



THE MESSENGER



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Photo: Julio C. Martin



At left: a rainbow makes an arch over St. Mary and St. George Church in 2014. Ten years later, the church and one-third of the town of Jasper was consumed by wildfire.

Anglican community mourns loss of beloved St. Mary and St. George Church in Jasper

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

When 500-foot flames leapt toward mountain tops on July 23, there was little more firefighters, first responders, and Parks Canada employees could do to stop the wildfire from roaring through parts of the town of Jasper.

Pictures posted to social media on July 24, showed all that remained of the historic St. Mary and St. George Anglican Church, once a beautiful example of Gothic architecture, was a chimney stack and parts of the stone foundation. A sign on the church property that once welcomed visitors to Sunday worship, stood in stark contrast to its ashen surroundings.

"We are all heartbroken. There are no words," said Bishop Stephen London in a letter confirming the sad news to people of the Edmonton diocese. Incredibly, although it was later confirmed the fire had consumed one-third

of the town, more than 20,000 residents and visitors had been safely evacuated.

"We are profoundly grateful for the people who put their lives on the line to fight the fire and ensure residents and visitors of the Jasper community were safely evacuated," said Bishop London.

Unfortunately, all but three members of the parish lost their homes, including those who resided in the Cabin Creek neighbourhood. Many ecumenical friends of the church, such as Jasper United Church, also lost homes and church buildings.

The Anglican community in Jasper has worshipped together since 1909, whether in a tent, box car, or log church, and, most recently in St. Mary's and St. George's church, which housed the local food bank and hosted community events and groups throughout the year.

"Please continue to uphold the community of Jasper and parish of St. Mary and St. George in

"We are all heartbroken. There are no words."

prayer," says Bishop London.

A Beloved Community

Today, the Rt. Rev. Julio C. Martin, is the diocesan bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Southeastern Mexico, but in the fall of 2010, he had just moved to Jasper with his wife and their two-month-old son.

"To say we were not impressed by the beauty of the landscape would be a lie. But to say we were overwhelmed by the love and care, and the genuine Christian warmth and welcome of our parishioners in St. Mary and St. George Parish is not an exaggeration," he says.

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All Saints' Cathedral offers space to agency assisting temporary foreign workers displaced by Jasper wildfire

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"The now destroyed church building was indeed beautiful and, in many ways, unique (it was one of the only churches with the Arthurian legend told in its stained-glass windows), but the hearts of our Jasperites' siblings in Christ do really harbour God's Kingdom on earth. It was not only my family who experienced being embraced by a Christian community. Every summer visitors from all over Canada and the world were impressed by the welcome they were offered by the small yet enormously devoted and committed group of parishioners who would make sure that Jasper - more than one of the most beautiful places on earth - is a place you can pray and praise in the Anglican tradition with one of the most beautiful families of the body of Christ."

Retired Bishop Victoria Matthews says Jasper is different from any other town or parish she has known.

"The memory of the town is dear to my heart, and the parish church of St. Mary and St. George was the parish I chose to attend on my last Sunday in the Edmonton Diocese before leaving for Christchurch, New Zealand. I would even say my initial experience of Jasper had the flavour of discovering Narnia. Now, however, because of the wildfire, much of that exquisite town, especially our beloved Anglican parish church, is gone. What is left is a mountain of memories, and a commitment to rebuild community. I do not doubt that will happen. The new town will be different, of course, but it will be authentically Jasper.

"As I recall the times I spent in Jasper, I especially remember a weekend with teenagers and young adults. We drove out from Edmonton. It was cold, around -30 degrees the whole weekend, yet we hiked, sang, prayed, studied scripture and attended church together. It was a formative time as it helped prepare the group for that summer's pilgrimage to Spain and France to walk the Camino and visit Taizé.

"It is my deep hope and prayer that whatever is built in the future will be as hospitable and welcoming as the Jasper of old. Remember, people are more important than even the most beautiful building, and

community will happen wherever there are people of goodwill and a commitment to work together. Let us rebuild Jasper and give God the glory."

People come from around the world to work in Jasper and many of the evacuees were new to Canada. Jasper Anglican Church parishioners had helped settle several hundred Ukrainian refugees displaced by war.

Locally, nationally and internationally, there has been an outpouring of support for the Jasper Anglican community.

"We are all devastated by the loss of St. Mary's church in Jasper and want to support all those affected by the fire," says Donna Wilkinson, a member of the "Crew of St. Mary's Edgerton" (Dayspring Ministry) who, over the August Long Weekend, raised \$2,800 for Jasper Anglican Church with their annual Lakeside Bake Sale.

Additionally, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) gave \$5,000 to the Diocese of Edmonton for the Jasper Employment and Education Centre that is helping temporary foreign workers displaced by



St. Mary's in Edgerton donated the proceeds from its annual August Long Weekend bake sale to help support the parish of St. Mary and St. George, Jasper Parish.



Media interview temporary foreign workers displaced by the Jasper wildfire at All Saints' Cathedral in downtown Edmonton.

the fire. The diocese has also received \$25,000 from an Order of the Society of St. John the Evangelist of Massachusetts for St. Mary's and St. George's parish.

Among the evacuees bussed to Edmonton were temporary foreign workers new to Canada. They were being lodged in a downtown hotel and connected to social supports through the Jasper Employment and Education Centre.

Every day, the centre receives between 50 and 100 clients, many of whom have been traumatised. All Saints' Cathedral clergy heard the centre had

need for more space and offered to share the Cathedral Hall.

"Most temporary foreign workers come to Jasper from the Philippines or India as a pathway into Canada," says Heidi Veluw, Jasper Employment and Education Centre.

"This is a traumatised group who drove through hell and don't know what the future holds. The thought of not being able to go back (because either their homes or livelihoods have been destroyed) to the only place in Canada they know is hard."

As of August 8, Jasper National Park remained closed, with a reopening date still reported to be several weeks away.

The centre employs some of those temporary foreign workers and Veluw is "extremely grateful" to All Saints' Cathedral for their hospitality.

Individuals who would like to donate to the Jasper Anglican parish can do so online at <https://edmonton.anglican.ca/> (select "Donate - Jasper Fire Fund").

Donations in support of the local Jasper community can be made to the Caring Community Fund: www.jaspercommunityteamsociety.ca; or via the Canadian Red Cross: give.redcross.ca

Family of churches joined together for Gospel work

By July, Anna Bubel, Strategic Planning Committee Consultant, had met with every parish in Diocese of Edmonton, either in person, or in a couple of extraordinary cases, via video or phone conference. Bubel says she had many "Ah-ha!" moments as she drove 4,600 kms to visit parishes. These are her top three:

- "I am blown away by the dedication of people. So many elderly women, in particular, are holding their church communities together despite declining numbers and increased expenses. They are clearly bound by a deep love of God and each other -- doing everything to keep their church doors open and keep Christ at the center of their lives. 'Small but mighty' was a description that was often repeated."
- "I was impressed by the clear and practical thinking of people when sharing their challenges and opportunities. There was a level-headedness when describing the struggles of their parishes."
- "The themes arising from the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analyses and the sessions were overwhelmingly similar and do not cut neatly along urban vs. rural divides. Smaller parishes experience the same challenges as larger ones,

albeit on a different scale. Rural parishioners tithe more per capita than their urban brethren. They are tackling the same challenges but with fewer human and financial resources. Parishes struggle with big-picture diocesan thinking (seeing themselves as part of a diocesan family of churches)."

"We are grateful to all of you for listening in spirit together by completing the membership survey and/or participating in a parish engagement session. As with any plan, we first needed to listen to our parishes and parishioners," says Bishop Stephen London.

With the discovery phase of our strategic planning journey nearing completion, Bubel is now summarising her learnings to share with participating parishes by the end of September or, at the latest, the first week in October. She is writing a comprehensive report for members of Synod to reflect on before they gather in October.

Her report on the parish engagement phase of the strategic planning process will be presented at our 69th Synod, "Hearts Burning Within Us," scheduled to take place on October 18 and 19.

"We plan to spend several hours as a



Synod talking and praying about the report. This is important work because it is from these conversations that we will develop the Strategic Plan for our diocese and parishes. Executive Council will use the insight gleaned from our discussions about Anna's report to chart a course for our next five years together," says Bishop London.

"We are in a challenging time as a church, and we need to discern together where Christ is calling us currently to invest our time and resources. We are a family of churches joined together for the work of the Gospel in Central Alberta. Please pray for our discernment as we listen to the voice of God together. Thank you for embarking on this journey in faith together."

Curb negative thinking by listening for God's voice

In August, we were in worship at our diocesan camp (which was going wonderfully, I must say). The Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambare led us saying, "For this reflection activity, Lazarus is going to come out. I want you to imagine our church. Our diocese. Our parishes. Our communities, ourselves, you. What words of death, destruction, rejection, disempowering or discouragement have been spoken? Think about what you have received, take a moment and write one or two words on a piece of paper. Then, gently tape what you have written onto the shroud covering Lazarus."



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

Out came Lazarus (played admirably by Blessing's son, Mukundi). He was helped into the center, surrounded in a shroud tied up with string. We stared at him and thought. One by one, we wrote on our papers, went up to Lazarus and gently stuck them to his shroud.

"Can't do." "Unwanted." "It is hard to believe, but a good story." "Genocide." "Human Control." "Do more with less." "Pedophile." "Weary." "Bully." "Exiled." "Stinks." "Not enough."

More people came up, adding their words or phrases - Lazarus was getting covered from head to foot.

and let him go."

Many of us around Lazarus came up to him. Some removed the words. Some cut the string. Some took the shroud right off - and there was Mukundi.

"Now, from the readings we have heard," Blessing continued, "what is God telling you? What is one word or phrase of life which God is telling you? Write that word on another piece of paper, and then stick that paper on this cross."

Again, we paused for thought, wrote something down and, one by one, came up to the cross.

"Awake." "Love one another." "Leave it

- "Lost and afraid."
- "Forgotten." "No help."
- "No friends." "Help me Lord, I'm at the end. Need your power."
- "Resentment." "Racist."
- "Addiction." "Hopelessness."
- "Never enough." "Give up on trying." "Failure." "Let down."
- "Betrayed." "Life is hard."
- "Worn." "Alone." "Hopeless."
- "Finished."
- "Thank you." Blessing continued. "Now, imagine in the Gospel how Jesus shows up, calls Lazarus to come out and frees him. Jesus is now calling Lazarus. Help Lazarus out of his clothing! Untie him

- into God's hand (your problems)." "Stillness."
- "Always there." "Every day is a dance!"
- "Family." "Believe." "Brotherly love, charity and relief." "Love is still possible." "Love, Justice, Hope, Daring, Go!" "Love" (thrice). "Believe, Surrender." "Peace." "Hope" (thrice). "Hopeful."
- "Hopefulness." "Hope is alive." "Believe and keep going!" "Love cat, animals, life, love." "Here comes the Son!" "Communion, Community."
- "Communion." "Comfort." "Freedom from Sin." "Accepted and loved." "Joy." "Smile and love." "Faith." "Lovely." "Yes." "Togetherness."
- "Laughter." "Pray." "Compassion." "Love another."

Now it was the cross' turn to be covered. Christ had freed Lazarus (and us) from wearing all the negative things which had been thrown at us. Through Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection we could now, instead of wearing those words of death, wear words of life. We were given new life.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for doing so. Thank you, Rev. Dr. Blessing, for leading us in this. And thank you, to all who participated in a wonderful Camp GIFT: Growing In Faith Together, which we held to celebrate our 150 years together as a diocese.

Grow our faith together, Oh Lord, and transform Your world. Amen.

+ David

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: SEPTEMBER 1 for OCTOBER 2024.

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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 anglicanmessenger@gmail.com

PWRDF SUNDAY
The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund
September 15, 2024

Diocese of Edmonton YOUTH
BOWLING Night
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST
STARTS AT 6:30PM-9:00PM
BONNIE DOON BOWLING LANES - 8330 82 AVE NW
FRIENDS WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED!
RSVP TO REV. DANIELLE @ DANIELLE@HOLYTRINITY.AB.CA

Making worship services inclusive and accessible to all

JENNIFER STEWART

Disability Justice Team, Diocese of Edmonton

A few years ago, I filled out a Diocesan survey about social justice with a very personal note: I was hoping to ensure that my daughter, a neurodivergent child with a rich spiritual life, could attend church as part of a welcoming and accommodating faith community.

I knocked and the door opened! The Ven. Jordan Ware, Archdeacon for Social Justice, called me to talk about the possibilities for inclusive worship, and she wondered if we could connect with others to form a team. And the work began – work that has been so much more challenging and more inspiring than I could have imagined.

Under the umbrella of the Social Justice Committee, Diocese of Edmonton, the Disability Justice Team is a remarkable group. Each group member has their own lived experience and stories. As we have shared our stories, I have realised that disability justice means my heart will be broken open with care, with love and sometimes with profound anger and frustration in the face of injustice and exclusion. And I have learned that gathering in community, praying together and sharing our experiences always brings healing and hope.

We need to hear the stories of many people to understand what disability justice means. It is a truth that all of us, at some time in our lives, will need accommodations for mobility or disability, and that some of us will always need accommodations to fully participate in church, at school, in employment and in the community. Social justice requires us to hear the voices of people living with disabilities, to really listen and follow their lead.

And we need a community to do this work of disability justice. Living with a disability can often mean individuals and families are isolated. This includes wondering about going to church; if we will be met with understanding and accommodations that offer safety and support, enabling each person to experience themselves as a beloved child of God with gifts and strengths to share.

Over the last two years, our team has developed an inclusive worship service guided by Rhythms of Grace – a program resource for worship services and faith formation for

children with autism, with accommodations that work especially for families of children who are neurodivergent. This includes a sensory-friendly environment with activities, music, storytelling, liturgy, prayer and the Eucharist. We have a "soft start" and multiple ways of participating in the service, with crafts, sharing and gathering and music. We welcome movement and have the best basket of fidget toys and tools! We encourage many ways of engaging with story and scripture, and listen to the voices of those attending, their laughter and their prayers. We hope parents and caregivers can relax when they know their children are welcome to be who they are and that our team has much experience to support them. We use simple and clear language and visuals so that everyone can follow along, and we hope to introduce American Sign Language to the service.

At each service we learn, and we are in ongoing conversation and prayer as we consider the many ways forward toward disability justice in the church. We are focused on getting the word out about our inclusive worship services so more families can attend. We offer resources to all parishes seeking information and guidance on accessibility and accommodations for people of all ages with disabilities. As well, we envision the possibility of a range of worship services for youth and adults, as we continue to learn and add new team members.

The Disability Justice Team has challenged me to imagine inclusive worship. The great strength of social justice work in the church is that it challenges us to engage with complexity, innovate and learn. In return, we find renewal in faith, hope and love. We find home.

I am grateful for the core members of the Disability Justice Team, including: Jenny Stuart,



Pictured above, l to r: Disability Justice Team members Vaughn and Cheryl Atkinson, Lynne Reckhow. Right: Cheryl Atkinson has a gift for creating fun and sensory-friendly activities and crafts for people of all ages participating in inclusive worship services.



Cheryl and Vaughn Atkinson, Wynne Whitten-Holmes, Sam Stauffer, Lynne Reckhow, Kristin Binnema. I am thankful for the clergy and musicians who have made our inclusive worship services so beautiful. Please join us for our next inclusive service. We will share information about upcoming services in the Synod Scene e-newsletter. If you would like to join our team, please email me, Jennifer Stewart, at js.prayerworks@gmail.com.

Social Justice Day to empower young people to respond to inequality

Young people, ages 13 to 30, of every faith, and those seeking to learn more about how our Christian faith compels us to transform the unjust structures of society, are invited to engage with first-voice advocates and leaders in communities who are forging the way for racial justice, queer justice, economic justice, environmental justice, prison justice and disability justice.

Explore the ways these concerns overlap and intersect, finding commonalities and shared inspiration for change at the Youth Social Justice Day hosted by the Edmonton diocese's Social Justice Committee on October 5, from noon to 6 pm.

A highlight of the day promises to be a panel discussion on advocating for systems and structural change (in law, public policy, human rights and public services), and an exploration of how to bring change.

Young people will have the opportunity to learn about and engage with these topics, share their ideas and envision social justice in their futures.

We are calling youth to reflect on our call as Christians to be attentive to and participate

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35

in the work of social justice and to join in community outreach and partnerships.

We are inspired by the passion and commitment of our young people to share their voices and envision new ways to respond to cries for social justice in our communities and in the world.

All young people are welcome to this fully accessible event, to be held at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, 11111 – 57 Avenue NW, Edmonton. In addition to the presentations, there will be time to meet and get to know each other, musical interludes and snacks.

Save the date and watch the Synod Scene e-newsletter (<https://edmonton.anglican.ca/newsletters/>) in the coming weeks for registration details and volunteer opportunities! Youth groups are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Youth Social Justice Day
October 5, 12 to 6 pm
St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
11111 – 57 Avenue, Edmonton, AB

Christian Bikers Ride into Inaugural Perryvale St. Thomas Motorcycle Ministry and Campout

BRUNO WISKEL
St. Thomas, Perryvale

When the congregation of St. Thomas', Perryvale was looking for a themed weekend to bring together Anglicans of all stripes, we discovered that 80 per cent of the parishioners, all members of the choir, the minister and the deacon, either rode a motorcycle or was a plus-one of someone who did.

So was born the inaugural Motorcycle Ministry and Campout, courtesy of the Perryvale St. Thomas Christian Motorcycle Association.

Friday night featured a meet-and-greet gathering, including a campfire, hotdog roast and a music marmalade (Anglican music jam). Bikers, including members of the Christian

Motorcyclists Association of Canada (CMAC), from across Alberta and as far away as Lethbridge, joined in the festivities.

Saturday started off with a pancake breakfast followed by a morning devotional by the Rev. Rose Howell. At noon, our bikers' parade rode through the hamlet of Perryvale before hitting the open road. Non-bikers also spent the day outdoors picking mushrooms at a nearby farm. In the evening, a potluck dinner was followed by singing around the campfire.

Ideal weather conditions on Sunday morning allowed for a multi-parish, outdoor service led by Howell, followed by a potluck luncheon and a final hug-and-handshake farewell.

Plans are already underway for the second annual Perryvale St. Thomas Motorcycle Ministry and Campout!



Pictured clockwise from top right: Paul brought his Honda Mini Trail all the way from southern Alberta to join in on the fun; Guy and Ramona, both members of the Christian Motorcyclists Association of Canada (CMAC), with their Harley in front of St. Thomas Anglican Church in Perryvale; CMAC member Guy roasts wieners at the meet and greet; Rose Howell leads the outdoor Sunday service amidst vibrant trees, below a gloriously blue Alberta summer sky.

Confirmation and Anniversary Celebration at All Saints', Athabasca



Bishop David Greenwood presides at a Confirmation Service and celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Athabasca diocese at All Saints', Athabasca on Sunday, May 19. During a wonderful lunch after the service, Bishop Greenwood toured the newly revitalised museum in the basement of the church.

Christ Church Significant Part of Grande Prairie Community



Bishop David Greenwood had the pleasure of celebrating the Eucharist at Christ Church in Grande Prairie as part of the 150th Anniversary celebration of the diocese. Many artifacts, writings and pictures from the earliest days of the parish, were displayed. It was an ideal way to show the particular significance that the Anglican Church has made in Grande Prairie. Following the service, there was a barbecue outside the church in the glorious sunshine.



Archbishop Linda Nicholls Joins in Celebration of Athabasca Diocese's 150th Year

The Rev. Deacon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

Throughout 2024, parishes of the Diocese of Athabasca are celebrating, in their own unique way, the 150th Anniversary of the forming of the diocese.

For example, on June 16, St. Luke's in Beaverlodge held an 1800's-style Eucharist Service and Picnic, in a similar fashion to 150 years ago. Other churches have planned celebration services, barbecues picnics and potluck meals.

To kick off its celebration year, Athabasca diocese presented a special edition of its annual Bible Reading Marathon during Holy Week. Archbishop Linda Nicholls, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, flew directly from Rome, Italy to preach at the 150th Anniversary Eucharist at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River on Sunday, May 5.

During what will likely be her last visit to the diocese as Primate, she is retiring in September, Archbishop Nicholls spent three full days in a small area of this vast diocese. She visited St. Bartholomew's, Grimshaw; Christ Church, Berwyn; Christ Church, Grande Prairie; and St. Helen's, Fairview, which will celebrate its 10-year-anniversary in Fairview Mall on November 23.

As this is written, the inaugural St. Thomas', Perryvale Motorcycle Ministry and Campout had just taken place; the G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together) Family Camp, featuring National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper as an invited guest, was coming up at Camp Artaban; and adventurers participating in the Youth Wilderness Canoe Trip were paddling down the Clearwater River from Saskatchewan



Archbishop Linda Nicholls and Athabasca Bishop David Greenwood with the 150th Anniversary Service congregation at St. James' Cathedral in Peace River.

to Fort McMurray. (Watch for the October issue for the full story.)

September will see a planting of crosses at St. John's Church in Wabasca; and other church communities, such as St. Mark's, High Prairie; and St. Anne's, Valleyview, will invite friends to join them for Back to Church Sunday. In October, 15 months after it was damaged by fire, the rebuilt church building of St. Andrew's, Lac La Biche will re-open.

The Greenwoods, Bishop David and Benita, continue to travel throughout the diocese to attend as many of these anniversary events as possible. Especially noteworthy was their trip

to St. Paul's, Fort Chipewyan; All Saints', Fort McMurray; and St. Thomas', Fort McMurray, which was covered in a previous Messenger article.

A diocesan-wide Thanksgiving Service will be broadcast on November 10 and will feature participation from many parishes.

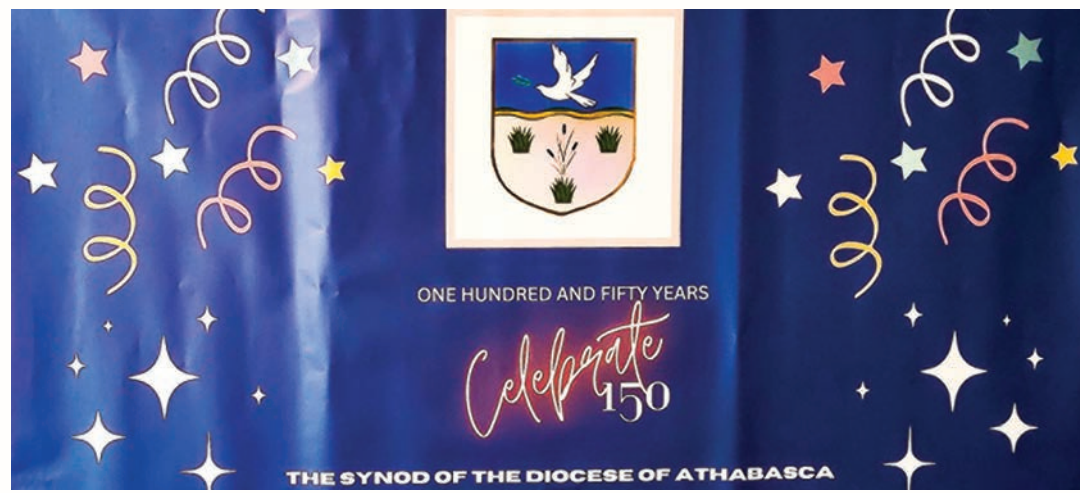
While these pictures offer a glimpse at the 150th-anniversary celebrations, thus far, there is still much more to come!

We celebrate and give thanks to God for changing this Mission Diocese into a Diocese with a Mission.

Pictured clockwise from top left: Archbishop Linda Nicholls (second from right) presents a 150th Anniversary Certificate to, from left: Rose Gish, rector's warden; Canon Terry Leer; Dave Cambridge, people's warden, of the St. James' Cathedral, Peace River parish; Archbishop Nicholls at St. Helen's in the Fairview Mall and with the congregation of St. Helen's; Archbishop Nicholls visits with Benita and Bishop David Greenwood; Peter and Jeannette Clarke.

Photos: Peter Clarke, Benita Greenwood, Sharon Krushel

Parishes of Vast Northern Alberta Diocese Celebrate with Anniversary Services, Potlucks and Fellowship



Pictured clockwise from top left: the celebration banner is displayed in parishes marking the 150th anniversary of Athabasca diocese; Anglican Church of Canada Primate Linda Nicholls greets people outside St. James' Cathedral in Peace River; the Parish of Christ Church, Berwyn welcoming Archbishop Nicholls and Athabasca Bishop David Greenwood with cookies, cakes and smiles; the Parish of St. Bartolomew's, Grimshaw sitting down to tea with their Archbishop and Bishop; the Archbishop and Bishop present a certificate commemorating the anniversary; Nicholls and Greenwood visit THE STORE run by Christ Church in Berwyn.



'Precious in My Eyes' - Athabasca ACW Conference

CANDACE MAHAFFEY
ACW Conference Coordinator, Diocese of Athabasca

Our annual ACW Conference, held in Grande Prairie with the theme "You are Precious in my Eyes," featured Guest Speaker the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, a Hebrew Bible scholar. She led us on a deep dive into the Isaiah 43:1-7 scripture. We learned about how the poet used repetition to get the attention of his audience. We also spent time reflecting on the scripture individually. We created collages while sharing in small groups.

It was great to see so many ladies from across the diocese enjoying great music, fellowship and food. However, we were anticipating even greater participation.



We are applying to the National ACW to host the 2026 National President and Coordinators Conference in Grande Prairie. We would like to hear your ideas for making the conference more accessible.

St. John's United Anglican Church kids contribute to Athabasca diocese's anniversary service in Manning

Bishop David Greenwood had the pleasure of visiting St. John's United Anglican Church in Manning on May 12. The congregation celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Athabasca diocese with a Eucharist Service on Mother's Day.

The children were invited to give thanks for something in their life by placing an offering into a decorative bottle. One year, the children's weekly thanks-giving collection helped purchase a goat through the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) World of Gifts program. They were disappointed when it did not show up at the church. Another time they donated to a school of ministry.

On this last day of Sunday school for the children, they sang the Johnny Applesseed Grace before lunch and it was announced that they had raised more than \$360, which they used to purchase toiletries for the local shelter.



Each child was given a Bible to take home and read over the summer.



St. Luke's, Beaverlodge Steps Out in 1860's Fashion



The congregation of St. Luke's, Beaverlodge celebrated the 150th year of the Athabasca diocese at an outdoor Eucharist Service, held at Hommy Park on Sunday, June 16. The liturgy, taken from Anglican services around 1860, was noticeably different from our services today. Some people dressed in period costume for worship and the barbecue following the service.

Locals Care for Cherry Point Church

All Saints at Cherry Point is a Provincial Historic Site owned by the Athabasca diocese and cared for by a local group. The welcoming, caring and community-minded congregation holds Sunday services once a month.

The congregation welcomed Bishop David Greenwood to celebrate the Eucharist on June 9. Before the service, Bishop David and Benita Greenwood were shown the Anglican cemetery close by the church, enjoying a meal afterward.



Parish Family of St. Luke's, Ft. Vermilion Welcomes Bishop David and Benita Greenwood



Bishop David and Benita Greenwood had the pleasure of attending St. Luke's, Fort Vermilion on Sunday July 28, where the Bishop presided at the Eucharist. There was also a barbecue and a time of fellowship together with the family of St. Luke's, including Canon Herman Dittrich (top left), long-time priest of the parish.

Berwyn and Grimshaw Parishes Come Together in Celebration of Athabasca Diocese's 150th Anniversary



Bishop David and Benita Greenwood were warmly welcomed by Christ Church, Berwyn on Sunday, July 21. Bishop Greenwood led the morning Eucharist. A lunch was held following the service. The program included a brief history of the diocese given by Bishop Greenwood, and games. It was nice to see many people from St. Bartholomew's, Grimshaw in attendance to celebrate with their church family in Berwyn.

Companion Partners' Joy "Single Best Thing"

The first two weeks in July were full of excitement and blessings for Bishop Stephen and the Rev. Stephanie London. The couple made their first visit to the Diocese of Buyé in Burundi, Africa, arriving safely in Bujumbura on July 4.



Bishop Stephen London (r) and the Rev. Stephanie London are greeted at the Bujumbura airport by Canon Dominique Ciza (l) and Archbishop Sixbert Macumi.

They were met at the airport by Archbishop Sixbert (Macumi) and Canon Dominique (Ciza). Although Archbishop Sixbert, who is both the Bishop of the Diocese of Buyé and the Primate of the Anglican Church in Burundi, continues to recover from long COVID, he greeted the Londons with great enthusiasm.

"Sixbert's genuine joy is so warm," said Bishop Stephen London. "We went to lunch at a place on the shore of beautiful Lake Tanganyika. After that, we went to the provincial offices."

They visited more than 10 different communities, participating in an ecumenical ordination service, multiple confirmation services, and seeing firsthand how support from people in the Edmonton diocese is helping build-up churches and communities in Burundi, through projects like the Buyé Bible College, hospital maternity ward expansion, new roofing for churches and water springs that help communities source clean water. Additionally, they assisted the Mother's Union in distributing medical cards to help vulnerable people access healthcare.

Bishop Stephen was "amazed" to see the scope of the impact of the Edmonton diocese's support. With a focus on evangelism, education and health, Buyé diocese has established departments for addressing development, gender-based violence, reconciliation, youth and theological education.

In Mwumba parish, the Londons observed the work of the Mother's Union (MU), led by Archbishop Sixbert Macumi's wife Clotilde, MU President, and Canon Bibiane, MU Chaplain. They distributed the medical cards purchased with money raised by members of the Edmonton diocese during parish coffee-hour appeals held in the fall. With a medical card, people are eligible to save 80 percent of the cost of healthcare, which would otherwise have been inaccessible.

The Mother's Union empowers women and families worldwide through literacy and development programs. In Burundi, they invite women to Literacy Circles where they pray together and work through problems in their communities using the problem tree method.

"The facilitator draws a tree on the board, and they first look at the roots of the problem they are discussing. Then they look to the branches that represent



Archbishop Sixbert shows the Londons their accommodations at the Buyé diocese's conference centre in Ngozi.

the consequences flowing from the root issues. They then turn to a solution tree in which they do the same analysis. The roots are the ways in which they can deal with the problem, and the branches are what the community would look like with the better roots..."

Bishop Stephen was further "amazed" by the savings programs administered by the Mother's Union. Members are put into savings collectives of 25 women. Every member contributes 100 francs (five cents Canadian) into a basket which becomes a community fund.

"If you get sick or have some kind of hardship, the community uses the fund to help you. Then, every member can buy a share in another fund. This is microfinancing. Every share is 1,000 francs (50 cents Canadian). People can put in anywhere from one to five shares depending on what they have. This is still their money, but the community combines it to make micro-loans to members.

"One woman told us about how she used a loan to buy and raise young goats which she sells to make a profit. Another bought a goat for its manure which increased her crop yields. She was then able to buy a second goat and expand her business..." This project is much appreciated because without assets these women would not have qualified for bank loans.

The Mother's Union works to empower women, which in turn benefits entire communities.

Upon returning to the Synod Office, Bishop Steve shared with diocesan staff that the "single best thing" about his visit to our companion diocese was "the sheer joy" expressed by Anglicans through singing and dancing.

Everywhere he and Stephanie traveled, even in Bigomo, one of the hardest parishes to access, "Hundreds of people lined both sides of the road, singing welcome songs and tossing flowers on the windshield. They were so grateful we were there," he says.

Bishop Steve blogged about his experience of Burundi in daily Facebook posts. You can see those posts, including many more pictures (and videos!) here: <https://www.facebook.com/>

Did You Know That...



Burundi is a small heart-shaped country of 27,835 square kilometers, with a population of more than eight million people. It is bordered by Rwanda to the north, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the northwest and the United Republic of Tanzania to the south and northeast.

Established in June 1965, the Diocese of Buyé is the oldest of the six dioceses that form the Anglican Church of Burundi. The Diocese of Buyé has 28 parishes and four archdeaconries. From 1993 to 2006, civil war between three ethnic groups ravaged villages, destroying Burundi's infrastructure system and displacing thousands of people. The Diocese of Buyé was not spared the consequences of that terrible war. Churches were looted and destroyed and many Anglican members and some of the clergy were cruelly assassinated. Anglicans in the Diocese of Buyé, under the leadership of Archbishop Sixbert Macumi, encourage the process of healing and reconciliation in their country.

The Companion Partnership between the Diocese of Edmonton and the Diocese of Buyé was made official in May 2009, after Bishop Jane Alexander and Bishop Sixbert met and became prayer partners at the Lambeth Conference. Over the past 16 years, this relationship has continued to flourish as each diocese discovers the unique gifts and strengths of the other. The goal of our partnership is to "grow in mutual affection and communion, seek a more profound experience of truth, build up the Church in unity and give glory to Jesus Christ our Saviour." As partners, we have each travelled to our partner diocese, we have collaborated on humanitarian efforts and we have faithfully upheld each other in prayer.



Evangelism, Health and Education Pillars of Buyé Diocese



Bishop Stephen London (r) confirms members of Buyé diocese alongside Archbishop Sixbert Macumi. "The energy and excitement level was high. I am so grateful for Canon Dominique (Ciza) who translated the service for us." From top: Dean Alfred Uwimanihaye at All Saints' Cathedral; Buyé Bible College was able to reopen with support from the Edmonton diocese.



Above: Mother's Union members, led by Canon Bibiane, MU Chaplain, and Clotilde, MU President, on their way to distribute medical cards. Below: In the Parish of Gashikanwa, Bishop Stephen learned that the parish "has a solidarity chain with chickens. Originally, they started with 20 chickens which they gave away with the stipulation that the new owner had to bring back one chick. That chick was given away again with the stipulation that when the chicken was grown, they would bring back a chick so that over time everyone would have an egg laying chicken. They do the same thing in the diocese with cows for the priests."



Above: this newly completed water well, a community gathering place, "captures the rainwater that soaks into the ground where it is naturally filtered and runs through pipes to deliver fresh and clean water." Center: In the Gahengeri Indigenous community, Twa people, original inhabitants of Burundi, make clay pots to sell and trade. Below: Churches are built from local materials, such as clay bricks, "but the roofs are made with corrugated steel sheets which are too expensive." Some of the diocesan funds designated for Buyé diocese have helped purchased roofing materials.



Edmonton Diocese Welcomes Deacons and Chancellor

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

The Anglican Diocese of Edmonton celebrated the ordination of two deacons and the installation of its chancellor on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024, at All Saints' Anglican Cathedral in Edmonton.

Helen Chan Bennett and Christa Eisbrenner were ordained as deacons by the Rt. Rev. Nigel Shaw and the Rt. Rev. Stephen London, respectively.

Chan Bennett was presented for ordination in the Anglican Military Ordinariate of Canada by the Ven. Jonathan Crane, the Rev. Canon Anne Wightman and Peter Wightman. A military chaplain based in the Diocese of Edmonton and an active member of St. Augustine's of Canterbury parish, Chan Bennett was ordained by Shaw, Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Military Ordinariate.

Eisbrenner was presented for ordination by Archdeacon Jonathan Crane, Jason Eisbrenner and Carol Potratz. A member of Immanuel Anglican Church in Wetaskiwin, Eisbrenner has served at All Saints' Cathedral and, most recently, Christ Church, Edmonton.

Mr. Robert Reynolds, K.C. was installed as Chancellor and an Officer of the Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton. He was seated in the cathedral chancel by the Very Rev. Alex Meek.

Currently serving with Alberta Counsel, Reynolds brings a wealth of experience in public service and constitutional law to the Diocese of Edmonton. He retired from Alberta Legislative Assembly as Parliamentary Counsel in September 2018 after 25 years of service. He has specialised in public law issues including administrative, constitutional, Indigenous, and municipal law. In October, he will apply his experience drafting Bills and bylaws, conducting meetings and his knowledge of the Legislative Process at his first Synod as Chancellor of the Diocese of Edmonton.

Since joining All Saints' Cathedral, he has served on Vestry and as a warden.

Reynolds is married to Ritu Khullar, Chief Justice of Alberta, with whom he has two sons.

In his homily, Bishop London said Chan Bennett and Eisbrenner both came to their positions of leadership within the Anglican



Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Military Ordinariate Nigel Shaw and Edmonton Bishop Stephen London send out deacons Helen Chan Bennett (l) and Christa Eisbrenner to "go and serve the Lord."



From left: Bishop Stephen London installs Rob Reynolds as Chancellor of the Diocese of Edmonton; Christa Eisbrenner's joy is captured by her friend and sponsor Carol Potratz; Bishop Nigel Shaw ordains Helen Chan Bennett as a deacon.



Photos: Sarah London

Church via other Christian denominations and have reminded him of the "most beautiful aspects of our church."

Preaching on the great feast of Pentecost, the birthdate of the church, the day God poured the Holy Spirit on all people, London said, "The Spirit of God is continually renewing the church, blowing through at key moments in our history to bring forth new faithful movement of Gospel ministry..."

"...The Holy Spirit didn't immediately answer all the questions the apostles and early believers were faced with. The Spirit walked with the church as they discerned a new way in the

face of new questions..."

"Deacons are called to be servant leaders, to do their service in public in a role of leadership in such a way that encourages the servant ministry of all of us," said Bishop London.

Addressing the ordinands directly, he said, "You have come to this place because you believe in the inclusive love of God for all people. Now we ordain you and ask you to lead us in this ministry."

Chan Bennett says her journey to ministry is diverse. She has worked as a certified financial consultant, managed a marketing team, and trained as a nurse.

"God has pruned me with these varied experiences to enrich my

ability to connect with individuals from all walks of life," she says.

Chan Bennett is a staff chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Educator at the University of Alberta Hospital, Stollery Children's Hospital, and Mazankowski Alberta Heart Institute. She has served in Edmonton and Calgary hospitals and hospices for Alberta Health Services since 2004.

In addition to her chaplaincy and counseling roles, she is a certified spiritual director in the Jesuit tradition, having undergone extensive training with the FCJ sisters over three years.

Presently serving on the ministry team at St. Augustine's Anglican Church in Edmonton, she has been a fully endorsed worker with the Christian Missionary Alliance Church since 2004, where she was the first woman ordained in the denomination's Western Canadian District.

After a long discernment process, she chose to transfer her ordination to the Anglican Church of Canada. She says this decision was "driven by my desire to continue to practice ministry with unconditional love and inclusivity of all." She adds that she is in a "new transformation and integration phase of being open to embracing her Chinese Buddhist-Taoist heritage and Catholic roots in a contemplative and liturgical space."

Eisbrenner has been involved with children's ministry at an Arabic-speaking church, volunteered with Immanuel, Wetaskiwin's ESL classes and had the privilege of teaching as an adjunct professor at Taylor Seminary. She served as the National Director of Women for a Baptist denomination while her husband Jason served as a pastor.

"This brought my education, ministry experience and ministry opportunities within a conservative, evangelical setting to a head. My husband and I left (the Baptist church) in 2020 and joined the online services of our local Anglican parish. We soon felt at home there. Although we have needed fresh eyes to see things the Anglican Way, we have embraced this historical and contemporary tradition of faith," she says.

The Eisbrenner family includes six daughters currently ranging in age from 26 to 3 years.

"Although much of my schedule now revolves around the school calendar, I continue to train and disciple women internationally with a ministry focusing on contemplative prayer," says Eisbrenner.