



THE MESSENGER



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LESSONS from the WILDERNESS



All Saints' and St. Thomas, Fort McMurray youth leader Willi Whiston (l), and Connor Putman with Cheeto canoe in Lakeland Provincial Park, in northeastern Alberta, during the second annual youth wilderness canoe trip supported by a Say Yes! to Kids grant from the Anglican Foundation of Canada.

Paddling and portaging, youth ponder life's big questions

WILLI WHISTON

Youth Leader, All Saints', St. Thomas' Fort McMurray Diocese of Athabasca

The afterglow sweeps across the horizon in shades of orange, saskatoon, and ripe wild raspberry. We are on the eastern shore of Jackson Lake deep in the boreal beauty of Alberta's only backcountry canoe circuit, Lakeland Provincial Park, with a motley crew of young people gathered from across the Diocese of Athabasca. Our muscles ache and our bodies feel tired after heaving heavy canoes over the almost four-kilometre portage into the park, but our souls and our spirits are just waking up.

We have traveled this way to learn how to listen, to pray for eyes to see, and to connect again with creation, and moreover, the Creator who holds it all with tender care.



Celeste Mahaffey heads out on the water.

Catholic priest and theologian Thomas Berry said, "We are between stories. The old story is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned 'the new story.' We are talking only to ourselves. We are not talking to the rivers; we are not listening to the wind and stars. We have broken the great conversation."

I have worked with youth navigating the big questions of life and faith for over five years now. They, too, are in between stories in their own lives as they start to unravel the stories of their upbringing and find their own place in the world and take on their faith as their own. We are not unlike our young people either, as we all work our whole lives to find new meaning in the face of change, to understand what it means to be truly human, and to reconnect again and again and again with the things of heaven, throwing aside the patterns of a noisy world.

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Edmonton Neighbours Celebrate Being Treaty 6 People

The Rev. NICK TRUSSELL
Rector, St. Luke's, Edmonton

More than 100 Holyrood and Strathearn neighbours from all different backgrounds and ages gathered to celebrate being Treaty 6 people, and the peace and hope we share for our common life together on this land.

Following a ceremony with a smudge, a song from the Holyrood Mennonite Church and words of inspiration from our neighbours, the young and young-at-heart joined in a variety of traditional games.

Much joy, laughter and hope were brought to the spirit of treaty.

Our treaty is more than something of the past for us to read about or some obscure legal history. Our treaty is meant for partnership and is something in which we can be active participants right here and now.

More than a few people who took part in the Treaty Recognition Ceremony were moved to tears in acknowledging the past hurt and present harm of broken treaty, and in making a strong commitment in hope to be good partners moving forward.

Before the drummer offered a traditional gathering song, he called us to "run forward together in love and trust that love and peace will follow for generations yet to come."

The Holyrood and Strathearn Community Leagues have a newly formed reconciliation committee, which has received an anti-racism grant from the city. They were very happy to partner with St. Luke's in making this event happen for our neighbourhood.

Many who took part said they hope for this to become an annual event for the neighbourhood.



Pictured at top, Nick Trussell (l), rector of St. Luke's, Edmonton, and Travis Enright Archdeacon for Indigenous Ministries, hold up the Treaty 6 flag during a Treaty Recognition Ceremony for Holyrood and Strathearn neighbours. Photos: Karen MacDonald



Gratitude for ministry of Shelly and Richard King

Early in May 2016, Shelly King (she wasn't yet ordained a deacon) came to work with us in the Synod Office. She says she'll never forget her first week, with people continuously calling in to express concern for Fort McMurray's 88,000 residents who had been driven from their homes by wildfire. Shelly was (and has been since) a calm presence in those anxious weeks, working the phones to find out who needed temporary accommodation and who could provide it.

Over the last seven years, we've both worked through life changes. I got married for a second time, then had major surgery just months into the COVID pandemic. That we were blessed with Shelly's (and Richard's!) presence in our diocese in the first place was due, in large part, to Shelly's need to care for her mom who had dementia. Later, Shelly would have an unfortunate accident, breaking her ankle and requiring physio.

By supporting each other, we've been able to carry on connecting members of our diocesan families, Athabasca and Edmonton, through *The Messenger*, in addition to weekly e-newsletters and daily website and social media posts. This unintentional, but at times very intentional, strategy of give and take, has kept us on a steady course.

As I'm writing this piece, Shelly and Richard have accepted an opportunity to minister in the Diocese of Canterbury (you'll read more about that in Richard's farewell column on page 4). This move will bring them much closer to their family in the UK. And I'm thrilled they will be able to watch their granddaughter grow in person.

But this is bittersweet news for the

Edmonton diocese. We'll miss Richard's joyful enthusiasm, although some of us will not miss his posts about the gloriousness of snow. And Shelly, goodness, I'd need a lot more space than I have here to adequately express what a difference she has made to the ministry of the Synod Office. She was up for any challenge, from helping produce our news publications, to event planning, registration, and reporting, to

photography, to digital content, to keeping the Prayer Cycle and Clergy and Parish Directory up to date, you name it, she could do it!

And I'd be remiss not to mention Shelly's ministry as a deacon of the diocese, and her work as a spiritual director with Studion...

We give thanks for Shelly and Richard who gracefully shared their gifts with the Edmonton diocese. God speed!

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Our WHY - caring to bring others to God's loving community

While doing our WHY workshops across the diocese, I've found it striking that, though each parish has a different WHY, they all share a common theme. The experience of those who attended the workshops can be summed up, I think, as this: they attend our church because this is where they have found, and continue to find, loving relationship in community with God.

God brings hearts together. When you care for someone enough to put their hand in the hand of our Saviour Jesus, you are helping them become healthier. But in that caring, you are vulnerable. Life is unpredictable! You give because you love, even though you may be rejected; even though, if you stand close enough, you may experience harm. Jesus gave Himself. He experienced rejection and harm, and He changed the universe.

Someone loved you enough to put your hand in Jesus' hand, and you found a loving relationship in community. That's how it's supposed to be. That's Christianity in a nutshell.

We are different because we are the people of loving relationship in community with God.



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

we need to renew our relationship with God, every day.

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus' words and actions were broadly about doing what is healthiest for people (He had strong criticism for those who didn't follow this path), and maintaining community with our Father in heaven. Doing what is healthiest is what love truly is. Obediently serving our Heavenly Father is what love truly is. Loving this way, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we are made one with Christ who is Himself one with the Father, so we are joined in community

Don't believe everything you hear from the world. Don't be disheartened by all that can discourage or dismay you. You are part of loving relationship in community with God.

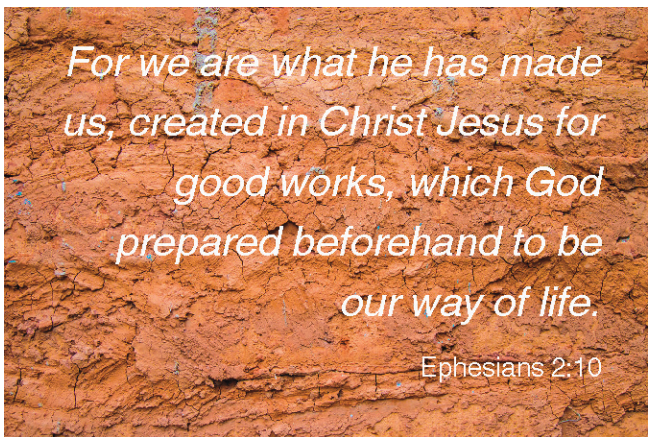
Knowing this, defining ourselves as such, our path becomes clear: to be in loving relationship in community with God. To seek out someone to experience and share God's love with is the first part of how we walk the path. The second part is to walk with God, together; for not only do we need to build up our relationships with each other,

with our Triune God. Jesus is our pattern.

Can you imagine what our world would be like if everyone lived this way? If each day, people praised and worshiped God: spent the day following Jesus' pattern in doing what is healthiest for all they met, and then thanked and worshiped God some more?

Our actions need not be grandiose or world-shattering. In fact, it's often best if they are not. It's in everyday, loving interactions that you glorify Christ, and have glorified Christ. Through these daily interactions, people are introduced to Christ and will introduce others to Christ.

God bless you for your love.
Shalom be with you.
+ David



All Relations - the Fifth Primary Principle

And yours by right, O Lamb that was slain, for with your blood you have redeemed for God, From every family, language, people, and nation,* a kingdom of priests to serve our God on earth.*
Canticle 24, BAS, quoting Revelation 5



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Isaiah 56:7b
There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

The church, at its absolute best, is beautiful. It is clear from the scriptures that the church is meant to be a sign to the world of what the community of love should look like. The church is intended by Jesus Christ to be a transnational, multicultural *communitas* "from every family, language, people and nation." The People of God is an all-inclusive community of love that has a higher allegiance than any earthly government or ideology.

One of my favourite recent experiences of

this was at the Lambeth Conference last August. I remember being a part of a spirit-filled worship service where people from all over the world gathered to pray and sing in their own languages, loving one another. This was my vision of what the human community is meant to be.

The book of Isaiah has a picture of the end of time which is a vision of a great table laden with good food and wine at which people from all nations gather to feast and share fellowship.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to my mind one of the greatest Anglican prophets of the 20th century, reminds us "we are all connected. What unites us is our common humanity ... We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas what you do, what I do, affects the whole world. Taking that a step further, when you do good, it spreads that goodness; it is for the whole of humanity."¹

The painful reality that Archbishop Tutu also reminds us of is that the Church throughout human history has not lived up to its own vision. In fact, "the church has put up barriers which

harm and oppress beloved creations of God. It now needs to embody its confession of these sins."² Archbishop Tutu experienced Apartheid; when the churches developed a "Gospel" of separation blessing the horrific racist policies of the White government of South Africa. But this is one example. Throughout Christian history, churches have either blessed or remained silent on issues of racial and gender injustice.

In our own Anglican Church of Canada, we are starting to grapple with our own stained past in our relationships with the First Peoples of this land.

Today, we have the amazing opportunity to try and live in a new way the great vision of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to be what Martin Luther King Jr. called the Beloved Community. This vision will not just happen. We must be intentional about naming and dismantling the barriers that keep us from being a safe and accessible faith community. This is Gospel work because it is about becoming who we are meant to be: a church of *all* relations. Racial justice is one of the most important things we can do today for Christ.

Blessings,
+ Steve

1. "Wisdom Shared with Me by Desmond Tutu," Marianne Schnall, Forbes.com
2. *Finding Our Way: Discerning a Strategic Path*, Anglican Diocese of Edmonton

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).

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Moving forward, listening to the missional heart of God

In my September article, I wrote "I don't think I'm exaggerating to say [my summer] has been life-changing..." That turned out to be true in more ways than one. Many of you will have heard by now that my wife Shelly and I will be leaving Edmonton diocese this month, moving to Canterbury diocese in the UK. I have learned so much in the past eight years and have endeavoured to share what I've been learning through these articles. We've covered a lot of subjects, from creating Mission Action Plans for your parish to grappling with the ongoing effects of Christendom on today's congregations, and so much more.



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

years in which we have seen the number of people in our parishes decline. Many 'chickens have come home to roost.' We have seen that our understandings about what it means to be the Church are embedded deep within us and make it hard to pivot to something that might more resemble the missional movement we need to be now. According to missional thinker Allan Hirsch in his latest book *Metanoia*, it may be that the

with others as we grapple with this question: 'How is God leading us so we can join in with what God is doing in our neighbourhoods and communities?' Amongst other things we have tried to understand how to deal with the changes in our context because of the pandemic, which followed on from many

first thing we need to do is to repent where we have had an unwillingness to change. If we take on that challenge to 'think again and change directions' (for that is the meaning of the Greek word *metanoia*, commonly translated as repent), then the next steps will involve learning to listen deeply to what God is saying now. The Church can learn on many contemplative prayer practices to develop this listening. In the past, we may have reserved these practices, such as *lectio divina* for example, for the enrichment of our personal prayer and faith. There's nothing wrong with that, but these practices can also tune our hearts to listen to the missional heart of God. We must be willing to hear what God is saying, even if it is uncomfortable. Then, of course, when we hear God's voice, we must obey.

As I try to listen, one thing I hear repeatedly is our need to become more relational, with each other within our parishes and with those we live and work with day-to-day. In their marvellous book, *1 Once*

Was Lost, Don Evert and Doug Schaupp share the stories of young people as they describe their journey to faith in Jesus. The overwhelming common factor is that first they became friends with a Christian and learned to trust Christians.

We have a big task before us, but our never-changing hope is that the power of the Good News of Jesus, the Gospel, has not changed. It is 'Jesus we preach; and Him crucified' (1 Corinthians 1:23), for it is to introduce people to Jesus that is the purpose of Jesus' Church.

I continue to wish you success and pray for every blessing in all your missional endeavours. Pray for us, also, as we take all we have learned in Edmonton diocese and apply it in a new parish, where I will continue to wrestle with all we have discussed in these many articles. Thank you to those who have written or commented to me with your own wisdom and reflections. It's been a joy to journey with you.

Soli Deo Gloria.
Richard

Children & Families Minister Commissioned in Backpack Blessing

The Rev. SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

St. John the Evangelist parish in Edmonton welcomed a new member of staff during the Blessing of the Backpacks service on Sunday, September 3. The congregation joined in commissioning Abigail Curle as Children and Families Minister, with a large group of parishioners coming to the front of the church to pray for her and the work she will do. The commissioning was a special way to begin her ministry. "Being commissioned during the service on Sunday was a powerful experience," Curle says. "I felt supported and welcomed by the church family into this new role and am so thankful for all of the encouragement I received. As the congregation prayed for me, I was reminded that God will equip me for the work He is calling me to as I trust in Him and I experienced a deep sense of peace."

Curle is employed as a substitute teacher with Edmonton Public Schools and will work part-time in the role at St. John's, coordinating Kid's Word, the children's program, and supporting families through fellowship and prayer.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to come alongside families in teaching the children of this parish about God and His word," she says. "And I am very much looking forward to seeing how God will use children's ministry to reveal His love to

each child and parent in powerful and personal ways. I am full of hopeful expectations for the ways that God will draw children and families together in community and towards Himself in love through this work, by His power and grace."

St. John the Evangelist rector, the Ven. Richard King, says on top of the wealth of experience she brings to the role, Curle's personal drive and enthusiasm are infectious, and St. John's is "delighted" to have her on board.

"She brings a desire to see children and their families grow in their love of God," he says. "She is committed to teaching the Word of God in a way that children and their families can apply to their own lives in a way that leads to discipleship growth. We are blessed to have her with us."



Pictured clockwise from above: members of St. John the Evangelist pray for Abigail Curle as she is commissioned to serve children and families; Curle and Richard King pray for students and families going back to school; backpacks await blessing in the centre aisle of the church.



Compassion Campers Connect to God's Creation

Through music, artwork, games, crafts and constant motion, 13 campers and 3 Leaders-in-Training connected with God the Creator's gifts of water, air, and food and with each other at Compassion Camp.

"Archdeacon Jordan and the rest of the volunteers did a great job of creating a safe and inclusive camp community," says Michelle Yee, Parish Administrator at Good Shepherd. Yee helped run the Compassion in Action station where, through a different activity each day, campers were encouraged to think about how they can share and protect the resources "Every Living Thing Needs."

She says she enjoyed hearing the children's discussions as they worked through activities, while identifying times when they helped or had been helped by others, as well as ways they could reach out to their neighbours (safely and with the help of a grown-up).

On the last day of camp, held August 28 to September 1, Compassion Campers, from Good Shepherd and St. Augustine of Canterbury, Edmonton, and their friends, joined their neighbours at the Kipnes Centre for Veterans



for a friendly game of BINGO.

"Campers particularly enjoyed beginning and ending each day, with music," says the Ven. Jordan Haynie Ware, rector of Good Shepherd. "We learned a lot of new songs with dancing and hand motions, and taught new campers some old favourites, like 'My Lighthouse.' The kids loved running around to celebrate that God's love leads us safe to shore!"

In addition to the Compassion Camp

curriculum, from Illustrated Ministry, campers had fun in the Castle Downs spray park, playing Minute-to-Win-It games, and walking around Beaumaris Lake to see what creatures find shelter there.

While driving home at the end of Compassion Camp, Yee overheard a discussion between her son and his friend:

"I think this was the best camp I went to this summer, what about you? Out of 10 what would you rate it?" one of the boys asked.

"Well, we didn't play water polo, so I guess like a 6 out of 10 for me," said the other.

"What? Are you serious? This camp was a 10 out of 10! We did so many things together, it was great!"

"Yeah, it was great. I had a lot of fun; water polo is still the best though, bro."

Learning from the wilderness - Athabasca canoe trip continued

Continued from Front Page.

As the vivid colours fade into a blue and the stars appear, I see God in the waves crashing against the shore. There is untold power in that water, and yet it also sustains the life of the trees and the creatures that surround us on our little campsite. This week it will sustain us, too, as we learn a new story together and slow down enough to allow our hearts to listen for the Spirit of God.

This is the second annual youth wilderness canoe trip in our diocese, made possible in part by new challenges and opportunities post-pandemic, and a Say Yes! to Kids grant from the Anglican Foundation of Canada. Among our company, are three leaders and seven youth from Fort McMurray, Beaverlodge and Grande Prairie. We've been sent with prayers and plenty of support from home, and a trailer of canoes from our friends in the Diocese of Edmonton.

The next five days will take us through four different lakes, some separated by winding channels flanked by stunted spruce, birch, aspen and muskeg, and others by portages cut through the forest where our canoe carts get stuck on roots and ruts.

On a particularly challenging portage, one young person remarked afterwards that he first wanted to curse the tree roots as he tripped on them, but then paused and considered that those roots delivered life to the tree. Perhaps, God's spirit can be found in twisted roots on long uphill climbs. Others saw God in the song of the loons, a pelican sweeping way overhead, or even the deep expanse of the forest all around us.

We considered together that it was God's spirit that knit this all together -- the logos, the



Pictured above (l to r): Ivan Bueckert, Joseph Muxlow, Sasha Bueckert, Liam Kovacs release their catch with Willi Whiston looking on. From left: Genoveve Zepeda, Ryley Mannett, Joseph Muxlow, Liam Kovacs fuel up for the day's adventures; Jay, Ivan and Sasha Bueckert help maneuver Ryley Mannett (front of canoe) through the reeds; campers warm up and wind down around a crackling campfire.

great conversation.

In the wilderness it becomes easy to listen. We are surrounded by the great beauty of creation, all while being slowly stripped of our creature comforts. The challenge is to carry the discipline of listening back into the *real* world. John Muir said, "Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world."

But I wonder if the same can be said about high school lockers? Can we learn to listen to God's spirit in our classrooms, on our couches, or even in our church halls? Seek, and you will find!

I hope there will be many more canoe trips to come, and remain thankful for the generosity of others who make these trips possible. I'm already dreaming, again, of fresh coffee and cinnamon buns on a misty morning, bookended by the comforting words of Night Prayer spoken in earnest around crackling campfire.



Church joins community in celebration of the arts

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

For 10 days in August, theatre patrons lined up several times a day at Holy Trinity Anglican Church (HTAC) in Old Strathcona for the Edmonton International Fringe Festival.

The Rev. Danielle Key, rector of HTAC, says Fringe was “gloriously chaotic in the best ways! Busy, happy people, great shows -- what more could we ask for? It is heartwarming and beautiful to bear witness to so many unique individuals coming together with their shared love of the arts.”

Whereas, last summer was a slow and pensive re-entry into the festival season after the pandemic, Key says this year, “it was full steam ahead.”

Church and community members, like Annie Randall, parish coordinator for young adults, newcomers and social justice, welcomed performers and audiences to 13 performances (two were chosen as Fringe holdovers), from August 17 to 27.

It takes many helping hands to run three stages, the Trinity Tea Room, front of house, and Cheer Tent Concession.

“So many members of the community stepped forward to fill the (volunteer) gaps, which was a



Pictured clockwise from above, patrons line up to see a show at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Old Strathcona; Rob and Danielle Key (Holy Trinity's rector) pause for a selfie in the midst of festivities; patrons leaving the cheer tent set up outside the church.



tremendous blessing,” says Key.

Mother Nature even did her part to ensure a successful Fringe run. A few cool and rainy days prompted people to head indoors to enjoy freshly baked scones in the serenity of the tearoom.

Talking with patrons and actors is always a highlight for Danielle

who served refreshments and snacks in the Cheer Tent alongside her husband Rob Key. Their daughter Emily arrived early to the church each day, occasionally napping on a pull-out bed in her mom's office, until it was time to tie on an apron and help serve tea and scones.

“We got to reconnect with community members, parishioners, and made new connections with people from all over the world!” says Key. “Fringe absolutely lived up to its theme this year. The Answer is Fringe!”

All Saints' Museum Church Hosts Special Summer Service

MIRIAM ROBERTS
All Saints', Drayton Valley

When I awoke on July 30 the sun was shining in a cloudless sky. I was pleased; our prayers were answered for a nice day for the celebration of the grand re-opening of the old All Saints' church at the Drayton Valley Museum.

We were graced with the participation of past and present parishioners and guests. We gave thanks to the Drayton Valley Historical Society for restoring the old church and preserving its history in Drayton Valley.

In her message, the Rev. Robyn King, rector of All Saints', asked the congregation to consider the start of the Anglican community in Drayton Valley, and the history of this space.

She also encouraged us to think about the present and future ministry of the Anglican community in Drayton Valley. Jesus' ministry is the foundation of our faith in this community now and into the future.

Those in attendance enjoyed the beautiful service. Members of the congregation happily greeted each other in church, and carried on conversations during the lunch held on the museum grounds.

People gathered under a canopy to view an album of old photos compiled by Sharon Wilkinson, of Edmonton, who is



Robyn King officiates at a service of Holy Communion in the original All Saints' Anglican church building in Drayton Valley on July 30, 2023.



the daughter of the late Lovetta Kjørlien. Lovetta was a historian for many years, and she had amassed a collection of old photographs.

Those who contributed their time and talents to organising the anniversary celebration were grateful it was a joyful experience.

The original church was moved from 50th Avenue, the site of the present Beehive Support Services Association, in November 1998, onto a foundation at the present location. The roof was re-shingled, and the original wood of the ceiling and floor were restored. Blinds were replaced. This refurbishment

was done as funds were made available from different grants to preserve the building's original state.

Anglicans have had a presence in the community since the early 1900s, and this building was the second church in Drayton Valley.

The first Anglican Institution was a Mission House, built in 1936 with funds from the “Lady Agnes Farren Memorial Fund.” The fund stipulated that, because there was no hospital in the vicinity, the mission house would provide medical services in the form of a dispensary and First Aid Station.

Deaconess Sybil Groves tended

to the community's spiritual needs. Miss Barbara Whittaker looked after medical needs and maternity care. These ladies traveled on horseback to the residents of Drayton Valley and surrounding area regardless of their faith.

The original church was dedicated on October 10, 1937. After oil was discovered in 1953, the congregation continued to grow. In 1955, the Rev. Les Corness became the first full-time rector. By the 1990s, the parish had outgrown the original church. Mrs. Edith Deby donated an acre of land for the present All Saints' to be built at 5212 47 Avenue.

Ice cream treats & worship focus of Cursillo gathering

RITA STAGMAN
Diocese of Edmonton Cursillo

It felt like a homecoming. On August 25, members of the Cursillo community came together with friends to share in song, prayer, conversation and ice cream at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Edmonton.

During the introductions, it was mentioned that St. Mary's was the original home of Cursillo Ultreyas (regular gatherings of *Cursillistas*, people who have attended a Cursillo weekend). The times of that fledgling group are memorable.

There were members in attendance from the first Cursillo held in the Edmonton diocese, to the last one held pre-Covid; including members who had done their weekend in Ontario and others who have yet to attend a Cursillo weekend.

We all came together in Christian fellowship. With Stephen Heritage leading us on the piano, we raised our voices in song and celebration. Bishop Stephen shared “words of wisdom” on



Cursillistas came from far and wide to worship together at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Edmonton, and to enjoy ice cream treats served by Bishop Stephen London and Cursillo Lay Director Corrina Kubos.

how as Christians we are called to see and love the true person underneath the outer façade. Corrina Kubos, Lay Director for Cursillo, announced the dates for the upcoming weekend as May 3-5, 2024. Janie Sequin has said, “yes” to being one of the lay directors for that weekend.

And did I mention there was ice cream?! Who doesn't like a bowl of

ice cream with a wide selection of toppings to choose from?

As is customary for the closing of an Ultreya, we gathered in a circle of prayer, holding up the needs of ourselves and others and giving thanks for this time of fellowship and the revitalization of Cursillo in the diocese.

The evening concluded with a rousing rendition of “Des Colores”

(a traditional Cursillo song). It had been far too long since we all heard that joyous sound!

If you would like to know more about Cursillo, or participate in the upcoming weekend or the next Ultreya, please contact cursilloedmonton@gmail.com. Stay tuned to *Synod Scene* for announcements.



Faith in face of grief and loss, subject of impactful book



MARION BULMER
St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

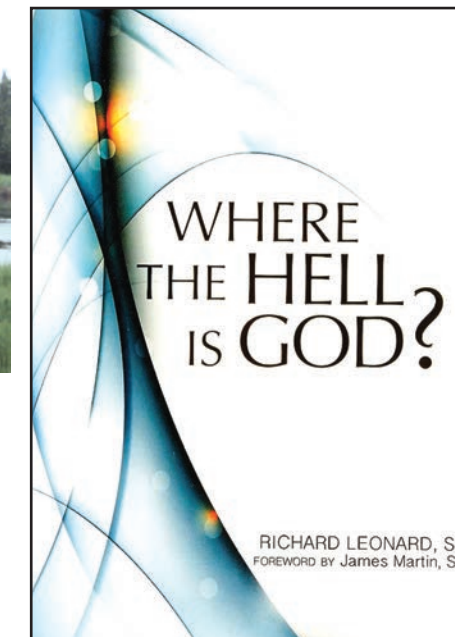
At only 67 pages long, this book packs a punch. It covers a great deal about suffering, pain, loss and the nature of God.

Richard Leonard, a Jesuit priest, has walked with many people through the dark shadows of life. He also speaks from the depths of his own pain.

When in her late 20s, his sister became a quadriplegic as the result of a tragic car accident. At the time of the accident, Tracey was a nurse serving an Aboriginal community in a remote area of Australia. She had a servant heart and had even been on mission with Sister (now Saint) Teresa of Calcutta.

The Leonard family had endured much. Richard's mother was widowed at 36, with three small children, under age seven, in her care.

I suspect all of us, or at least many of us, have scrambled through death, loss and personal challenges wondering where God was. I faced this challenge in my late 20s. My friend, a mentor to many, a husband and a father to three small children, died of lung



cancer. I was very angry with God.

I conversed with my priest and his insightful wife, and read many books, like *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, by Harold Kushner. By the time I read Leonard, I had faced the deaths of many more friends, including friends with small children.

Leonard writes that we are in

a world created by God, yet we are not controlled by God. Do we see God as a magician who can magically fix, he asks. (p. 53) Or does God allow us freedom, accompanying us through the good and the bad, through the whole of our lives? (p. 4) God is ever present, but we are not marionettes. (p. 51) Sometimes, we blame God for things which clearly rest with humans and the nature of the world.

The author points out that God cares for us in the bigger picture. (p. 25) God wants us to have life, liberty and joy; to speak for justice, to be faithful, hopeful and loving. (p. 35 and 41) But, in the bigger picture, God may not care specifically what you do to follow Jesus. (p. 27)

Many years ago, when reading a book, possibly authored by Henri Nouwen, I found it extremely liberating to understand God is with me on whatever path I take. If the intent of my actions is good, then those actions will rest with God.

Leonard says there is not a revengeful, ugly side to God. (p. 49) The whole Old and New Testament are a love story between God and humanity. (p. 2) He speaks of God not needing the sacrifice of our death, or even the sacrifice of his son Jesus. (p. 37)

Jesus lived radically. By challenging societal norms, he was perceived as a threat to the political, social and religious authorities of the day. (p. 39) Jesus came to live life fully; to establish the reign of justice and love in the world, and there was a cost to living these truths. (p. 43)

Leonard understands the incarnation in terms of the transformation of our hearts and souls by and with God. That alteration may come through a reading, a sacred site, a prayer, or as hope within us. God is with us even in the absence of healing.

In Jesus's life, suffering and death do not have the final word. (p. 17)

PREACHING MARATHON

In Support of David Phillip Jones, K.C. Preaching Fund

November 25, 9 am to 7 pm, All Saints' Anglican Cathedral, Edmonton

Gibbons rector celebrates 40 years of ordained ministry

WILLA GORMAN
Emmanuel, Gibbons

The parish of Emmanuel, Gibbons, along with special guests, celebrated the 40th anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of the Rev. Anthony Kwaw on the beautiful Sunday of July 16, 2023.

When Kwaw, who is rector of Emmanuel, Gibbons, told the congregation about his upcoming anniversary, he said, "I was called very young."

On this special day, our little church was filled with family, friends and parishioners, both past and present. At the service, Anthony celebrated Holy Communion, and the Rev. Fr. John Baptist Okai, his friend from seminary who now lives in Regina,



Clergy colleagues pictured from left: Keith Marsh, former Emmanuel rector now parishioner, Miranda Sutherland, Anthony Kwaw, John Baptist Okai and Adenike Yesufu.

preached the sermon. The Rev. Adenike Yesufu, deacon, gave a few words before the blessing.

Lunch was offered following the service. Our hall was too small to hold everyone, so several people

filled their plates and enjoyed lunch outside while visiting with friends. Anthony served a cake decorated with a picture of Emmanuel Anglican Church.

Anthony was born in Half-Assini, Ghana. He attended St. Teresa's Minor Seminary in Amisano, Elmina, Ghana; St. Peter's Major Seminary in Pedu, Cape Coast, Ghana; St. Paul University in Ottawa; Université de Moncton (NB); and University of New Brunswick (UNB). He was ordained on July 17, 1983, in Half-Assini Ghana. He has served in churches in Ghana, Ivory Coast (RCI), Ottawa, New Brunswick, and now the Diocese of Edmonton.

Many Blessings to Rev. Anthony as he continues in his service to the Lord.

"To God be the Glory."

Church of the Nativity & Dayspring Ministry Summer Celebration

FRED MATTHEWS
Lay Reader-in-Charge
Church of the Nativity, Frog Lake

Anglican parishes walked together in faith with the community of Frog Lake toward healing, restoration and hope in recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day and the Summer Solstice.

This was the second joint service which gathered members of Church of the Nativity, Frog Lake together with the Dayspring Ministry parishes (St. Mary, Edgerton; St. Thomas, Wainwright; St. Mary, Vegreville). Members from St. George, Edmonton also participated in the service held on Sunday, June 18.

Fred Matthews, lay reader-in-charge of Church of the Nativity, presided over the service using the Standing Stones liturgy which incorporates Cree imagery and ceremony. Gordon Hills led prayers

and Archdeacon Rachael Parker, rector of Dayspring Ministry, celebrated the Eucharist with bannock and berries in place of communion wafers.

Worship included smudging, a flute song, prayers in the four directions, a eucharistic prayer written specifically for Standing Stones, and a Cree honour song. The readings were an Indigenous teaching story called "Hiawatha and the Great Peacemaker," and Matthew 5: 21-26 (First Nations Version). These formed the basis of the sermon which focused on the importance of forgiveness, love, and mercy in the journey.



Pictured from left: Julia Boberg, Vicki Strang, Mark Vigrass, Fred Matthews and Rachael Parker.

Local Indigenous Elder and Church of the Nativity member Herb Stanley led a pipe ceremony following the service, gathering the congregation in a circle to share the pipe.



Fred Matthews offers a smudge at joint service to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day and Summer Solstice.

The celebration concluded with a traditional feast of soup, bannock, blueberry-flavoured lard, deep fried beef fat ("Indian popcorn"), rice pudding and berries.

St. Augustine of Canterbury goes wild in southeast Edmonton

The Rev. JONATHAN CRANE
Rector, St. Augustine of Canterbury,
Edmonton

St. Augustine of Canterbury held a "wild" fundraising event on June 3, raising about \$900 for their upcoming Re-Wilding Project. St. Augustine's rector the Rev. Jonathan Crane was grateful for beautiful weather on the day, the great music provided by Paul Fuelbrandt, the artistic face-painting skills of Theo Harasymiw, and the mocktails created by Mary McLean and Jennifer Stewart. In all, about 70 people came to enjoy the activities. Crane says the main goal of the event was accomplished, which was "to bring the community together on the land."

In addition to the already popular Sunshine Garden, the Re-Wilding Project is meant to further nurture the relationship



Approximately 70 people came out to enjoy a fundraising event, on June 3, in aid of St. Augustine's "Re-Wilding" project. Festivities included face-painting, mocktails and music on the lawn outside St. Augustine of Canterbury in the Edmonton neighbourhood of Fulton Place.

of St. Augustine's church family and the surrounding community with the land on which the church is situated. The plan includes restorative ecological design, education, and sacred community spaces, some of which were literally outlined during the

fundraising event. The concept drawings were marked out on the property with spray paint, as was the planned labyrinth.

Other ideas for this multi-phase, community gathering space include:

- upgrading the church annex;

- creating amphitheater space;
- lighting the trees;
- adding soil to the church parking lot;
- planting trees, bushes and native prairie grasses on walking paths.