



THE MESSENGER

JANUARY 2021

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Packing take-way meals in December 2020 with PrayerWorks volunteers Ellen Stuart, Sharon M. Whitford, Mike Smith, Michelle Lacoursiere, Stephen Smith, and Clinton McArthur.

PrayerWorks Mission & Ministry in 2021: *the path unfolds*

PrayerWorks is a food program operated by St. Faith's Anglican Church. Its ministry of hospitality provides meals and an element of food security to neighbours in the Alberta Avenue area of Edmonton and beyond.

In this article, Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Stewart reflects on the changes and challenges Prayerworks experienced through 2020, and hope for a way forward in this new year.

JENNIFER STEWART

PrayerWorks Meals Program

I have been reflecting on the ministry of Prayerworks; reflecting on how that ministry has unfolded over the past year, and the great uncertainty of this time. On the surface, it seems change has been the constant.

The Ven. Travis Enright, Rector of St. Faith's, has provided vision and led us through many changes in response to the public health emergency that is the COVID-19 pandemic. We've adjusted days and times for our meals, experimented to find the best packaging and ways to assemble meals for take-away, delivered meals, formed new volunteer teams, and built new partnerships.

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"Arise, shine, for your light has come." Isaiah 60:1

Bishop JANE ALEXANDER
Diocese of Edmonton

Here we are in 2021 and it is the beginning of the season of Epiphany; a time of new beginnings in so many ways. The search for newness seems to be a universal human need. It is almost an insatiable thirst or hunger. People are always looking for change, for growth, for improvement. This year we are SO ready for change, and for improvement in the situation throughout the world caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We start this new year in a burst of hope. A vaccine is on the horizon, the opportunity to meet with friends and family and to hug them close is within sight. I am almost exploding with anticipation. I remember once being in the desert. We had ridden out – yes on camels, but that's another story – to see the sun come up. It was freezing cold, and so dark. But, as you can see from my photo, fingers of light started to break above the hillside and then the sun appeared. There was no stopping the spread of that light; light that showed us everything so clearly, every hair



on the camel, every laugh line on people's faces, everything was brought sharply into focus and we could see the day stretching out before us.

Unlike that slow steady sunrise, Epiphany ends the season of Christmas in a burst of light. We know that because of the birth of Jesus Christ, God will not leave us alone, stranded, lost in darkness and misery. Epiphany is the time of year when we say "Aha!" or "I get it!" God's message of love and light to the world is finally understood as

being universal, something for everyone.

God's light blazes out in the darkness drawing people towards it; a light with the strength to transform the world. During this season of Epiphany we celebrate that God's light is a gift for the whole world. The light and the spreading of the light is the mission of the church.

If we step back in time for a moment to just before the birth of Christ, the people of Israel had been exiled from their homeland for many generations. The Israel they returned to was poor and shabby, a pale shadow of its former greatness. The prophet Isaiah called them to take heart. He reminded them that God comes like light in the midst of darkness and transforms it. God, Isaiah assured them, had not abandoned them. Isaiah saw his nation possessing such light that others could not help but be drawn to it. He points them to a time when they can say to one another "arise shine for your light has come." I think that in 2021 we could do with a strong dose of Isaiah.

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New beginnings, new life, for Syrian family in Canada

Messenger Staff

In 2016, the Diocese of Edmonton assisted in the sponsorship of a refugee family from Syria. The Abbas family, Kamal, Nadia and their two children, Mahdi and Helen, arrived in November that year.

Marilyn Scott, spokesperson for the 10-member sponsoring group, sends this update on the family's life in Canada.



Kamal and Nadia Abbas sign the paperwork for their new home. Photo by Paul Chell

A special note in this strange time, to thank you for the support you provided for the Abbas family since they fled Syria and came to Canada.

The family has thrived with the support of our 10-member sponsoring group and the support of the Diocese of Edmonton. They have applied for Canadian citizenship and have bought a small home in Ottewell. When Nadia finished showing us the house, she burst into tears. It was her dream to have a house here. Special thanks to Paul Chell, from our team, for providing guidance through the process.

Kamal is still struggling with English but has passed Level 4 and has worked for the last three years as a seasonal worker with Greenside Up Landscaping Company. During the winter he has been taking English classes. With his many years of welding experience in Syria he has been given permission by Alberta Trades to work at an apprentice level for welding here in Alberta. That is his dream. Unfortunately at this time there are no welding jobs available for him.

Nadia has passed her Level 8 in English. She has been working as a care giver and also has a cashier

job at Safeway. She is planning to take a course in social work next fall. Last fall, she organized a trip to Jasper on her own and the family loved it. Paul Chell had taken them to the Jasper area the year before and they fell in love with the mountains.

The family has a car and Kamal drives the family where they need to go. Nadia is working toward getting her license.

Mahdi, at 15, is now six feet tall. He is fluent in English and doing okay at school but probably doesn't work as hard as he should since he is afraid of being called a "nerd." He has been enjoying his involvement in soccer.

Helen, at 12, is very much a girlie girl. She is interested in almost everything and loves dancing, skating, acting and talking. Her English is excellent and she has many friends.

Unfortunately, at this time of COVID-19 the children are not able to participate in the activities they have come to love.

The family has become quite independent and no longer call us on a daily basis. They consider all of us to be their family. They come by often to deliver delicious Syrian food. We have become very fond of tabouli, kibbe, falafel, stuffed grape leaves and Kamal's amazing lemon chicken.

The family has settled into life in Canada with great enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure to see them grow and live peacefully after coming from a war zone. A huge amount of gratitude goes to all of you who have helped make this possible.

Edmonton diocese is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, empowered by the Canadian government to facilitate refugee sponsorships. We receive requests daily, but the need of families fleeing their homelands (just as Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with Jesus) currently far outweighs the help the diocese is able to give.

PrayerWorks Mission & Ministry: the path unfolds, cont'd.

Continued from front page.

From logistical brainstorming chats to deep conversations with our volunteer teams about the PrayerWorks ministry, we have explored new ways of being.

In late November, I was jogging under a nearly full moon in a clear sky as the sunset lingered and snow reflected the light on a stretch of open pathway. As the path led into the trees, where the stillness and the darkness enveloped me, I felt awe and fear, uncertain. It's not the first time I've felt this. But this time, the beauty and power of the moon and trees held me. I knew in that moment that my uncertainty was far surpassed by what is constant: the form of the moon and the trees; the form of all Creation, infinite in possibilities and in hope through all seasons and times.

PrayerWorks, too, has been to me the very form of God that has pulled us in and led us through this year. Through uncertainty, this ministry has called and the path has opened, filled us with the very presence of God, of joy, of light, of humour, of hope and peace, of welcome... of love.

In the midst of logistical planning and day-to-day work for the meals we serve – food

bank, menu, cooking, serving, and cleaning – there was always the transcendent: in our volunteers who arrived with smiling eyes behind their masks, in the culinary genius of our cook teams, in the dance that was assembling and serving and packaging meals at a physical distance, in the smiles, the stories, and the sorrows of our neighbours who walked through our doors or stood patiently waiting for a meal, in our conversations and in our prayers.

Incredibly generous donors supported PrayerWorks this year. We also received grants from the provincial government emergency pandemic response funds, Food Rescue Canada, and the Edmonton Community Foundation. These donations and grants enabled us to serve through this health emergency, supporting especially the extraordinary costs of take-away meal packaging and the increase in meals distributed from March to June, about 12,000 meals in total. We also extended our year into summer barbecues in August and September.

New volunteers brought their gifts to the ministry while our regular teams and volunteers journeyed with PrayerWorks with

deep commitment and grace. Partnerships with the Creating Hope Society and with Edmonton schools in the Alberta Avenue community enabled us to provide meals to elders and to school children who moved to online learning from March to June.

During the spring and summer PrayerWorks delivered hundreds of meals to the Boyle-McCauley neighbourhood and to Camp Pekiwewin, the volunteer-led camp for homeless people in inner Edmonton that became a community for hundreds in inner-city Edmonton in the summer and fall of 2020.

Archdeacon Enright has spoken in many ways about the mutuality of PrayerWorks. He talks about how, in continuing to serve the most vulnerable, we all come home to PrayerWorks Common and community, where we find safety, warmth, nourishment, and friendship.

As I write this, PrayerWorks is moving again to serve only take-away meals, and we are again uncertain about how many meals we will need and how to connect with our most vulnerable neighbours. As we profoundly experience our fragility and

vulnerability, our hunger and need, God calls us and PrayerWorks responds as the path opens.



Joyce Taylor and Madison Thurgood in the PrayerWorks kitchen, spring 2020; take-away lunch in December 2020 with Edgar at the door and Arthur Woloszyn serving.

2021: a new year - a time to remember who we are



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

Happy New Year! It's very interesting that I am writing this column on Advent 1 (the new year of our liturgical calendar), for January (the new year of our secular calendar).

Though in some sense each year is an arbitrary

division of time with nothing really changing due to the progression, in another sense each year (liturgical and secular) gives us the opportunity to begin anew, refresh our path, and rededicate ourselves to our purpose. Some people do this through New Year's Resolutions.

(I made a resolution many years ago not to have New Year's resolutions. I have managed to keep that one!) Others review their past, assess the present, and strive to re-connect with their bedrock, their driving purpose, their meaning in life. Still others focus on putting one step in front of the other, simply engaging with whatever is in front of them. This has been especially important in the tumultuous year just passed, with jobs in jeopardy, families stressed, and people afraid of becoming sick. 2020 was not fun for many.

Jesus' time on earth was a tumultuous time as well, with disease, death, insecurity, stress, foreign occupation, and torture prevalent around him. Jesus, however, came with a message of life, love, accountability, and caring. He said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; I do not give it

to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or fearful or cowardly." (John 14:27) "Peace be with you," he said. (John 20:19b) In fact, in John 20, Jesus repeats this message three times to his fearful and confused disciples.

The word we translate as "peace" is "shalom" in Hebrew or "Eirene" in Greek, which broadly mean "reconciliation and one-ness with God; peace, reconciliation, justice and one-ness between people; security, health, wholeness, contentedness and well-being, a quiet and loving confidence, an appreciation for one-self." It is the result of loving God with all you are, loving yourself as an image of God, and loving others as you love yourself. The Holy Spirit, which the Father sends to you at the request of the Son, is the Spirit of God's Shalom – the Spirit that will lead you in the way God designed you to be: one with God and with your fellow members of the family of Christ. In Shalom. In Peace.

This does not mean that we are cut off from all that is happening in the world, or that we won't be exposed to sadness, grief, anger, and all the other emotions of life. Our faith is not one of withdrawal or denial. It is the most realistic of faiths. Our faith knows that the world can be a terrible place, *and* that it is redeemed, in Christ. Led by Christ in living our faith, we find ourselves effectively holding up a mirror to the world and singing "there is a better way." Like Christ, we encourage the world to change because the Kingdom of God has come near. Our song is not one of angry retribution, nor of cries for justice and punishment, nor of fear and self-righteousness. Our song one of peace and forgiveness. It is a song that recognizes the fallen world in which we live, and yet where we know that Christ has authority over everything,

and *Christ* will be the judge. Therefore, our task is not to condemn, but to save; not to hate, but to love. We argue, yes, we argue lots! But our arguments come out of seeking the best for the other, seeking the will of God. We need not be distressed or fearful or cowardly, because Christ has overcome all that we feared. Evil need not dictate our lives. And in modeling a life of shalom, life in the family of Christ, we will encounter others who are not living that life. Some will need saving: people who are being preyed upon by others, people who, not through their own desire, find themselves in peril, lost, not knowing the peace of God. Some will need confronting: those who are trying to prey on others or take advantage of others, those trapped in greed and selfishness, not knowing the peace of God. Some will attack us. Some, Christ himself will rebuke. We can pray for them all. We can help those we are able to help.

As a baptised Christian, your inheritance is the peace of God: the shalom of Christ. Christ did not say "I have this feel-good chemical you can try, and it might help you get through things." Christ did say: "Shalom I leave with you. My shalom I give you." Receive it. Re-fill yourself with it. Re-dedicate yourself to Christ and live in his shalom regardless what the world throws at you (even death itself!). You will not be defeated, because you are of the family of Christ and you have his shalom. Be filled with love for the Father, for yourself as an image of the Father, and for all your fellow images-of-God. May his Holy Spirit fill you, now and for eternity, overflowing endlessly. Amen.

Happy New Year.
Peace be with you.
+David

"Arise, shine for your light has come." Is. 60:1 continued

Continued from the front page:

As we begin this new year let us commit to be light in this world. During the last nine months we have been aware, perhaps more than ever before, of those people who have been symbols of God's light to us. People who have prayed with us, people who have made sure we knew we were not alone, people we could count on to give us the word we needed when we needed it most. You can see Christ in the way they live. They are the ones who are living out their call to be Christ-like.

2020 was a very hard year, a year when many of us could not be in the places we felt we needed to be. It was a time when we really needed one another, a time when we relied on one another

to do the right thing. We have made sacrifices, particularly when it came to meeting together for worship and fellowship. We tried to make them cheerfully out of love for our neighbour, but let us be honest with one another, it has been very hard indeed.

Yet, here we are 2021, a new year, a year of promise and the light is breaking upon us. Let us take up the challenge to be bearers of God's light in 2021. Yes we live in difficult times, but whatever the circumstances before us or the uncertainties about us, the aftermath of Christmas and the challenge of the New Year is that God has visited us. The glory of the Lord is risen upon us. Let us face the New Year with a renewed sense of joy and commitment. Joy that God is with us –

that is after all, what Emmanuel means – with us in dark places, with us in our prayers and in our actions. That is the first and most immediate way you and I will be light in the world in the next months. In prayer and action. God has chosen to bring his Light into the world through people like you and I.

This year each one of us will try new things, do things we have never ever done before. We will meet new people, eat new food, find new depths in our love of God and our understanding of his love for us.

May we have the audacity of Isaiah to say to those around us, "Lift up your eyes. There is light in the world."

+Jane

SUBMISSIONS DUE 1 MONTH PRIOR to PRINTING DATE

DEADLINE for FEBRUARY, 2021 is Monday, January 4, 2021

www.edmonton.anglican.ca/blog/the-messenger

Submissions:

We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 300 dpi).

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'This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit.'



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

Hello again!
We continue our series on bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, as described for us in Paul's letter to Galatians:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22-23)

We said last time that it is an essential aspect of our ongoing discipleship to let the Lord transform the cultural values that we inevitably carry with us. To do that we want to see what these words from Galatians mean when Jesus uses them. What does he mean when he uses the word *love*? We know it means more than being *pleasant* or *amiable*. Loving our neighbour as Jesus means it is more than just being *nice*.

In John 15, Jesus talks in depth about love and bearing good fruit:

"I am the vine, you are the branches; those who abide in me and I in them

bear much fruit..."

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love."

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command:

Love each other." (selected verses John 15:5-17)

Here then, Jesus very helpfully illuminates how the fruits of the Spirit are brought forth in us, and what love looks like to him. If we put what Jesus says here with Paul's words in Galatians 5, we see more clearly how we are meant to bear the fruit of the Spirit:

1. The Holy Spirit lives in us as disciples of Jesus.
2. The Holy Spirit produces good fruit in us as we abide in Jesus and the love he has for us; love that is just like the love the Father has for Jesus, the One he sent into the world.
3. Love grows in us and is shown through obedience and utter reliance on Jesus.
4. Jesus' love, the love the

Spirit wants to grow in us, is self-sacrificial.

So, we can see that Jesus is radically different in his view of love compared to that of the highly consumerist and individualised culture that we live in today. You might even call it "tough love." It's certainly not a weak or feeble love. And it's so much more than just being nice.

Next time, we look at what Jesus means with the word *joy*. Until then, let us continue to consider the values that shape our lives and where our culture's view of love impedes our ability to take on Jesus' description of it. And may God bless you in all your endeavours in His name.

Richard

Reaching People for Christ, the Only Road to Growth



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

In the midst of our economic downturn and the pandemic, bishops, dioceses and parishes are seeking to cut expenditures. Many are seeking to cut costs at all costs.

It won't work well, that's for certain. At least in our diocese, our budgets no longer have any padding whatsoever. The diocese and the parishes are all at that proverbial "bare bones

budget" already. Some parishes are not able to pay their employee costs. Even the diocese is taking from investments to pay for clerical salaries. No. There remains next-to-nothing to cut.

So, as unpopular as it will likely be, I suggest we look at membership development and evangelism.

This certainly does not mean going back to our current disciples and asking them to give more money. Our current members are giving what they can of their time, talent and treasure. We cannot demand more of them.

We will have to ask that they minister differently, that they change their focus, direction and intent. We'll have to ask that our current disciples break out of their protective shells to more effectively proclaim Christ crucified and resurrected.

In the past, congregations assumed that the Church would survive because Christian parents kept giving birth to Christian babies. A high birthrate was essential for a thriving congregation. Emphasis was placed on Baptism Preparation, Sunday School, Confirmation classes and Youth Groups. All parents had to do was put more babies into the parish childcare system and the Church would be ok.

That clearly has not worked. It won't work to try to recapture that past—it no longer exists, and it clearly wasn't effective when it did exist. No one dare turn to the "good old days of Canon So-and-So."

What could work is membership development and evangelism. That is, we train our current members to turn outward in obedience to Christ's Great Commission.

We develop their abilities to proclaim Christ crucified and resurrected through their words, thoughts and actions. We shift our attention to the future and design that future in accordance with Christ's mandate to the Church.

That shift will necessarily include training in evangelism, in the effective proclamation of the gospel in ways that others may appropriate. It won't work to ask, "If you were to die today, do you know where you would end up?" It won't work to use guilt or other pressure tactics. To be effective, our proclamation must share our own experience of salvation in language and actions that others may view as a model for their own. So, we demonstrate our own salvation in Christ to others in ways that encourage them to explore their own salvation. That's

evangelism.

The hard part about this is not the need to know our own salvation. The hard part is finding the courage to share with people who may reject our story. Our society is altogether against sharing the Christian faith. The Christian Church is largely viewed as narrow-minded, bigoted, and judgmental. It used to be, decades ago, that belonging to a church was viewed as a good thing. Not any longer. So we need to find the courage to share what our faith means to us.

Cutting costs is not the way to address our mid-pandemic future. Membership development and evangelism are. The good thing about all this is that, in addressing membership development and evangelism, we are being exactly the kind of Church Christ created us to be.

Edmonton diocese joins interfaith partners in public letter

The Rev. Deacon SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

Bishop Jane Alexander is one of more than 25 faith leaders in Alberta who signed an ecumenical-

interfaith COVID-19 statement released December 3, 2020 in response to the public health crisis. These leaders stand in solidarity with a plea to citizens and

governments to: "commit to carrying the burdens of one another, and to leaving no one behind."

"It has already been a long season of uncertainty,

fear, suffering, and loss," the statement reads, "and it is not over yet. We must make an even more intentional effort to preserve social cohesion and concern for the

common good. We are not alone, and we cannot and do not face this trial alone."

To find the document, search 'statement' at edmonton.anglican.ca.

Athabasca diocese succeeds in hosting virtual Synod

Canon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. In 2020 we have had to invent many new ways to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Church has seen many changes enacted, including online recorded or livestreamed services, and meetings moved from direct contact to virtual gatherings. One such gathering was the recent Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca.



The Constitution of the diocese requires that a Synod be held every three years and 2020 was the year that had to happen.

The Diocesan Executive Council did not think it wise to hold an in-person synod, where upwards of 85 people would normally attend. So, it was decided that on Saturday, November 21, the first virtual Synod of the diocese would occur. The gathering would form on the Zoom virtual platform at 10:00 am that day. All needed documentation required was sent to delegates ahead of the meeting, and at the appointed time, Bishop David Greenwood started the proceedings with prayer, before calling the meeting to order. With Ms. Kelinda Roberts appointed as Lay Recording Secretary and Archdeacon Terry Leer as Clerical Recording Secretary, the Credentials Committee then reported that a quorum was achieved,

with 53 of 62 lay delegates and 14 of 15 clergy delegates in attendance on the Zoom platform. The minutes of the previous electoral synod were received, as well as those of the regular synod in 2017, the latter with a couple of corrections. It was when the vote was taken that some technical glitches appeared in the system, causing a delay. This demonstrated the difficulty in holding what is normally a three-day event, with three or four guest speakers, workshops, parish reporting, orders of business, motions, and open discussion in such a truncated manner. Thus, when Bishop Greenwood made the motion on the first order of business that the Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca meet in regular session September 17-19, 2021, the motion was carried.

Time was given in break-out rooms for the Athabasca and Peace deaneries to elect two regional deans, as

well as clergy and lay representatives for Diocesan Executive Council (DEC) and for the next provincial synod in October 2021 (*see Election Results inset*). These elections took longer than anticipated. The Peace Deanery break-out room, which I was in, required some time for the tabulation of votes, especially for DEC as three lay members were to be chosen from four candidates with 20+ people voting. Plus, it took a few minutes for the scrutineer to receive the votes, a small complexity which caused some unexpected delays. However, everything worked out well in the end. We left the members of the Athabasca Deanery to tell jokes and entertain themselves, whilst waiting for us.

The Rev. Blessing Shambare was appointed Regional Dean for Athabasca Deanery, and the Rev. Deacon Danielle McKenzie for the Peace Deanery. We believe this is the first time

that a deacon has been appointed as a regional dean in the Diocese of Athabasca. Congratulations Danielle. We were also reminded that at the next provincial synod we will elect a new Metropolitan. Having personally attended one such election, I am sure it will prove an interesting event for our delegates.

Our virtual synod then continued with financial matters, which made for serious reading. The reality is that we needed to ask the national office to allow us to forego paying our share of the General Synod costs this year. They were very understanding of our plight and agreed to our request, for which we are most grateful. Income is down and parishes need significant

financial support. As with most discussions of finance, there were many comments and suggestions, including a diocesan-wide fundraising and stewardship campaign, as well as a call for us all to give sacrificially and not forget the needs of the wider church.

In closing the three-hour virtual synod, Bishop Greenwood thanked people for their participation and reminded us that “we are not isolated parishes; we are a family” and “we need to support each other as a diocese. Let us not grow tired of praying for one another.”

The first meeting for the new Diocesan Executive Council is Wednesday January 13th at 7:00 pm.

Thanks be to God.

Diocesan Synod Election Results November 21, 2020

Regional Deans

Athabasca Deanery
Rev. Blessing Shambare

Peace Deanery
Rev. Deacon Danielle McKenzie

Diocesan Executive Council

Athabasca Deanery

Clergy:
Rev. Rose Howell

Lay:
Joanna Muzyka
Ross Alexander
Willi Whiston

Peace Deanery

Clergy:
Rev. Leon Cadsap

Lay:
Mike McMann
Gail Shewchuk
Peter Clarke

Provincial Synod 2021 Delegates

Clergy:
Rev. Blessing Shambare
Rev. Fariborz Khandani
Rev. Deacon Karen Kovacs

Lay:
Willi Whiston
Kevin Pederson
Candace Mahaffey

Newly elected members of Diocesan Executive Council and regional deans will hold office until the next diocesan synod, scheduled for September 17-19, 2021.

Athabasca Diocese Virtual Worship Resources and Opportunities

For access to online services, both mid-week and on Sunday, please visit the ***NEW*** diocesan website at www.athdio.ca or one of the following parish websites:



- www.stjamespr.org
- www.christchurchanglicangp.org
- www.sttom.ca
- www.allsaintsanglican.ca
- www.parishnorthernlights.org

Or, search Facebook.com for:

- The Diocese of Athabasca
- St. James Cathedral
- St. Mark's High Prairie
- St. Thomas Fort McMurray
- Christ Church Grande Prairie
- St. Anne's Church Valleyview
- All Saints Church Fort McMurray
- St. Peters Church Slave Lake
- Anglican Church of Athabasca
- St. Helen's Anglican Church
- St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church



Have you downloaded the church app yet?

Check out the Anglican Diocese of Athabasca church app and download for free.
<https://tithely.app.link/anglican-diocese-of-athabasca>

"Only God could plan something so perfectly timed."

MESSENGER STAFF

LCdr the Rev. Robert Parker and the Rev. Rachael Parker arrived in Edmonton diocese in summer 2020, Rob as the Senior Base Chaplain at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Wainwright and Rachael as rector of St. Thomas' Anglican Church in Wainwright and St. Mary's in Edgerton. The Messenger caught up with this couple near the end of 2020 to share their story with the diocese.

Rob and Rachael Parker met in the library at Huron University College in 2003. Rob was a first-year seminary student preparing for service as a military chaplain. Rachael was the rector of two parishes in Stratford and Mitchell, Ontario, and happened to be in the library doing research for a course in crisis counseling. Two years later they were married.

Since then, their married life and ministry have kept them moving: from Sarnia, Ontario to CFB Borden, and later Halifax, Nova Scotia. Before coming to Wainwright, they were living "right on the lake" in Round Lake, Ontario, with Rob posted to 2 Service Battalion at CFB Petawawa and Rachael praying about where her next ministry might be.

"After a year of 'sabbath' time," she says, "I was ready to jump back into parish ministry. I spent a lot of time in prayer, asking for discernment as to what my vocation might look like on Round Lake."

Rob was expected to remain at CFB Petawawa for three years but received his posting to CFB Wainwright just after Easter 2020. Rachael's prayers quickly shifted focus.

"I was asking the Holy Spirit to lead me into whatever future God had been preparing me for. I had emailed Bishop Jane early on a Tuesday morning to offer myself for interim or part-time ministry in

the area, and I just about drove off the road when I got the reply two hours later that there was about to be a full-time position available in Wainwright and Edgerton! This was absolutely Divine intervention! Only God could plan something so perfectly timed."

Rachael began at St. Thomas' and St. Mary's on September 15, 2020 and has been growing into the work since then, albeit with the added challenges of COVID-19.

"I love my new congregations. I have never been so slow in getting to know my parishioners, getting to visit people, etc., but with the pandemic, everything is so very different. However, I am learning how to use technology and taking baby-steps (with Rob's help) into creating an on-line presence. I have been finding the members of the two congregations to be incredibly patient and good-hearted people."

"I have begun referring to our two parishes as the 'WE Parish' (Wainwright-Edgerton), as I truly believe that together WE can journey along our new path through the pandemic and into whatever new ministry opportunities God is planning for us."

Rachael is not new to rural ministry. She says she is "not a city-girl" and isn't even bothered about travelling on the prairie winter roads (when meeting in-person is allowed). "My first post was a two-point parish in what used to be referred to as the snow-belt of southwestern Ontario," she says. "I have a new vehicle with good tires and patient parishioners in Edgerton, in case I am late some Sundays!"

Rob has served with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) for nearly 20 years; six years in the



Pictured above: Robert conducts prayers on HMCS Athabaskan in 2015. Below: Rachael and Robert reunite after eight month tour at sea with Operation Artemis.

Primary Reserve Forces and 14 in the Regular Forces. He served in Ontario at London, Meaford, Borden and Petawawa and in Nova Scotia at Halifax and Shearwater, which included 12 sea deployments and four operational deployments, adding up to 500 days onboard a ship in seven years.

"One of the challenges that we have both had to face," says Rob, "is the amount of time that I have been away from home in the last 15 years. We have been married 180 months and I have been away 65 of those months."

Now, as Senior Chaplain at CFB Wainwright, Rob supervises two other chaplains and is responsible for overall ministry and pastoral care. The chaplaincy team was put to the test soon after his arrival. All Rob's skills, training and faith were needed last October following a tragic incident in which a soldier was killed during a training exercise.

"In any critical situation," he explains, "the chaplain is often brought in as a calming presence. We are there to support the Chain of Command, the soldiers, sailors or air personnel, and families. As a Unit Chaplain, you are often the one who will bring meaning and closure for those who knew and worked with the fallen member. That could be in the form of a memorial service within the unit. We will then be there to deal with any fallout that happens afterwards. Depending on the situation, that could be months of checking in and talking to members of the unit."

Rob says the main difference between military chaplaincy and parish ministry is that a chaplain's 'congregation' consists of all the people in the unit or units under his or her care, regardless of their beliefs or religious practices.

"For example," he says, "when I was at 2 Service Battalion in Petawawa, I had 970 CAF members. 25 of them identified as Norse-



Pagans and I facilitated their religious accommodation requests and the ability to celebrate their main holy days."

"Regardless of my religious affiliation, they knew that I was their chaplain and that I would look out for them and be there for them when they needed support."

Both passionate about their respective ministries, Rob and Rachael admit they find it hard to 'switch off' from work. Even in that, though, they share the load and support each other.

"I have had the opportunity to sail all over the world," Rob says, "from South America and Western Europe to the Middle East and the East Coast of Africa. I couldn't have done any of this without the help and support of Rachael."

And Rachael concurs. "Rob is my best friend before all else. I have had to learn how to do a lot on my own because of his deployments but I have also been able to learn so much more about my own vocation because he has been away so much. He is so very supportive and has always been able to find a way to be present for me, even when he is halfway around the world. I truly believe that our vocations, like our relationship, were interwoven by God."

Edmonton diocese became home to two other military chaplains in 2020. The Messenger hopes to share their stories in future editions.

Prayer Requests for the Parkers

LCdr the Rev. Rob at CFB Wainwright:

The people I serve with have been and continue to be some of the most compassionate, caring people I know. Remember us regularly in your Prayers of the People. Pray for the troops, for those that lead them and those who support them, like chaplains, medical and mental health professionals.



The Rev. Rachael at St. Thomas' Wainwright and St. Mary's Edgerton:

Like the rest of the diocese, we need prayers for discernment and wisdom as to how we might be a real Christ-sharing presence in our communities both in the midst of this pandemic and then in whatever the new normal might be.

PWRDF empowers vulnerable to take Climate Action

Our parish has had on-going ladies Bible studies for several years now, and we recently completed our first one on-line on Zoom. As you can imagine, this was quite a stretch for many of us, and the first few sessions were quite hilarious as people struggled with the challenges of the technology; how to get the phone camera set up so you appeared ‘right way up,’ how to manage the mute button, and how to make the audio work when your computer wasn’t cooperating.

It was a great study though. We did the 40 day “Social Justice Bible Challenge” produced by Forward Movement. At our final meeting we reflected on what we had learned and its impact on our lives. People were amazed at how often the message of social justice was mentioned in the Bible; how important the work of caring for others was in God’s messages to his people throughout the Old Testament and through Jesus’ teachings.

The final passage we studied was 1 John 4: 1-21, and verse 21 basically says it all: “those who love God must love their brothers



DOROTHY MARSHALL
PWRDF Representative
Diocese of Edmonton



and sisters also.” One way we show love is our behavior towards others. If our actions negatively impact others, they cannot be called ‘loving.’

Climate change is a reality affecting every country. Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, and weather events are becoming more extreme. It is a well-documented fact that poor communities and countries around the world are suffering the most from the impact of climate change. The people most affected are the same brothers and sisters that God calls us to love. How can we show that love? We can reduce our own impact on climate change by the

decisions we make. We can also support initiatives that enable people to reduce the negative impact the changing climate has on their lives.

On behalf of Anglicans across Canada, PWRDF is working with partners around the world to enable them to initiate projects that support climate action. Some examples of these exciting projects are:

- Planting 80,000 trees in rural Uganda on farms and school properties, to restore soil health by fixing nitrogen levels and preventing soil erosion. These trees also provide nutritious fruits and income opportunities for families.
- Providing chickens to rural women in Colombia as well as knowledge of organic farming methods to improve nutrition,

- food security, and income.
- Supplying electric water pumps to Cuban farmers to irrigate crops and increase food security.
- Providing seeds and agricultural education to farmers in Zimbabwe, improving food security and resilience to climate change.
- Constructing water wells and pumps in rural Kenya to provide clean water, which improves health and reduces travel time to fetch water, which keeps more girls in school.

More information on these and many other worthwhile projects is available on our website at www.pwrdf.org. You can show your love for your neighbor by giving the gift of Climate Action; make changes in how you live to reduce the production of greenhouse gasses. You can also enable these kinds of projects to continue through your financial support of PWRDF. You can make your donation through your church envelope or safely online on our website.

Dorothy Marshall, Diocese of Edmonton PWRDF Representative at pwrdf@edmonton.anglican.ca.

(I do recommend that Social Justice Bible Study. If you are interested, it can be ordered online at <https://www.forwardmovement.org/Products/2464/the-social-justice-bible-challenge.aspx>)



Digging wells in Kenya helps keep young girls in school.

Friendly, Frosty Fellowship at St. John’s, Edmonton



Parishioners of St. John the Evangelist Edmonton gathered on November 28, 2020 to celebrate the liturgical New Year’s Eve. Family groups came and went through the late afternoon and evening, picking up Advent bags prepared by children and family ministers Hanna Keim and Melissa Chaffee. No more than 10 people gathered at one time, following government and diocesan guidelines.

Through the early months of winter, an outdoor gas fire pit took “the edge off” events such as coffee mornings (everyone brought their own coffee) and prayer times. These were held in all weather up until outdoor gatherings were banned entirely in early December. Rector of St. John’s, the Ven. Richard King says, “They provided a means of simple social interaction which enables us to maintain connection, catch up and encourage each other, all of which is so important in these challenging days. We’ll start up again as soon as it is safe to do so.”

Baptism at St. John the Evangelist, Cold Lake

Sunday November 15, the Rev. Donna Gauthier, Rector of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Cold Lake, had the pleasure to baptise baby Olivia Stangby with proud parents and siblings gathered for the occasion. The service was conducted with all required safety precautions. Gauthier has officiated at two baptisms and two baby blessings during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Hope Bears are reading AFC books. You can order books through the AFC Store.

anglicanfoundation.org/store

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Picture perfect: peace in a pandemic, part two

MESSENGER STAFF

The Messenger is pleased to present the second in a two-part series featuring the photography of Janice Hurlburt.

Hurlburt attends the Anglican Parish of Christ Church in Edmonton. She is an amateur photographer with a love of nature and a passion for birding.

These photos represent a few reflections of her time spent in nature through 2020.



When I saw this pair of Forster's Terns at the Heritage Wetlands Park in Sherwood Park in June I thought it was a parent flying in to feed a young one, but they are both adults. A beautiful bonding moment. Having hovered to feed the bird on the ground, it then landed right beside it. The hovering must have been to impress its mate.



Visiting a friend's garden at Wabamun and watching the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds flit, hover and zip amongst the abundant, colourful flowers carefully tended for their benefit.

“For me
the door to the woods
is the door to the temple.”

Mary Oliver, *Upstream*



Evening Grosbeaks always add a splash of colour, especially in the winter. This pair (male above, female below) posed nicely for me as they came into my friend's yard to feed on the sunflower seeds at her feeder.



Watching a pair of Great Horned Owlets in the river valley; comical and curious and adorable. Sharing this experience with my grandkids and seeing it through their eyes made it all the more fun.