



THE MESSENGER

MAY 2021

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“Resurrection life, outrageous love” theme of final episcopal sermon

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

With a determined focus to move into where God is calling her and members of the Edmonton diocese next, and in celebration of all that is new, the Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander publicly concluded her 13-year episcopal ministry of “outrageous love” by presiding over the Holy Eucharist at All Saints’ Anglican Cathedral in Edmonton on the most joyful day of the Christian year – Easter Sunday.

Bishop Jane began her April 4, 2021 homily by reflecting on a “wonderful” passage from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 8.

“I’m absolutely convinced that nothing - nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable - absolutely nothing can get between us and God’s love,” she said through a camera lens to more than 270 people watching the service live on All Saints’ YouTube channel. “Absolutely nothing, not even a pandemic, can get in the way of this truth that holds firm for all times and all place... Today, we receive the promise of salvation and the assurance that we are redeemed,” she said. “Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and promises us life forevermore.”

The notes of the opening hymn, “The Day of Resurrection,” (Francis Jackson): “Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend, for Christ the Lord is risen, our joy that hath no end,” played by All Saints’ organist and music director Jeremy Spurgeon, rang triumphantly through the nearly empty cathedral. A surge of variant strains of COVID in Alberta and across Canada limited the cathedral congregation to fewer than a dozen people, including Bishop Jane’s husband Dr. Tim Alexander, their youngest son Peter and soon-to-be daughter-in-law and the bishop’s executive assistant Jennifer Wirun.

Bishop Jane greeted worshippers, both present and online, proclaiming: “Alleluia!” Christ is risen,” and was met with the familiar response: “The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!” The Dean of Edmonton and rector of All Saints’ Cathedral, the Very Rev. Alexandra Meek, shared the good news of Jesus’ resurrection and our salvation in the first (Acts 10:34-43) and second (1 Corinthians 15:1-11) readings: “that everyone who believes in him



receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Rev. Ruth Sesink Bott, vicar of All Saints’, shared the Holy Gospel (Mark 16:1-8), describing the visit of three women: Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James and Salome, to the tomb. There they expected to find the crucified body of their beloved dead Jesus. Instead, they received astonishing news: Jesus had been raised from the dead.”

“If you go further into the gospel – into what we call the ‘longer ending of Mark,’ said Bishop Jane, “you will find that Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and she tells the others. At the time of Jesus, it would be impossible to imagine for a moment that such amazing and earth-changing news could first be given to women. And then it is

Pictured above: Bishop Jane Alexander brings a joyful greeting at her final Easter Sunday service as bishop in All Saints’ Anglican Cathedral, Edmonton. Pictured below: Bishop Jane turns and lays her crozier on the altar.
Photos by Margaret Glidden

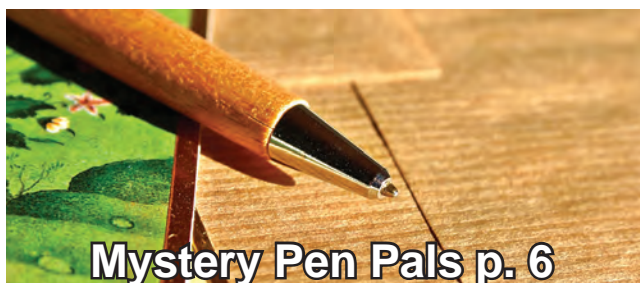


Mary Magdalene: not Peter, not John, not James the brother of the Lord, but Mary, who becomes the apostle to the apostles, the first Christian evangelist... What was he (Jesus) thinking? Everything is changed, turned on its head.”

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Episcopal election update: nominations underway in May

The Rev. Deacon SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

The process is well underway for electing the 11th Bishop of Edmonton on June 26 and during the month of May the diocese will mark several milestones in this process. May 16 will be the final day for the Diocesan Search Committee to receive for consideration the names of those who would stand for the position. May 29 will be the final day for the committee to receive a curriculum vitae from each applicant. May 30 will be the final day for parishes to submit the names of delegates who will vote at the electoral synod.

The search committee has been hard at work since March 18, when Diocese of Edmonton Executive Council voted in six committee members and one alternate from among 22 nominees (six clergy and 16 laity). The following day, the newly formed committee elected the Rev. Canon Chelsy Bouwman as its chair and Canon Barbara Burrows as its secretary. The committee then immediately got to work on a document that is technically called the ‘memorandum’ and more commonly known as the diocesan profile.

Diocesan Administrator, the Very Rev. Alex Meek, says it is important to remember that the work of the search committee is vital, but the power of decision lies with the diocese.

“The search committee has the role of presenting the voice of the diocese in the memorandum,” she says, “but then functions primarily in an organizational way to make sure deadlines are met and candidates have submitted their paperwork on time. It’s an important committee,

but members do not function out of their own voice. They write the memorandum based on information received from across the diocese so potential candidates know who we are and can pray about whether they are called to serve the church here with us.”

Bouwman echoes this understanding of her committee’s work.

“At no time in this process does the search committee act as a special voice to recommend one candidate over another,” she says. “Our function is to create the memorandum, receive proposals of candidates, ensure they meet the requirements, and prepare information for synod members.”

Along with a description of the diocese, the memorandum includes a set of ‘local requirements’ for potential candidates based on information collected in early March through special deanery meetings, bible studies, and virtual responses to videos on the diocesan website. Bouwman says this information has all been very helpful in developing these local requirements, which make the difference between anyone who might be generally qualified to be a bishop according to the constitution of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert’s Land (see inset), and that unique person who is specifically called to Edmonton diocese at this time.

April 22 was the deadline for the memorandum to be delivered to the administrator. It was then distributed to the electoral synod delegates who will eventually take part in the vote. It is also available on the diocesan website at edmonton.anglican.ca for anyone who would like to read it.

Straight away, after April 22, the

Episcopal Election Timeline

May 16:	Final day to receive names for consideration
May 29:	Final day to receive information from applicants
May 30:	Final day for the Secretary of Synod to receive names of parish delegates
June 5:	Search Committee must present candidate information to the Administrator
June 23:	Final deadline for Members of Synod nominations
June 26:	Episcopal Election

search committee began seeking and receiving the names of people who would like to stand for nomination and will continue to do so until May 16. Proposals can come from almost anywhere: the provincial House of Bishops, archbishops and bishops outside the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert’s Land, theological colleges, clergy and lay members from inside or outside the diocese and province. Lay people within Edmonton diocese who are not members of synod may make suggestions either to the delegates from their parish or to the search committee directly, as long as the person they wish to propose has agreed to let her or his name stand.

The search committee will assess all proposed persons according to both the canonical requirements and the local requirements in the memorandum, gathering all the information they need to do that effectively. If the committee rejects a proposal, it must be because the person did not meet the criteria laid out in the memorandum. In that case, the person who made the proposal will be notified. However, the committee is not required to

explain the decision in detail. The canons (church laws that govern the process) require the committee to be very careful with respect to confidentiality.

Once all proposed persons have submitted the required information and have been assessed, the committee has until June 5 to present the nominees and all their information to the administrator in a form that will enable synod delegates to make an educated decision on the day of the vote. Members of synod then have until June 23 to nominate any candidate they feel the search process may have missed. The nomination process comes to a formal conclusion at the electoral synod when the Diocesan Search Committee presents its final report, including all nominees.

Administrator Meek says, “thank you,” in advance. “The search committee is a diverse, faithful and exceptionally competent group of individuals. I have every confidence in them and am so thankful for their willingness to serve the diocese in this work.”

Diocesan Search Committee

Clergy:

The Rev. Canon Chelsy Bouwman
The Rev. Nick Trussell
The Rev. Stephanie London

Laity:

Ms. Sherilyn Trompetter Okereke
Mr. Fred Matthews
Mr. Clark Hardy

Provincial Members:

The Rt. Rev. William Cliff
The Rev. Canon Helen Kennedy
Mr. Larry Brewster

Qualifications of a Bishop

All candidates in an episcopal election must meet five qualifications set out in the constitution of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert’s Land. It must be shown that he or she:

- (a) is of the full age of thirty years;
- (b) is a priest or bishop in Holy Orders of The Anglican Church of Canada, or of a church in full communion therewith;
- (c) is faithful in the doctrines and discipline of The Anglican Church of Canada as determined and defined by the official formularies of that church;
- (d) is known and recognized within that person’s community as being a person of integrity and moral stature; and
- (e) has those qualities and abilities of leadership, experience and learning that will enable that person to fulfil the duties of a chief pastor in the Church of God.

(s. 6.02, provincial constitution)

What does it mean to you to know that Jesus likes you?

“You do too like me!”
My heart broke as
I heard the four-year-old boy yell out to another. Tears running down his cheeks, he yelled again: “Come back here! You do too still like me!” The other boy rode away on his bike.
We want to be liked. We want to be loved, accepted, to be told by others, “You are important. You have value. I like you.”



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

As I'm writing this, we're just completing our Bible Reading Marathon. As a diocese we hosted a non-stop reading of the bible on Zoom from 1:00pm on Palm Sunday until 4:00pm Maundy Thursday.
One thing that struck me as we listened to the readings together was that life is full of conflict. The bible is totally full of it! You could argue, I suppose, the act of creation itself is a conflict with the “state of non-creation.” But regardless of that, the first description of conflict involving people is the temptation and the fall in Genesis chapter 3, a mere 55 verses into the bible. And conflict in various ways and stages is depicted right until the end of the bible. Jesus' ministry as written in the gospels was full of it. Human beings are creatures

of conflict. We grasp, we strive, we compete, we even – in the extreme – war and kill. Such is our fallen nature.
In the church too, we have conflict. This conflict has hurt many people.
An amazing thing, though a great blessing I think, was that in our Bible Reading Marathon, we had people with many differing perspectives join together to read the Word of God. We had Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and many Anglicans. We had our Primate, the four Metropolitans of the Canadian church, and many Bishops. We had other clergy and many lay people, from within our diocese and from around the world. Despite all our differences, all our conflicts with each other, together we read the word of God and together we listened to the word of God.
Much conflict comes down to what was experienced by that four-year-old. ‘I want to be rich / famous / powerful / have my way in some fashion, so that I can tell myself that I am important and so that you will know it, too. I want to prove to myself and to the world that I have value. I want to be liked, for then I may like myself.’

The interesting thing though, in listening to the stories of the bible, is that when people come into God's presence they don't get their own way, or prove how rich / famous / powerful they are. Rather, God leads us through a freeing process of giving up that insistence on getting our own way, to serving God in God's way. This is a way not of selfish grasping, but of sacrificial giving. It is a way of rediscovering our true identity.
We must discover that we can disagree and discuss what we disagree on, that we can listen and learn, and not attack each other but totally seek to serve Christ in what we do and say. We must discover that though conflict is a given, it can be engaged so as to build up and not destroy. Then, as we work hard to give up our own needs and desires for power, adulation, importance and value, to our surprise and our joy, we discover we are, through the risen Christ, children of a Father of unending love and fellow-members of Christ's family.
Your heavenly Father looks you in the eye and says, “You are important. You have value. I like you. Welcome home.”
To the glory of our Father, in the name of the Risen Son, and by the power of the Holy Spirit – to our eternal joy. Amen.

+David

“Resurrection life, outrageous love” theme of sermon, cont.

Continued from front page.

The church continues to change, “We have new ways of doing things,” she said. “That's been true this year!” Since March 2020, when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and Bishop Jane made the difficult decision to suspend in-person worship services, parishes of the Edmonton diocese have used digital technology to hold virtual worship services and provide opportunities for communities to connect online. Transformational change has shaped the Edmonton diocese throughout its 108-year history. When Bishop Jane was installed as 10th Bishop of Edmonton in May 2008, she succeeded Bishop Victoria Matthews, the first female Anglican bishop in Canada. (In 2019, the Anglican Church of Canada elected Linda Nicholls as its first female Primate.) Now, in addition to women taking “an equal role in the leadership of the church, people, regardless of their sexual orientation, can receive and share in the sacrament of marriage in equal measure,” she said. “There are lots of other things for sure. This Easter life of ours is exciting,

unexpected, and keeps us on our toes. Resurrection life always looks for a bigger family; more love, abundance and outrageous love, in fact.”
Concluding her last sermon as Bishop of Edmonton, in the cathedral where she was ordained as a deacon and then a priest, where she was subsequently inducted as a rector and a dean, then elected and installed as a bishop, Bishop Jane said, “Let me tell you a secret. The message to get up and get out there and tell someone about Jesus is mine to share today, tomorrow, and in a year's time. It has nothing to do with being a bishop and everything to do with being a daughter of God. You see, Jesus rose from the dead so all of us can believe the power of sin and death is broken once and for all time. We are now asked to live this new resurrection life.”
Or as @bishjane put it to her Twitter followers on Easter

Sunday morning: “He has gone ahead of you to Galilee. He has gone ahead of you to Edmonton, Cold Lake, Frog Lake, Ponoka, Wainwright, Jasper, Buyé.....even to the ends of the earth. Christ will always be there wherever you find yourself.”
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!



Easter Eucharist, April 4, 2021
Photo by Jennifer Wirun

<p>SUBMISSIONS DUE 1 MONTH PRIOR to PRINTING DATE</p> <p>DEADLINE for June 2021 is Monday, May 3, 2021</p> <p>www.edmonton.anglican.ca/blog/the-messenger</p> <p>Submissions: We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 300 dpi).</p>	<p>Send to: Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) anglicanmessenger@gmail.com Peter Clarke (Athabasca) seens@telus.net</p> <p>MESSENGER TEAM</p> <p>EDITORS Margaret Glidden (Edmonton) Peter Clarke (Athabasca)</p>	<p>LAYOUT & DESIGN Margaret Glidden Shelly King</p> <p>PROOF READING Jennifer Wirun</p> <p>REPORTING Peter Clarke Margaret Glidden Shelly King</p>	<p>A \$15 annual donation is suggested. Please send donations to the Dioceses of Athabasca or Edmonton, c/o The Messenger.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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, ON.</p>
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Missional patience in the Early Church, part two



The Ven. RICHARD KING
Archdeacon for
Mission and Discipleship
Diocese of Edmonton

Welcome back to our series on the importance of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), and how it equips us for participation in the Mission of God. Having previously looked at love, joy and peace, we now continue with a second article about patience.

Last time we saw

how the Early Church put patience at the very center of its mission strategy, and we concluded with seeing how successful that was.

So how did they grow?

For Justin (Justin Martyr, 100-165AD), the Sermon on the Mount was not just teaching to be learned, but an indispensable guide for the daily life of each Christian.

In every aspect of life, from business to the home, patience was central to the way each Christian was called to live. Lives lived in this way, with integrity and visibility, did something: “by our patience and meekness Christians will draw all.”

Justin found that patience attracted people. It was counter to the culture of the day. I think that is also true for our culture. So you can see how the missional

aspect of discipleship was inculcated right from the very beginning in the fruit of the Spirit lived out in the life of each Christian.

But there is something else to note. These early followers of Christ restricted access to public worship, and “raised the bar” on discipleship. There were several reasons for this.

Firstly, the situation they found themselves in was extremely hostile. Emperor Nero’s persecution of Christians began in 64AD and never really let up, culminating in the Great Persecution under Emperor Diocletian in 303AD. Churches prevented outsiders from entering private Christian worship services, and ordered Christians not to talk about what went on behind these closed doors. It was a means of protecting themselves,

but they also believed their times of worship were meant to glorify God and feed the Lord’s people, not to evangelise outsiders.

Secondly, for Justin, Christian witness depended on the integrity of the believers’ lifestyles. Justin’s community did not consider people true Christians if they could merely quote Christ’s teachings, but only if they lived them as well, and only if they lived them, “as Christ handed down to us,” would they be baptised and allowed to participate in eucharistic services.

Justin’s justification for this was to be found in the Sermon on the Mount. “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord... but only the one who does the will of my Father...’” (Matthew 7:21) was one such example.

How different this was from our approach.

I am not advocating such strictness, but I wonder if we sometimes tend to downplay the importance of the quality of our day-to day lives in bearing witness to our God. I meet a lot of Christians who are worried that they ‘don’t know enough yet’ to answer the questions of non-believers. But this is the primary lesson from Justin and the Early Church. It is the quality of our lives that speaks. We do need to be able to express our faith in words, but a life lived in love, joy, peace and patience speaks volumes to a world that is hungry for these things. Living as God would have us, and bearing forth the fruit of the Spirit, will have an impact for God all around you.

Until then, may God bless you in all your endeavours in his name.

Richard

Tough times call disciples to generous, outward focus



The Ven. TERRY LEER
Executive Archdeacon
Diocese of Athabasca

In August 2020, the parishes of St. Helen’s (Fairview), and Christ Church and St. Bartholomew’s (Berwyn and Grimshaw) were linked together by the appointment of myself, the Ven. Canon Terry Leer, as their common priest-in-charge. They were to remain two distinct parishes, but they had to learn how to share ministry personnel and resources.

In the midst of the pandemic and even the rampaging “third wave,” this has not been as difficult as one might think.

The Zoom worship schedule was set up to

provide one service every Sunday of the month. The priest-in-charge presided over two services of Holy Communion using the reserved sacrament. A non-transitional deacon presided over one service of Morning Prayer with the support of a committed lay reader. The priest-in-charge presided over the remaining service of Morning Prayer. The liturgies, distributed in advance and ready to be shared on screen with all worshippers, involved parishioners from all three congregations. Eventually, participation expanded to include parishioners from St. Anne’s Church in Valleyview, who are currently without a resident incumbent.

Circumstances led these parishes to cooperate with services for Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. People opened their plastic bags to impose ashes on themselves. The

Choral Good Friday Gospel featured readers from all four congregations. Easter Sunday saw worshippers from across the province, from British Columbia, and even from Germany. Heck, we even hosted a virtual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

One magnificently glorious, and unexpected, outcome of our enforced cooperation has been a blossoming of generosity. Both of the original two parishes have chosen to pay additional support to the diocese for ministry. Yes, they’re paying their full assessment, but are offering to the diocese more financial support, so that ministry support to all parishes in the

diocese may continue. No one forced the parishes to pay this. Rather, the parishes are growing in generosity.

So, what are the rest of us to learn or experience from this? I’d like to turn this into a secret plea for increasing your financial support of ministry, but that’s not what this is about. It is about learning to respond to pressures, stresses and difficulties not by turning inward, but by turning outward. Rather than drawing into our own shells and protecting our own interests, these congregations have experienced grace and growth by pushing outward in their generous support of others. Most institutions—

and certainly diocesan executive officers—are retracting programs in these days, cutting costs and protecting existing resources. Instead, however, these congregations are learning to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Jesus in active and generous compassion. The lesson is: we respond to the pressures, stresses and pains of this time by turning outward to others in meaningful and practical acts of love.

So, if it is permitted for this executive officer to cajole his readers, resist the temptation to self-protection. Look for grace in generous self-offering. This is what we have to learn.



Bible Reading Marathon heard ‘round the world on Zoom

Canon PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

How do you bring together diverse and multi-denominational clergy and laity from all parts of Canada and around the world to act in unison on one platform?

Simply ask them all to read the bible to others. God’s Word is the universal message that all Christians want to share.

That is the idea behind the Bible Reading Marathon. Using their own translation and language, participants take turns reading through the bible in one-hour segments, each following on from where the previous reader ended. I first heard of it from the Rev. Chuck Mortimer when he was in Fairview parish. Subsequently, St. Mark’s in High Prairie began hosting these events through Holy Week. I never thought that someday the bible marathon would become a widespread and glorious event, broadcast from the Diocese of Athabasca to the world.

From the very beginning, the marathon in High Prairie was an occasion in which all Christians could take part. So this year, when the Diocesan Executive Council was asked to support the event, they did so in the full understanding that all Christians would be invited to take part, not just Anglicans. The hope was that we would in some way gather closer together as the family we need to be.

With the full support and leadership of Bishop

David Greenwood, we had three weeks to get this up and running. We invited everyone we could, by every means available. Mrs. Benita Greenwood compiled the Google form and spreadsheet to organise registration. Then we waited for responses, and soon they started to come in. When someone registered, they were sent confirmation of their preferred date and time, as well as the Zoom link. In the two weeks prior to the event we received many registrations, questions, time issues, reading time changes, etc. Thank goodness for email.

Finally, Palm Sunday arrived. A few minutes before 1:00pm, Bishop David started the marathon with prayer, and the first hour of reading began at Genesis 1:1. At 2:00pm Bishop Larry Beardy of the Diocese of Mishamikoweesh started reading, and National Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald followed at 3:00pm. The Bible Reading Marathon was well underway.

The Zoom event was broadcast on Facebook Live, reaching almost 1,200 viewers on the first day. Many times that number tuned in over the course of the whole event. Participants included clergy and laity from Athabasca diocese and others across Canada, with the difference in time zones making it easier for readers from the east to take the early morning spots. Primate Linda Nicholls read at 6:00am our time, and our former Primate Fred Hiltz gave a blessing on the



event and participants. We were joined by all Canadian metropolitans and 28 bishops from Canada and the Episcopal Church of the US; by National Bishop Susan Johnson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; and by Archbishop Gerard Pettipas of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan.

There were readers from England, Germany, the Philippines and Zimbabwe, and we heard the scriptures read in languages other than English: Eastern Arctic Inuktitut, Shona, Tagalog, Kankana-ey/Igorrot, German and Farsi. Whatever language was spoken, readers expressed their joy at being invited to take part, especially during Holy Week.

The marathon lasted 99 hours altogether. Bishop Nigel Shaw of the Canadian Military Ordinariate read the final words of the book

Pictured above: Bible Marathon participants via the Diocese of Athabasca Facebook Live feed on Maundy Thursday. Pictured below: Bishop David Greenwood reads from the Gospel of Mark.



of Revelation at 8:30 am on Maundy Thursday. But as we still had seven more people ready to read, we began again at Matthew 1 and got to John 9 by our finish time of 4:00pm. Bishop David then thanked everyone for their participation and concluded the event with a time of prayer.

Many people helped to make this event a success: those who invited and encouraged others to take part, the readers, those kind people who helped

host the Zoom meeting, especially in the midst of night. For all, the felt love of God was a wonderful, shared experience which transcended anything else. There was true happiness in sharing God’s Word across God’s world. Ephesians 3:20 rings true: “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us...”

God surely blessed this gathering of His people.

Have you downloaded the church app yet?

Check out the Anglican Diocese of Athabasca church app and download for free.

<https://tithely.app.link/anglican-diocese-of-athabasca>

Athabasca Diocese Virtual Worship Resources and Opportunities

For access to online services, both mid-week and on Sunday, please visit the ****NEW**** diocesan website at www.athdio.ca or one of the following parish websites:

- www.stjamespr.org
- www.christchurchanglicangp.org
- www.sttom.ca
- www.allsaintsanglican.ca
- www.parishnorthernlights.org

Or, search Facebook.com for:

- The Diocese of Athabasca
- St. James Cathedral
- St. Mark’s High Prairie
- St. Thomas Fort McMurray
- Christ Church Grande Prairie
- St. Anne’s Church Valleyview
- All Saints Church Fort McMurray
- St. Peters Church Slave Lake
- Anglican Church of Athabasca
- St. Helen’s Anglican Church
- St. Bartholomew’s Anglican Church

Mystery pen pals span the generations at St. Paul's

MICHELLE SCHUREK
St. Paul's, Edmonton

There is a project that we worked on at St. Paul's this year that I think you will find encouraging, playful and hopeful. Forgive me if my enthusiasm is too much – I am surprised and delighted at the results, and it has given me new energy.

The idea for Mystery Pen Pals pretty much landed in my lap! It started with a conversation between me and Laura Rogers, a parishioner at St Paul's. She created a card ministry for the parish last year and, as we talked about the joy of receiving a hand-written note, she reminisced about a pen pal activity she had been part of several years ago. That provided the framework for our pen-pal project. COVID had separated us from one another. Many were feeling the effects of social isolation. Exchanging letters seemed a good antidote to the situation.

As a big supporter of intergenerational connections, it seemed natural to try this out between the youth and elders from our congregation. I sought out 12 elders to pair with each of the youth in our youth group and had enough writers within a few weeks. Ideally, there would be four letters sent each way, eight in total. Writers were to keep their identities a mystery for as long as possible. Collaborating with our youth director, we contacted parents to let them know of the activity but left it a surprise for the youth. I gave each of the elders and youth an alias, using a bird theme. The first letters from elders to youth were delivered on the second Saturday of 2021.

With that first letter I included an explanation of how the youth were being invited to participate, with guidelines and suggestions for writing back. Although the youth were strongly encouraged to write back, it was not an expectation, as we had surprised them with it and wanted it to be fun, not onerous. They also had the option to reply with something other than a letter – it could be baking, a craft, a drawing, with or without explanation. We were thrilled with the response. Eleven young people wrote a reply in the first round. Over the full exchange, each of the youth wrote at least one reply, and most replied every time.

And it was fun! There were so many insightful and heartfelt reflections. As the activity unfolded it seemed to take on a life of its



Photo by i-Stock.com/Pheelings Media

own. Since cursive writing is no longer taught in schools, the kids had to figure out how to read it. This brought up the possibility of learning cursive from the internet! One of the parents suggested that cursive was code and, therefore, part of the mystery (so creative).

Speculation ensued over who had whom. "Who is in the youth group?" asked the elders. "Who are the elders in our church?" asked the youth. And on it went. It was hard to keep all the details straight sometimes: mystery names, participants, alternating delivery days and variable drop off times. But it was wonderfully playful. Some people added baking, artwork, or small gifts. One elder asked his pen pal if marbles were still around, and the pen pal replied, "yes," along with a small bag of marbles as evidence.

The response from elders and parents was very positive. Initially, elders were excited but uncertain. What did they have to say that would be of interest to young people? Likewise, parents were enthusiastic but skeptical. There was uncertainty around whether the youth would respond. The collective sense was that technology and the steady march of time meant that kids would not be interested. But the youth outdid themselves and proved the assumption untrue.

Many of the youth surprised everyone by writing as soon as they got their letters. Many details were exchanged about life experiences, interests, family lives, and so on. The final letters written by youth were delivered at the end of February. Although that was the official end of the exchange, a few pairs decided to keep going. For those who did not keep going, identities were revealed, and this too was a fun time of discovery. Friendships have been formed and happiness shared in the

darkest months of the year and a dark period in history.

One delightful and unexpected outcome was the inclusion of younger children. Several of our families with kids in the youth group also have eight to eleven-year-old children. When the first round of letters came in from the youth, one of the younger siblings had written

his own letter, making up aliases for himself and his hoped-for mystery pen pal. I scrambled to find another elder willing to participate and, thankfully, one agreed. When the second round began, another sibling from a different family joined in, and in the third round yet another. In total, 12 youth and three younger siblings took part in the pen pal exchange, along with 14 elders.

As the director of community outreach at St Paul's, I have the pleasure of building bridges between the church and the community of Grovenor, where our building is situated. In addition, I help provide opportunities for parishioners to get to know each other better and become more connected. I am often on the lookout for activities which help foster intergenerational connections, offer an opportunity for creativity, and/or make a little space for personal reflection. All three of these intentions were met, and exceeded, with the creation of our Mystery Pen Pal Exchange!

Tweens and Teens Meet Bible Reading Challenge

MESSENGER STAFF

During the season of Lent, Canon for Family and Children's Ministry the Rev. Sue Oliver issued a challenge to youth in Edmonton diocese to take on one bible reading every day for 40 days. The youth met the challenge and exceeded expectations.

The 40-day Adventure attracted attention from across churches and denominations. A dozen young people, grades four and up, participated, receiving a daily email with an assigned passage of scripture and two questions to answer. They met weekly, via Zoom, where they built community as they explored themes of creation, love, perseverance, trust, hope, and forgiveness. The group spent an entire week reading the seven 'I Am' Statements of Jesus found in John's gospel. Participants pointed to this as their favourite part of the learning.

One of Rev. Sue's hopes for this challenge was that young people would feel more comfortable finding their way around the bible; that it wouldn't feel like a foreign and confusing object. She also hoped they would come to realise that the

bible is relevant to their daily lives in spite of being written more than 2,000 years ago.

When asked what they enjoyed most, the student's responses were candid and honest:

"The 40-Day Adventure Challenge has got me to read my bible more, become a more active Christian, and unlock new ways to become closer to God. I also enjoyed that we can get together with other people and talk about the connection we have with the verses."

"It gives me something new to do when new things are hard to find in covid."

"I like how the stories are ancient but still have a lesson for today."

Rev. Sue has been overjoyed by the participation of the students.

"I was sure that when a dozen students started on Ash Wednesday, only a few would stick it out to the end!" she says. "But, to my surprise and delight, they all kept at it and are asking for more. I'm not sure what exactly the group will do next. But when students are asking for more bible learning and community, one is compelled to deliver the goods! Stay tuned for the next adventure."

A gift of love to PWRDF, a gift of hope that changes lives

May is the month when we remember mothers and, as I look at the row of geraniums blooming on my windowsill, I am reminded of my mother and the spring windowsills at home. Mum left us a few years ago, but she often seeps into my mind; thoughts triggered by a comment, or a memory, as I go through my daily life. She was a woman of great faith who loved to give.

One of the greatest gifts mum gave her children was the act of planning her own funeral. Years ago, she made sure we were all aware of her wishes. There was to be no eulogy, because “if they didn’t know her, they shouldn’t be at her funeral.” It was to include lots of her favourite hymns “with everyone standing to sing, of course,” and the service was to praise God in thanks for her life. What a blessing this was for us at the time; we could reflect on her life and focus on supporting family members, and not worry about planning details.

Mum’s final intention, made very clear to us, was to tithe 10% of her estate to her favorite charity, the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) of the Anglican Church of Canada. Her estate was not a large one, but she had confidence that whatever she could give would be put to good use in supporting the projects funded by the PWRDF. She was right.



DOROTHY MARSHALL
PWRDF Representative
Diocese of Edmonton



As a person who lived her life helping others, mum knew the importance of giving people the tools to improve their lives. She appreciated the model used by

PWRDF of funding partners around the world; enabling them to support the learning of new strategies for food self-sustainability, improving health and nutrition, and feeding those forced to leave their homes because of conflict or disaster.

Giving is a big part of our Christian lives, as we follow the example of Jesus, and we are called to give generously. In 1 John 3 we are told “not to love with words but in actions and in truth.” Giving to PWRDF is a loving gift that keeps on giving, as lives can be changed for generations to

come.

How can our loving actions support the work of PWRDF? Perhaps you have a birthday or anniversary coming up and could suggest to your friends and family that they donate in honour of the occasion. Or you could choose something from the online *World of Gifts* catalogue to give as gifts to your friends in the same way. The catalogue has a wide variety of items needed by our partners to support their programs.

PWRDF’s online giving page at pwrdf.org/give-today allows you make a gift in memory of someone, or in honour of a special occasion. When you make your special gift, you have the option of sending an e-card card to the recipient. If you

prefer to send a traditional card in the mail, you can call toll-free at 1-866-308-7973 to make those arrangements.

You might want to consider planned giving, which includes annuities, stocks and bonds, real estate, or life insurance policies which name PWRDF as beneficiary. You can also call to discuss this option if you are interested.

Visit pwrdf.org for more information on how to give and the valuable projects your gifts support. I hope you will take the time to learn more and to support our work through prayer. Please contact me, Dorothy Marshall, your diocesan representative, at pwrdf@edmonton.anglican.ca if there’s anything I can do to help.



Children in a village in northern India are nourished by a project supported by one of PWRDF’s partner organizations, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Edmonton Diocese Supports Buyé Mothers’ Union Project

MESSENGER STAFF

Clotilde Muhimpunda, president of the Buyé Mother’s Union and wife of Bishop Sixbert Macumi, is pictured here distributing medical cards to the people of the Ruyenzi Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Buyé, Burundi.

The photos were sent by Buyé diocesan secretary the Rev. Audace Kwizera to the Rev. John Gee, synod

secretary-treasurer for the Diocese of Edmonton. Along with Lenten greetings, Kwizera shared thanks for the Edmonton diocese’ role in raising funds to help pay for the medical cards. In the fall of 2020, parishes

in Edmonton diocese raised nearly \$5,400 toward the project. The now annual \$5-5 Ways Campaign supports the Buyé Mother’s Union in purchasing and distributing these cards, which provide access to

medical care coverage otherwise out of reach for seniors and children of low-income families.



Good read promotes stewardship of God's good earth

MARION BULMER

St. Thomas', Sherwood Park

Over the past few years I have read several books of an environmental nature.

The Sacred Universe, a theologically challenging book by the late scholar Thomas Berry, shifted my perspective on the theology of creation. Berry's work gifted me with a deeper, more profound understanding of what it truly means to have dominion over creation, and, somehow, Genesis took on new meaning for me.

Then, *Dirt to Soil* by Gabe Brown attracted my attention. Brown shows it is possible to reclaim and refurbish soil without fertilizer, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides.

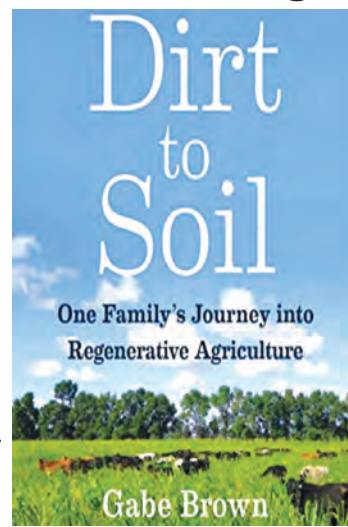
We can return the world to a flourishing diverse ecosystem, while still feeding people, protecting plant and animal life and restoring lakes and sloughs as healthy places.

Industry has led farmers to believe that chemical technology will feed the billions. The common practice of fertilizing crops has yielded significant results since the late '50s. Used in conjunction with monoculture farming (growing only one type of a crop at one time on a specific field), this practice has stripped the soil and created unhealthy dirt, not conducive to healthy food production or sustainable growing environments.

Faced with the challenge of raising food and profit from his land with little money to invest, Brown,

a farmer and rancher from North Dakota, began reading and talking to scientists about alternative farming practices. When he planted cover crops with as many as 12 forms of plant life, the soil began to change. The topsoil became deeper and denser; absorbing more moisture in less time. Over time the soil and plants were enriched by fungi, bacteria and pollinators, and the diverse population of insects, birds and animals which had returned to his farm kept pests at bay. Additionally, further diversification of crops and livestock resulted in multiple sources of revenue.

With Brown's success came the



realisation that God was calling him to encourage and teach others to farm and garden in ways that improved, rather than depleted, the soil. Caring for the earth is central to his spirituality and ministry.

I pray this message of hope and encouragement will bring us back to being part of our environment where

we are in harmony with creation.

Marion Bulmer is a member of St. Thomas' Anglican Church in Sherwood Park and an avid reader of books from a variety of genres, including memoirs, non-fiction, spirituality and theology. In her words: "my joy of reading helps bring balance to the busyness of life."

In Service to God and Music

The Rev. Deacon SHELLY KING

St. John the Evangelist, Edmonton

What did we know about Kobie Kloppers? When my husband and I came to St. John the Evangelist in December 2019, we quickly learned how integral Kobie is to this parish, and how well-loved. He ran two choirs, played the organ beautifully and, for special occasions, reached out to a musical world otherwise unfamiliar to us, to draw in musicians who have shared their amazing talents in our worship services. We also heard pieces of the story of the Kloppers' immigration to Canada. But truly, we had no idea.

In March, the Odeion School of Music in Bloemfontein, South Africa released *A Passage of Nostalgia: The Life and Work of Jacobus Kloppers*, which reveals a life much larger in scope than I had imagined. This quiet man who shares his gifts each week with our church family is a musical legend on (at least) two continents, has lived the strength of his convictions, and has shaped the lives of many.

The book chronicles the life of Jacobus Joubert Krige Kloppers,



Jacobus (Kobie) Kloppers at the organ on Easter Sunday as he has been every Sunday during the pandemic, restrictions permitting.

from his upbringing in a faith-filled, music-loving Afrikaner family, through his training in South Africa and Germany, to the pivotal point when Kobie and his wife Miensie decided to uproot their family and Kobie's career to move to Canada. Despite a love of his homeland and the Afrikaner culture, Kobie could not continue to live in the Apartheid regime. In his words: "I felt trapped in a situation where I had no choice but to become an accomplice and a pawn of the government to achieve the enforcement of what I believed to be an immoral policy... I was not prepared to defend a life of white privilege at the expense of blacks who had legitimate demands for equal treatment."

The Kloppers family arrived in Edmonton in 1976 with no employment waiting, but a firm trust that God would provide. Kobie's first job was as organist at St. John's, where he has remained ever since even as his career has flourished in other spheres. *A Passage* highlights his many contributions as teacher, lecturer, performer and composer.

A collection of six essays edited by Martina Viljoen, Associate Professor of Musicology at the Odeion School of Music, the book is academic in style and will be enjoyed most thoroughly by those who understand the world of music and composition. The story of a life well-lived shines through, however, illustrating two overarching themes in Kobie's life: commitment to Christian service and dedication to the discipline of music. *A Passage of Nostalgia: The Life and Work of Jacobus Kloppers* will be formally launched later in 2021.

Book Club Tackles Uncomfortable Truths

Good Shepherd Anglican Church in Edmonton hosts an Anti-Racism Book Club each month on Zoom. The March gathering included participants from St. Thomas' Anglican Church in Sherwood Park and from Good Shepherd, St. George's, and Holy Trinity in Old Strathcona, Edmonton.

CHERYL ATKINSON

Holy Trinity Old Strathcona, Edmonton

Layla F. Saad's *Me and White Supremacy* is a guide for white people to do the self-examination necessary to pursue the work of antiracism. It was not like other books we have studied in our book club; it invites or even demands our active participation. The book is a series of 28 topics with accompanying prompts for reflective journaling. Like layers in an onion, each topic reveals another truth about how white North Americans have been shaped by a system of white supremacy. It forces you to look inward at your own deeply-held beliefs and experiences to discover painful truths about yourself. White members of our book club found it a challenging and uncomfortable read. I believe BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) members of our group found explanation and confirmation of their lived experience. I am very grateful for their presence and participation in our discussions as it is made absolutely clear

that what this book says is true: that dismantling white supremacy is the job of white people.

Moving forward, we discussed how love can transform our fear and discomfort into concrete antiracism actions that we are taking, or will take. From echoing BIPOC voices so that antiracism messages are amplified with appropriate credit given; to simply acknowledging fellow BIPOC parishioners with a friendly greeting; to attending antiracism demonstrations and even revisiting this book again each Lent; white book club members committed to ways we could each contribute to dismantling racism.

The evening concluded with thoughts about areas of our lives, our communities and our churches that continue to be shaped by racist thoughts and behaviours. White

supremacy has been centuries in the making and it will take much truth-seeking, love, and determination over time to do the work God is calling us to do. But as Ms. Saad says in the introduction to her book, "Create the change the world needs by creating change within yourself."

