director is there to help hold the space with you, to listen to your heartbeat in it all and to listen for God.

In our denomination since we began to encourage it and grow in it we have seen a marked decrease in pastoral failures.

A reluctant friend tried it and has not stopped going, experiencing such value in it. You should try it once or twice and just see what it's like. Meeting with Jesus in a gentle safe space with a friend can take you to wonderful places.

Continued next page.

Service at the heart of St. Augustine's "crazy" cooks

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

For several years, The Five Crazy Ladies, a group of women who really seem to enjoy each other's company, have shared their passion for cooking with as many as 150 guests attending the Friday evening community dinner at PrayerWorks Hall.

Once a month, the ladies who are often joined by St. Augustine of Canterbury, Edmonton Rector the Rev. Jonathan Crane, decide on a menu, purchase groceries and gather donated food bank items to supplement the meal. Crane can always be counted on to help with meal preparation, especially with physical tasks like lifting six enormous pans of piping hot lasagna out of the oven.

Last fall, the ladies provided a Christmas bag for every guest who attended the turkey dinner. One of the women mentioned the idea at her workplace and her colleague volunteered to crochet scarves and neck warmers. Another ministry team member told a relative who then asked his company to provide toiletries.

The ladies put out a call for warm socks adding a pair, along with Christmas candies, to each bag. Finally, volunteers from all walks of life came together to assemble

150 bags and spread cheer and goodwill to the men, women and children attending the Christmas dinner.

The women say they enjoy each other's company and look forward to their "cooking days." They are excited about two upcoming



The Five Crazy Ladies get some help with lasagna preparation from parishioner Fred Harris and the Rev. Jonathan Crane.



meals: a full Ukrainian dinner and a special meal at Easter, and have begun crocheting hats for the next Christmas offering.

"This really is a fine production," says Crane. "The ladies provide good wholesome food and they have a lot of fun doing it."

Many parishes in the Edmonton diocese contribute to the

PrayerWorks Hall community meal program, which includes a Thursday lunch, Friday supper and Saturday breakfast. To donate your time and talents to this ministry (servers are needed, in addition to cooks), please contact the Rev. Madeleine Urion, program coordinator, by email: maddie@stfaithsanglican.org.



Pictured from left: Sandra Arbeau, Doris Harris, Gail Gravelines, Karen (sitting), Joyce Taylor, Jonathan Crane.

Journeys of recovery inspire Edmonton parish

The Rev. RENÉE DESJARDINS
St. David's, Edmonton

St. David's hosts an annual Dinner & Silent Auction on the last Friday in November. The proceeds are divided equally among the mission and ministry of the parish and a local or distant charity. In 2018 we donated \$2,355 to Our House Edmonton, a year-long residential rehabilitation program for men who are overcoming addictions.

On Sunday, February 10, 2019, St. David's welcomed Rebecca Bernard, Program Supervisor, and two current residents of Our House. During coffee hour, Rebecca shared about the different program components (self, relationships, sexuality and spirituality) at Our House, which is operating at its capacity of 60 residents and has a

waiting list. We were shocked to learn a mere 10 per cent of their operating budget is covered by government funding.

Once Our House clients have completed their treatment program, they receive ongoing support to become healthy participants in their community. However, Rebecca spoke of the scarcity of follow-up transition housing (e.g., sober-living houses) for men who have completed their one-year program.

We were particularly blessed that the two young men, who are nearing completion of the program, were willing to share some of their own stories of healing and recovery. The courage and commitment of both men to embrace their journey to sober living and provide a positive example for those around them was amazing. We saw resurrection life at work in them.

Inspired by their journey, St. David's is considering how we might continue to encourage and support the work of Our House in the future.

See the Our House website at www.ourhouseedmonton.com for more information.



Our House Program Supervisor Rebecca Bernard invited to St. David's Anglican Church by Renée Desjardins and congregation.

Experience of Spiritual Direction continued

Continued from previous page.

Messenger: What would you say to lay people who may think this is for others, more "holy" than they think themselves to be?

Directee: Many of us think God only belongs in certain parts of our lives, like our church part or our faith part. But the truth is God's big enough to be at work in all parts of our lives. That means that doing the laundry or getting a speeding ticket can be holy, and as much a God moment, as sharing at the Lord's Table in church. Having a space to talk through those moments can reveal God's activity in us than we ever thought possible. Over time it will change you for the better.

Messenger: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Directee: I so wish I had discovered Spiritual Direction before my 40s - so does my family if they are honest.

It's not counselling, yet I am counselled. It's not all talking, yet I am heard. I may sit in silence for an hour and hear more than if we talked the whole time.

It helps me to reorient my life to my True North, my true values. It helps me to process what's going on in my heart or my spirit, or my physical body so I can be of some use to my family and parish.

I always leave hopeful, refreshed and heard.

It's God's grace to me because it's a place where I meet with Him. And being in God's presence always brings life.

Five confirmands presented at Feast of Presentation

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

On the chilly morning of February 3, 2019, Bishop Jane Alexander and the Rev. Susan Oliver, rector, welcomed the Christ Church, Edmonton 10:00 am congregation to the Sacrament of Confirmation on the Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas).

This feast is a “gift,” and a “poke in the side every February,” said Bishop Jane in her homily. “God reminds us that we are personally responsible for being called to newness.” As we think about how this year will be for us spiritually, physically and emotionally, “This feast bursts in,” as if to say, ‘how’s it going one month in?’ and reminds us to “keep at it.”

Gathering the children around her at the front of the church, Bishop Jane held up a package of hot chocolate mix and asked if they enjoyed drinking hot chocolate. Not surprisingly, many answered with an enthusiastic ‘yes!’ “What if I told you this hot chocolate is ‘bacon-flavoured?’” she asked.



Pictured from left: Chelsy Bouwman, Asiah Goetze, Christian and Raine Chinnery, Jan Vrem, Bishop Jane, Reuben Woudstra, Nathan Stephens and Sue Oliver.

Leading the children to a stained glass window, featuring the Presentation of Jesus to the prophet Simeon and Anna, Bishop Jane told them that God is full of surprises. Simeon waited a very long time in expectation of receiving the King, and it must have been a great surprise to see the Messiah in the form of a wee babe.

“The salvation of God didn’t arrive in jewels and riches riding on the back of a magnificent horse and

in procession, but was carried in in the arms of a young woman and seen in the innocence of a baby,” said

Bishop Jane in her homily.

“Imagine the baby Jesus and the old man Simeon, the old lady Anna, and the young Mary all looking at each other and this kind of glorious collapsing of the past, present and future; of tradition and innovation; all a glorious theological explosion,” she said. “Something of that is seen here in church this morning. Confirmation candidates, their parents and sponsors walking freely into their adult faith with all the hope, promise and, yes, accountability that comes with it.”

Members of the congregation rejoiced as Bishop Jane called forth five young people to affirm their baptism through the sacrament of confirmation.



Bishop Jane and the Rev. Sue Oliver teach about our God who is full of surprises.

Loving Celebration of Loving Service



Donna Willer and rector's warden, Les Jaster, prepare to cut the retirement cake.

The congregation at St. Mary's, Ponoka hosted a retirement tea for the Rev. Donna Willer, February 9, in celebration of her many years of faithful service as parish rector.

Donna was ordained a deacon by Bishop Victoria Matthews at All Saints' Cathedral in 2007. Her early ministry years were spent in at St. George's in Devon, and in Vegreville, where she served as interim deacon-in-charge of St. Mary the Virgin. She then served in Westlock, Barrhead and Lac La Nonne as deacon-in-charge and rector following her ordination to the priesthood by Bishop Jane Alexander on March 22, 2009. She has faithfully served as rector of St. Mary's in Ponoka since March, 2014.

Family members and friends braved the cold to come to the “tea party” from as far away as Saskatoon to join her in fun and fellowship. Many stories were shared bringing tears and laughter. As Donna continues to the next stage of life's sacred path we pray God's grace continues to be with her.

Submitted by Deb Stevens, parishioner at St. Mary's, Ponoka, with additional information provided by Messenger staff.

St. Matthias' sister parish improving clean water access



The parish of Buringanire, sister parish of St. Matthias, Edmonton, has started making improvements to the Kavomo water spring in our companion Diocese of Buyé. The community project will filter clean water from the spring and prevent it from being contaminated by livestock. This is the second water spring project supported by the Edmonton diocese.

Photo of the community members as they begin to clear the site provided by the Rev. Dominique Ciza, Diocesan Secretary of Buyé diocese.

EfM brings deeper understanding of relationship with God

DAN MCCOSH

Lay Reader, St. David's, Edmonton

Two fellow lay readers at St. David's encouraged me to sign up for Education for Ministry (EfM). They told me it was not meant to be a prelude to a M Div. or the diaconate. Rather, it would give me a well-rounded understanding of Hebrew and Christian scriptures, church history and theology. Although I had taught Sunday school and been involved in lots of study and discussion groups, I longed for an opportunity to gain a more comprehensive and clearer understanding of my relationship with God. The course did not

disappoint.

It was incredible to read through both the Old Testament and New Testament over two years, a feat I had never been able to complete. The supporting books and discussions created clarity about the context, issues and theology of those texts.

I had little understanding of church history and how the many components of our and other Christian churches developed. It was fascinating to work through "the first three thousand years" of Christianity in Diarmaid MacCulloch's book.

In our final year of the four-year EfM journey we focused on developing a personal conception of God through our understanding of

the culture, our study of scripture and our personal experiences. This was the most life altering year as I worked through my many competing and poorly focussed thoughts. It also helped me to recognise that other religions have sought to define the same God and deal with the same issues in the world around them.

The outcome of it all for me was greater confidence and

capability as a lay reader, and a thirst to continue to expand my knowledge. I am exploring the idea

of completing a master's degree, now that I am more confident that I have a foundational understanding. Others found their ministry in social justice, in evangelism, in hospitality, in helping the needy. What was common for us all was the realization of what our ministry would be — what plans God had for us.

There is more. A key part of the program is the development of skills in theological reflection, a process in which individuals or small groups reflect on personal or collective experience(s) in light of their faith. This has given me the ability to address issues with which I am confronted in the secular world and explore how I might react as a Christian.

Yet more: in EfM people develop a close relationship with the other participants, fellow disciples of Christ, people with whom they can share the journey beyond EfM. They become people from whom you can seek advice and direction when you are confronted with choices; people with whom you can celebrate your missions when your paths cross.

EfM is one of the defining choices in my Christian life. I wish I had done it decades earlier.

EfM is one of the defining choices in my Christian life. I wish I had done it decades earlier. Without reservation, I encourage all who are seeking to know more and to find your mission, to enroll. You will be empowered.

EfM is an adult Christian formation program offering a basic introduction to theological studies. It uses a group-based model, inviting participants to engage with each other in exploring what faith means in the contexts of Christian tradition and daily life. Edmonton has been a sponsoring diocese since 1992, and the first class graduated in 1996. Since then, about 130 people have completed the program, many of whom are still very active in a variety of ministries throughout the diocese and beyond.

Detailed information about EfM is available from EfM Canada at www.efmcanada.ca. For information about registration in the Diocese of Edmonton, contact the Rev. Robin Walker at efm.edmonton@shaw.ca or phone 587-523-4297.



St. David lay reader, Dan McCosh, taking part in recent Politics of Faithfulness event at St. Matthias Anglican Church.

Seniors' referral program takes guesswork out of hiring

The Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA) has joined the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council in an initiative to support seniors in their own homes by providing referrals to services such as snow removal, yard help, housekeeping, home repair and maintenance and moving help (www.seniorshomesupports.com).

The Seniors Home Supports Program is available to all seniors, regardless of income status, and was developed in response to needs identified by GEA, the Federation des Ainés Franco-Albertains, the Greater Edmonton Health Advisory Council, the Alberta Caregivers' Association and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, which established the Home Supports Program.

The Anglican diocese is a member of GEA, a network of faith, labour, and community organizations working together to mobilize citizens' power to act effectively on issues that matter to us all.

SENIORS HOME SUPPORTS PROGRAM

Six Edmonton seniors organizations provide seniors with referrals to businesses, community groups and individuals which offer:

HOME REPAIR & MAINTENANCE
SNOW REMOVAL
YARD HELP
HOUSEKEEPING
MOVING HELP
PERSONAL SERVICES

Referrals are free, but seniors pay for the work that is done.

Find the seniors organization that serves your area of the city:

Call 211

www.SeniorsHomeSupports.com



Questions about the program can be directed to Ken Bracke, GEA past chair, at 780-450-3138; or

Janelle Beblow, communications coordinator at Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, at

janelle@seniorscouncil.net or 780-423-5635, ext. 1.

St. Matthew's hosts community theatre for kids and adults

MERIDITH MCLEOD GAGNON
St. Matthew's Anglican Church
St. Albert

A sermon by St. Matthew's, St. Albert Rector the Ven. Lee Bezanson, encouraging members to seek ways to use their gifts to help build the church community, has led to the formation of a parish music ministry outreach.

Sturgeon Valley Theatricals (SVT) offers performing arts classes for children, in addition to a musical performance group for adults. The budget-friendly children's classes are held during the week and emphasize the process of learning, rather than competition.

"I have a daughter who loves theatre and performing, but hates competition," says founding member Meridith McLeod Gagnon, recalling her own musical theatre experience as a child. "We wanted kids to be welcome to sign up without having to go through an audition," she says.

"Our program focuses on kids working together, exploring and playing. Parents are invited to the last

class to see what the kids have learned," says Meridith, a Royal Conservatory trained vocalist and pianist who teaches drama in the French Immersion Program for St. Albert Schools.

The program provides Thursday evening classes for children 6-8 years old and 9-11 years old, taught by Edmonton-based writer/actor/director/producer Rebecca Merkley. SVT instructors plan to add another age category for 5 and 6-year-old children in the fall.

An adult group also meets on Thursdays over two 8-10 week sessions (January to March, and September to December), and offers a master class with a local vocal coach as part of the program.

The adult group's performance of *Love or Something Like It*, staged in the church hall, sold out. Their performance of *Anywhere but Here* included spoken word parts and featured local story slam



artists and poets. The next three performances are already being planned.

"I think that there is disconnect in our society because of fewer people going to church and fewer community hall gatherings," Meridith says. "We provide a small community feel for the people who come through our door. We are blessed to be a part of this community and blessed that SVT has a home."

By providing an open and accepting space for people to engage in musical theatre, St. Matthew's is reaching out to more people in St. Albert who may be longing for connection.


"We hope SVT will become a long-term part of St. Matthew's Church culture," says Meridith.

To learn more about the theatrical program, or to volunteer for an upcoming show, email musicatstmatts@gmail.com.

Support for neighbours living in state of "in between"



DOROTHY MARSHALL
PWRDF Representative
Diocese of Edmonton


My daughter Leah and I have been living in varying degrees of "limbo" for the past year. We have spent some time house-sitting, we stayed with family

members and we camped out for the summer and fall in a borrowed holiday trailer. Once the snow started to fly and the temperatures plummeted, generous people down the road invited us into their home. Finally, just before Christmas, we started camping in our new home build – we had insulation and a wood stove, so we were warm and anxious to be in; soon it will be done. I hope!

Living out of a suitcase for over a year has been one of those "growth experiences" I was not really expecting. I have learned that building a house takes a long time and is a lot of work. I now have an idea of the many skills required to pull it off; many I wish I didn't have to learn, like drywall mudding. I know that my son, who was the chief builder, has infinite patience with his mother as she learns (and sometimes even masters) a new skill set. And I have a great appreciation for the incredible blessing of help and support from all my kids, as well as other family and friends.

There have been other types of lessons too, such as being patient with the slow progress as all these building steps take time. I am realizing that each day is its own opportunity not to be squandered by worrying. Time and time again I have been reminded of how fortunate I am to be in a position where I have the health and support to be building at all, and to have a place to call home.

One thing that has come as a surprise though, is the impact of living in this limbo. It is like a pause in life, when most of your belongings are packed away and you accumulate a long list of things you will do "once the build is done." I am also mindful of those who are fated to live in their own state of "in between," for a very long duration. The living conditions of the Rohingya refugees are so removed from our reality, their situation is barely conceivable. They are crowded into a camp at Cox's Bazaar on the border of Bangladesh. Sprawling over the hills of that area, all the way to the horizon, is a sea of makeshift huts of corrugated metal and plastic sheeting. A total of 921,000 refugees have fled the violence and ethnic cleansing of their former home in Myanmar (Burma) to this temporary "haven."

The Bangladesh government has been incredibly stretched in dealing with this challenging influx of humanity. The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, as the relief ministry of Anglicans across Canada, has stepped up to help. With our partner church organizations of the ACT Alliance we have been working in the camp on food security initiatives, providing shelter, teaching technical skills, providing seeds for micro gardens and psychological support. We have donated \$95,000 to date, to support initiatives combating gender-based violence, promoting gender equality and to set up learning centres where older Rohingya girls are role models teaching younger girls.

We have also used \$40,000 of our Canadian Foodgrains Bank funds, which was matched by the Canadian Government 4:1 for a food distribution program.

Understandably, the Bangladesh government is anxious to repatriate these refugees, but realistically the resolution could be a long time coming. In the meantime, the refugees are not able to work or use local schools or build permanent



Rohingya man constructs a trellis wall in Cox's Bazaar.

structures.

The Rohingya will need ongoing support for the foreseeable future. Along with our coalition of partner agencies in ACT Alliance, PWRDF will continue to work on your behalf to communicate God's love to our neighbours around the world.

Please remember these displaced people in your prayers. If you would like to learn more about the Rohingya living at Cox's Bazaar, please check out our website at www.pwrdf.org. And, if you would like to be involved in this ministry of relief and development at your parish level, please email diocesan representative Dorothy Marshall at pwrdf@edmonton.anglican.ca.

PWRDF Seeking Board of Directors' Members

To request nomination form, email
the Edmonton Synod Office:
churched@edmonton.anglican.ca

Please send nominations
by 2:00 pm MST on April 30, 2019
to: Mishaël David c/o PWRDF
80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON
M4Y 3G2
or email: mdavid@pwrdf.org

Building compassion - Immanuel, Wetaskiwin ACW hosts day of sharing and learning cont.



Arzoo Sabour (left) immigrated to Canada from Iran in 2002, and Eun-Jin Kim immigrated to Canada from Korea in 2000. Together they have more than 18 years of experience working at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. In 2018, EMCN provided assistance to more than 17,000 people facing the challenges of a new home, language and culture.

Continued from Front Page.

Staff and volunteers often accompany clients on appointments to help interpret language and terminology. In recent years the centre, which is funded primarily by federal and provincial governments, has been gradually expanding its demographic reach through online programs to assist people who are new to rural Alberta communities. According to the 2016 Statistics Canada Census, about 1,310 immigrants, approximately 11 per cent of the city's 12,486 residents, call Wetaskiwin home.

As women walked across Immanuel's frozen churchyard, their eyes were drawn to a single red dress hanging from tree branches above a sea of white snow. Later, in the warmth of the church, they held space in their hearts for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. As the women (including members of Immanuel's reconciliation team wearing their ribbon skirts), reflected on an exhibit of red dress photographs, they shared feelings of grief, heartbreak, loneliness, sadness, coldness, pain, vulnerability and danger.

Four years ago, photographer Mufty Mathewson's eyes focused on a newspaper image of a red dress in a forest with the caption: 'Imagine if 1,181 of your daughters never returned home? Imagine no one cared.' The picture was taken to honour and remember the 1,181



Moved by a newspaper graphic drawing attention to the national crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, Mufty Mathewson started the Red Dress Photography Project when she was 81.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls cited in the RCMP report of 2014. Mathewson, then 81, felt compelled to act.

"So there I was sitting in my jammies in the living room reading the paper and thinking, 'You know what? I do care,'" said the founder of the Red Dress Photography Project, speaking at the ladies' day event with her team member, Jayme Blenkarn. She asked a young Indigenous woman, who was a member of her photography class, to help her take pictures of a dress blowing in the breeze along a railroad track in Stony Plain, and later invited members of her Images Alberta photography group to hang second-hand dresses from the trees along her street. It was not long after that she discovered, and was further inspired by, Métis artist Jaime Black's own REDress Photography Project, now a permanent installation in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg.

Mathewson shares her exhibit, which has grown to include hundreds of red dresses photographed across Canada, at conferences, galleries and churches like Immanuel and All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, which featured the collection during its annual Red Dress Memorial Service in October. There is an open invitation to join the project by taking your own red dress photo, and the installation can be booked for public showings through the project's Facebook page.

Although domestic violence can affect people of any age, income level or ethnicity, women are at highest risk, said Petra Pfeiffer, executive director of Wetaskiwin and District Victim Services. She talked to those gathered for the ladies' day about the signs of and ways to support victims of domestic violence. In 2018, her department, which includes three full-time staff and 12 volunteer advocates, made 2,040 contacts with victims,

Women have the capacity to lead us to a more peaceful world with compassion, affection and kindness. Dalai Lama

including children and senior citizens, in domestic violence cases.

Pfeiffer described the forms and cycles of partner abuse, explaining how isolation is often used to control victims in an abusive relationship.

"I usually know by what they're telling me if I have a victim or abuser in front of me," said Pfeiffer.

There are a few things you can do to help someone in an abusive relationship, said Pfeiffer.

"Finding a safe place to approach your friend or family member with sensitivity and without criticism may give them the courage to talk about their situation and may even give them strength to begin exploring their options. Do not wait for your friend to tell you about the situation," she said. "Bring the subject up yourself and tell them you are concerned about their safety." Family and friends must understand that leaving an abusive relationship is an extremely difficult, often dangerous process. Many fears prevent victims from trying to leave, including injury or death, lack of confidence in being able to provide for themselves and/or their children, diminished social status and the loss of common friends.

"There is also cultural or family pressure to stay in a relationship, regardless," she said.

Anyone experiencing or concerned about domestic abuse can receive 24-hour support by calling the **Family Violence Information Line (310-1818)**, or by visiting www.familyviolence.alberta.ca. Wetaskiwin does not have its own women's shelter. The closest shelters are in Camrose and Maskwacis.

Ladies' day participants were



Pictured from top: Immanuel Wetaskiwin Reconciliation Team members Fiona Brownlee, Bonny Graham and Gloria Rogers wear their ribbon skirts to honour the murdered and missing Indigenous women; Gaie Goin and Sheila Kluczny; community shares fellowship over lunch.



able to view the Red Dress exhibit and discuss the presentations over lunch and fellowship in the church hall. Proceeds from the event will be shared among the EMCN and Wetaskiwin Victim Services.

"I think people want to become more aware about women's issues and the ways we can engage with and support one another," said Gaie Goin, a member of First United Church in Wetaskiwin.

"I've learned so much today – much more than I expected," said local artist Colleen McGinnis, a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

For a century, Immanuel ACW has been reaching out to women in need. In recent years it has supported projects and organizations such as the Neighbourhood Outreach Soup Kitchen and Victim Services in Wetaskiwin; the Hope Mission and Salvation Army in Edmonton; White Ribbon Campaign for the proper treatment of women and the Anglican Foundation across Canada; Women for Women in Afghanistan, and the Buyé Health Centre (maternity ward) and Mother's Union (Dignity Kits) in Burundi.

"Voting is a holy act," Bishop tells Politics of Faithfulness participants continued

Continued from page 2.

In order to be Christian out loud and vote in a faithful way, we must look at the story of who we are as people of faith and as a church, said Dr. Stephen Martin, Associate Professor of Theology, The King's University, whose thoughts on the relationship between the church and the public have been significantly shaped by the eight years he lived in Cape Town, South Africa. In his talk on "The Body of Christ and the Public Good," Martin built on British philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's suggestion that, in order to know what to do, we must know the stories we are a part of.

We are Albertans and Canadians and we are also "a people from every culture, race, every part of the world, somehow gathered together around Jesus," Martin said.

"We tell the story of being part of a people who were once in rebellion against our creator but now, through baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus, are the beginning of God's new world of justice and peace," he said.

"It's a way that sees the transformation of the human story, not in a conquering empire, but in the resurrection of a crucified Messiah put to death by that very empire," said Martin. "The children of Abraham became the body of Christ in truth and are able to discern the will of God."

The justice and peace Paul speaks of in his letter to the



"We are called to be present to the stresses and the issues that affect the quality and the goodness of life in our communities," said Joe Chrastil (left), Ken Bracke and John Gee, representatives of the Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA). "We are called to give voice to the people in our communities who don't have a voice."

Corinthians in Rome (Romans 12 and 13), was not of the power of the emperor Augustus Caesar, but of the power of God to salvation through our saviour, Jesus Christ.

In Christ, the human story reached its crisis point and resolution and we are living in the epilogue, said Martin. "It's not up to us to resolve the story. It's not up to us to save the world. God has already done that at the cross. The crucifixion of Jesus summarized all of human rebellion. It also reached its resolution in the resurrection of Jesus – God rejecting our rejection."

"We have to live as if Jesus is Lord and take that very seriously. We have to live as if the world God promised is already here in our midst: a world where the lame walk, the blind see and the poor have good news. The church in the public exists to model the good, perform the good and to enlarge the good."

When determining our vote, Martin suggested we look to Romans 12 for guidance:

- vote generously recognising that we live in a world longing for the abundance of the Kingdom of God;
- vote hospitably recognising we live in a world longing for the welcoming of the kingdom of God - reach out to the stranger;
- vote deferentially; not in the interest of ourselves, our tribe, our class, or our culture but in the interests of those whom the kingdom of God will bless: the poor, the sick, the desperate, the lonely and people who do not have the ability to vote.

When casting her own vote, the Bishop of Edmonton said she will draw on her faith, conscience and personal manifesto. She said we can each help our elected officials gain a deeper understanding of the hopes, dreams and concerns of the world by writing a personal manifesto, keeping in mind: "what we believe; why we believe it; and why we think it will further the will of God."

And we do not want to count people out before engaging in discussion, Bishop Jane said. "Our political candidates are people

who want, we hope, to serve and promote the common good. It is very important you underline what the common good looks like for you. What around you does not look like God's will coming on earth as in heaven?"

She said we must keep in mind there is no perfect politician, political party or system.

"I have yet to meet a perfect human being," she said. "These imperfections absolutely do not excuse us from taking part."

Martin cautioned voters to "be wary of any candidate, party or ideology that says 'we want to make blank great again' - even if they say we want to make the church or Christianity great again."

"In God's kingdom greatness is not a gospel word," he said. "But goodness is. So let's vote the common good in a way that reflects who we are and what our story is as we wait for the kingdom to come."

Mindful of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion, which challenge us to "seek to transform unjust structures of society," Bishop Jane said we should welcome elections as a forum for debate and an opportunity to talk about what justice will look like in our society.

"The politics of faithfulness assume, above all, that Christian faith is not to be kept in a corner only to be trotted out on Sunday morning, but to be carried with us at all times, wherever we go and wherever we find ourselves," said Martin.



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