



# THE MESSENGER



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Pictured clockwise from left: National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper leads a session at Camp Artaban; family members sport matching t-shirts; Athabasca Bishop David Greenwood, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Chris Harper and Blessing Shambare lead worship; message rocks placed at the foot of a cross. Photos: Sharon Krushel and Benita Greenwood

## National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop joins families at inaugural Athabasca GIFT Camp

Bishop David Greenwood  
Diocese of Athabasca

This summer, the Diocese of Athabasca held its inaugural GIFT (Growing In Faith Together) family camp. Daily worship organised by the Rev. Dr. Blessing Shambare, featured talks by the Most Rev. Chris Harper, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop; music by Cathie Creaser, Tammy McKeachnie, Sarah and Barry Craighen and Sharon Krueshel; On Eagles' Wings children's activities, led by the Rev. Lesley Hand; and activities for youth, led by Chianna Pederson.

Many more people (too many to name), helped with activities such as canoeing, outdoor games and crafts, preparing food and barbecuing, all coordinated and resourced by Benita Greenwood.

Some people stayed over the entire camp, some came for each day, some came for a day or even a few hours. God was there: worship was shared, games were played and enjoyment was encountered!

We enjoyed fellowship and visiting, eating together, and listening to Archbishop Chris while knowing the kids were enjoying themselves



in their activities. We enjoyed being in the presence of God as we worshiped in many different formats and ways. We were delighted to have parishioners from St. James', St. Helen's, St. Bartholomew's and Christ Church (Berwyn) join us for our final Eucharist with Archbishop Chris on Sunday morning.

Thank you to the organising committee (Benita Greenwood, the Rev. Deacon Peter Clarke, the Rev. Lesley Hand, Cathie Creaser, Willi Whiston, Dorothy Malone, the Rev. Dr.

Maryann Amor), to those who helped out (some mentioned above), and to all who participated(!) in Growing in Faith Together. Most especially thanks to our Lord Jesus, who was with us as we gathered, showing us how we can live our daily lives with Him in the midst of us.

Several people came forward and said, "If we can do this again, I'd love to help out." And so, we have booked July 31 to August 3, 2025, for the next diocesan family camp. All are welcome!



Athabasca Family Camp



Padstow Cemetery Restored p. 2



Bring What You Have p. 4



# Edmonton Bishop blesses Anglican pioneer cemetery restored by farming family near Mayerthorpe

MARGARET GLIDDEN  
Edmonton Editor

On a sunny hillside south of the historic Rochfort Bridge near Mayerthorpe, in Lac Ste. Anne County, Bishop Stephen London, accompanied by RJ Chambers, office administrator, Diocese of Edmonton; and Janette Chambers, office administrator, St. Timothy's and St. Margaret's, Edmonton; led a Remembrance Service, on July 27, for those interred at Padstow Cemetery.

Located in the center of four quarters of land farmed by the family of Wyatt and Coreen Soroka and their four children, Padstow Cemetery is all that remains of an Anglican churchyard that once included a log church built by pioneers and consecrated for worship in 1913. A plaque in the church honoured six settlers who had been killed in action during World War One (1914 to 1918).

The church was dismantled in 1960, and use of the cemetery was discontinued. In the ensuing years, it had become overgrown with brush.

Then, two years ago, Wyatt Soroka who knew of the cemetery's existence, located several headstones amongst a forest of trees.

"Two years ago, Wyatt cleaned out the forest to find the graves," said Wendy Soroka, Wyatt's mom.

"When his skid steer pulled out a tree, roots and all, out came a pillow gravestone for Arthur (Art) Robert Arnold, Northumberland Regiment, March 31, 1941."

Wendy reached out to RJ Chambers at the Synod Office to see if he had information that could help the Soroka family identify the graves.

Wendy and Joe had formed a volunteer group of friends and volunteers to restore and maintain the cemetery and they wanted to mark each grave with a white cross.

Fortunately, Chambers was able to provide a copy of the Register of Burials that was kept on file at the Synod Office. (The original burial register is kept at the Provincial Archives.)

The local committee hopes to one day be able to replace the temporary grave markers



Bishop Stephen London, RJ Chambers and Fran Marion help several generations of the Soroka family mark the graves of early settlers buried in an Anglican cemetery on the Soroka's farmland south of the Rochfort Bridge near Mayerthorpe.

donated by Park Memorial Funeral Home with permanent markers.

At the Service of Remembrance, Bishop London said a prayer for each of the 23 people who were identified as buried in Padstow Cemetery.

The Diocese of Edmonton owns the cemetery and it is accessible to the public in a fenced-off area along Township Road 564 (Padstow Road). To the best of Chambers' knowledge, the Edmonton diocese owns 26 cemeteries and 4 additional memorial properties.

## St. Thomas Gives '5' to Help Companion Partners Access Healthcare



The parish of St. Thomas', Wainwright (Dayspring Ministry) greeted September in a spirit of generosity by raising money during their coffee hour for medical cards for Edmonton's companion diocese of Buyé in Burundi. While enjoying ice cream in the late summer sunshine, on September 1, parishioners hold up their \$5 contributions. Photo: Allan Samm

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# Vision of God so much bigger than we can imagine

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

When the two disciples asked this question, their lives had been completely transformed forever. They had started their long journey dejected and hopeless. It had been a horrible weekend. They had had to watch the teacher they had come to love and trust be arrested, tortured and executed in public in a humiliating way. All their visions, hopes and aspirations had been extinguished in just a couple of days. And so, on the Sunday, they were walking to a small town called Emmaus, outside of Jerusalem, when a stranger came to walk with them...

This story is one of the most profound and beautiful in scripture. If you don't know it, go read it right now! Luke, chapter 24, verses 13-35. Theirs lives were changed forever because they met the risen Christ.

And this was not just a man resuscitated after being dead.

This was a dead man resurrected. And not just a man, but the son of God!



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON  
Diocese of Edmonton

And so, the man walking beside them taught them mysteries and truths that they would have never imagined. It was everything they had dreamed, and so much more. The vision of God was so much bigger than they knew!

In Jesus, God wasn't just redeeming a tiny country in the middle east. God was using that as a springboard to bring salvation to the entire world. The Kingdom of God, that amazing God-soaked, inclusive, healed community of love centered in Jesus, is for all the nations. In Jesus, God has thrown his arms wide open.

This meeting with the risen Jesus blew... their... minds. But more importantly, it ignited... their... heart. This wasn't just new information! This was a life-transforming, heart-expanding, world-changing invitation to life, life and more life. Eternal life. The invitation of Jesus is not to follow new rules, but to know the love and

mercy of God at the deepest levels of our souls, and to give our lives completely to God. To be transformed into people on fire with love for God and for our neighbours wherever we meet them.

The message of Jesus is the most revolutionary message in the world because it invites every person into a community of love that transcends all political and power allegiances, and to know the healing and merciful love of God in Jesus Christ.

When we meet as a Synod this month, we are using this passage as our touchstone to remind ourselves we are not just having a business meeting, but we are meeting as disciples of the risen Jesus opening our hearts to be set on fire.

Blessings,  
+ Stephen



## How to grow the church - a tale of two hens

Two young chickens, Bertha and Gert, laid their very first egg on the same day.

Bertha was overjoyed at the sight of her egg. "Look, Gert, Look! Look how beautiful it is! How shiny! How wondrous! I've never seen anything so beautiful in all my life!"

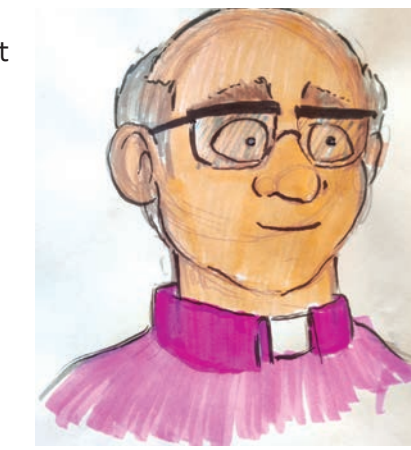
"Everyone! Come, come, come quick! Come and look at my egg!"

Many other chickens came running around, and eagerly told Bertha how beautiful her egg was, indeed.

That night, Bertha was too excited to sleep. She polished her egg until it shone shinier than the moon. She couldn't wait to show it off again. The next day, people agreed with her that, indeed, it was the shiniest egg they had ever seen.

The following night, she decided to paint it. Gathering different colours from around the henhouse, she carefully made paints and then daubed the egg all over. This continued, day after day after day, each day Bertha getting the delight and amazement of the other chickens as she shined it, re-painted it and shined it again.

Gert, on the other hand, was very different. "NO ONE is going to see my egg!" she



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD  
Diocese of Athabasca

announced.

"Why, is something wrong with it?" A hen asked. Gert glowered at her.

"Gert's got a faulty egg!" the rumour quickly spread through the henhouse.

Day after day, night after night, Gert sat on that egg. If anyone asked to see it, or even just came too close, Gert would peck out at them and growl – as only a chicken can growl.

"You'll smother it, Gert!"  
"You'll squish it, Gert!"  
"You'll break it, Gert!"  
She ignored all the

admonitions.

One day, as she sat on her egg feeling very, very hungry, a thought she didn't recognise came to her. "Talk to me."

"Eh?"

"Talk to me."

"About what?"

"About anything. I don't know anything."

And so, in her head, Gert began to talk. She described what she was doing, how the henhouse was arranged, how crazy her friend Bertha was. She described all the chickens giving the advice to "stay away from old Aunt

Rousty, for she'll peck your legs off just as soon as look at you." For days and days, Gert sat on her nest, silently sharing in her head everything she knew.

After many days, Gert was very surprised to feel the egg underneath her beginning to rock. "Oh dear – maybe I have squished it!" She stood up to look, and there, on the top, was a crack. "Oh no! I have broken it!" She heard a peck, the crack broke, and out came a beak. The beak pecked some more until, quickly, the eggshell was broken apart and before her stood, in all his glory, her young chick.

"Stay away from Aunt Rousty. Got it! Thanks, Mum." Were his first words.

Later that day, the farmer came by. He admired the new chick, and said, "I think I'll name you Paul."

He then went over and saw the shiny painted egg sitting beside Bertha. "Oh Bertha, you silly thing." He picked up the egg, now rotten inside, and took it out to the compost.

Who do you think the farmer was most pleased with – the chicken who sought the praise of those around her, or the chicken which brought forth new life?

Let us, with all the Saints, be filled with the Word of Christ, believe Him, follow Him and bring forth new life.

All thanks be to God,  
+ 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: OCT 1 for NOV 2024.

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## Abundance We Carry is Enough

The Ven. JONATHAN CRANE  
Archdeacon for Mission and Discipleship  
Diocese of Edmonton

*“Jesus said to them, ... ‘you give them something to eat.’ They replied, ‘We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.’ And he said, ‘Bring them here to me.’ ... And all ate and were filled.” (Matthew 14:16)*

I love so much this scripture (in several Gospels) of the feeding of 5,000 men besides women and children: it is a story of a miraculous meal, it is a story of Jesus' compassion for the crowds, and centrally for this article, it is a story about what really matters in our offering to God.

Mission and Discipleship in our Canadian 21st century context carries much complexity. Individual parishes and the family of churches which make up our diocese are in living memory of Sunday schools of hundreds. We remember the stories of establishing big churches in new neighbourhoods, of rich partnerships with political powers, the CBC, and of relative financial ease. There is no way around it, the Church was a notable power in Canada in days past. But we are no longer there and that is an uncomfortable feeling. We easily move, at worst, into finger-pointing, and often just into grief. I am thinking of parishes and individuals who feel like they have failed, that we missed something, or that some part of the church



failed us. It is normal and natural to feel so in the context.

I am not here to give a post-mortem, though, on the story of one part of Christ's Universal Church in one area. I am not particularly interested in that. What interests me, is the way Jesus refocuses his disciples on what they have – even as they are in stress and worry. Every woodworker knows that you can't build a piece of furniture without some rough material at hand, and that even the tiniest scrap can often be fashioned into something just right. Every home-chef knows those days when you first look in the fridge and think, “we have nothing for dinner,” and then, with a little creativity you have one of the best meals of your life forged out of pantry-scrap. Every preacher or presenter knows that moment of preparation when you think, ‘my God, what am I going to say to these people,’ until you go for a little walk, take a breath and it all comes together.

Before the throne of God, none of us are judged on what we used to be, or what other people were able to do, but we are absolutely judged on how we use what we are given.

I love the moment when the little boy in the “Abundance” story brings his five loaves and two fish. It is so little! His hands are probably grubby, he was likely very poor, and everyone



overlooked him except for the small gift he carried. And yet, the whole crowd, the whole community benefitted when his small gift was brought to Jesus.

It is literally all we have to do to be the living church in our area, and to exist in faithfulness: to bring what we actually have to Jesus and to trust our Lord's process. We release now what we don't have, don't know, who used to come, and how people used to see us. We look again in our basket and see the abundance we carry in so many manners, gifts, strengths and assets. It is enough.

*God-willing, Jonathan Crane will be collated as Archdeacon for Mission and Discipleship at the opening Eucharist of the 69th Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton.*

## Are We Okay with Letting the Children Come?

STEPHANIE OKOLO  
St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

Is what I have to say important? Seeking an answer to this question is, in part, why it has taken me so long to write another article. Because, genuinely, what more do I have to say?

In a religion like Christianity, a tree that branches into different sectors with differing ideas about how we are to worship God, it feels almost pretentious for me to believe I could say something of nuance that hasn't been said before. Interestingly, I am nearly positive I am not the only one who has thought this.

I am sure many of you, even subconsciously, find yourself falling into the mindset of ‘Oh, it's so nice that kid is doing that thing, but let's hope they don't overstep,’ or ‘it's so lovely that we have so many young voices, but let them not overshadow the more experienced voices of our seniors.’

I understand these thoughts. Although I come across children with amazing insight, there is a part of me that, cynically, thinks ‘well, what could they teach me?’ What's interesting is, in spite of Jesus saying, ‘Let the little children come to me,’ often, the church, seemingly, makes it conditional. Let the little children come to Jesus, but let them stay in their place.

‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’ This verse, written in the book of Matthew, exemplifies the notion that even a demographic that is viewed by many as innocent and naive, should not be disregarded.

However, I have noticed that many

children do not outwardly share their perspectives about the Bible or the church, not for lack of interest, but because in a place where “all are welcome,” they feel ostracised. This is paradoxical to the identity of the church. While, yes, there are youth groups at many churches in which younger people are more open to sharing thoughts and opinions, it is more common for youth to take a major role in the main church when they age out of these groups. Until then, we stay silent in the pews, obediently listening to the sermons.

And yet, as I sat listening to a sermon, I could not help but watch the tiny babies in front of me with utter fascination. Completely unaware of the volume of their outbursts, they were free of inhibitions. I understood the parent's immediate want to make them as quiet as possible. Nevertheless, I only wanted them to babble louder. It helped me grasp that these voices that we silence, these curiosities that we subdue, hold younger people back from fully coming to terms with their thoughts on Christianity, thereby keeping the Church from evolving with newer generations. We disregard these voices as naive and innocent, forgetting that these qualities make them so special in God's eyes.

We forget that our relationship with God should always be evolving. As we get older, we find ourselves falling into a routine with our faith, but one should not stay comfortable with the Bible.

To let the children come means an

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admittance of their thoughts and questions, helping all of us think more deeply about our beliefs. One voice is not more important than the other, because at the end of the day, are we not *all* children of God?

*Stephanie Okolo is a grade 12 student and member of the youth group at St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton.*