



THE MESSENGER



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May the God of hope fill you with all joy
and peace in believing, so that you may
abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Consultant Search Sets Strategic Planning Process in Motion

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

A diocesan strategic planning committee has begun the process of finding a consultant to prepare a strategic plan that will incorporate the *Finding Our Way* visioning document adopted by the 68th Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) went out this fall, and Bishop Stephen London and executive council hope to have a consultant in place by the end of the year, said Greg Heaton, chair of the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee.

Heaton, a member of Christ Church, Edmonton, is joined on the strategic planning committee by Anne Smith, also of Christ Church; Betty Kaahwa, St. Faith's, Edmonton; Les Jaster, St. Mary's, Ponoka; the Rev. Clare Stewart, St. Timothy's, Edmonton.

The strategic planning committee is looking for an experienced consultant who also understands faith communities in general and, ideally, the Anglican Church of Canada.

The consultant will be asked to use the *Finding Our Way* visioning document adopted by

the 68th Synod as a framework for the strategic plan. This document which outlines 5 primary principles, and 12 specific goals calls members of the diocese to remember that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the center of all we do.

Heaton, who recently retired from the City of Edmonton where he worked in the legal department and external relations, says a good strategic plan, in addition to being centered on an inspiring shared vision, should also be grounded in a solid understanding of the current state of the diocese. To that end, the diocese seeks a "robust and thorough environmental scan" of its 48 parishes.

Heaton hopes the environmental scan, which will require the consultant to engage with clergy and lay leadership in every parish, will offer a complete and more realistic picture. The methodology will include a set of consistent criteria and, where possible, objective measures (for example income and expenses, assets and liabilities, building condition, weekly attendance, and the strategic focus of Mission Action Plans). The environmental scan will also incorporate less tangible elements (such as the energy and engagement of parishioners and the role the

parish plays in the larger community).

"There's a story we tell ourselves about what's going on in parishes and in the diocese," says Heaton. "With an understanding that each parish is autonomous, executive council and Bishop Steve hope to provide a balanced, overall strategy."

The consultant will use this information to develop a set of draft strategies tied to one or more of the 12 goals outlined in *Finding Our Way*. These strategies will outline how the diocese will respond to its current situation and achieve its goals. They are intended to move the diocese closer materially and measurably to its goals and vision.

The strategies are expected to guide the diocese's actions in the short to medium term, approximately five years, while recognising that the strategic plan will be a living document subject to revision as circumstances change.

With executive council's final approval, the Diocesan Strategic Plan will be presented to synod, in October 2024, for adoption.

In the meantime, Heaton says parishes should "get ready. Think about the story you'd like to share with executive council and synod."



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Christ Church, Grande Prairie Welcomes Amor as Rector

The Rev. Deacon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

People from across the Diocese of Athabasca gathered at Christ Church in Grande Prairie for the induction of the Rev. Dr. Maryann Amor as rector of the parish by Bishop David Greenwood.

The Eucharist service, held on Sunday, October 15, was a chance for some people to meet this new priest who had already been serving at Christ Church for several months.

The Gospel, from Matthew 22: 1-14, was read by the Rev. Deacon Karen Kovacs. In this parable, Jesus teaches about the king who called a wedding feast to which nobody came, so servants were sent out with orders to bring people in from the streets for the celebration. However, the king noticed one man who was not properly attired for a wedding feast, so he ordered that he be thrown out into the darkness. Jesus reminded his listeners that many are called, but few are chosen. It seemed to be a suitable metaphor for the placement of Amor in the parish of Christ Church, Grande Prairie.

As she previously explained to *The Messenger*: "Although God called me to ordination, to get onto the roller coaster ride, I know that I would not have stayed on it had God not accompanied me through it all... God did more than just call me to go for a crazy ride and leave me to deal with everything on my own, but God helped me to face all those dark stretches of track, each sudden drop in altitude, each unexpected sharp turn. I guess God was like my harness – I still had to go through the tough things, but God kept me tied to the car, so I wouldn't fly off into oblivion..."

"When I look back over these past 17 years, I am, actually, so glad I stayed on the roller coaster. I have learned so much along the way, have become a lot stronger than I ever knew I could be, have met the most amazing and wonderful people who have thoroughly blessed my life. Actually, I don't think I will ever get off -- I still don't have a clue where things are going, or what drop off is on the horizon, but I know my safety harness will never fail."

In his sermon Bishop Greenwood reminded us that the Bible is meant to both challenge and encourage us. We are to be united as we follow and serve Jesus, not just in a parish or a diocese, but with all Christians, as we all belong to Jesus.

All gatherings which bring us together should be celebrations. Yes, even funerals,

which celebrate a life following Jesus and the committal to an eternity with God in heaven. God is with us wherever we are. Our recent synod was a prime example of God guiding our deliberations and decisions through the process of intentional listening.

In giving us an example from his own life, Bishop Greenwood reminded us not to worry or build up fears as things confront us, but to lay them before God and ask him for help. Instead, try to focus on the good things in life and enjoy the wonder of God's creation. Bishop Greenwood was keen to tell people not to use him as an "example" of someone to follow. We are all fallible, so we must rely on God.

In his induction of Amor, Bishop Greenwood asked her to be a humble and open example of God's love, in her words and actions to the people of Christ Church and local community. With knowledge, justice, truth, love, mercy and wellness God gives us the "clothes" we need to put on to proclaim the Gospel.

Following the Promises of the Priest and the People, the lay readers of the parish were commissioned for ministry by the bishop and were present with certificates. All but one person, who was in Australia, were present.

After the final blessing, people were invited for lunch in the church basement.



Bishop David Greenwood installs Maryann Amor as rector of Christ Church, Grande Prairie.



Participating in the induction service, back row (l to r): Rosemary Howell, Bishop David Greenwood, Wayne Putman, Don Thompson. Middle row: Peter Clarke, Maryann Amor, Karen Kovacs. Front row: Melanie and Jade Osiguzo. Photos: Sharon Krushel

Edmonton Diocesan PWRDF Rep to Support Parishes in 'Great Work'

Bishop Stephen London is pleased to appoint Mr. Jeffrey Hanger, of St. Mary's, Ponoka, as Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) Rep. for the Edmonton diocese.

Hanger is married to Treena, parish secretary, and they and their children have been members of St. Mary's for about 17 years.

"The charity offers an incredible response to long-term development, immediate aid, and responses to issues here in Canada," says Hanger who has been the St. Mary's PWRDF rep for the last 5 years.

As diocesan rep, he hopes to "support the wonderful parish reps in their role. I have always received a lot of support from the national PWRDF staff and volunteers when I put on fundraising/awareness events," he says.

In addition to working with partners in Canada, PWRDF partners with relief agencies around the world. "This gives it a strength and depth that other



JEFFREY HANGER
Diocesan PWRDF Rep

agencies may not be able to reach," he says. "PWRDF is still working in Ukraine and Gaza for example."

He adds, "The work of PWRDF offers great insights into immediate and long-term challenges faced by the developing world. I hope I can shed some light on this great work."

As the diocesan rep, Hanger is available to "discuss the work of PWRDF and find answers to difficult (and easy) questions."

"The PWRDF can't continue this work without the support of the churches and parishioners, both on long-term projects and where need is immediate."

"This is our opportunity to support communities around the world, from the comfort of our pew. And I hope to be able to support the parish reps in that role," he says.

Parish reps for the PWRDF can contact Jeff Hanger by email at jeffhanger71@gmail.com

Companion Dioceses Partner to Put Roofs on Four Churches in Buyé Diocese

Since July, our companion partners in the Diocese of Buyé in Burundi have been able to put roofs on churches in Gatare sub-parish, St. Paul parish; Kwiri sub-parish, St. Emmanuel parish; Kumana sub-parish, Bigombo parish; Gakana parish.

"Christians, especially the ones from those sub-parishes, are very grateful for the support," said the Rev. Canon Dominique Ciza, executive secretary, Buyé diocese.

"It was amazing to see people from other denominations appreciating the work done and contributing some benches and chairs."

Approximately \$10,580 was contributed from the 2023 Diocese



of Edmonton programming budget, constituting one percent. The remainder of the funds were raised by individuals and parishes during the annual \$5/5 Ways campaign for medical cards.

Waiting *patiently* for God's promise of hope

Sometimes I struggle to practice what I preach. I know that patience is an important virtue; I even taught it to my kids when they were much younger. In our house, we had a dialogue when my kids tried to hurry us through something that couldn't be hurried. I would ask, what is patience? The answer was supposed to be 'waiting with a happy heart.' I usually got something smart-alecky in response, but the point remained.

But then, when I find myself caught, for instance, in a line that just doesn't seem to budge, I get impatient. I don't want to wait. There is a lot to do. And, yet... I know there is a wisdom to waiting patiently. What is that wisdom? It is that patient waiting is the necessary condition for spiritual depth. Important things are rarely hurried. Healing for instance always takes the time it needs, and rushing can make it worse. Relationships also require a lot of time to grow in trust. Maturity is the work of decades. And so on.

The message of the season of Advent is



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

the wisdom of patient waiting. Advent is the liturgical season in which we prepare for the coming of the Son of God, in time, at Christmas. Often, we want to jump right to Christmas. The commercial stores certainly do. We find Christmas decorations and music arriving in November. But, even in the church, we are often frustrated by not singing Christmas carols right away and getting the decorations up. I would invite us to resist that

temptation. To experience the season of Advent adds depth to our Christmas celebration. Advent is the season that reminds us why Christmas is so important. Christmas is not just an opportunity for some seasonal joy as the days get darker and darker. Rather, Christmas is a proclamation of hope for the deepest need of the human heart. To sit in Advent is to remind us, both that humanity needs a saviour, and that

God's time is not our time.

In Advent we listen to the prophets in the Sunday readings, particularly Isaiah. And the message of the prophets is the reminder that humanity is in exile. We are separated from God which can be seen in the deep divisions that exist within humanity. But the message of Advent is that God knows our need for healing and restoration and has given his promise of salvation.

The season of Advent is about meditating on God's promise of hope. As we enter into this season, remember that this is deeply personal. Advent is not only about salvation history, but it is about praying about where you need some hope in your life. Perhaps it is obvious; or perhaps you need to do some deep soul reflection. Whatever your struggle, God wants to bring his healing grace into your life. Advent reminds us that healing is not quick, and it doesn't always look like we want it to look. But it does come through God's presence in your life. Spend this season praying where you need Christ to be born in you anew.

Blessings,
+Steve

Honorary Canon installed during 59th Athabasca Synod Opening Service

The Rev. Deacon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

The opening Eucharist of the 59th Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca took place at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River on Thursday, September 28.

The church was resplendent in large banners, one for each parish displaying each parish's WHY and their unique vision to serve God.

As members of the clergy processed in singing the opening hymn, they were joined by an additional person wearing an Alb, Mrs. Vicki Townson.

During the service, Bishop Greenwood installed Townson as an Honorary Lay Canon to the Cathedral. This was cause for much celebrating. For many years, Vicki and Dan Townson have been actively involved with the parish of Christ Church.

As diocesan treasurer, Townson has assisted both the Diocesan Executive Council and the Management Committee. In his remarks, Bishop Greenwood mentioned how she helped him better understand the meaning of the figures on financial spreadsheets.

The sermon from Bishop Greenwood included his hopes and dreams for what might be achieved during the synod which ran for three days. This was the first in-person synod since the one held in Peace River in 2017. A truncated online synod was held in the interim, but only to put forward the plan for this year's synod and to comply with the Constitution of the Diocese.

The service continued with very uplifting singing, the Eucharist and prayers, all leading to a joyful conclusion with food and fellowship in the basement hall.

Thanks be to God.



Pictured clockwise, from top right: Honorary Lay Canon Vicki Townson; Bishop Greenwood places Canon Vicki Townson in her stall at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River; Bishop Greenwood collates Vicki Townson.

Photos: Sharon Krushel

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: JANUARY 2 for FEBRUARY 2024.

CONTACT
Margaret Glidden (Edmonton Editor)
anglicanmessenger@gmail.com

Peter Clarke (Athabasca Editor)
seens@telus.net

REPORTING, LAYOUT & DESIGN
Margaret Glidden

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59th Diocese of

National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Lights Up Screen with Encouraging Message

On the first full day of synod we heard, via a pre-recorded meeting, from a person that we had hoped to meet in person. However, this was not to be. Archbishop Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, was not able to attend our gathering in person as he was at another gathering in New Zealand.

Instead, Archbishop Harper and Bishop Greenwood met the night before synod over Zoom. An edited version of their conversation was played at synod.

In his frank and encouraging manner, Harper reminded us that the church is not the parish or diocese, but the greater community of believers in the world. This means we can share the basics of our faith, the origins and that good foundation we are blessed with, wherever we are.

We must treat the spiritual things inside us as a guide.

While there is diversity and nuance in cultures, there is also a real need to bring people back to community, which we have left behind.

Changes over many years have made us more insular than prior generations. This is not only a result of COVID, but also due to our lifestyle changes. Our dependence on cell phones, for example, draws us away from conversation with others around us. Although we readily communicate with our phones and on social media, we do not physically interact in the same way.

Bishop Harper reminded us that, as Christians, we all have access to prayer in common no matter where we are in the world. My wife and I, for instance, joined in a station of

the cross service while walking through a small Tuscan village in Italy. They prayed in their language, my wife in the Latin of her youth and me in English. We all felt closer together.

Having God at the center of all that we say and do is most important to our faith in Jesus. The message of love that we share also means we need to have and receive forgiveness. We must be humble in our lives and accept that we can go wrong.

Bishop Harper spoke of de-colonisation and the need to examine past events and recognise where hurts and damage were done. He believes that the church has much to do to keep moving forward,



especially in terms of truth and reconciliation. We are still only at the Truth stage.

The church is active and can adapt to challenges. He illustrated this thought with an ant colony analogy. Inevitably ants encounter difficulties, but they overcome obstacles by keeping a big-picture focus.

Fairview and Lac La Biche parishes reset following adversity and tragedy; emerge with fresh outlook and host of possibilities

Many people wore orange shirts to the 59th Athabasca Synod, on Saturday, September 30, National Truth and Reconciliation Day.

We were gathered in a small banquet room of the Chateau Nova Hotel in Peace River for much of the synod, which helped provide a sense of closeness and family, especially at times of worship.

The services and the singing were wonderful and, as is our custom, we started each day of synod with Morning Prayer.

Included in the response to the Bishop's Charge were several conclusions:

- We must hold onto Christ in our daily lives;
- We need to explore new ways to share Christ with others;
- Are we, especially the long-time parishioners, willing or able to let go?
- If we go out and live our faith, we shall thrive.

Later, there was a chance for every parish to share information about what they have done and experienced. The following are two examples of the many that were given:

The parish of Dunvegan (Fairview) gave a detailed and joyful report, delivered by Shirley Lof. They are a small group. Several years ago, they decided to sell their church building due to cost. That turned out to a wise decision. They now rent space in the local Fairview Mall which is more affordable and has increased the parish's visibility. They are able to meet people as they walk past the church space.

Recently, they began opening their space when the Food Bank is



open, to offer coffee and fellowship and a listening place to people.

They also began sharing their small space with the Lutheran Church at different times, which enable the churches to give each other mutual support and maximise their use of the small space. They are a resourceful and resilient parish that does well financially, to the point of helping support ministry at the diocesan level.

The report from St. Andrew's, Lac La Biche, by the Rev. Deacon Kevin Pederson and Kathryn Pederson, told of the recent tragedy of the church being

deliberately set on fire (see the earlier article in *The Messenger*). The fire was started in a locked church and in specific areas; the office and records were targeted and burned. Prayer books were stolen during subsequent break-ins. They had a problem with a tenant and every time they posted an announcement of a church service it was destroyed. However, people and other churches rallied around St. Andrew's parish and gave or lent items that a church would need. The parish is looking forward to settling their insurance claim and new beginnings, knowing that God is with them, always.



Athabasca Synod

Paulsen shares ideas for 'Moving Forward as Family of God'



Addressing the theme of synod, "Moving Forward as the Family of God," Paulsen said, we may be strong as a family, but we are not born to this family. Indeed, we are adopted into the family of Christ by our baptism.

Even though we are the family of Christ, she continued, like any family, we differ. Whether by location, background, culture or many other variables, we do differ. We are together as a family *only* because of God. We are because he is.

Who is God? Paulsen says we can look to Isaiah 40:25-30 for a good guide. God is justice and perfect love everywhere.

Table groups were invited to share their experiences of God interacting with them. The intimacy of such sharing is challenging for some, but it is what we are called to do in sharing Christ with others.

We were reminded about the importance of forgiveness in our lives; both to give, and to receive the forgiveness of others we may have hurt. Isaiah 42:3 was offered in support of this. We can pray for people to come to know Christ and we need to get outside of the church to help facilitate that. We cannot expect people to just come to a church because it is there. Those days are past.

Paulsen challenged us by suggesting we need to shape church to suit the needs of our

communities. This was an idea supported by other speakers during the synod. The passage from John 9 was shared. We must bear in mind that we may never know why people do not come to church.

We should understand that God is among us every day. We do know that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, before all things, the head of the body, and through him all things will be reconciled. In Jesus all the fullness of God dwells. John 4:1-42 Jesus wants us to know him. He crosses boundaries to do this. He takes people where they are. Jesus is the Messiah, God made man. 1 Peter 3:15

What is required to be the Family of God? Nothing and everything. By God's Grace, we exist, and our life is our gift to God. We know that God wants us to worship him and to share him. That sharing should be in both word and deed; in how we communicate with others and how others see what we do for others in our lives. In a large city we may not be known for what we do. But in our smaller towns and villages, what we do and how we behave is evident. We can be assured that wherever we are and wherever we go, God will be there also.

Paulsen challenged us. Where in our budgets is Local Outreach? Luke 10:1-16 speaks of the sending out of the 72 into every town and place, visiting the people. Not flitting from place to place but establishing connections with people and sharing God's love with them and healing them in his name.

We are the workers; God is the evangelist. It is not all up to us, but we are the feet and hands of God's plan to bring people to know him.

So, let's get out there, out of our comfort zone, step out in faith. We need to reclaim discipleship and evangelism if we are to serve God well.

We never know who we may meet, or where Jesus may lead us. Paulsen shared a personal experience whereby, through a small personal interaction with a stranger, that person became more curious and, subsequently, came to know Christ. Even the briefest encounter can lead to amazing changes.

We can grow and mature by becoming closer to Jesus, through our study of scripture and our times of prayer and getting closer to others. We believe that when two or three are gathered, he will hear our requests and we should pray with the expectation that God will not only hear but respond. Sometimes, unanswered prayer is his response.

When Cornelius prayed to God, Acts 10:1-48, God spoke to Peter. In verse 34, Peter proclaims that God shows no partiality, but that anyone who fears him and does right is acceptable to him. This was part of the calling of the Gentiles unto God.

God knows our pre-existing spiritual lives. And he meets folk in their own space. God calls us and we assist God. It is essential that people share their faith journey.

Many people in the Diocese of Athabasca are familiar with the Rev. Dr. Judy Paulsen because of the webinars she has hosted for us during the past couple of years. It was a joy to have her speak to us in person four times during our synod weekend. She is an engaging speaker with much to offer to challenge us.

Pictured, clockwise from top: Archbishop Chris Harper shares an encouraging message from New Zealand; guest speaker Judy Paulsen says it is by knowing God that we are a family; regional deans Danielle McKenzie and Blessing Shambare share ideas for "Crazy Cool Church Outreach," and "Daring Discipleship"; Shirley Lof, Kevin and Kathryn Pederson share how their parishes in Fairview and Lac La Biche have and are adapting to change; 59th Athabasca Synod participants share a joyful moment; Bishop David Greenwood talks with Lloyd Nayrota (right) and Leon Cadsap.

Stories by PETER CLARKE
Photos by SHARON KRUSHEL

Intimate relationship essence of 'Daring Discipleship'

Our last few synods have felt more like family gatherings as we spend time learning from speakers from far and wide. Speakers can introduce us to new ideas and actions for helping people know God better. That is not to suggest that we can only learn from strangers, we have much knowledge and experience within the diocese.

This synod featured sessions by our regional deans, the Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambare from Slave Lake; and the Rev. Deacon Danielle McKenzie from Grimshaw/Berwyn.

In his session Blessing Shambare suggested that each parish represents a family within the greater family of Christ. Beyond our homes. We are the children of God both within and outside our homes. In sharing Ezekiel 1:15-18 and 10:9-10, Shambare said he saw us like the wheels within wheels that the passages mention. There is a need for an active and constant activity



in our communities, proclaiming Jesus. The Glory to God that we say each week needs to go out into our villages, towns and cities. We need to have and share our joy in knowing Jesus with others, by how we act with people we meet, whether we know them or not.

To succeed in "Daring Discipleship" we must see our faith as a relationship, both with God

and others. We need a willingness to be intimate with God and create new stories in our times with others. As church, we need to cast our nets wider, celebrate our differences, give of ourselves, be excited and experiment.

In her session, "Crazy Cool Church Outreach," Danielle McKenzie, said Jesus' method of spreading His Word was by word

of mouth. There was no social media 30 years ago, let alone 2,000 years ago. She suggested that through the relationships we foster, we are that word of mouth now. Our outreach need not be a big financial burden. We know that God is always with us, and our deeds can be done with love. Some examples she shared are a Worship Under the Stars Night, a Candlelight and Christmas Carol service, a games night with refreshments, a Drop-in Chili and Church Night, a Halloween Children's Party. Another example is the outdoor Live Nativity Night hosted by St. Mark's, which is anticipated by community of High Prairie every year.

It was good to know that the diocesan family is sharing in so many possibilities of how we move forward, sharing Christ in our lives. We may be a small number of parishes in a vast area, but our sharing is what brings us closer together.

This is Our Missional



Holy Trinity, Edson Hosts Weaving to Remember the Children

BARBARA SHEPHERD
Holy Trinity, Edson

The Parish of Holy Trinity, Edson hosted the Remembering the Children weaving beginning on September 26.

We welcomed members of our congregation and visitors to our Main Street location where the weaving was displayed at our open house. We appreciated the baking of local resident Jodi Cox, who donated a portion of the profits of her Orange Shirt cookie creations to the Edson Friendship Centre.

To give as many members of the community as possible a chance to see the weaving (we estimate it was viewed by more than 40 people), we displayed it for the week until Thanksgiving Sunday.

Reflecting on the background of the diocesan weaving in her homily message, Alison Reid said, the project was started on Ash Wednesday by weaver and lay evangelist Alison (Jamie) Hurlburt, a member of Christ Church, Edmonton, in partnership with Fiona Brownlee, rural and

aboriginal communities liaison for the Edmonton diocese.

"Providing orange thread, a loom and instruction, Alison recruited and trained loom keepers in five Edmonton parishes," Reid said.

In the ensuing months, as the loom was moved from parish to parish, dozens of weavers including some from outside the Anglican community offered their prayers while weaving.

Our weekly Bible study group worked through the *Doctrine of Discovery: Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts* video and study guide throughout the month of September. This led to thoughtful discussion and reflection. Parishioners who were unable to attend the discussions were invited to review the materials at home.

Several parishioners attended the local event held by the Edson Friendship Centre on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, September 30, participating in a Smudge and Round Dance.

We are grateful to have had this very moving artwork in our community.



Greeters at Holy Trinity welcome people to view the Remembering the Children weaving.



The Messenger would like to hear what the missional heart of God is saying to your parish. What are you doing to be more relational, to be more missional? Please send your parish stories (max. 500 words) and pictures (min. 1 MB) to anglicanmessenger@gmail.com.

Good as New Shop Supports Rural Christian Churches and Community



MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

An ecumenical initiative started by four Christian churches in a rural Alberta town east of Edmonton continues to meet a community need for affordable clothing and household goods more than three decades later.

At the 31st Annual Meeting of the Good as New Shop, held in the first week of November, donations of \$6,000 each were presented to St. John's Anglican Church, Sedgewick United Church, Bethania Lutheran Cemetery and the Community Church of the Nazarene.

Receiving the donation on behalf of St. John's, Sedgewick was Sandra Rosiechuk, rector's warden, and a Good as New Shop

volunteer for eight years. "Our members that are able, gather on Monday and Thursday mornings to clean the shop, prepare donations for sale, and sometimes load the truck to take the items we cannot use to other centers," says Rosiechuk. "We take turns serving customers three afternoons a week."

The Good as New Shop operates out of the former Bethania Lutheran Church. Volunteers also shovel snow, mow grass, and take items to collection bins for recycling.

After building operating costs (utilities, repairs, etc.), the leftover income is divided among the four churches.

Pictured from left: Lois Polege, president, Good as New Shop; Joan Djos representing Bethania Lutheran Church; Betty Smith representing

Sedgewick United Church; Sandra Rosiechuk representing St. John's Anglican Church; Helen Whitten, treasurer, Good as New Shop; Doug Webb, pastor, Sedgewick Community Church of the Nazarene. Photo: MaryLou Rawluk

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St. George's, Devon Celebrates 70 Years as a Faith Community

DAVID BELKE
St. George's, Devon

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Parish of St. George's, Devon as a vibrant faith community. It is also the anniversary of the church building which has stood at the corner of Columbia Avenue and St. Clair Street for 40 years. Members of the parish honoured these twin milestones on Sunday, October 15 with a special service and events.

The Rev. Lisa Wojna led the congregation in the special anniversary program. The festivities started with a blessing of eight potentilla shrubs newly planted on the church's front lawn as enduring signs of the church's longevity. Also known as cinquefoil, the potentilla is a hardy plant well suited for the Alberta climate, but it is also one rich with meaning and symbolism. Since ancient times, the resilient shrub has been used in herbal medicine, while in Christian symbology and heraldry, it is widely regarded as signifying faith, hope, attachment, and, appropriately for a church dedicated to the knightly St. George, honour, pride and reliability.

After the blessing, members of the congregation were invited to place painted stones at the base of the plants. Each one was individually decorated by patients at the Grey Nuns hospital where Wojna also works as a chaplain. Each

hand-painted rock carried hope for the future of the church including Love, Laughter, Kindness, Charity and many more optimistic messages.

Catharina Lamaitre found being part of the rock-laying ritual, especially moving. A newcomer to the congregation, she said, "It made it very clear to me, since I am a new one at the church, I am part of it now."

After the outdoor gathering, a tour of St. George's small and welcoming sanctuary was an opportunity for congregants to observe the significant features of their well-loved building. Wojna made special note of the altar, the lectern that supported the word of the Lord and the font which had only a month ago been used for an adult baptism.

The service was marked by song and a warm sense of

connection. Wojna's sermon focused not only on the importance of remembering the past but also on having a hopeful and disciplined faith in the future.

After the service, the congregation and their guests gathered in the basement hall for a potluck lunch to share memories and lively conversation. Members of the community offered items for the table and were offered a piece of anniversary cake. People also poured over photo albums from St. George's past celebrations.

The celebrations were further enriched by the arrival of former St. George's rector the Rev. Christian Gordon and his wife Lisa who led the church for many years before moving on to St. Patrick's Anglican Church in Edmonton. The Gordons had rushed to Devon following St. Patrick's service and were warmly welcomed to St.

George's anniversary festivities. Wojna received praise for her care in creating an event that truly reflected the church's character.

"It felt like it was tailor-made for St. George's," said Alice Nycholat, who expressed that the celebration both recognised the parish community's past as well as its hopes for the future.

This memorable marking of a milestone year successfully connected people as a community in Christ. As Paul Humphries remarked, "St. George's has always been about close fellowship."

The parish celebrated their paired anniversaries with a meaningful reaffirmation of past success, a communion of memories, and a hopeful eye to the years to come.



From left: former St. George's, Devon rector Christian Gordon catches up with Lisa Wojna; Lisa Wojna blesses shrubs that were planted in front of the church to mark the anniversaries; people get to know one another after the service.

St. Thomas Welcomes Sherwood Park Families to Pet Blessings, Prayers, Pumpkin Carving and Pizza!

CANON CHELSY BOUWMAN
St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

St. Thomas, Sherwood Park welcomed families (approximately 40 children and their parents) to our parish's annual Prayers, Pumpkins and Pizza event. Gathering upstairs in the church, we took time to talk about the many things we are grateful for, then headed downstairs to carve pumpkins with our friends and family. Before packing up our carved pumpkins to take home, we ended our day by devouring 17 large pizzas. Pumpkin carving makes you work up an



Puppies, stuffies and lizards, oh my! On Wednesday, October 4, folks and their beloved pets gathered together at St. Thomas Anglican Church in Sherwood Park for a Blessing of Pets Service.

The Rev. Chelsy Bouwman was delighted to welcome many of our

community's four-legged friends and to enjoy some holy chaos as our pets got to know one another. Children also brought pictures of their pets and their favourite stuffies to be blessed!

"Let everything that has breath, praise the Lord!"



Inspiration

ADVENT ACTIVITIES 2023

- Stick 1:** Fight for a cause Jesus would support. Set aside time and place to hear the Holy Spirit's voice. Read Luke 2:1-20. Watch a film version of the Gospels.
- Stick 2:** Reconcile with someone you've been estranged from. Invite someone to share coffee and conversation. Read Luke 3:1-6.
- Stick 3:** Bring lunch to someone who doesn't get out much. Invite someone to discover part of God's beautiful earth with you. Read Luke 3:7-18.
- Stick 4:** Do a secret act of kindness. Listen for God's voice in music. Encourage someone with kind words. Read Luke 1:39-45.
- Stick 5:** Bake/buy cookies or muffins and share them with friends, co-workers or people in need. Listen to someone's story. Read Luke 21:25-36.
- Stick 6:** Pray for every neighbour on your street. Do errands for a shut-in. Drop a veggie tray off to a nurse's station at the hospital.
- Stick 7:** Write a note of encouragement to someone who needs it. Use a centring prayer to hear God's voice. Study the life of Jesus written by scholars.
- Stick 8:** Reflect and record how much joy the Advent season has brought you. Smile and thank someone who serves you. Hide a happy note for someone to find.

Anne Frank Diary of a Young Girl Definitive Edition



MARION BULMER
St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

Jews of German descent who fled Germany in the early 1930s after the Nazis came to power. They were well educated. One is caught up in the fear that grips them, the fear of living in hiding, the fear of bombs. We are fortunate to be free to move about, be with who we choose, to spend time in nature.

We see how important food becomes in difficult times. I was deeply touched by the four Dutch people who help this group of eight. They took a huge risk and did suffer because of helping. One is touched by the humanity and strength of character shown by the Dutch who assisted Jewish people.

Once again, we realise the capacity for displaced people or refugee people to survive often rests on how wealthy they are, and who will help them. However, even money does not ensure safety for this family.

Anne admires and loves her father, I cannot imagine his pain and hurt realising how alone she felt, how she could not share with him because he did not share. He seems to be a good man. A man who worked hard to save his family and ultimately fails. One wonders how difficult this was for him, as he survived the horror.

This monumental book leaves the reader felling blessed to have been able to be immersed in Anne's thoughts and feelings. We continue to lose innocent children to war, children whose lives would have been a gift to the world. Yes, Anne's diary is a gift, but her future was lost.

Born in 1929, Anne could still be living today had her life not been cut short. Anne and her sister die of typhoid in Bergen-Bergen concentration camp. Ultimately one aches for her and the many who die at the hands of other people.

This book first had a profound influence on me when I read the edited version in my teens. Anne's father published his edited version in 1947. Otto particularly wished to protect his wife, Anne's mother. In her original diary, Anne wrote of sex and criticised those living in the Annex.

The Definitive Edition came out in the 1990s. Each time I read this masterpiece covering just over a two-year period, it was as if I had received a visceral punch. Knowing the outcome made reading it a second time even more difficult.

Perhaps like many, this book contributed to my desire to understand the Second World War. How could we as people deliberately and systematically kill other humans? How could we deem others unworthy of life and treat them as scapegoats?

Anne's diary introduces us to a lovely girl between the age of 13 and 15, who seeks to further her education, who has goals, who wants to correct her faults. Anne talks of being self-aware. She seems very self-aware for her age. She speaks of how, without her faith, she would have no moorings in the world. She knows she would like to be a writer, that she wants to be remembered. The poignancy of this is that she *is* remembered.

Anne's family members were

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

This historical novel follows a teenager as he joins three eccentric "wise" men on the trip of a lifetime. Like any of life's journeys, it involves learning, love, sadness, and a destination beyond all expectation.

The book, published by Edmonton author David Holehouse, is available from depthofheaven.com as an E-Pub, or as a paperback from dwholehouse@gmail.com.

Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas.
Thank you for your generous support!

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

ADVENT CONTROVERSIES

- WHO WILL LIGHT THE CANDLES ON THE ADVENT WREATH?** (Illustration shows a man pointing to a candle with 'NO', a woman pointing to a candle with 'NO', and a child pointing to a candle with 'YES'.
- SHOULD THE WREATH HAVE ONE PINK CANDLE?** (Illustration shows three people holding signs that say 'YES', 'NO', and 'IT'S ROSE, NOT PINK'.
- WHETHER TO PREACH ON CHALLENGING ADVENT THEMES** (Illustration shows a man preaching into a chasm labeled 'CHASM (SMALL)' and a group of people sitting on a bench with the text 'SHALL WE PUT THE TREE UP THIS AFTERNOON?' above them.
- WHO COULD HAVE EATEN THE VESTRY ADVENT CALENDAR CHOCOLATES?** (Illustration shows a man looking at a board of advent calendar chocolates and another man looking at a chocolate.