



THE MESSENGER

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St. Mary's food bank ministry helps Highlands' neighbours

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

Churches in the Edmonton diocese continue to work alongside their communities to address the root causes of poverty in the hope that all members of future generations will have an equal opportunity to contribute to society. However poverty, whether visible or invisible, still exists and can affect anyone. Each month, Edmonton's Food Bank serves more than 22,000 people, of whom 40 per cent are children under the age of 18, through its hamper program.

"Between 2015 and 2018, the number of people accessing our hamper programs increased by 50 per cent," says Samantha Potkins, special events and communications coordinator. By December, 58,603 Edmontonians had received a food hamper, at least once, in 2018.

The majority of the Edmonton Food Bank's 44 hamper distribution depots, located throughout the city, are run by churches. Within the Edmonton diocese, parishes such as St. Mary's, Edmonton, offer a food bank ministry to help meet the needs of people in their community. In the Highlands neighbourhood east of downtown and within blocks of the stately homes along Ada Boulevard, St. Mary's receives as many as 50 hampers every Tuesday morning.

On December 11, Adrienne Lamb, producer and host of CBC television program, *Our Edmonton*, visited St. Mary's with cameraman Rick Bremness and Samantha Potkins of the food bank to speak with volunteers and staff about their ministry.

When Suzanne Brown began coordinating St. Mary's Food Bank Depot more than 15 years, it soon changed her perception about the people whose need it serves. When Canada's first food bank opened in Edmonton in 1981 (it was run by the Edmonton Gleaners Association) Brown admits that she, along with many others, believed it was for "down-and-outers: people who don't want to work, who are on welfare or drugs. I found out that's not true," she says.

Brown recalls one morning when she greeted an elderly lady at the door of St. Mary's hall. She had come to pick up a hamper but "was too embarrassed to come inside. Her husband was in a nursing home and she couldn't afford to buy food."

While leading the food bank ministry, Brown



Every Tuesday morning Edmonton's Food Bank drops off hampers at St. Mary's Anglican Church in Edmonton's Highlands neighbourhood. This vital community outreach program was recently featured on the CBC Television program *Our Edmonton*.

would see some people regularly. Over several occasions she came to know a single mother who said she was raising three children while attending college.

Then one day the woman stopped in to say good-bye to Brown. "She hugged me and said, 'I got my social work degree and I got a job in Yellowknife. Thank you!'"

Lauralee Armstrong, 27, has been attending St. Mary's since she was eight. When Brown "retired" as coordinator in August Armstrong, a mother to two boys, ages one and three, offered to lead the food bank ministry. Though she works full-time, is studying to be an accountant and volunteers as the parish treasurer, Armstrong says she looks forward to Tuesday mornings and spending time with the people who receive hampers. "I really enjoy being able to give back," she says.

The Rev. Ruth Sesink Bott arrives around 9 am on Tuesdays to put on a pot of coffee and create a welcoming space where people can enjoy a hot drink and, if they wish, to smudge. Recently, one Indigenous family smudged and told her they felt welcome from the moment they walked through the door and smelled the aroma of sage.

"One of the hardest things about poverty is loneliness," says Sesink Bott. "It prevents people from engaging in their community and often creates shame. We want people to know they are welcome here just as they are. We have all experienced a time when we've been broken and struggling. I've felt loneliness, I've felt sorrow.

When I was a student we used the food bank. I know that struggle. It's part of my own journey."

Before she was appointed rector of St. Mary's, Sesink Bott coordinated the PrayerWorks Common community meal program at St. Faith's in the Alberta Avenue neighbourhood. She "loved helping people on the margins," and admits she was hesitant to relocate to St. Mary's.

"I thought oh, Ada Boulevard in the Highlands, is that

really where I want to be? But this is a mixed neighbourhood. You wouldn't think that just driving through. If you walk in the area you'll see signs of that mixed reality," she says. The diversity of the Highlands is reflected in the high proportion of seniors, immigrant and Indigenous families living in the area. Sesink Bott says there are many people on a "very limited income" who struggle to buy groceries.

"Coming here I was overjoyed when Suzanne said, 'Hey Ruth, we are the community Food Bank.' It's amazing when we connect with our neighbours: people of all ages, at all stages," she says. "We're just overjoyed to be able to love our community in this way."

St. Mary's welcomes help from anyone willing and able to volunteer with their food bank ministry on Tuesday mornings.

Edmonton's Food Bank receives no core government funding for programs, services or food purchases, relying on the generosity of the public to operate. Every year the food bank runs a Festive Campaign to help provide year-round services. This year they aimed to raise 350,000 kilograms of food and \$1.8 million dollars.

"This is an increase over last year's goals, which is reflective of the high need in our community," says Samantha Potkins.

To support the food bank and its initiatives, please visit www.edmontonsfoodbank.com; or call 780.425.2133.



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Outreach youth worker engages faith community support

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

Breaking down fear and challenging misconceptions by providing opportunities for marginalized youth and church communities to grow in relationship is at the heart of a new Diocese of Edmonton ministry.

In November, 2018 Bishop Jane Alexander appointed Clark Hardy, a member of Holy Trinity Anglican Church (HTAC), as Outreach Youth Worker to walk alongside marginalized youth, ages 13-24.

“For me as helping youth grow in relationship with their creator, their community and themselves is evident in the narrative of the Christian story,” says Hardy, who has a BA in Pastoral Studies from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. “Throughout scripture, such as 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, we see a loving God pursuing people to reconcile themselves to Him. Each of these relationships is interconnected with the other. God has reconciled us to Him, and calls us to share in the ministry of others also being reconciled with God.”

Shortly after moving to Edmonton, Hardy “fell in love with human services work” at Hope Mission where he enjoyed coming alongside people in the Housing First program to help them realize their strengths and potential.

“Looking at my own life, I realize the opportunities I’ve received and the place I’m in have a lot to do with the family I was born into and the people around me. Seeing the resiliency of youth born and raised in difficult circumstances makes me want to come alongside them in the same way people helped me,” he says.

Encouraged by Jesus’ example of walking alongside people on the margins of society, Hardy is intent on bringing dignity to young people who struggle every day to meet their basic needs.

His ministry is aimed at reaching youth who are living below the poverty line, whether with their family or on their own. Of the 100,000 Edmontonians living in poverty about 40,000 are children (up to age 17), and around 233 are homeless youth (up to age 24), according to the 2016 Homeward Trust Homeless Count. Hardy says those numbers do not include the “invisible homelessness,” - young people living in transitional housing or couch surfing - that extends beyond emergency shelters and the

street.

As Hardy’s ministry takes shape, he is in regular contact with Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS) and the Old Strathcona Youth Society (OSYS) to determine the needs of youth.

Two years ago he started the Trinity Art Project, with the help of HTAC member and artist Alma Visscher, in collaboration with Holy Trinity Anglican Church (HTAC), YESS and OSYS. Each week local artists share their time and skills with the youth in the church - a safe, non-judgmental environment.

“It’s really important they have a safe, warm place to hang out, especially during the winter. It seemed like a natural fit to have a youth arts outreach at HTAC,” he says.

The parish believes art is an important way in which we interact with God’s mission. It has a gallery space in its Upper Hall, an arts council, resident poet and musical theatre group, is a BYOV for the Edmonton International Fringe Festival every August; and hosts theatre productions, music concerts and events such as First Fridays Open Stage, showcasing local talent, throughout the year.

HTAC, YESS and OSYS currently offer several weekly art drop-in opportunities for young creatives, providing access to high-quality art supplies, as well as the knowledge of local professional artists keen on sharing their skills and helping them find places to exhibit and market their art. Hardy plans to expand the Trinity Art Project to the Edmonton Young Offender’s Centre, where he helps lead a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy group twice a week. It will be another chance for artists to share their skills and art supplies while building trust and rapport with the youth.

“When youth have had to deal with a lot of trauma and difficult circumstances, it’s really hard for them to let another person or strange adult into their lives. But, if they can get to know the artists in the center, they will have someone in the community they can connect



Clark Hardy
Outreach Youth Worker
Diocese of Edmonton

with,” says Hardy, who served as youth transition advisor for the John Howard Society for two-and-a-half years.

Connecting youth with understanding employers and flexible employment opportunities is another focus of Hardy’s ministry. In addition to being a source of income and work experience, low-

Eventually, Hardy says he would like to be able to partner with parishes to support youth throughout the diocese. “If we could work at empowering churches in other communities, I think that would be very beneficial.” He is developing resources to equip clergy and lay persons to better understand and address the needs of marginalized youth; and to help parishes and communities become comfortable in welcoming and including them.

If you are able to suggest a social enterprise opportunity or would like to invite Clark Hardy to visit your parish, email him at clark@edmonton.anglican.ca.

Epiphany Sunday Confirmation at Holy Trinity, Old Strathcona



On Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2019, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Old Strathcona witnessed the beauty of four amazing youth reaffirming their baptismal vows through confirmation. The service was lovely and Bishop Jane’s sermon to begin this amazing season of Epiphanytide was greatly appreciated. Pictured from left are: Aeneas Pappas, Chris Pappas (rector), Tasia Pappas, Bishop Jane Alexander, Paul Lepine, Danielle Lepine (assistant curate), Emily Lepine. Submitted by the Rev. Danielle Lepine.

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Take a risk: follow Jesus on the ultimate adventure



Bishop Fraser Lawton
Athabasca Diocese

*"Aslan is a lion - the Lion, the great Lion."
"Ooh," said Susan.
"I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion..."
"Safe?" said Mr Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."*

- C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

A few years ago, I was given the dream opportunity of driving a Porsche 911 (1997) on a race track for eight laps. Each driver was assigned an instructor who had the ability to dial down our vehicle's power if we neglected to follow the directions. It was very fun. I was, though, I sadly confess, the slowest driver that day. I have several excuses. The first is that I told the instructor I wanted as much direction as possible – I wasn't only looking for the rush, but wanted to actually learn some skills. Secondly, the 911 was the slowest and heaviest car

available for the adventure. In my defence, my time did improve lap by lap. Ultimately, the real reason is that I have a self-preservation instinct that was also in play throughout the experience.

This instinct can be very helpful to us, even keeping us alive. There are times, however, when it is an unhelpful barrier; preventing us from taking needed risks or opportunities. It also has the ability to handicap us spiritually. The drive to preserve things as they are, whether as a congregation or in our own individual lives, can lead us to all sorts of compromise or to give in to fear that prevents taking action needed for growth and maturation. What Paul calls the 'old man' doesn't want to die.

To walk with Jesus inevitably brings us to moments of decision and conviction by the Holy Spirit calling us to repentance and change. The gospel calls us to live according to the ways of the Lord, and this often conflicts with the world and its attitudes. Fear and self-preservation can draw us to be quiet and compromise, especially when there's a potential cost to our relationships, reputation or career. Some of us may think these are the concerns of past far-off times and places. However, over the last few years, the culture in our own land has been growing further and further

from any Christian tether. Very often public discourse reveals both ignorance of and disdain for the gospel. Government policies, either by intent or consequence, increasingly contravene our faith.

What do we do in these circumstances? We need not give up or submit to fear. It is important for us to be aware of our faith and of that of the culture. We can't simply assume they align. Where they differ, we must choose the way of the Lord. He alone is our hope and life. We can ask the Lord to give us the grace we need to live the gospel. The difference maker in this is a relationship with Jesus. As we get to know Him better and better, we know more and more how wonderful He is and the infinite worth of belonging to Him.

Walking with God is not going to simply preserve us or make life easy. In this sense, He is not safe. Yet, He invites us to know Him and enter into His presence through the power of the cross and the grace we have in the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit we can dial up to full and not be afraid of the results. God hasn't invited us to safety, but to a grand adventure. The living knowledge of this is worth any cost.

**The Lord be with you,
+Fraser**

Baptized Children of God spread boundless joy in new year



Bishop Jane Alexander
Edmonton Diocese

On Sunday, December 30, I was so happy to preside at the baptism of six children of St. Mark Jieng parish in Edmonton. Areng, Achiek, Ajah, Iga, Nyariak, Chol, their parents and sponsors cheerfully processed to the font with joyful drumming and singing

from the congregation. The children who were older spoke of their desire to be baptized. At a service such as baptism you cannot help but look into the children's excited faces and be excited for them in dreaming of what God might do in their lives. This kind of joy is not feeling happy; it is more. It is not a transient feeling. It is a joy that we are connected with something so real that, as Rowan Williams said, it 'will break every boundary or container that we try to confine it in' (*Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life*). Joy is a building block in our Christian life that keeps us spiritually healthy. Joy is discovering that the world is more than you ever suspected, that God is more than you ever suspected, and that you



are more than you suspected.

As I looked into those children's faces I saw children of God rooted in the past living in the present with a blessed future. I prayed for them that because of God's love for them they would know His deepest joy. And that, because of God's love for them, they would indeed be able to display inquiring and discerning hearts, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in all God's works.

As we move through Christmas and into Epiphany I think that the image of joy spreading through the church and the world is important for us. At Christmas, when we celebrate the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, there is always that sense of something new coming into the world, new possibilities, new hope.

My prayer is that every one of us has seen some glimpse of God in a new way since

December 25, 2018, because this in-breaking of joy and light is ours and is a gift.

The poet Malcolm Guite wrote a beautiful sonnet for Epiphany which illustrates this thought:

*It might have been just someone else's story,
Some chosen people get a special king.
We leave them to their own peculiar glory,
We don't belong, it doesn't mean a thing.
But when these three arrive they bring us with them,
Gentiles like us, their wisdom might be ours;
A steady step that finds an inner rhythm,
A pilgrim's eye that sees beyond the stars.
They did not know his name but still they sought him,
They came from elsewhere but still they found;
In temples they found those who sold and bought him,
But in the filthy stable, hallowed ground.
Their courage gives our questing hearts a voice
To seek, to find, to worship, to rejoice.*

*Sounding the Seasons:
Poetry for the Christian Year*

**In Christ,
+Jane**

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Recovery from Christendom: rediscovering our identity



The Ven. RICHARD KING
Archdeacon for
Mission and Discipleship

Last month we started considering how, having lived so long under Christendom – those hundreds of years in which the church was at the centre of society’s worldview – we are left with an incorrect and skewed understanding of certain key truths; and we have a lot of baggage around

words like *church*, *mission* and *discipleship*.

We started with mission and saw that the love of God compels God to reach out. We, as the Lord’s ‘sent ones,’ are called to live in the same way; living lives through which our missional God reaches out to those around us. We are the light of the world, Jesus says. Every day, we wake up and go about our lives as the Lord’s sent ones. As we each go about our business, we represent our God. It’s the love of God that compels us onwards. Indeed, Paul links this compelled-by-love onward movement with the word *ambassador* in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. We represent Jesus every moment, for good or ill. This ongoing, onward, love-compelled movement; this

missional-impulse, is the focus of our lives.

To be missional, then, is not to *do* works of mission. To be missional is to be ‘like our Father in heaven.’ We are sent because He is a sending God. He sent Jesus. He sends the Holy Spirit. He sends us. Thus, to be missional flows out of our doctrine of God. It affects each one of us. There is no such thing as an ‘unsent’ Christian. We are all the Lord’s sent ones. Out of this flows how we are to *do* church and discipleship, not the other way round.

Yet, as we have seen, Christendom put church at the centre. Discipleship was focussed primarily on church attendance. Church became about the place we gathered, where we listened while someone ‘better trained’ did

the ministry, rather than an active body of which we are all vital members.

As we can immediately see, that creates a much more passive picture. Instead of being ‘sent,’ we are ‘gathered.’ Instead of being equipped for our ‘sent’ lives, the focus and a great deal of energy go into making the gathering as good a time as possible and filling the rosters to make our gathering work.

So – and here is the rub – when you think of the words *church* and *discipleship*, are you thinking in the terms of being a ‘sent one’ or a ‘gathered one?’

‘ID,’ our diocesan prototype framework for missional discipleship, is into its second year and we have worked with eight

churches now. This work is ongoing and we continue to learn a great deal. One thing I always do at some point in the proceedings is to ask participants to indicate whether they believe God can’t use them because they don’t know enough yet. It is always the case that the vast majority raise their hands.

Each of us has within us right now all we need to flourish and grow as the Lord’s sent ones. The tragic legacy of Christendom is when we think we don’t know enough and, thus, live a diminished form of the life God has for us.

May God bless you richly in your daily, missional lives.

Richard

Worship and Evangelism: linked, but not the same



The Ven. TERRY LEER
Archdeacon for
Mission Development
Diocese of Athabasca

It seems that some denominations and congregations have confused *worship* and *evangelism*. The primary sign of this confusion is the existence of “seeker friendly” worship services. Such services present a “gospel-light” approach: we don’t want to make any demands lest the newcomer be frightened away. Let’s not highlight the uniqueness of the Christian faith; we should present faith as an easy spirituality, accessible to all, and avoid any connection with institutional religion and obligation.

Let’s make God friendly and easy to approach,

with none of that “fear-of-the-Lord” stuff. And the best way to present easy Christianity is through our seeker-friendly worship, which relies heavily on music as performance.

In truth, worship and evangelism are different and not to be confused. They are related, perhaps even twinned, but they are different.

Worship is the Christian community’s corporate declaration of God’s worth in our lives. Worship is our common praise of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and our proclamation of our gratitude to God for all that he is and all that he does. Worship is greater than the sum of its parts (praise, prayer, discipleship development, sacramental living). It is the Church’s response to the free gift of salvation which every disciple has experienced. Worship is an expression of our identity as the whole Body of Christ through which we collectively focus our attention on God. We use praise, prayer, discipleship development and sacramental living as channels for our focus, but

that focus is God which makes worship greater than the sum of its parts.

Evangelism is the disciple’s way of fulfilling Christ’s Great Commission: ‘Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...’ Evangelism is how we disciples work out our own salvation in the presence of and for the benefit of others. We proclaim the gospel in our own lives so that others might experience God’s call to salvation. In evangelism we serve as God’s tools for the salvation of others. In this, our attention is directed by the love of God towards the souls of others as we present our experience of salvation in terms which the

other can appreciate.

There might well be an evangelistic impact on disciples in our worship, but it is obvious that the two are different. We cannot really make worship into evangelism, and evangelism can never replace worship. Our worship must support our evangelism and develop the skill set used in evangelism. Our evangelism must direct the attention of others to the God whom we worship. But the two are different.

Highlighting the distinctions calls our attention to each of them and so we are pushed towards excellence in each. Our worship must reinforce

our praise and prayer. Our evangelism must genuinely reflect God’s love. Our worship pulls the community into the grace and power of God. Our evangelism re-presents the resurrected and loving Lord in ways which speak to the person in front of us.

So, our Church needs to appreciate both worship and evangelism—their distinctiveness, their goals, God’s intent in each. With such an appreciation, we will find the insight to more genuinely worship and more effectively evangelize. Then each of them will support the other, which will more effectively enable the Church to be the Church.

Diocese of Athabasca 2019 Upcoming Events

February 8-9: Diocesan Executive Council *Note new location: St. Peter’s Ecumenical Church, Slave Lake
February 8: DEC Eucharist, 7 pm
Everyone welcome

April 5-7: Lay Readers’ Conference
“Competent and Confident: Using our Tools for Ministry,” St. Peter’s Ecumenical Parish, Slave Lake
Freewill Offering

April 26-28: ACW Conference, St. James’ Cathedral, Peace River
Details TBA

General Synod Consultations within the Diocese:

- May 8, 7 pm, All Saints’ Church, Fort McMurray
 - May 9, 7 pm, All Saints’ Church, Athabasca
 - May 15, 7 pm, Christ Church, Grande Prairie
 - May 16, 7 pm, St. Mark’s Church, High Prairie
- *All licensed clergy, diocesan synod members and general synod delegates are expected to attend at least one of these General Synod Consultations.

Anglican/Lutheran congregation increases community presence

JOANNA MUZYKA
St. Andrew's Zion, Colinton



This Christmas at St. Andrew's Zion (Anglican/Lutheran Congregation) in Colinton, part of the four-point Parish of the Northern Lights in the Diocese of Athabasca, we did not let the busyness of our everyday lives stop us from adding a few more things to the seasonal mix.

Back in November, as a way of strengthening our presence in the community, we participated in the Athabasca Moonlight Madness Chamber of Commerce parade. Colinton is a small hamlet located about 15 minutes south of the Town of Athabasca. Our members come from various parts of Athabasca County to be part of our family. I have often wondered how anyone who is not actively searching for us would know we exist. We created a banner and members of the congregation joined businesses and community groups for the parade.

We greeted the crowd with hand-warmers and hot chocolate packages, and a warm invitation to join us for our Christmas Eve service, as well as our regular Sunday services. People loved it!

We started off Advent by asking the congregation to decorate a tree in the hall with socks, scarves, mittens and hats that were delivered to the local foodbank to add to hampers following Christmas.

Other holiday happenings included our now annual Christmas Potluck and Children's Presentation on the evening of December 22; organized and planned by member Kathy Asfeldt and put on by the children and youth of our congregation. It is always a wonderful evening of joy, laughter and talent.

Following the Sunday service, on December 23, the

congregation went carolling in Colinton. A special thanks to Don Sissons for bringing a wagon for all of us to ride on, and Gail Sissons and Beth Gunderson for having hot chocolate and popcorn ready when we returned to the church.

Our parish is currently without an incumbent and we were blessed to have the Rev. Christobel Lines join us to lead our Christmas Eve service, which we concluded with singing "Silent Night" by candle light.



Clockwise from top: Don Sissons drives the sleigh of carollers; the Allen family on Christmas Eve; St. Andrew's takes part in the Athabasca Moonlight Madness Parade. Photos: Dan Lemke and Joanne Muzyka



St. Mark's, High Prairie proclaims reason for season

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor



Every December the community of High Prairie is drawn to the snow-covered front lawn of St. Mark's Anglican Church by music broadcast over an outdoor speaker.

The Live Nativity, put on by the parish on the first Friday of the month, is a long-standing tradition in High Prairie. The Birth of Jesus, the real reason for the season, is proclaimed far and wide. Motorists (this year from as far as 60 kms away) have been known to drive into the car park to enjoy the evening with us. This year about 100 people turned out on a cool (-10 C), yet seasonably warm evening, to hear scripture readings and sing Christmas songs.

Young and young-at-heart actors dress up as Mary, Joseph, King Herod, the magi, angels and shepherds to enact the Christmas story. One angel who towers above all brings the Annunciation to Mary.

Our welcoming prayer was led by the minister from the local Baptist church. The Nazarene church minister was in costume again this year, as were people from the Victory church. The six readers were from Roman Catholic and Anglican churches.

The Live Nativity was imagined,

too many years ago to remember, as a way of sharing the greatest story ever told with our community, in a way no one could miss. St. Mark's is

situated along the main highway through town. We set up a stable and sign and advertise on a float in the Santa Parade one week before the Live Nativity. The local media lend their support by publicizing and covering the event.

On the evening of the performance, we light up the whole yard and provide seating in the driveway for everyone who comes. The event is completely unrehearsed, with people choosing their costumes (made by Colleen Greer) when they arrive. Live animals are brought in by local farmers. This year we had a large cow and her three-week-old calf. The animals are not quiet, as we discovered when, at the end of one reading, the cow made a loud grunt of approval. In years past we have had goats, sheep and a donkey; everyone loves the animals.

Nobody seems to mind the



One of the Magi (Hope Keshen) presents a gift to Mary (Promise Spruyt) for baby Jesus. Photo: Chris Clegg, South Peace News

spontaneity either, though it can make for anxious organizers. This year, with less than ten minutes to go to start, we did not have

our central characters! A call went out, quite literally. Within moments we had a Joseph and one of the

angels offered to be Mary. She did a wonderful job, especially with her speaking part. People were amazed at her presence.

There was excellent participation in the singing this year as people seemed to appreciate the large-print song books. At the end of the presentation we had a local Filipino group sing two of their favourite Christmas songs for us.

After the hour-long production, everyone is invited to the church hall for hot beverages and goodies. The little hall was filled to overflowing with people sharing their joy over the

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(includes sermons for lay readers for each Sunday)

The Anglican Centre (archives for the Diocese of Athabasca)
Phone: 780-624-2767
Fax: 780-624-2365
Email: dioath@telusplanet.net

Parish websites

- Peace River: www.stjamespr.org
- Fort McMurray, All Saints': www.allsaintsanglican.ca
- Fort McMurray, St. Thomas': www.sttom.ca
- Grande Prairie: www.christchurchanglicangp.org
- Boyle: www.parishnorthernlights.org



Edmonton Cursillo Renewal Weekend a grand reunion

DAVID HOLEHOUSE
Lay Director
Edmonton Cursillo

Edmonton's Cursillo Renewal Weekend proved to be a grand reunion, as Cursillistas who made their weekends in previous years returned for a time of revival and refreshment.

Held at serene Star of the North Retreat Centre in St. Albert, the November event brought together 40 souls for a full complement of fine music, deep prayer, God-led healing, uplifting worship, animated discussion and total abandonment of our own agendas to the irrepressible,



loving guidance of the Holy Spirit.

There was dancing, and boisterous, joyful singing; especially for our theme song, "Bless the Lord, O My Soul." There was a beautiful handmade banner, which was started in Tofield and finished in Calgary when the Rev. Laureta Blondin's sewing machine gave up the ghost, proclaiming the theme verse of the Weekend: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

We shared a community meal on Saturday at tables decorated by the prayer team. Our music leader came all the way from White Rock, BC, for team training days and the Renewal Weekend. Leaders from the Canadian Anglican Cursillo Secretariat, from Ontario and Calgary, brought words of love and encouragement. Local speakers opened their hearts to God and to the gathered community to tell of Christ's healing love in

their lives. The level of generosity and commitment by all was extraordinary. And, as always, there was a healthy dose of holy humour flowing throughout.

We were also blessed with friends from the Indigenous community, who opened our hearts and minds to their traditional practices of prayer and praise to our shared Creator God.

If this weekend differed from the others, it was in an increase in our conversation of words like *revival*, *renewal* and *recommitment* to the way of Cursillo. The tools remain the same: regular group reunions for small-group prayer among friends; monthly ultreyas to encourage us with regular witness and fellowship; continuing education and formation for spiritual growth and strength.

The weekend was once again an opportunity to examine our current place on the journey of life; to appreciate the depth of God's grace and the power of faith; to hear

testimony about how companionship with God, perseverance in study and love of thy neighbour give us a life worth living. The prayer team underpinned all our doings. Our Sunday focus included the journey ahead with Christ from a safe, hallowed, spirit-filled place back into a world easily distracted by baubles, frets and pursuits.

We left with an absolute and abiding assurance that God still has work for the Edmonton Cursillo Community to equip lay people to walk alongside their clergy in building up God's church and kingdom here on earth. We are the body of Christ, walking, singing, praying and praising, as we continue our pilgrimage of faith, hand-in-hand with Christ and community.

We invite new candidates to walk with God at the next Cursillo Weekend in the fall of 2019. Watch www.edmontoncursillo.ca for updates and like us and share on [facebook.com/edmontoncursillo/](https://www.facebook.com/edmontoncursillo/).

Boat ambulance delivers expectant mother to healthcare



DOROTHY MARSHALL
PWRDF Representative
Diocese of Edmonton

I like to think that my father was somewhat of a "Noah" in his day. Give the man directions and he could build anything... even a boat!

Now, dad's instructions were not divinely received; he found them in a book at the local library. However, his boat, like Noah's, was constructed in the middle of the dry prairie without a sign of water anywhere. In fact, dad did his building in a small unheated garage in our back yard through a long Alberta winter... without any power tools (again, like Noah). My brother and I often helped, as did Noah's sons. My job was to do the

sanding. Obviously, I was considered *unskilled* labour. I don't know what motivated Shem, Ham, and Japheth to help their father with that massive building project but, as for me, I put up with the cold on those winter evenings because I simply wanted to spend time with my dad.

Our hard work certainly paid off. I have great memories of building that boat, and enjoying the fruits of that winter's labour; fishing on the lakes of northern Alberta. Being out on the water was pure pleasure for this prairie girl.

Sometimes a boat is used for much more than pleasure; it can be a lifeline. In the case of one of the projects funded by our Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, a particular boat was built, not on dry land, but on a river delta on the other side of the world. It was near the village of Bantiar, on a remote river in Bangladesh. This is an area of extreme poverty; many farmers lost their land to river erosion and rising water levels.

As part of a maternal

health project, PWRDF funds bicycle and boat ambulances, as well as a birthing house where traditional birth attendants (Dais) monitor the health of pregnant women in the area.

Shahana, a 26-year-old woman from this village, was in the late stages of her second pregnancy when she went into labour unexpectedly at home and began having convulsions. (Her first son had died of pneumonia at age six months.) The Dais were consulted and decided she needed to go immediately to the hospital. But there were no men available in the village to drive the bicycle ambulance to the river where the boat ambulance was docked. With no time to waste, the Dais put Shahana on a bicycle ambulance and several neighbour women helped them push the bicycle to the river bank. Once she was safely on board the boat, the boatman began the two-hour journey across the river to the birthing centre.

As often happens, the baby could not wait and was delivered by the Dais while they were on the middle of

the river. Fortunately, with the help of the trained Dais, Shahana safely delivered her baby and the convulsions stopped while she was recovering after the birth. She named her baby girl Nodi (which means river).

The financial support of Anglicans from across Canada makes a good news boat story like this one possible. PWRDF is engaged in working with partners like Global Affairs Canada, who provide matching dollars in support of initiatives that promote maternal, newborn and child health. In fact, the government matches every \$1 donation with \$6.

PWRDF's strategy to reduce poverty worldwide is focused on improving the health of mothers and children. This includes prenatal check-ups, education about healthy pregnancies, access to trained birth attendants,



Traditional birthing attendants (Dais) in rural Bangladesh.

newborn care education, vaccinations and well baby visits. Construction of basic health facilities in rural areas (clinics, expectant mothers' houses, dispensaries) and community health worker training are also part of PWRDF's wellness and poverty reduction strategy.

If this initiative is something you would like to learn more about, please visit our updated website at www.pwrdf.org. You can also financially support our work by donating on that secure site. If you would like to become involved as a parish volunteer, please email Diocesan Rep., Dorothy Marshall at pwrdf@edmonton.anglican.ca.

St. Paul's Edmonton helping Rwandans help themselves

SHELLY KING

with Nora and Wendell James

St. Paul's Anglican Church is making a difference, thousands of kilometers away from their Edmonton parish, in the Anglican diocese of Cyangugu in southwest Rwanda. St. Paul's raised approximately \$6,000 for Rwanda in a single day through a silent auction last November. Subsequent donations grew that amount to \$8,000, which was then increased even further through a matching-funds grant.

All the money raised at St. Paul's will go into a scholarship fund arranged in conjunction with Cyangugu diocese. Six per cent of children in Rwanda do not attend any school. Fifty-eight per cent don't finish primary school. Of the 32 per cent who do go to secondary school, only three per cent finish, though some do vocational training until grade nine. Only one per cent of students have the means to attend college or university. The goal of this fund is to assist both students who are not able to attend school, and those who are doing well, but are unable to continue due to financial restraints. Although education is supposed to be free in Rwanda, the cost of school fees and uniforms makes it unaffordable for families living at a subsistence level. The hope is that educated students will be able to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

Wendell James, chairperson of Focus on Missions at St. Paul's says the church "has helped such individuals in the past, and these investments have earned dividends in terms of benefits to the region."

Several of the candidates for education funding, as well as some who have already benefitted,

are known personally by Wendell and his wife, Nora James, who made their most recent trip to Rwanda last August. Naome, for example, is a young woman who shows great leadership potential. She is studying to become an engineer. Olivier is a young man who wants to go to university so he can support his siblings who currently cannot go to school at all. His mother is battling cancer and he had not been able to pay school fees for two years, yet the headmaster of his school kept him in, believing God would provide. A third candidate is Solange. She is the eldest girl in her family, which has previously received support for housing. Solange was third in her class in primary school, but couldn't afford to finish. She is one individual who may be helped through the fund. Others may be helped with vocational training and obtaining equipment to begin practicing their vocation.

As with previous trips, the visit in August 2018 was busy and full of opportunity for ministry. Nora helped teach "Days for Girls" sessions and brought as many cloth menstrual kits as possible. Being able to manage their menstrual cycle helps keep young women in school. With the help of a local nurse, they provided education for both girls and boys about relationships, the body and pregnancy, emphasizing biblical values to help youth make healthy choices. There was also opportunity to follow up on microfinance and housing projects started in previous



Pictured clockwise from top, some of the students who have been or may be helped through St. Paul's Rwandan Youth Education Fund: Solange (far right) with her family in front of their home in Gashonga Parish, which was funded through Rural Development Interdiocesan Services of Rwanda; Wendell and Nora James with engineering student Naome after she finished speaking to the youth conference; Olivier with his headmaster Odel, who fought to keep him in school in spite of an inability to pay.



visits.

Then on August 6th, the first of two conferences kicked off, as 40 pastors and 40 catechists arrived, representing parishes throughout the large, rural diocese. A team of three from Wholeness through Christ used skits, visual aids and small group discussion to cover topics around personal and spiritual healing, and the practice of listening to God. Dr. Wanjiku Kironyo, the founder of a social economic development program based in Kenya, also provided sessions about counselling and dealing with such issues as historic baggage, prejudice and self-esteem. It was a rare opportunity for the clergy to all be together.

Approximately 200 youth arrived from villages throughout the diocese on the evening of August 8th. Their conference, over the next four days, covered several of the same topics as discussed with pastors, but geared to their level of understanding and with greater emphasis on active group participation. The conference wrapped up with a communion



service led by the Rt. Rev. Nathan Amooti, Bishop of Cyangugu diocese.

All of this work has developed out of a long-standing relationship between St. Paul's and Cyangugu diocese. Previous trips to the area were led by Dudley and Pat Baker in conjunction with Wholeness through Christ Canada, with the James's coming on board when Nora joined the 2015 trip.

Wendell says that establishing the Rwanda Youth Education Fund and the associated fundraising have been priorities through 2018. However, he says, "The over-all objective must be to help Rwandans help themselves, without creating dependencies. We see housing, microfinance and education as three pillars to help achieve this objective... and we now have agency agreements in place for each." Near term plans include selecting about half a dozen candidates for education scholarships in 2019. The James's hope to return to Rwanda in 2020.

Breaking Bread Together



St. Columba Anglican Church in Beaumont, as part of our outreach program, has been involved in hosting dinners at St. George's Anglican Church in Edmonton for university students involved in St. Aidan's House, an intentional Christian Community on campus. This is the second year we have hosted these dinners, and the dinner on November 18, 2018 was the first of four we will host this university year. Members of St. Columba joined students for a Holden Prayer service led by the Rev. Heather Liddell, educational chaplain, followed by a meal with enough leftovers for the students to take home. A

wonderful time was had by all! Submitted by Ursula Stewart, parishioner at St. Columba, Beaumont

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Advent congregation ponders world turned upside down

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

A chorus of readers and singers, led by Bishop Jane Alexander and accompanied by organist Fred Bryant, brought warmth to the festively decorated sanctuary of St. Aidan and St. Hilda Anglican Church, Rexboro, on Sunday, December 9.

The 41st Annual Advent Lessons and Carols Service drew an enthusiastic congregation to the pioneer country church west of Edmonton for the traditional telling of Jesus' birth. But, amidst the cozy carolers, a bishop was stirring.

"We've just heard again that wonderful Christmas story telling us about the time when the world was turned upside down," said Bishop Jane.

Mary, barely able to contain herself and so full of excitement with what God wanted her to do, gave us her wonderful song, "The Magnificat," she said.

"But, when was the last time we jumped up and down with excitement about what God wanted us to do? Sometimes as we hear the Christmas story and, as we live

again into this amazing thing, it becomes a question of what will we do to turn the world upside down?

"The other day I heard someone say that the challenge is not to keep Christ in Christmas, but to let Him out! So let Him out of Christmas so that He can keep on turning the world upside down through us. I

think that's really God's point: that He came and gave the shepherds the best news in the world, and Mary jumped for joy and the world was turned on its head.

"I don't think you can have a real faith without it interfering with every aspect of your life. Are there places where the world needs to be turned upside down and what might we do? Are there places, for example, where there are still children who are being forgotten about? I think about the children in Yemen. Are there places that haven't known peace in a long, long time? I think about South Sudan. Are there places that are so used to being split apart that they take it for granted? I was in Bethlehem last

summer and again was struck by the fact that there, right down the middle of the place where Jesus was born, there's a huge, great wall. It's not right, is it?

"What's the thing that makes you a bit squirmy, because you know it's not right? Whatever my part is, large or small; whatever your part is, large or small; I hope you will not sit on the edge. I hope you'll take the fact that Jesus came to dwell among us and let it be the difference in your life."

Bishop Jane and several members of the congregation took turns reading the nine lessons, beginning with Zachariah 2:10-13; and ending with John 1:1-14. Mary Phillips-Rickey and Mary Stephens shared their gift of song, performing together "Angels We Have Heard on High" and "O Holy Night."

Following the service, many people gathered for fellowship at the Wabamun and District Seniors' Centre, where food and donations were collected on behalf of the Wabamun Christmas Hamper Committee.



St. Aidan and St. Hilda, Rexboro: idyllic at Christmas.



Bishop Jane welcomes parishioners and visitors to celebrate the Rexboro Service of Lessons and Carols.



CBC story-tellers recount *A Christmas Carol* at St. Augustine Parkland

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

The Rev. Billy Isenor, rector of St. Augustine's-Parkland Anglican Church, Spruce Grove, welcomed more than 180 people to a dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* on December 15. CBC Radio One personalities Adrienne Pan, Lydia Neufeld, Janice Johnston, Mark Connolly and Rod Kurtz told the timeless tale in five staves (sections) in support of the Christmas Hamper Drive of the Spruce Grove Kinettes and Stony Plain Kinsmen.

Emcee Kim Trynacity said the CBC's tradition of reading *A Christmas Carol* spans more than two decades. The idea originated with CBC Toronto newsreader Judy Maddren who began an annual project to stage a spoken-word version of the Dickens' classic in 1990, subsequently raising more than \$5 million for local charities across



CBC Radio One personalities Rod Kurtz and Adrienne Pan each read a stave of *A Christmas Carol*.



Canada.

"The story of *A Christmas Carol* (the transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge through his encounters with the Spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come), is as relevant today as it was when Dickens wrote it 175 years ago," said Trynacity, alluding to the economic disparity in Victorian England society, which is still prevalent today.

The show's producers, St. Augustine's members Ian Bowden and Aglaia Lessard, began planning the

production last June with the support of their fellow vestry members and parishioners who suggested the proceeds be given to a local charity.

For more than 40 years the Kinettes and Kinsmen have shared the blessings of their community with people in need at Christmas. In 2018 they raised more than \$450,000 to provide 1,200 families and 4,000 people with toys and gift cards, necessities over the Christmas season and food for a festive meal.

"We are so blessed by the giving of this community; to be able to show the folks receiving these gifts their community cares about them and that they are not alone at this time," said Ed Berney and Jennifer Lloyd representing

the Parkland area Kinsmen and Kinettes.

The production featured the talents of many local musicians, including folk trio Meridian Line: Ian Bowden, Rick Diesbourg and Rick Cormier; barbershop quartet Tag Along: Bill Sykes, Bill Courtis, Dave Jackson and Frank Traviss; the St. Augustine's-Parkland Anglican Church Choir, led by Aglaia Lessard; renowned organist the Rev. Lorne Manweiler, priest-in-charge of St. Timothy's Anglican Church, Edmonton; folk singer/songwriter the Rev. Tim Chesterton, rector of St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Edmonton; and vocalists Victoria Thompson and Hazel Wolfert.

During the intermission, audience members were treated to festive desserts including mince and butter tarts, shortbread, spiced apple cider and mulled wine.



The audience is entertained by barbershop quartet Tag Along.

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