



*So if you have been raised with Christ,  
seek the things that are above,  
where Christ is,  
seated at the right hand of God.*

Col 3:1



To reach the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (above), the site of the death and resurrection of Jesus, pilgrims like Robyn King, rector of All Saints', Drayton Valley and St. Paul's, Leduc, enter the Old City of Jerusalem through the Damascus Gate (top) on a Roman road dating from the 2nd century. King shares about her pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the May issue of *The Messenger*.

Photos: Robyn King

## Building anti-racist communities focus of 2023 Clergy Conference

The Rev. Deacon SHELLY KING  
Messenger Staff

From February 7 to 9, nearly 50 members of the clergy from the Diocese of Edmonton gathered for a clergy conference, which had been held annually prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the last such gathering of clergy happened more than three years ago, in January 2020.

The opportunity to reconnect at Providence Renewal Centre in Edmonton was much appreciated, and the conference theme was timely and engaging. The diocese brought in facilitators Ashima Sumaru-Jurf and Roxanne Felix-Mah, managing partners of Equity in Action, to lead training based on the conference theme: Respecting the Dignity of Every Human Being: Equipping Clergy to Help Build Anti-Racist Communities.

"The phrase, respecting the dignity of every human being, comes from our baptismal covenant," says Bishop Stephen London. "The idea of the conference was to help our diocese live more fully into our baptismal promises through the work of anti-racism."

"One of our goals in this diocese," says Bishop London, "is to become more and more what Martin Luther King Jr. called the Beloved Community. We know that much of the growth of our diocese is coming from BIPOC persons (Black, Indigenous and Persons of Colour) who come from diverse cultures and backgrounds. We want to make sure they find a home in our churches where they can flourish. One of the key learnings that I took from the conference is the idea that inclusion

*... inclusion and equity are intentional work that we need to do ...*

and equity are the intentional work that we need to do for this to happen. It doesn't happen on its own."

Sumaru-Jurf and Felix-Mah have more than 15 years of experience in facilitating and leading diversity and inclusion (D&I), equity, and anti-racism initiatives in corporate, government and non-profit sectors.

They began the training by establishing a common understanding of terms such as diversity, culture, equity, inclusion and racism. Discussion about the cause and impacts of racism sometimes gets hung up because of misunderstanding around these terms. So, the following definitions were offered and discussed at length:

- **Diversity** is often thought of in terms of visible diversity but, in fact, includes the entire range of human difference, including education, family makeup, income, etc. Diversity simply describes a state of being. For example, one might say, "this parish is diverse" when considering the wide range of human difference that exists within it.
- **Inclusion** involves creating an environment where differences are valued and respected so that every person can participate in a meaningful and authentic way.

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# Stepping. Outside. the. Shadow. of domestic violence

MARGARET GLIDDEN  
Edmonton Editor

If you suspect someone you know is in a violent relationship, asking if they are okay and if they feel safe at home can help save their life.

At the "Stepping. Outside. The. Shadow." workshop organised by the Immanuel ACW in Wetaskiwin on February 11, church and community members from Wetaskiwin, Maskwacis, Camrose, Ponoka, Edmonton and surrounding areas heard about the responsibility we all have to end domestic violence and support survivors and their families.

Because victims of domestic violence are often isolated from their friends and family support network (the COVID pandemic exacerbated this isolation), their workplace peers and/or church community are often their only lines to safety.

Fiona Brownlee, a member of the Immanuel ACW planning committee, said when her close family member was trapped in an abusive relationship, her managers at

work noticed she was receiving an unusual number of phone calls and texts from her spouse. They gently asked her if she needed counselling and she accepted. With support, she was eventually able to step out of the shadow of abuse.

Presenting at the workshop virtually via Zoom from her home in B.C., Helga Edwards, co-author of *Addressing Domestic Violence in the Church*, said church members can support someone who has suffered domestic violence by acknowledging their pain and grief. People often feel alone and forgotten, so it is helpful for them to know our faith offers hope, she said. "A victim's faith and the support of their church community can be vital to their



Pictured at left: Gloria Rogers, member of the Immanuel Reconciliation Team and ACW, shares a Moss Bag teaching during the Stepping. Outside. The. Shadow. Domestic Violence – Taking Action workshop on February 11.



healing process." With her husband Bob Edwards, Helga empowers victims through the Awake Deborah ministry ([awakedeborah.com](http://awakedeborah.com)). Jill Shillabeer, Leading Change call to action coordinator for the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) and Joe Campbell, Leading Change community developer, gave an engaging presentation on domestic violence in Alberta. Domestic violence and abuse happen to people of all genders,

however, those who identify as women, girls and gender minorities are at an increased risk of experiencing gender-based violence, more severe forms of gender-based violence and longer-lasting psychological and socioeconomic impacts of violence, they said. From April 2021 to March 2022, 98.5 per cent of the individuals sheltered by the ACWS identified as women. (ACWS 2022 Data Release)

Continued on page 5.

## Building anti-racist communities focus of 2023 Clergy Conference continued

Continued from Front Page.

- **Equity** is not the same as equality. It assumes that in for all to participate in a meaningful and authentic way, some people will need different supports than others. It requires the intentional dismantling of barriers that some members face.
- **Culture** is not only about the food, dress and customs inherited from our various places of origin. Every group of people, including a parish, develops its own culture. As American sociologist Milton Bennett sums it up, culture is simply "the way we do things around here."
- **Discrimination** is not so much about the biases, stereotypes or prejudices we may hold as individuals, but rather an action or decision that treats a person or group of people badly in some way based on characteristics including, but not limited to: race, age, disability, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, etc.
- The training focused on **racism** as systemic, rather than individual discrimination. In the material provided, racism is described as "a system in which power, privilege and prejudice

based on race work together to produce unearned privileges for some and marginalisation / disadvantage for others." Clergy were invited to look briefly into Canada's history, tracking key moments when racism has occurred and when it has been challenged; then noting specific government policies that either enshrined or began to dismantle racism in our society. The group was introduced to the Ladder of Discrimination. This is an anti-racism tool designed to help us understand how beliefs and attitudes become the foundation of behaviors and actions. Discrimination starts with biases, which are simple associations that all people make. But we can project bias onto a whole group of people, which creates a stereotype. Stereotypes then lead to prejudice, which involves prejudging people based on a stereotype. When we act upon this prejudice through differential treatment, we are discriminating. This discrimination can then be institutionalised through policies and procedures, leading to systemic discrimination. However, every step in the Ladder of Discrimination can be interrupted. Anti-racism initiatives in local communities aim to interrupt these steps. By working through a selection of case studies based

on real life situations, participants were invited to think through how they might begin to dismantle the Ladder of Discrimination. The case studies touched on issues, such as what to do when someone verbalises stereotypes and prejudices that are hurtful to others; how to encourage-inclusion by incorporating expressions of worship beloved by some but new to others; how to address unconscious bias. Unsurprisingly, there were no "one-size-fits-all" answers to these situations, but wisdom emerged through hearing one another's perspectives. The practical nature of the case studies led to deep and honest reflections from clergy who are often pulled in multiple directions as they navigate these very real issues. The facilitators observed "a commitment to authentic and honest dialogue about these issues, which is the starting point for meaningful anti-racist actions."



At the 2023 Clergy Conference in February, facilitators Ashima Sumaru-Jurf (speaking) and Roxanne Felix-Mah (seated at front), managing partners of Equity in Action, equip clergy of the Edmonton diocese to help build anti-racist communities.

Sumaru-Jurf and Feliz-Mah describe their organization as being "committed to ensuring a practical and relevant impact for the organizations and communities they work with." Yet, with all their expertise, they pointed out it is clergy and parishioners who best understand how these things play out in the context of parish life and ministry. The facilitators commented more than once that values stemming from the Gospel are "beautiful" and well-suited to combat racism. Before leaving, participants were encouraged to identify the first steps they might take toward addressing racism. The workshop wrapped up with a sense that there is much to be done and still more to be learned.

# What does Easter mean? The transformation of everything.

Easter. Easter is a lightning bolt transforming the history of all humanity; changing its course from that point and forever more.

Without Easter, Good Friday is no longer good, but rather a sad tale of yet another victim crucified to reinforce the earthly display of power by Rome.

Without Easter, Christmas is no longer “Christ’s Mass,” but rather just a mid-winter get-together to encourage each other that the days will get warmer and brighter.

Without Easter, there would be no Christianity. Jesus’ disciples, demoralized and despondent, would have returned to their previous lives, convinced that the revolution they had believed in and thought they were part of, never happened.

Without Easter, people would not have spread around the world, teaching a way of living that centered on love; the love of God for them, and their love for each other and others in response to God’s love.

Without Easter, people would continue to believe that might does make right, that to the victor go the spoils, and selfishness is a virtue.



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

But Easter did happen. Jesus rose. Resurrected, His body fit to live not only on earth but in the heavens; a forerunner of the *new creation* which God has promised for us. Jesus’ death and life, counterpoint to the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, show us there is a better way than selfishness, than striking against another, than living in evil and depravity, than trying to create our own salvation and the way to it.

The story of Jesus’ resurrection makes no sense to one who believes only in what can be scientifically proven, and it made no sense to the Greeks and Jews of Jesus’ day, either. Jesus’ students did not believe it at first, not until they personally encountered Him. The claim attached to His resurrection makes even less sense: that by His death my sins die? And in His resurrection, I am healed? That you can be healed if you believe it, too? That His death was not an imposed sentence on a lunatic, but a voluntary sacrifice by a Saviour? That through Him, I can be one with the Creator of everything?

Where’s the logic in that? Where’s the cause-

and-effect? Where’s the understanding? There is no human understanding -- only Godly understanding. As Paul wrote, “God was pleased to save those who believe by the foolishness of our message. For Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks ask for wisdom, but we preach about a crucified Christ, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

You are called. Christ is the power and wisdom of God. Christ rose and He lives with you now. Christ called Christians over the ages (people from St. Paul to Mother Theresa, from John Chrysostom to Desmond Tutu, to you) to build hospitals, orphanages and schools, to abolish slavery, care for the destitute and impoverished, gently and kindly walk with Him. Jesus’ revolution is still ongoing, and He calls you to be part of it. You are forgiven, you are released, you are empowered, you are called -- such it is to be a student of Christ. Be meek (gentle and kind), be righteous, be merciful, be pure in heart, be a peacemaker. Follow Him, and truly encounter Easter, in all its glory, and be transformed by the lightning bolt which changed the world.

Blessings,  
+David

## Finding Our Way to Transformative Discipleship

This is an exciting time to be a Christian! There are lots of challenges to be sure, but today we have so many opportunities to live out the Gospel in a robust way.

For instance, we have access to resources that our forebears in the faith never dreamed of. In the time of Martin Luther, it was a great luxury to have just one bible. In modern day China, I have heard stories of Christians traveling great distances just to hear one learned person talk about Christian faith. Now, we carry in our pockets a device that gives us access to thousands upon thousands of books, hundreds upon hundreds of talks and lectures, dozens upon dozens of devotional apps and ways of praying and living better. With all these resources, it should be a golden age of Christian faith. Yet, it is not. Why is that? The answer to that question is an important and complex story that I won’t tell here. But the one thread I do want to



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON  
Diocese of Edmonton

draw out for this reflection is there is more to the Christian life than these resources. Indeed, I would also include our buildings, our traditions, our coffee hours and even our beautiful worship services. None of these, of course, make the Christian life. Indeed, they are ultimately only resources to help us grow in our Christian life. All of them serve this end: Transformative Discipleship.

At the end of the day, we have to take discipleship seriously. This is what Jesus calls us to *be/do/become*. Discipleship is a whole way of life. Discipleship is not an extra add on to life like a hobby or a pastime. Discipleship is more like your whole philosophy of life. It is your worldview, your ethics, your values, your *why*. It is who you are; it is your core identity. But it is even more than a philosophy of life. It is a missional call to serve the world in the name of Christ and to

tell the good news about the Kingdom of God. But ever more than that, it is a living relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ. It is knowing yourself as a beloved child of God in loving relationship with the Creator.

The word “Disciple” in its most basic meaning is to be a student, but a student in the old sense of the word. Someone who follows the teacher. As we all know, we can only learn so much through books. We have to actually live the life. For instance, I learned some things about being a father by reading. But the real learning comes from *being* a father. It is the same with the Christian life. It is a good and meaningful way to live. But we have to *live* it out every day of our life. And at the end of the day, it is not good resources that will renew our church. What will renew our church is having churches full of people who take their discipleship seriously and make it the center of our lives.

Blessings,  
+Steve

**We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 1 MB, 200 dpi).**

Submissions are due one month prior to the issue for which they are intended, for example: APRIL 1 for MAY 2023.

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The publishers and editorial staff of The Messenger value honest, transparent and respectful communication. We seek to provide encouragement and inspiration to all who are building loving, inclusive, Christ-centered communities. We respect the dignity of every human being and endeavour to lift the voices of people who are marginalised. We are committed to the quality of our content. We reserve the right to edit all contributed material. We correct any factual errors in a transparent manner. To report an error, please email [churched@edmonton.anglican.ca](mailto:churched@edmonton.anglican.ca)

# St. James' Cathedral Works Out its WHY

Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

Bishop David and Benita Greenwood had the privilege of facilitating the cathedral parish of St. James in discovering that their WHY is "To be Christ-like so that everyone becomes Christ's family." They plan to do this by:

- Inviting
- Welcoming
- Accepting
- Visiting
- Teaching
- Relating
- Worshiping
- Music
- Meeting needs, personally and communally
- Leadership
- Carrying each other in Christ
- Intentional relationships

- Giving thanks
- Prayer with action

The Bishop and Benita then had the privilege of worshipping with the people of St. James' on February 5, at which time Dean Jason Haggstrom was presented with a picture of the Northern Lights over the town of Peace River. The picture was a farewell gift to Jason and Nova from the diocese. Following the service, people enjoyed fellowship during a potluck meal. Please join in prayer for the people of St. James' Cathedral as they pursue their WHY in conjunction with the search for a new rector. Please also pray for Dean Jason and Nova as they begin their new adventure in Christ, being called to the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador.



Pictured from left, back row: Sherri Lizotte, Dave Cambridge, Rose Gish, Cheryl Anderson, Bill Gish, Wanda Laurin, Elaine Leer, Barry Craigen; front row: Bishop David, Benita Greenwood, Cheryl Anderson, Sharon Krushel, Theresa Cambridge, Sarah Craigen.

## New Beginnings at St. Helen's

ELLEN LUPICK  
St. Helen's, Fairview

Levi and Zaya Rudyk were baptised at St. Helen's, Fairview on Sunday, January 8, 2023 by retired minister, the Rev. Wayne Putnam from Beaverlodge.

Two weeks later, we welcomed our new part-time minister the Rev. Lloyd Nyarota who will spend two Sundays a month at Manning, one at Berwyn/Grimshaw and one here in Fairview. We pray that God will guide us in this new venture.



Pictured above, from left, family and godparents at baptism: T.J. and Piter Hogstra, Wayne Putnam, Amanda, Zaya, Levi and Dave Rudyk, Colby and Cody Klassen; below, from left, front row: Inez Austin, Doreen Verschoor; back row: Irwin and Genevieve Konratt, Alice Schwartz, Shirley Lof, Lloyd Nyarota, Jim McGregor and Ellen Lupick.



# WHY Plans Developed for Perryvale, Colinton

On February 25, 2023, Bishop David and Benita Greenwood had the pleasure of engaging with St. Thomas' Anglican Church in Perryvale and St. Andrew's Zion in Colinton, both in the Parish of Northern Lights, as they discovered their WHYs.

St. Thomas' WHY is "to welcome all so that each one is loved" and they plan to do this by:

- Sharing God's Word
- Inviting
- Accepting
- Not pressuring
- Sharing God's joy
- One-on-one relationship building
- Visiting

The WHY for St. Andrew's Zion is "to welcome so that all belong to the family of Christ" and they plan to do this by:

- Intentionally reaching out
- Speaking the truth in love
- Discussion and prayer
- Exploring differences in honesty
- Grace
- Meeting needs
- Caring in love
- Sharing God's love generously, with actions and words
- Praying for each other
- Praying for the world
- Forgiving
- Creating a safe place

It was interesting to see how the experiences of people came into play for their locality, as each congregation developed a different WHY and they are only about 15 kms apart. Please pray for these two congregations that, indeed, they may fully live out their welcoming WHYs, and be greatly blessed by our Lord.



Pictured from left, back row: Richard Loken, Margaret Newton, Judy Flax, Joanna Muzyka, George Howell, Rose Howell, Orest Muzyka, Henrik Asfeldt; middle row: Deana Lemke, Wendy Lawrence; front row: Benita Greenwood, Jan Overacker, Sheila Neilson, Joyce Wilson, Bishop David.

## Winter Journey to Fort Chip.

On February 18, Bishop David and Benita Greenwood along with Fr. Leon Cadsap from All Saints' parish, Fort McMurray, drove up the winter road to Fort Chipewyan in a record three-and-a-half hours, as the road was in excellent shape.

We visited with the Rev. Canon Marjorie Glanfield, before joining her at St. Paul the Apostle parish the next day for the baptism of two of

her grandchildren. The temperature was in the minus-30s, so the propane furnace had to be thawed out on Saturday in order for us to have heat on Sunday (the wood stove was cracked and did not function).

Please join in prayer for the parish of St. Paul the Apostle, and for the community at large. May the newly baptised, and all our relatives in Christ in Fort Chip. be blessed as they walk with Him.



Pictured from left: Leon Cadsap, Benita Greenwood and Bishop David Greenwood stop for a photo on the winter road to Fort Chipewyan in February.

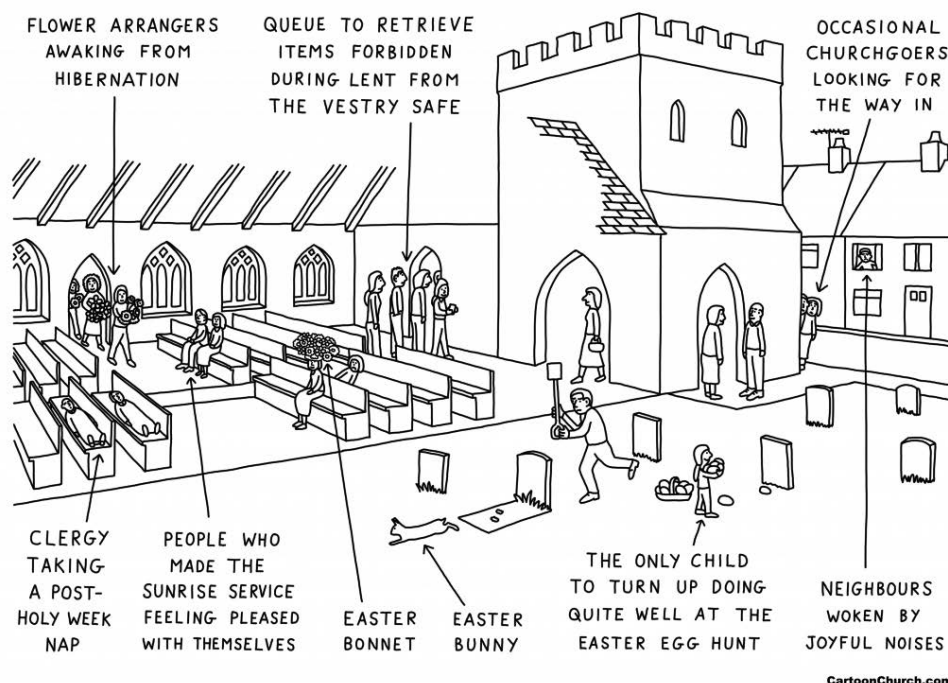
## Diocesan Easter Vigil Service

April 8, 8 pm

All Saints' Anglican Cathedral

10035 103 Street NW  
Edmonton

### THE EASTER SERVICE



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## WAIT

Diocese of Athabasca

## Women's Conference

April 28 to 30

St. Andrew's  
Zion, Colinton

For more info and to register, email:  
northernlightsath@gmail.com



## 58th Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca

Thursday, September 28, 2023

All Saints', Athabasca Parish

## Stepping. Outside. the. Shadow. of domestic violence continued

Continued from page 2.

Located in Edmonton on Treaty Six land, the ACWS office represents a network of 50 women's shelters on Treaty 4, 6, 7, and 8 lands and the six Métis regions across the province. During the past year, these shelters received more than 65,000 calls.

Two shelters, in Edmonton and Calgary, are dedicated to serving seniors. Older adults are particularly vulnerable as they can experience intimate partner abuse, but also abuse from adult children, grandchildren, or other family members, and an increasing number are experiencing abuse and harm from roommates. Other vulnerable populations include Indigenous women, newcomers to Canada facing language and socio-economic barriers and people who identify as LGBTQ2S+. (ACWS 2022 Data Release)

Gloria Rogers, a member of Immanuel's parish reconciliation team and ACW, shared a Moss Bag Teaching, explaining that traditionally a moss bag representing

a mother's womb was gifted to a Cree mother, enabling her to take her baby everywhere she went. Rogers held a Moss Bag she made for her daughter to show the traditional practice of sewing an eyelet for each of the Seven Teachings of Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility and Truth, gifts of the Eagle, Buffalo, Bear, Sabe (Sasquatch), Beaver, and Wolf.

Nora-Lee Rear, executive director of the Camrose Women's Shelter, which serves an area of central and eastern Alberta extending to the Saskatchewan border, invited questions from workshop participants. She was joined by Shillabeer and Campbell for a panel discussion.

This was the second workshop on domestic violence offered by the Immanuel ACW, which has been active in the Wetaskiwin community for more than 100 years. The Stepping. Outside. The. Shadow. workshop was financially supported by the Wetaskiwin Family



Above center, Nora-Lee Rear, executive director of the Camrose Women's Shelter, which serves an area of central and eastern Alberta extending to the Saskatchewan border, invites questions from workshop participants. She led a panel discussion with workshop facilitators Jill Shillabeer, right, and Joe Campbell of the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters.

and Community Support Services (FCSS). Proceeds from ticket sales for the event were donated to women's shelters in Camrose and Ermineskin.

Through its Leading Change prevention program, ACWS offers tailored gender-based violence prevention training to workplaces, schools, and communities. To learn

more, visit <https://acws.ca/>

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you can call the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters toll-free at 1-866-331-3933 to speak to someone at a shelter near you. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. The Camrose Women's Shelter also has a 24/7 support line: 1-877-672-1010.

# The peace of Christ *more* than a comforting feeling

We continue our reflections in the book of Colossians, picking up directly from last time. We saw what it means to *put on* the “new self” as described in Colossians 3. There is more to draw out from this passage.

Let’s remind ourselves of what Colossians 3:12 says:

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience...”

I left you with a question last time: “Does this truly describe us?”

The next verses are illuminating, too, for they give more description and meaning to the words in verse 12:

“Bearing with one another



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

and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”

The word for meekness in the original language hints at a willingness to make concessions; the patience described has a sense of long-temperedness and endurance in the face of exasperating

or even wrong conduct.

That’s interesting, for it makes the meaning of verse 13 even more clear. Even if confronted with wrong and exasperating behaviour, we forgive and get on with it.

In using the words, “bearing with one another,” Paul is using a Greek word, *anexomy*. We translate this word as “bear with,” which means to endure

patiently, to be with, to suffer, to tolerate supportably. These are the hallmarks of a church family’s relationships.

Paul is not assuming that no one will ever do anything wrong; that no one will exasperate us, but that as a family we can know how to deal with it. Faults and complaints are dealt with by mutual forbearance and forgiveness.

And, of course, love! We move on to verse 14:

“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

The phrase “above all these” has some scholars wondering if Paul is continuing the metaphor of *putting on*; whether he has in mind a sort of outer garment that would be worn on top of the other garments of the “new self.”

Love is the glue; the love that binds us all together: the love of the Godhead, the fullness of which dwells in Jesus. And remember, as

Colossians 2:10 told us, we have been given that same fullness in Christ.

In verse 15, peace is added to all this. But what does he mean by that word?

“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

This is not an individual sense of feeling peace, but is the peace of Christ between people; the peace between people that Christ alone can bring.

When there is conflict, the *umpire* is the peace of Christ. The word “rule” in this case has the sense of one who arbitrates, for as one scholar put it: “The harmony of the Church is God’s will for his people.” Again, the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts is not meant for us individually, it is peace between people.

May God bless you in all your endeavours in His name.

Richard

## Bishop, Archdeacon Visit St. Paul's, Seeking to Encourage

Bishop Stephen London met with St. Paul’s Anglican Church in Leduc, on Saturday, February 25. He told parishioners he had come “to encourage you in the work that you do for our Lord, and to say, thank you!”

The Bishop spoke about the value of being a parish; a missional community that shares the radical love of Jesus Christ.

The Ven. Richard King, Archdeacon for Mission and Discipleship, preached the following morning at the Sunday service. The parish and St. Paul’s rector, the Rev. Robyn King, will consider what follow-up might be valuable.



## Ecumenical partners build on foundation of friendship

Synod Office staff of the Diocese of Edmonton welcomed Lutheran staff of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories for an informal time of worship and fellowship on February 14, 2023. The group shared Holy Communion in the First Peoples Chapel upstairs in All Saints’ Cathedral, followed by refreshments and a time of reflection and getting to know one another better, in the Synod Office board room. This was the second get-together of the church bishops and administrators who also met last May at Trinity Lutheran Church. On his Facebook page, Bishop Stephen London said he is even more convinced of the importance and value of ecumenical and full communion relationships. “Thank you, Bishop Larry Kochendorfer and the staff of your office for your friendship,” he said.



# Writer chronicles faith journey in *Searching for Sunday*

Published in 2015 by Christian thinker Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday* is shaped by the Sacraments of the Catholic church.

In the book’s foreword, author Glennon Doyle Melton writes: “Whenever I want to scare myself, I consider what would happen to the world if Rachel Held Evans stopped writing.”

When I read this book, in March of 2020, I already knew that Rachel, the mother of two young children, had recently died at age 37. By the end of the book, I agreed with Glennon Doyle. Through her writing, Held Evans continues to provide thought-provoking commentary on matters of Christendom in North America.

A friend had mentioned this author to me at the time of Rachel's death. Then, during a retreat led by Ronald Rolheiser, he quoted this book which the Spiritual Book Club at Providence Renewal Centre also chose to read in March of 2020.

Rachel Held Evans struggled with her faith. The churches she was raised in and was part of in the Southern United States were conservative and evangelical. She and her husband drifted from the church.

During her journey and disenchantment with church, she

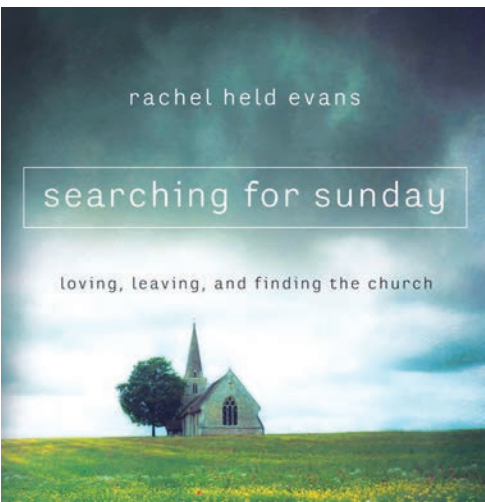


MARION BULMER  
St. Thomas', Sherwood Park

grew to know that one cannot function as a Christian alone, one does need a Christian community. I think this is the experience of many of us. When we are alone, there is no one to challenge, to encourage, to redirect us.

Yet, the community, the Church, often fails. Rachel quotes Wilhelm Dilthey who writes: “Jesus came announcing the Kingdom of God, but what happened was the church.” (p. 253) This church had all the problems that most communities have: prejudice, pride and injustice. The churches of Rachel’s youth did good things: they supported those facing challenges and grief, they taught the gospel. She benefited from strong and healthy youth groups.

The author was very well read in terms of Christianity and had a broad sense of the general culture. Her independent thoughts and opinions led her to be estranged from



the churches of her upbringing. She offered hope and solace to those at the margins of our communities; people who have been excluded and hurt by the Church, including LGBTQ2S+ communities, feminists, divorcees and others. Homogenous communities are at risk of being clubs and social places. Community is needed, but only if it supports and has mercy for all.

Her belief is that many Christians want to appear correct and competent. Rachel felt that real community is made up of people who share their vulnerabilities and are honest about their places of hurt, fear and sin. Church should not be a place for only those who appear unbroken and successful. She talks about church being not the happiest place in town but the most honest place in town. (p. 66) This would be

her hope.

Fortunately, Rachel was raised by well-informed and open-minded parents. They attended these churches she criticised, but were also willing to have open and honest conversations. Her husband also supported her questioning of the status quo. Rachel went on to become a journalist and began writing on Christianity in columns, blogs and books.

In time, she found Christian communities, primarily out of the south, that were diamonds of peace and growth and inclusion for her. The leaders of those communities were informal supporters of Rachel, who wrote about and discussed issues of inclusion, openness and support for the marginalised. Among this group of writers and clergy is Lutheran pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber, who I suggested as an author of interest in a previous review.

Rachel talks about the common mistake of placing clergy on pedestals. They are people like everyone else and should not be idolised. This practice both hurts and hinders their leadership and their ability to promote the ministry of the laity. We all have a calling.

In her writing, Rachel tackles complex issues with vulnerability and humour. I highly recommend this readable book.

## St. Mary's Welcomes Community to Gospel Singalong

The Rev. LAURETA BLONDIN, rector St. Mary the Virgin, Vegreville

St. Mary the Virgin, Vegreville hosted another successful Gospel Singalong event on Sunday, February 12. The parish music team Companions on a Journey (Jim Bragg, Lisa Topilko, Janet Rowlands) led the musical event, a fundraiser for the church. The afternoon was further supported by various church members who assisted with providing or serving hot and cold refreshments such as home-baked cookies, and welcoming people at the door.

Special guest Khrystyna Kohut from Ukraine shared her musical talent, making the afternoon truly memorable. Kohut was a professional piano teacher in Ukraine before the Russian invasion, and she fled the war in her homeland several months ago. While she speaks almost no English, she broke through the communication barrier with her beautiful accompaniments for parishioner and flutist Lisa

Topilko. She then played three lovely solo piano pieces.

The next parish musical event

was scheduled for Palm Sunday when Companions on a Journey told the *Easter Story in Song* — in the

style of an Advent lessons and carols service.



Parishioner Lisa Topilko, on flute, is accompanied by guest pianist Khrystyna Kohut, from Ukraine, during an afternoon Gospel Singalong on Sunday, February 12 at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Vegreville.

# 2022 a meaningful year for Indigenous Ministries

FIONA BROWNLEE  
Aboriginal and Rural Communities  
Liaison, Indigenous Ministries  
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This past year, more in-person events broadened the work I do for the Edmonton diocese as part of the Indigenous Ministries team. I was present for important events for families impacted by the legacy of Residential Schools, preached in parishes, and walked with my home community of Wetaskiwin on the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. I remain grateful for those who support this work, for the clergy willing to embrace this ministry, for Anglicans across the diocese who know there is no reconciliation without truth.

I would like to share some of the highlights of the different projects I engaged with in 2022.

## Remember the Children Weaving Project

In the fall of 2021, I helped lay evangelist Jamie Hurlburt bring their vision of taking a mobile loom to different city parishes to weave a piece in remembrance of children who died at Residential Schools. Jamie is a member of Christ Church, Edmonton and a weaving instructor. The loom was smudged by Fred Matthews, a fellow member of the Indigenous Ministries team on Ash Wednesday at Christ Church. It was then taken to St. Faith's, Church of the Good Shepherd, St. Luke's and All Saints' Cathedral, where parish teams of loom keepers helped other members prayerfully contribute to the piece. The loom was in each parish for two weeks at a time from Lent through the Easter season. Almost 100 people took part in the weaving, from children as young as six to adults in their 80s.

As Jamie told the participants, each line of weaving represented one child who had died at Residential School. Jamie also wove a special pattern for unmarked burials that have been discovered. During a special service at All Saints' Cathedral in June, the finished piece was blessed and unrolled down the center aisle. Through their tears, people laid down tobacco, shared poems, sang and prayed. In September and October, around the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, the weaving was warmly received in five different parishes.

Our hope is that more parishes will be able to receive and



Pictured clockwise from above: participants march to Churchill Square in Edmonton following a service at All Saints' Cathedral for the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People on May 5, 2022; the Remember the Children orange textile stretches down the center aisle of the cathedral during a dedication service June 19; the Immanuel Reconciliation Team and Fiona Brownlee address participants in the Wetaskiwin Orange Shirt Day walk, September 30.



experience it. Both Jamie and I will make ourselves available to be with folks on Sundays. In the meantime, the weaving lives at the Cathedral.

## Red Dress Events

Each year in early May communities across the country remember Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2-Spirit folk (MMIWG2S). The month prior, we held a Ribbon Skirt Workshop at the Cathedral to make red ribbon skirts for May 5, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Indigenous, settler, and newcomer women met in circle to learn about ribbon skirts from Noella Steinhauser. Tracy Bradley also helped us make the skirts which many of us wore to a time of prayer in the First Peoples Chapel at the Cathedral.

For the second year, the Reconciliation Team of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin organised to share information about MMIWG2S in Canada by hanging red dresses in two City of Wetaskiwin parks. Many community members voiced their appreciation for the team's effort. On May 5, we gathered at the Peace Cairn, a space blessed and prayed



over by local elders, to pray and sing for the women and girls who are missing from their communities.

## Preaching and Working with Children

Being invited to preach about reconciliation is one of my great joys. I love being with local parishes to encourage them on this journey. I am also really grateful to be working with children, who are open to learning about reconciliation. A number of these opportunities came about in the spring of 2022. I was invited to join St. Thomas', Sherwood Park for a weekend in May to be part of a Messy Church reconciliation event and to preach.

The following Sunday found me preaching at my home parish of Immanuel, Wetaskiwin. Fortunately, I was well received. At the end of May, the Reconciliation Team of Immanuel held its annual Heart Garden event. We made an altar frontal and team member Gloria Rogers added ribbons around the bottom. We also planted our garden together. This garden is dedicated to all the children who went to Residential Schools, especially those children who did not return home. The garden flourished over the

summer and continues to be a sign of hope in our community.

Come June, I preached twice around National Indigenous Peoples Day. For the past several years, I have been invited by my friend pastor AnnE Zimmerman to come and preach to her congregation of Lakeland Lutheran in Cold Lake. We both see it as part of the ongoing full communion of Lutherans and Anglicans. The Rev. Colleen Sanderson, rector of St. Michaels and All Angels, Edmonton and chaplain of Canterbury Foundation, invited me to share with the seniors in residence. It is refreshing to meet seniors who understand why truth and reconciliation are important for Christians and for our country.

## National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

For the last several years, many parishes in the diocese have observed Orange Shirt Day, now recognised as the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, on the Sunday closest to September 30. I encouraged parishes in their efforts by providing resources. This year, several parishes incorporated the Remember the Children weaving into their services and events.

The 7th Annual Orange Shirt Day walk in Wetaskiwin was led by the reconciliation team from Immanuel in partnership with the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum. More than 100 people join us for the event.

## Conclusion

I want to give thanks to my friends and colleagues in Indigenous Ministry, Archdeacon Travis Enright, Fred Matthews, the Rev. Nick Trussell, for their continued support and creative nudges, and for all in the Synod Office who answer my questions, post my stories and are such good cheerleaders. I am also grateful to parishes for reaching out with invitations to preach, requests for information and resources, and for praying for all of us who are involved with this ministry. I want to give thanks to my Indigenous sisters Gloria Rogers and Bonny Graham who form the Immanuel Reconciliation Team with me. They are willing to take my ideas and run with them and reciprocate with ideas of their own. I am uplifted by their love, prayers and support. Finally, I want to thank Creator for giving me a curious spirit and open heart to hear truth and work towards reconciliation.