



THE MESSENGER



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DECEMBER 2024

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And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,
(and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only
begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

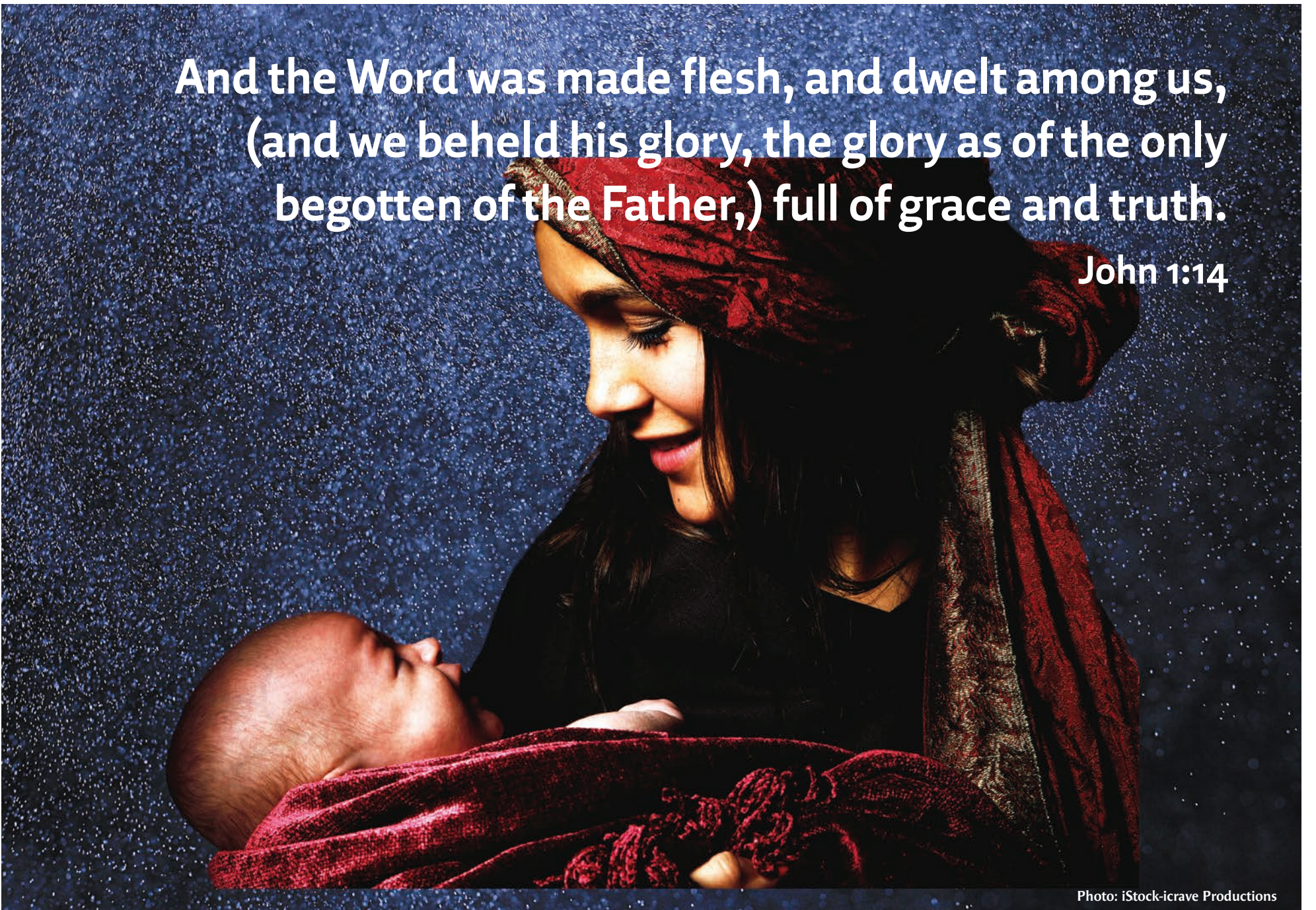


Photo: iStock-icrave Productions

69th Synod hears Gospel road not without obstacles, meant to be walked together, not alone

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor
The Messenger

Throughout the 69th Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton, held October 18 and 19, the more than 170 friends who gathered as one in the name of Jesus Christ were encouraged to listen to what the Holy Spirit might be saying to the church.

The Synod, a bi-annual gathering of elected parish representatives, clergy, diocesan officers, Synod Office staff, ecumenical partners and guests, was orchestrated as an act of worship.

There were many worshipful reminders to draw participants closer together around the Gospel.

All Saints' Cathedral Music Director Jeremy Spurgeon introduced the Synod Song "Take, O Take Me as I Am" by John L. Bell. The worship team at St. Matthias played this music, which was sung at various times on Saturday to draw people back together.

As delegates, guests and appointees to Synod registered, they were invited to take in displays by various ministries in the diocese and contribute to the Diocesan Art Project by colouring sections of a mosaic depicting the

theme of "Hearts Burning Within Us," taken from the Gospel of Luke 24: 13-35, the Road to Emmaus.

The opening eucharist on Friday evening at All Saints' Cathedral incorporated a smudge ceremony led by Ven. Travis Enright, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization, Cree Elder Russell Auger, and Sundance Road Drummer Marcus Cruz. Fiona Brownlee, Aboriginal and Church Liaison and a Bishop's Appointee to Synod, led the Prayers of the People in the four directions.

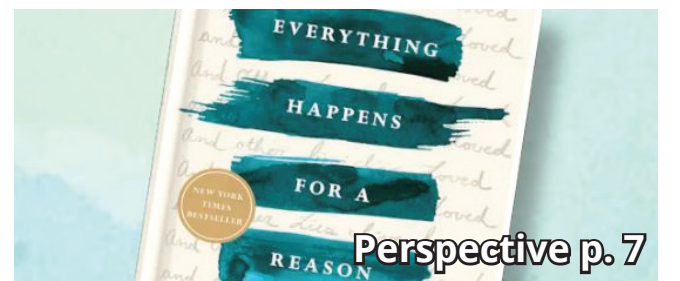
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“We can partner and learn. We can be creative. We can rise to the challenge. We are not alone...” - Bishop Stephen London

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With the lights of All Saints' Cathedral dimmed, the Ven. Alexandra Meek, Dean of Edmonton, explained that “each year at the Diocesan Easter Vigil we light, from the new fire, individual candles to remind us of each congregation that shares the light of Christ so faithfully across this diocese. It is a beautiful light in the midst of the darkness.”

Meek then lit the Synod flame which burned for the duration of the gathering, continuing the next day at St. Matthias Anglican Church in west Edmonton.

In his Bishop's Charge, the Rt. Rev. Stephen London said the 46 churches comprising the Diocese of Edmonton are impacted by “forces (historical and present) that are far beyond anything our tiny diocese of Edmonton is going to change.” He urged members of Synod to face the reality of declining finances and a smaller volunteer base, rising insurance costs and fewer clergy, with “creativity and faith,” and be mindful that “We are not alone in our challenges. All Christian churches are facing this struggle...”

“These are hard conversations to be sure, and they come with sacrifice. But humanity is always at its best when we rise to the challenge, and I am here to tell you there are Christian siblings out there who are rising to the challenge, who are refocusing us on the centrality of the mission of Jesus Christ with the Gospel at the center.

“We can partner and learn. We can be creative. We can rise to the challenge. We are not alone...” You can read and listen to the Bishop's Charge online at <https://edmonton.anglican.ca/news/bishop-stephen-londons-charge-to-69th-synod>

To “walk together with the whole of our synod in equipping the church for the living out of its vision and vocation,” Bishop London collated and seated the Ven. Chelsy Bouwman as Archdeacon for Rural Ministry; and the Ven. Jonathan Crane as Archdeacon for Mission and Discipleship. Bouwman, who is rector of St. Thomas, Sherwood Park, and Crane, who is rector of St. Augustine of Canterbury, Edmonton, had attended youth group together as teenagers.

Making its Synod debut, the Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir (DECC), conducted by Laura Hawley, sang “I See the Love of God in Every River,” by David Ouchterlony, during communion. Formed in 2022, DECC, which is funded by the Anglican Foundation of Canada and generous donors, provides accessible opportunities for children and youth, in grade two and up, to learn and offer throughout the diocese music connected to the church's worship.

Bishop Stephen London called the meeting of the 69th Synod to order, and invited the Rev. Canon Scott Sharman, Canon to the Ordinary and Executive Officer for the Edmonton diocese, to present the first resolution, L-1 (carried), to appoint members from full communion partner churches, thus enabling a representative from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Moravian Church in North America to participate as full members of the Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton.

Synod received warm greetings from ecumenical and full communion partners representing Roman Catholic, United, Evangelical Lutheran and Moravian churches who each echoed Bishop London's remarks that, indeed, Christian churches are not alone in their challenges in Living the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that it is increasingly important to seek opportunities to support one another.

69th Synod Election Results

The following positions were elected or acclaimed by the 69th Synod on the evening of October 18, 2024:

Executive Council – North

Clergy: The Rev. Jordan Giggey
Lay: Cathy Armstrong, Emily Stephen-Garneau

Executive Council – South

Clergy: The Rev. Lisa Wojna
Lay: Morgan Cromarty, Suzanne Oswald

Executive Council – East

Clergy: The Rev. Ruth Sesink Bott
Lay: Mikaela Hanley, Brian Jolly

Executive Council – West

Clergy: The Rev. Andreas Sigrift
Lay: Brian Ault, Bruce Simpson

Diocesan Court

Clergy: The Rev. Helen Chan Bennett, The Rev. Jordan Giggey

Lay: Angela Bokenfohr, Jim Robertson (Member of Law Society)

General Synod

Clergy: The Ven. Travis Enright, The Ven. Jordan Haynie Ware, The Very Rev. Alex Meek (Alternates (by order of vote): The Rev. Ruth Sesink Bott, The Rev. Akon Akon
Lay: Cathy Armstrong, Betty Kaahwa, Matthew Mercer-Deadman
Youth: Emily Stephen-Garneau

Provincial Synod

Clergy: The Rev. Akon Akon, The Rev. Donna Gauthier, The Rev. Stephanie London
Lay: Betty Kaahwa, Matthew Mercer-Deadman
Youth: Emily Stephen-Garneau

Recorders for the 70th Synod

Clergy: The Rev. Colleen Sanderson
Lay: RJ Chambers

Diocese of Edmonton family enters Season of Pakitinâsowin

Members of the family of parishes comprising the Diocese of Edmonton moved further in their journey of reconciliation and right relationship with the Indigenous peoples of Treaty 6 and Treaty 8, when, on October 19, the 69th Synod voted overwhelmingly to support changing Canon 5 on the Disestablishment of Parishes.

The Edmonton diocese is entering into a Season of Pakitinâsowin by acknowledging that “true richness comes only when you can give away unjust gains that were never really yours at all.” (Source: The Spirit of Pakitinâsowin: Reparations in the Diocese of Edmonton Introduction)

When a parish is disestablished, its property assets are allocated for ministry and mission through the Diocesan Development Fund. With the change to Canon 5, Synod must allocate a minimum of 10 per cent of the property assets of the disestablished parish to the Pakitinâsowin (Sacred Lodge) Fund for Reciprocity and Reparations, or successor Funds established by the Executive Council for reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

This carries forward the decision of the 68th Synod, in 2022, to direct the Executive Council of the Diocese of Edmonton to enact policies and procedures ensuring future material benefits of the lands and infrastructure occupied by churches are equitably shared with First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners per the spirit and intent of the treaties.

Subsequently, at the direction of the Bishop and Executive Council, the Ven. Travis Enright, Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization, formed a Sacred Healing Lodge, Amiskwaciwâskahikan, to develop a 10-year plan for Indigenous education and a spiritual system led by Indigenous people for vulnerable Indigenous youth.

In the 2024 budget, Synod allocated general operating funds for the salary and benefits of the Archdeacon for Reconciliation and Decolonization and the lay reader-in-charge, Church of the Nativity, Frog Lake First



Archdeacon Travis Enright speaks to Synod about the Pakitinâsowin Fund for reparations.

Nation, currently Fred Matthews. In time, these offices will be modified to reflect the expanded responsibilities of what will eventually be known as the Standing Stones Sacred Lodge.

A misimâw/lodge elder will provide spiritual and administrative leadership to the Sacred Lodge community: Lodgepole communitas in Edmonton and Church of the Nativity parish on Frog Lake First Nation. This person will also inspire the ministry of an ayamiheweyiniw/pastor who will teach the sacred stories and knowledge of local gathering communities and help people find their way into the healing journey.

These two leadership positions will give significant expression to the diocesan reparations initiative concerning people and groups who walk together with and share in the ministries of the Diocese of Edmonton directly.

View the *Pakitinâsowin (Sacred Lodge) Fund Proposal* online at <https://edmonton.anglican.ca/news/parishes-of-the-diocese-enter-season-of-pakitinasowin>.

'Tharseo' - take heart, we don't ever travel alone

During this Advent season, I would like to invite you to meditate on my favourite word of Jesus in the Greek New Testament: “**tharseo**.” This word is often translated as either “**take heart**,” or “**take courage**.” In older translations of the New Testament, it is sometimes also translated as “**Be of good cheer**.”

Jesus always offers this word to his disciples or others when they are facing a storm. Sometimes, the storm is literal as in the story of Matthew 14:22-27. The disciples are on the lake of Galilee in a boat when a storm hits. The waves and wind threaten to swamp the boat when Jesus comes to them. He speaks to them: ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’

Sometimes the storm is figurative, such as when the Apostle Paul is under arrest (Acts 23:10-11), and the guard is fearful that the crowds will do terrible violence to him. At this moment, Jesus comes to him and says, ‘Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome.’

Time and time again in the New Testament, when the people to whom Jesus is ministering are fearful and uncertain, Jesus comes to them with these words, ‘take heart.’ I think we all know what it is like to feel the opposite, to lose



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

the end of the day “lose heart,” or “take heart?”

This Advent, I invite you to meditate on the truth that Jesus Christ has come into the world so that we might “take heart.” Jesus was born so that the world might be healed and redeemed through him. He is God come among us, and the deeper promise of Advent and Christmas is that Christ is always with us. He walks with us; his spirit dwells within us. He guides us and strengthens us. We read and meditate on these stories of old in the Scriptures to remind us that Jesus is speaking to us, as well. When we come to the storms and difficulties of life, we have to go through them. But we don't travel alone, ever. Jesus is always with us, speaking to us as well: ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’

heart. This is when we get discouraged, doubt ourselves and wonder if we will be able to move forward.

The image of the heart is important here. It is central to the teaching of the New Testament that Jesus has come to transform our hearts, that central part of who we are as persons. Jesus teaches, in Matthew 15:19, that out of the heart comes all of the negative things in our lives. But he also teaches, in Luke 6:45, that out of the heart a good person brings good treasures. There is a battle for the human heart. Will we at



This is true for us as individuals and for the church as a whole. As you well know, our beloved church is entering into some figurative choppy water. We have significant challenges and uncertainties ahead. As the Bishop of this diocese, I turn to this promise of Jesus every day. This is why Tharseo is my favourite word in the New Testament. Jesus is amazing in his faithfulness, gifts of grace and courage.

Even in these hard times, I see again and again, amazing moments of God acting in people's lives. We are on the right path. And I know we will walk this path well, because of this promise of Jesus: ‘Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.’

Blessings,
+ Stephen

Starting again the core of Christianity

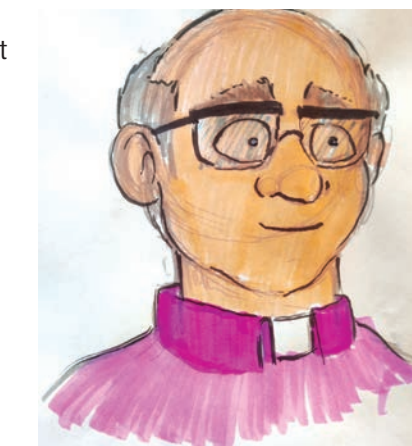
Last month, I asked that we commit to truly having Christ reign in us, by learning and teaching, disciplining ourselves, joining together and encouraging each other in sharing the life of Christ through our lives.

But what if something goes wrong (something always goes wrong)? What if we just plain get tired?

I remember from the movie *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the song “Could we start again, please...” It comes at a time in the movie when the disciples are scared and ask to start over by going back to a less scary, more jubilant time.

Starting again is at the core of Christianity.

Baptism is starting again. It is having your old life die and taking on a new life in Christ. Confirmation is starting again. It is renewing your baptism commitment, confirming that you truly want Christ to reign in your life and asking God to renew His commitment through the continued gift of the Holy Spirit. Weddings are starting again, leaving your old life and embarking on a new adventure where three



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

(two spouses and God) become one in mutual support and accountability.

Sabbaths are starting again -- making time to reflect, rejoice, renew. Purposefully engaging with God through worship and prayer and disconnecting from the worries and anxieties of the world.

Funerals are starting again -- a time to give thanks for the Image of God which was embodied during the life of the deceased, a time to grieve and support each other, a time to worship

our heavenly Father for the great gift of the one we knew, and a time to look to our own joining with God in the New Creation, where death is no more, and move forward in the Holy Spirit.

Forgiveness, at the very core of our faith, is about starting again.

Now, our liturgical year is starting again. We have just gone through a year in which we grew with Christ, participated in His death and celebrated His resurrection and then His

ascension. We grew in our understanding, our faithfulness, our discipleship, celebrating Christ in our lives each Sunday.

Advent, the beginning of our year, is a time of starting again -- looking forward to Christ, anticipating both His historic incarnation and His coming fullness before the New Creation of God Almighty.

As you start again, please remember those in distress, those less fortunate. I encourage prayers for people in Israel, Gaza, Lebanon and the entire Middle East (the Athabasca diocese shared Advent prayers from the Very Rev. Richard Sewell, Dean of St. George's College in Jerusalem, in our weekly diocesan update email of November 7). For people in Ukraine and Russia. For wherever people are in conflict, wherever people are harming each other.

I encourage you to pray for yourself! Pray that you may indeed know Christ deeply in your being, walking with you. That you may have His strength, know His steadfast love, share His presence. And each Sunday, may you start again, with your fellow saints.

God bless you greatly,
+ 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: JAN 2 for FEB 2024.

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A \$15 annual donation is suggested. Please send donations to the dioceses of Athabasca or Edmonton, c/o The Messenger.

The Messenger is published under the authority of the Dioceses of Athabasca and Edmonton. Opinions expressed in The Messenger are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher.

The Messenger is a section of the Anglican Journal, printed 10 times a year (no issues July and August) by Webnews Printing Inc., North York O.N.

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Edmonton Diocesan Synod Begins "Big Work" of Planning Good Future Together



The 69th Synod of the Diocese of Edmonton was tasked with interpreting the findings of the Listening in Spirit | Shaping Our Future Together Phase 1 Report, produced by Another Way Consulting.

From May to July 2024, Anna Bubel, principal consultant, Another Way, gathered quantitative data (2017 to 2023) from Synod Office records, responses from parish members to an online survey, responses to 1-on-1 interviews with 18 lay leaders and clergy, and feedback from engagement sessions with 46 parishes, plus Synod leadership, conducted mostly in-person, except for a few that were conducted by

phone or videoconferencing. She summarised the results of the parish engagement sessions which were shared with parishes for their approval as "faithful reflections" of the opinions expressed.

Bubel used a health metaphor to reflect on the current state of the Diocese of Edmonton. She estimates that "33 percent of parishes are at the end stage of life and are in palliative care. One might say they are 'actively dying.'" The legacies of these parishes, people and buildings (including the maintenance of cemeteries) would have to be carefully defined to honour the traditions and memories of these sacred spaces.

Approximately 42 percent

of parishes are "experiencing chronic health issues, which will result in their demise in the medium term, if drastic health measures are not taken," Bubel says.

"To get a new lease on life, these parishes need to make several key lifestyle changes: Investment into children's ministry and next-generation leadership, along with the consolidation of parishes to allow for full-time clergy and support of mission work (both from human and financial resources' points of view) will be required."

The final group of parishes, approximately 25 percent, are "thriving." Having experienced a rebirth after COVID-19, they have an attendance of

more than 150 people on a given Sunday and most church communities in this grouping have children's ministries in place, and all have at least one cleric.

"This subgroup, says Bubel, "is not immune to the same threats and weaknesses of other parishes, but it has the bandwidth to address them. Perhaps, with the sale of properties and the mergers of parishes, apportionment rates could decline for these remaining parishes. This policy change might free them up to grow into their fullest and best selves."

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Three years ago, when the Rt. Rev. Stephen London became Bishop of Edmonton, he was advised the diocese was facing major financial challenges. In 2022, parishes had emerged from the COVID pandemic with roughly half the number of in-person attendees than they had in 2019.

But he assured Synod in his Bishop's Charge on October 18, at All Saints' Cathedral, "It is not just us (Mainline churches, in general, are aging and decreasing in numbers). We have two choices: we can either let events happen as nature takes its course, or we can make intentional decisions that

allow us to stabilize to do our mission as followers of Jesus Christ.

"I do believe that God loves our church, even as we are struggling God meets us there. God walks with us and guides us forward. This is not the first time the church has struggled. The Synod in the Year of Our Lord 500000 will have a different set of conversations than the Synod in the Year of Our Lord 2024. We are just getting started, really, as the church. This is our moment. This is our time. God is with us. Emmanuel."

Bishop Stephen asked Synod to begin laying the groundwork for a good future by identifying the key implications of the Phase 1 report for the strategic

plan, ideally a clear articulation of our "commitment to concrete decisions and actions that we will make over the next two years to hit our goal (by the next diocesan Synod) of creating a sustainable diocesan community that enables us to live out our calling (proclaim the Gospel, make disciples, further the Kingdom through a commitment to the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion) in a way that is healthy and vibrant, and not marked by fear and anxiety for the future."

In table groups, Synod members assessed the discipleship, diversity and physical assets, as well as social, financial and human resources, of parishes and the

diocese. "We have to interpret the report and highlight the things important for us to work on. We do not have the capacity or resources to do everything. We must choose what is priority, relevant, actionable and pragmatically possible," he said.

The key implications recorded by each table group were compiled and have been presented to Executive Council.

"This big work (strategic plan) is something we must do together," Bishop London said. "If you will walk, I will walk. We will walk together."

Read the *Listening in Spirit Phase 1 Report* and view Anna Bubel's Presentation to Synod at <https://edmonton.anglican.ca/synod/69th-synod-2024>

Reduced Church can Potentially be More Robust

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

The Lord said to Gideon, 'The troops with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand. Israel would only take the credit away from me, saying, "My own hand has delivered me." Now, therefore, proclaim this in the hearing of the troops, "Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home." ' Thus, Gideon sifted them out: 22,000 returned, and 10,000 remained (Judges 7:2-4a).



great things of our world: the top stocks, the renowned celebrities, the largest buildings. And, on the whole, we Anglicans are not powerful; at least, not like we once were in our colonial history. In just about all ways, we have been reduced.

But, critically, what does this reduction mean? Is it failure? Is it attack? Is it a plant overcome by weeds? I suggest that, while we might find some truth in any of those options, they are not ultimately helpful for us to move forward and deeper in. Instead, as Jesus so often directs, 'look first for the kingdom of God.' The divine voice says to us, 'See what you have, where you are, and how I am with you.' Truly, there are many gifts embedded in a church in decline.

Gift #1 In the days when church was a cultural or mandated activity (Christendom), unsurprisingly, many folks had no deep investment in the mission of the church. A telling statement from the historic annals of the current church I serve, is that 'it was a good place to show off your fur coat.' There is a lot of meaning in that statement, but not much in the way of a Jesus-shaped presence.

Notably, Jesus spent his time with those who could afford no fancy clothes ('sinners'), or with those in recovery from financial addiction (cf. Zaccheus). A beloved church in decline has a natural effect of releasing the inner narratives of power, glamour and wealth. The folks who stick around in a place of decline are those

drawn by something deeper, more connected and central to the story. I suspect this is true for each of you reading.

Gift #2 A church in decline is forced to review, reframe and articulate its identity. If you have ever boiled down a sauce, you know that the dominant flavours, and some previously hidden ones, become more robust. We, the church, in a time of reduction and in a time of transition, have no choice but to reach into our satchel and pull out 'treasures old and new.' It is critical for us to cling more closely to those needed elements, and to boldly release those things that are no longer helpful. Determining which flavours stay or go, is deep work, communal work and artful work.

Gift #3 A church in decline is also a church with no choice but to do less. I have heard a few people reflect that the COVID-19 lockdowns were a strange blessing, because they couldn't overwork in the same way they had before. I am sure we all know individuals and corporations that jumped at the natural (though painful) opportunity that Covid afforded to pivot away from unhelpful activities. In the same way, we in the church are afforded, by our crisis-opportunity-state, to release those things that are wearing us out. We will not get through trying to do all the old things. Release your burden, Jesus says, and take up the one which is light and brings peace.

And, we all know, that a sauce that is well reduced, just tastes better and brings more delight. We may still mourn the loss of things past, but our primary energy must be directed to explore the new opportunities, flavours, clarifications and treasures that are yet becoming among us.

Gideon, in this curious story in the Old Testament book of Judges, comes to understand that as the people become fewer, God becomes greater.

He is sent, repeatedly, to reduce the number of his troops, lest he rely too heavily on his own power. The divine voice directs him into ever foolish ways of reducing his number, like watching how the men drink water and sorting them into tongue-lappers and hand-scoopers. (The lappers win out.)

They also don't attack the Midianite camp with brute force, but by using creative and shrewd means. It is one of the most obvious 'trust God, be creative and you will succeed' stories in the Hebrew bible.

And the story is a scriptural referent for our own post-Christendom church context. We are not great, in the way of the officially

Rest as Resilience

The Ven. JORDAN HAYNIE WARE
Archdeacon for Justice
Diocese of Edmonton

In our busy, overscheduled culture, few of us would say we get enough rest. Yet, rest is a commandment, not a recommendation, for Christians and Jews. God's commandment to rest is a direct response to the slavery the Israelites experienced in Egypt, and it is important to find ways to remember that life is more than labour.

I have recently returned from a three-month sabbatical designed to rest. I spent some time learning and building my skills, so that, upon my return to work, I would have more strategies to work smarter, not harder.

But some of my time was spent creating mental, emotional and spiritual space by failing to produce, or producing something entirely different. I prayed the Daily Office four times a day, every day. That is a lot of unproductive time. I volunteered with Little Bits Riding Academy (therapeutic riding centre), to use my body more than my mind to care for other people (and horses). The point was to, as the poet Wendell Berry says, rest in the grace of the world. Sabbatical, like Sabbath, reminds us that the world turns without us. We are not slaves to production. God delights in us simply for who we are, not for how much we do.

Your work may not have sabbatical provisions, though I urge you to check. A surprising number of union contracts allow for such a thing, with sufficient planning.

Sabbatical rest resists the pull of productivity that says we aren't enough unless we produce bricks without straw. Even if extended time away just isn't possible, I pray you find a way to practice rest in a way that reminds you of your infinite worth to God, regardless of your productivity.

I am grateful for the Continuing Education Plan of the Anglican Church of Canada, the Sabbatical Trust of the Diocese of Edmonton and the leadership of Good Shepherd for supporting this time of rest. I hope you, too, can find such rest.



God delights in us simply for who we are, not for how much we do.



Everything Happens a window to understanding

I believe *Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved*, by Kate Bowler, is an important book. I also offer this read to you with some trepidation. I have read this book with two reading communities, and it was received with mixed reviews.



MARION BULMER
St. Thomas, Sherwood Park

I am prepared to argue that author Kate Bowler, who also has a podcast that is received well by church communities and secular people, addresses faulty thinking within church communities that needs to be addressed around tragedy and its place in God's world. These areas are never easy for us to discuss.

More importantly, for me, Kate invites us into her journal of what it was to live as someone in her 30s facing death. Rarely are an author's feelings of fear, turmoil and loss shared with us as fully as they are in this book.

The challenges I had with this book were not so much as what was said, but what was not. Kate, a professor at Duke University, is an expert on an area of the church called the prosperity gospel. It was the backdrop for much of the story, so an introduction to this area of the North American church community would have been helpful as it is not an area I am familiar with.

The premise of the prosperity gospel appears to be that good things will happen for those with a robust faith. It is a gospel of reward. Certainly, physical well-being would be included among these blessings which are often financial. Though critical of this theology, Kate met friends and people she admired while researching this part of the broader church. It took me a while to sort this out in my reading. I would have appreciated more clarity.

Kate was raised in Winnipeg MB where her

parents were professors. Her husband, whom she met when very young, is from a long line of observant Mennonites from MB. This book touches on the lives of her colleagues from Duke Divinity School, as well as her friends and family.

Ironically, at the time of her diagnosis with stage four colon cancer, Kate felt on

top of her world. She had an 18-month-old son and had recently received tenure at Duke. Stage four is generally seen as a terminal diagnosis leading to palliative care. Kate's medical team did everything they could to treat it, and eventually she was offered expensive, experimental immunotherapy not available where she lives.

She feared the home she was purchasing, and her parents' home would have to be sacrificed to cover the cost of transportation and treatment. Fortunately, the Duke community worked on her behalf to persuade insurance providers to cover the cost of treatment.

In the meantime, she feels as though she is the only one preparing for death, while everyone else is on Instagram. I remember the day my brother-in-law died, at 56, and my sister asking, "How can everyone continue to go on with their life?" Though she was very much alive, her world as she had known it had ended. She felt very alone.

Kate paints a picture of what it is like for a young mother to face her own death, while parenting her young son. Her book allows us to enter in and develop compassion for individuals and families facing these challenges. Through Kate's account of her life, we gain a unique

understanding. I hope this book will help people think and talk about death. That we would discuss it with honesty and prepare for the inevitable challenges of dying.

Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved has initiated much debate and conversation in my reading communities. I hope this read helps us all to be loving and compassionate when meeting people facing the challenge of death. Our faith asks us to be present and caring during all passages of life, the joyous and the challenging.



Join the Rev. Helen Chan Bennett in the Death Cafe YEG!
St. Augustine's Anglican Church
6110 Fulton Road, Edmonton
Lower Level, Livingroom (Elevator Available)

December 20, 7 pm

This non-religious group is for anyone interested in exploring the topics of death, dying and end-of-life care in a safe and supportive environment.

Advent Activities 2024

CREATION

- Invite someone to discover part of God's beautiful Earth with you
- Donate supplies to an animal shelter
- Pick up litter
- Take a shelter dog for a walk
- Discover God's beauty by walking a new trail
- Support a cause that supports the Earth

GRATITUDE

- Write a note of gratitude to God
- Reflect and record how much joy the Advent season has brought you

READ & WATCH

- Read Luke 1:39-45
- Read Luke 2:1-20
- Read Luke 3:1-6
- Read Luke 3:7-18
- Read Luke 21:25-36
- Watch a film version of the Gospels, like *The Chosen*
- Study the life of Jesus written by scholars

FRIENDSHIP

- Call and check on a friend or family member
- Listen to someone's story

SHARING

- Give a treat to a community helper
- Take a shut-in to lunch
- Bake or buy cookies or muffins and share them with co-workers, friends, or people in need
- Drop off a veggie tray to a nurse's station at the hospital, the police station, fire station or EMT depot
- Donate what you can to a food bank or community pantry

CHILDREN

- Read to a child
- Adopt a local school and supply them with snacks and other necessities

CENTRING

- Use a centring prayer to hear God's voice
- Listen for God's voice in music
- Set aside time and place to hear the Holy Spirit's voice

KINDNESS

- Let someone go ahead of you in line
- Smile at everyone today

SECRET ACTS

- Pray for every neighbour on your street
- Hide a happy note for someone to find
- Do a secret act of kindness

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Fight for a cause Jesus would support
- Read the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action. Then act.



Wishing you peace and joy this Christmas.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!



Pictorial

Archdeacons for Mission and Discipleship, Rural Ministry Installed During 69th Synod Opening Eucharist



Pictured clockwise from top left Synod Secretary-Treasurer John Gee reads the Gospel of Luke 24:13-35, with Jay Adams; the Diocese of Edmonton Children's Choir, directed by Laura Hawley, sings during communion; Cree Elder Russell Auger leads a prayer with Fred Matthews, Marcus Cruz, Travis Enright and Fiona Brownlee; Dean Alex Meek lights the Synod flame; creating the Synod Art Project; Synod Officers John Gee, Bishop Stephen London and Chancellor Rob Reynolds conduct the Friday evening meeting; All Saints' Cathedral Music Director Jeremy Spurgeon leads the Synod Song; Diocesan Administrator RJ Chambers collects ballots; Bishop Stephen London collates Jonathan Crane as Archdeacon for Mission and Discipleship and Chelsy Bouwman as Archdeacon for Rural Ministry. Photos: Margaret Glidden

