



THE MESSENGER



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The dedication 'To the Glory of God' on the cornerstone of St. Mary and St. George still stands, although the church lost its building to the Jasper wildfire in 2024. See page 6 for more about Jasper. Photos: Stephen London

About this issue of *The Messenger*

This month, as our parishes gather in annual meetings to review the past year and pray and plan for the future, we are featuring the work of Innovative Stewardship, one of the six guiding principles of the Diocese of Edmonton's strategic workplan.

Stewardship is not the same thing as fundraising. Stewardship embraces the wise, holy use and care of all our resources. It begins with recognizing with thanksgiving that all we have comes from God. It requires prayerful discernment as we seek to orient our resources to the Glory of God and the ministry of the Gospel.

*Like good stewards
of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift
each of you has received.*

1 Peter 4:10, NRSV

*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it,
for he has founded it on the seas
and established it on the rivers.*

Psalms 24:1-2, NRSV

Innovative Stewardship Meets Challenges with Creative Vision

THE REV. STEPHANIE LONDON
Edmonton Editor

How can our churches activate the resources they hold in relationship to the Gospel call? This question drives the mandate of the Diocese of Edmonton's new Innovative Stewardship Committee under the leadership of Archdeacon Travis Enright.

Over the past century, the church has faced disruption on a massive scale. The aftermath of the World Wars, growing secularism, the death of Christendom, and globalization have fundamentally changed how we exist. Our mission and ministry within and outside the church have been shaped by calls for justice

The Innovative Stewardship Committee works to build in a way that is financially sound and responsible to the core call of the Gospel. It engages with parishes in three ways:

1. By offering a discernment process to support parish building projects, and by walking alongside them.
2. By working with the Coordinator for Missional Renewal to help parishes tap into an economy of community-building.
3. By asking and imagining the missional potential of each project, and helping parishes integrate their ministry and financial assets into creative economies of scale through community and ecumenical partnerships.

and social change, the information age, and the effects of Covid. Our resources and structures have shifted. Intergenerational relationships have been washed away. We are being challenged to re-think how we understand ourselves as a church in relation to the call of the Gospel. Looking outside our walls, we find the landscape is different from that which we once knew.

Church buildings often feel like a burden. Limited leadership capacity makes maintenance, repair, and upkeep a challenge. At the same time, expenses and insurance rates keep climbing. Buildings constructed in the 1950s and 60s are now facing major repairs from age or deferred maintenance. The reality, Enright observes, is that—if we took the building out of the picture—most congregations would be in a position to thrive. This doesn't mean that our sacred spaces aren't important, but that we need to begin to see our buildings as missional gifts for the work of the Gospel.

These challenges raise important questions for the church:

- How do we reimagine our buildings as assets and opportunities rather than burdens?
- How can we animate and activate leadership capacity?
- How can we support clergy becoming multifaceted in their vocations, and congregations in their ecumenism?

- How can our buildings become drivers of mission in a landscape no longer divided along denominational lines?

In this new world, renaissance and requiem are both necessary. Central to the task is acknowledging where we are, honestly and without fear. We need to evaluate our resources courageously so that we can discern how to build, what to let go, and how to grieve. Enright looks back to the same mid-twentieth-century era when many of our churches were built. Like the Anglicans of the past, he observes, we still have the ability to meet challenges and respond to them effectively. Like them, we will also require sacrifice and discernment. We will need to leave some things behind. From there, we need to discern where God is bringing resurrection. Our ministry as a church is not about our own capabilities, but our commitment to pursuing God's missional direction.

When asked what he most wants churches to know, Enright points again to courageous innovation. Churches must be fearless in their evaluation of leadership, community, and physical resources. They should seek partnerships in places they may not have looked before. What are the unique opportunities for the Gospel to move in each local context?

The challenges we face are great, but they do not rest on our human shoulders alone. God's mission in the world always leads us.



Youth Social Justice Day p. 4



Jasper Looks to the Future p. 6



Holodomor Commemoration p. 8

Witnessing to God's Love in the Diocese of Athabasca

THE REV. PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

Earlier in the year St. Mark's Church in High Prairie spearheaded a campaign across the Diocese of Athabasca to raise money for our partner Diocese, the Diocese of Ibba in South Sudan, Africa. This was in response to a request from Bishop Wilson Kamani of that diocese to fund the purchase of bicycles to assist members of the Mother's Union in their ministry.

With the generous support of St. Mark's in High Prairie, St. James' in Peace River and from the Diocesan ACW Conference, we were able to send almost \$6000 to Ibba. This enabled the purchase of 16 Bicycles for the Mother's Union leaders to use, to attend meetings, to visit Mother's Union members in the parishes, as well as to visit sick people and anyone needing help in the diocese.

Bishop Wilson Kamani, Mama Agnes the leader of the Mother's Union and the Mother's Union members sent a message of thanks to the people in this diocese for enabling this work to be carried out in the Archdeaconries, Rural Deaneries and at St. Barnabas's Cathedral. This positive support to our partner diocese so far away, serves to show us what the family of God can achieve working together. Thanks be to God.



The Bishop had the joy of presiding at the Eucharist service at St. Bartholomew's, Grimshaw, on Sunday, November 16, 2025.

St. Bartholomew's is a faithful and dedicated congregation with a deep heart for their community. Each week, the parish operates the town's food bank from the church building—a vital ministry that continues to grow. Just last week, the food bank reached a new milestone by assisting 19 families, a testament to the generosity and commitment of the people who serve there.

Following the service, everyone was invited to stay for a delicious lunch, where warm conversation and fellowship filled the room.

St. Bartholomew's continues to shine as a place where faith is lived out through compassion, service, and community care.



On Sunday, November 16, 2025, the Bishop had the pleasure of presiding at the early Eucharist service at Christ Church, Berwyn. This vibrant parish is known for its warmth, hospitality, and deep commitment to its community.

Christ Church is truly a hub in the village of Berwyn. Members of the congregation extend their ministry beyond the church doors through their work at the Berwyn Christ Anglican Thrift Store, a cherished local resource that supports and connects neighbours.

The parish is also beginning an exciting new chapter with the launch of a Sunday School program, offering faith formation and community for the young people who attend the church.

The Bishop was delighted by the welcome received. The people of Christ Church are gracious, joyful, and dedicated—faithfully witnessing to God's love in all they do.



Above: St. Bartholomew's, Grimshaw
Photos: Peter Clarke



Above and right: Christ Church, Berwyn
Top: Mothers' Union members in the Diocese of Ibba

We welcome letters to the editor, news, stories, and book reviews (max 500 words), event notices and high resolution photos (min 1 MB, 200 dpi)

Submissions are due one month prior to the issue for which they are intended, for example: November 1 for December 2025.

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Stewarding Purpose

Happy New Year, friends! As I find myself moving into my fifth year as Bishop of this diocese, I look forward to where God is leading us in 2026. I believe this is going to be a significant year in the life of our diocese. We are now well into our strategic plan, *A Way Through the Wilderness*. Each issue of the Messenger has been highlighting one of the pillars of the plan, and this month we are highlighting the pillar called Innovative Stewardship.

In this issue, you will read about different and exciting visions of an expanded understanding of what stewardship is. Stewardship, of course, is at the heart of our personal commitment to following Jesus. But there are also bigger church level stewardship questions: how do we leverage our assets to support the greater mission of the church? How do we form partnerships in our diocese and outside of our diocese to lower administrative load and increase missional effectiveness? How can the Synod Office better lean into its support of the lives of parishes? These are all stewardship questions.

I want to remind us why we are asking stewardship questions. We make these



Bishop STEPHEN LONDON
Diocese of Edmonton

decisions for only one reason: to support the ongoing mission and purpose of the church. What is that mission and purpose? There is a general mission and purpose that all Christian churches throughout history and around the world share regardless of context, and there is the specific way that we live out that general mission and purpose here in central Alberta in the year 2025.

What is the bigger general mission and purpose of the church? It is to participate

with God in making all things new through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These verses from 2 Corinthians 5 sum it up well:

"If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ."

The church has always been about creating a community focused on the love of God and love of neighbour. It is meant to embody the great themes that are all too lacking in the world: hope, love, peace, kindness, and justice. That is the general mission and purpose of the church: to proclaim and live out the Kingdom of God.

In our own day and time, we are living this out daily in a Canadian context here in central Alberta. We are over 45 communities of faith (most are parishes, while some are other forms of community) that are committed to being places where we proclaim a generous and good Gospel, where people can gather for worship, where people who are hurting can find grace, where the community is served, where people are loved, where scripture is studied, where hungry people are fed, where people learn new skills in leadership they didn't know they could, and so on.

We do so much to serve this greater vision, and it takes a lot of infrastructure and support to do this work. Because we believe in the vision, we have to be wise and innovative in how we use our resources. That is why I am excited about this pillar of our strategic plan. I want to see this vision of the generous and good Gospel lived out for years and years to come.

+ Steve

Stewarding Blessing

Greetings, beloved in Christ! "Unto us a child is born, unto us a child is given."

As we pass through the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, whence Christ was revealed on earth, God Incarnate, may the revealing of Christ in your heart continuously bless and nurture you.

As we encounter God's prayers, as we are guided by His Holy Spirit into walking His way of love and giving, may we encourage each other in transparent and loving discipleship.

God has blessed you with everything you have. You have then multiplied that blessing in sowing generously. As Paul wrote in his Second Letter to the Corinthians: "The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work." (2 Cor. 9:6-8)

Our diocese is greatly blessed by the ongoing generosity of all its members.

Historically, the church has been funded in four principal ways:

1. Givings of members. This is the oldest documented way (for example, see Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and Acts 4:32-37).
2. Proceeds from corporate enterprises. Think of farming, fishing, winemaking or beer-making in medieval monasteries.
3. Investment proceeds. Typically from endowment funds, especially those set up by royalty or wealthy families.



Bishop DAVID GREENWOOD
Diocese of Athabasca

For state-owned or sponsored churches, this would extend to taxes (the closest example of this we have in Canada are taxes going towards schools run by church-affiliated bodies, such as the Roman Catholic schools).

4. Returns on property, either from sale of property or rental proceeds. For example, this could be from renting the property out to farmers or people desiring accommodation. A "glebe" is the historic English term for this arrangement.

Financially, we try to be transparent, discussing the proposed budget with parishes at our fall deanery meetings before it is finalized. We post the budget on <https://athdio.ca/resources/diocesan-budget>, and our ongoing financial health, alongside our Diocesan Executive Council (DEC) minutes, at <https://athdio.ca/resources/dec-minutes>. Our financial health includes proceeds from property rental, investments, and our Fair Share Budget Allocation, which comes from member giving. Unlike medieval monasteries, we currently do not have any corporate enterprises from which we derive income!

**Just as
"unto us a Son is given",
so unto the Son
we are given.**

The Diocese of Athabasca owns 66 properties scattered across Northern Alberta, totalling well over 100 acres: one diocesan camp, ten cemeteries, nine residential

(municipal lots), one retirement housing complex (we own two pieces of land for this, but not the complex itself), 31 worship centres (some have residences and/or cemeteries included on the land), and 13 "unused" (treed lots, farmer fields, empty lots).

How do we steward the property we own? How can we transparently use it to experience and share the love of Christ? Our DEC Property Sub-Committee oversees our property usage, for just like the money you donate or our investments, this land is to be used transparently to the greater glory of God and in pursuit of experiencing and sharing the love of Christ so that Christ's family is further established. For example, the residences were built or acquired with the intent of housing clergy, to facilitate the exercise of their ministry in our various parishes. The Worship Centres were intended as community centres and worship hubs.

This work is critically important, for we find as we walk with Christ, just as "unto us a Son is given", so unto the Son we are given. As we experience the loving union of Christ with us, we see that everything in our life truly belongs to God and is to be used for the love of God and of our neighbour. We are so wondrously blessed, so let us let Christ bless others out of what we are blessed with. In this way, we join with the work of Christ, the work of the Creator Almighty, our Dearest Father, on earth as it is in the heavens.

Nothing we have is "ours"—it is all God's. May the revealing of Christ in your heart continuously bless and nurture you. Merry Christmas, and Happy Epiphany.

+ David

Social Justice Day Empowers Edmonton Youth

The essence of our Youth Social Justice Day on November 1 was shared stories and the opportunities to listen deeply to these stories. Our learning and work towards fairness, equity, inclusion, and giving voice to those with living experience requires us first to listen. I enjoyed sitting with our youth participants and watching and listening as social justice champions shared stories that opened up new experiences and understanding. Through stories, sharing experiences and asking questions, young people found openings and connections.

For the disability justice session, Alexis Hillyard shared "Stump Kitchen" in a lively and fun way, reminding us that celebration and joy are also part of social justice work. Alexis is an educator who elevates and centres the voices and experiences of people of all ages who live with limb differences and other disabilities. Through our sharing circle and Alexis' amazing Stump Kitchen videos, we learned what is most important to her in her advocacy:

to build awareness, accessibility, inclusion and a world where everyone gets to reach their full potential. Our discussion became an opportunity to reflect and share back, to build an even richer vision for disability justice. We also heard stories of what it feels like to be isolated and how important community is to disability justice and the overall work of social justice.

The Social Justice Day for Youth builds community and strength, empowering young people to move forward together in compassion and direct action towards a more just world. Long after the day comes to a close, the stories continue to live in our hearts and prayers and in our advocacy.

- Jennifer Stewart (St. Faith's, Edmonton)

This was my second Youth Social Justice Day. After a great success last year, I wanted to come back again.

I attended Economic Justice, Prison Justice, and Non-Violent Solutions to Problems of

Injustice break out sessions.

I learned a lot from all 3 groups. I found it impactful to hear the thoughts and concerns of my peers and how much we had in common as we were all around the same age range.

I enjoyed the many ways for me to get to know everyone in wonderful fellowship. I made a lot of new connections with people who have the same interests as me.

The Youth Social Justice Day has inspired me to go back to doing justice lead activities in the community as I once did years ago. It reminded me what joy there is in giving back to the community.

- Emily Stephen-Garneau (St. Peter, Edmonton)

Participants spent much of their afternoon in small group conversations sharing their stories and learning from their peers and from experienced mentors.

Breakout sessions focused on 8 specific areas of Social Justice: Disability Justice, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, Indigenous Justice, Non-Violent Solutions to Problems of Injustice, Prison Justice, Queer Justice, Racial Justice. Each small group conversation was facilitated by someone with years of rich experience working in that particular area of Social Justice.

After these enlightening and inspiring conversations, the youth in attendance gathered in larger groups and, guided by experienced community activists, talked about practical ways that they can "make a difference" in the world today and how they can productively challenge the unjust structures they encounter.

The day also included reflection on how Christian scripture informs and compels our response to injustice around us.

And no day would be complete without good food (pizza and delicious samosas from Lodgepole bakery) and good fellowship.

- Rob Betty (St. John's, Edmonton)



Youth Social Justice Day Photo: Jordan Ware

Innovative Stewardship of Buildings

Ecumenical workshop encourages congregations to reimagine spaces purposefully

TOBY RAMSDEN

I attended a workshop in the middle of October at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Red Deer, facilitated by Katja Brittain.

Katja is originally from Germany and has an unusual background with a degree in theology in Germany, then earning an MBA, whilst working in business development in Scotland and Canada. She has many years experience as a self-employed consultant, with the United Church in Toronto, and now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), collaborating with congregations across Canada to reimagine their spaces in alignment with their mission and community needs. She has assisted congregations to significantly increase their revenue streams while maintaining a strong focus on their ministry and mission and has successfully transformed underutilized spaces into thriving community assets, ensuring strategic church sites remain operational and cherished.

The ELCIC faces the same problems as the Anglican church does with declining attendance and churches built for much larger congregations. They are closing churches where the congregations are unable to visualise a way forward. Katja has developed an analytical model, blending quantitative analysis with the soft values of faith, community, history and relationship, to create approaches to developing under-utilized properties into revenue-generating assets, providing support

for churches to continue their ministry in the community. Listening to her, I realised I was just hearing the tip of the iceberg of the experience she has gained from working with churches across the country.

Her model begins with mission—clarifying why the congregation exists and how the building supports or hinders that mission. The next step is to map congregational life and building use, recognizing that congregational vitality and building health are interrelated. After this, she moves to assess the financial health of the congregation, leading to identifying some key financial priorities that impact building decisions. Now, the congregation is ready to explore options for the future, such as considering partnerships or hybrid use. Every decision carries risk and opportunities, so the next step is to evaluate them through a variety of lenses, including economic (long term sustainability), social (heritage, community impact and relationships), theological, (alignment with mission and values), organizational (capacity and energy), environmental (energy use, climate & creation care) and reconciliation (honouring Indigenous relations). The benefit of this approach is that questions are examined from many different perspectives, so no single perspective predominates and decisions embody faithful and responsible stewardship.

Congregations now need to identify and evaluate specific partners for mission alignment, finances and practicalities, using a checklist. Next, they have to set rental rates

after considering the building's per square foot operating costs, market rates and alignment with the congregation's mission. Finally, reflection must lead to implementation, so they need to develop an action plan, grounded in prayer.

Another area, which we lacked time to explore fully, was developing the concept of a hybrid/online church. Churches today live in two worlds—the physical, epitomised by the church building, and the virtual that extends far beyond it. Although many churches have adopted some form of hybrid worship, few have taken the time to reflect intentionally on how hybrid worship shapes their faith, sense of belonging and mission. She suggests reflecting theologically on how the church currently uses the digital tools available and then mapping that digital footprint to move from simply using technology to living in the virtual world faithfully. Hybrid worship can become more participatory, relational and missional.

The temptation is always to rush towards a concrete solution; to give the answer before doing the analysis. However, her model makes congregations slow down and use the time and space for theological and communal reflection, transforming dry, technical checklists into discernment practices that safeguard the congregation's role as responsible stewards of both ministry and place.

It was well worth driving to Red Deer on a beautiful Saturday morning to find myself the lone Anglican, thereby turning the workshop into an ecumenical gathering!



St. Augustine of Canterbury prepares to capture solar energy. Photo: Jonathan Crane



Interested in Solar? Start here!

- Solar Information
- <https://joinspice.ca>
 - <https://solaralberta.ca>
- Canadian Resources for Faith Groups
- <https://www.faithfulfootprints.org>
 - <https://www.faithcommongood.org>
 - <https://greenchurches.ca/about-us/>
- Inspiration from Abroad
- <https://www.greenanglicans.org>

Stewarding Creation

St. Augustine of Canterbury lives out creation care with solar power

ANNIE MCKITRICK
St. Augustine, Edmonton

On the Path Toward Environmental Sustainability

In the month of September, the Season of Creation, our worship turned our hearts to the wonder of Creation. We remember that every mountain, river, bird, and breath of wind is not only beautiful—it is holy, spoken into being by God’s love. In our Baptismal Vows, we are reminded that this world is not ours to use, but God’s gift for us to protect:

Celebrant: Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation and respect, sustain, and renew the life of the earth?
People: I will, with God’s help.

Many faith communities are asking how they might live out this vow more fully. Congregations across Alberta are embracing practical, faithful responses—improving building efficiency, restoring green spaces, reducing waste, and increasingly, exploring renewable energy such as solar power.

What Does It Take to Go Solar?

For a church building to support a solar power system, a few key factors are considered:

- A dependable, structurally sound roof (preferably recently upgraded)
- A roof with sufficient space and a south-facing orientation (east, west or flat roofs may also work)
- Minimal shading from trees or surrounding buildings

When these conditions align, solar panels can deliver long-term environmental and financial benefits. During sunny months, excess electricity generated is sold back into the grid. During the winter, ongoing production continues to lower energy costs. The result? Lower utility bills and a cleaner footprint.

St. Augustine’s Solar Journey

St. Augustine has long been committed to environmental stewardship. The church’s rewilding task force already cared for the grounds and encouraged biodiversity—so adopting solar power became a natural step in living out Creation care.

To explore solar more deeply, the congregation partnered with S.P.I.C.E (Solar Power Investment Cooperative of Edmonton), one of Alberta’s community energy co-operatives. These co-ops help churches, non-profits, community centres, and other organizations assess, finance, and install solar systems.

S.P.I.C.E helped:

- Assess the building and electrical system
- Estimate energy savings and environmental impact
- Present financial options to the congregation
- Hire and oversee a qualified local solar contractor

While the project had been dreamt about a decade earlier, this year the timing and resources aligned. As former rector the Rev. Jonathan Crane reflected:

“As churches we are caretakers of a building and we are stewards of land. Using solar power is one of the easiest ways that we can use the

most renewable resource on Earth and save on our electrical bills.”

Faith in Action: A Living Witness

The St. Augustine Solar Project is more than a technical installation—it is a statement of hope. It reflects our call to honor God’s gifts, protect future generations, and lead within our wider community.

This initiative shows what is possible when congregations listen, learn, and act together. With over 2,299 hours of bright sunshine each year, Edmonton remains one of Canada’s sunniest cities—providing abundant potential to expand solar energy across our Diocese.

Sharing the Light with Others

St. Augustine is preparing a resource to help other congregations explore solar possibilities through grants, faithful investing, and community partnership. Churches throughout our Diocese—large and small—can walk this path of stewardship together.

If you feel called to learn more or share this journey, we invite you to speak with church leadership. Let us dream together of a future where every parish shines with God’s light in both worship and action.

*Caring for creation is an act of faith.
By embracing renewable energy,
we honor God’s gifts
and sustain them
for future generations.*

–Annie McKitrick



Helping Families for Jesus

RITA STAGMAN
All Saints', Drayton Valley

What better way to start to prepare for a baby than to host a baby shower—to gather gifts, share in fellowship, and rejoice that a new baby is coming into the world.

On the first Sunday in Advent, All Saints’ Drayton Valley hosted a shower to honour baby Jesus. The members of Living Spirit United Church joined us in a time full of fellowship including shower games and great food and gifts to meet the needs of a baby—diapers and wipes, blankets and clothes, and of course cash donations were accepted.

All these gifts were gathered to be given to the local charity of Brighter Futures–Baby

Essentials Program. This community-funded program helps families in times of hardship by assisting to provide their babies with essential items such as diapers, formula, supplements for breastfeeding mothers, and more. It is our prayer that each gift given provides young families not only support during challenging financial times but demonstrates the love of Christ and shows their community cares about their precious baby and their family.

All Saints’ will be accepting donations to this program until Epiphany, January 7th. There are already rumblings about how we can expand this event to the wider community next year, so stay tuned.

Building a House for All

Jasper congregations plan a healing future together

THE REV. NICK TRUSSELL
Coordinator for Missional Renewal
Diocese of Edmonton

The tragic wildfire in Jasper in 2024 destroyed nearly one third of the structures in the Jasper Townsite and displaced thousands of people and families. The loss included all of the Anglican and United church buildings. As the people of Jasper and the church communities look toward their future, 'rebuilding' and 'recovering' are not quite the right words. The communities have been changed by the experience and are now allowing it, as they heal together, to reshape them into something new.

The United and Anglican church communities are committed to build on the land in a way that best reflects their mission in Jasper and invites the participation of partners who share that mission. The churches have been using the hymn "Let us build a house" as an expression of their vision for the land they steward in Jasper. As they move forward they want to develop the space in a way that will intentionally break down the dividing walls between people. They want to build a place where all are welcome and invited to find flourishing in Spirit and community. This will mean building some of what they had in a new way. There will be a worship space but it will be an intentionally multi-faith worship space. It will also mean building some new things like an intentional space for the food bank and potentially special-use housing in collaboration with local partners.

Planning for how the whole community of Jasper can best use the land for spiritual and community growth has been a beautiful process. It has invited reflection on the wounds of colonialism and embraced the joys of what has been shared by the community in recent years.



Community economic development consultant Anna Bubel (of *Another Way*) leads a community consultation in Jasper on October 27, 2025. Along with Anglican and United Church leaders, attendees represented the Muslim community, Ukrainian newcomers and the Ukrainian Orthodox congregation, the food bank, the Jasper Artists' Guild, architecture consultants, seniors' housing representatives, and Jasper town staff.

Photos: Stephanie London



Building together on the land will represent more than the sharing of budgets between two Christian denominations and local partners, granting bodies and funders. It is an expression of healing for the whole community, where they can work together on a vision they share and celebrate the differences they hold.

There are still many decisions to make about funding and design but the priorities for the use of the land are quite clear. The United and Anglican congregations are building more than a shared church building, they are strengthening relationships and partnerships with the vision of a stronger Jasper.

Stewarding Community Connections

Unique role fosters wellbeing and missional growth within and outside church

MICHELLE SHUREK
Community Outreach Facilitator
St. Paul's, Edmonton

The Community Outreach Facilitator (COF) at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Edmonton intersects with many pillars of the Diocesan Workplan, A Way through the Wilderness. Through the lens of "Innovative Stewardship," the role seeks to ensure that all participants are cared for as they engage in parish life. This "whole-person" approach includes personal and community safety, connection, wellbeing, and ease. As our lives and resources orient toward the One Who is Over All, the ways we steward ourselves and the larger body express that focus. The COF role supports this orientation by strengthening the internal life of the parish while shaping how we participate in, serve, and respond to the external community of Grovenor and the wider Edmonton context.

Before COVID, St. Paul's leadership had already been exploring how God was at work in the surrounding neighbourhood. A job description for the Community Outreach Facilitator was drafted but then set aside during a period of leadership transition. When COVID disrupted all known forms of gathering, the role was reconsidered as a potential "pivot" for the parish and was filled in September 2020.

Emerging in such unusual circumstances, the role opened new possibilities for exploring stewardship. It offered a micro-scale entry into community life that did not mirror previous patterns of engagement but instead responded to expressed needs through observation, intentional connection, and sustained listening.

Critically, the COF functions as a facilitator rather than a director. At St. Paul's, every event, program, or ministry requires lay leadership; the COF offers support rather than directional authority. During the early days of COVID, the role carried the title "Director of Community Outreach," reflecting the need for virtual leadership and strong communication. As the work evolved over time, the emphasis shifted toward supporting parishioner-led initiatives. Rather than creating programs requiring new training or volunteers, the COF listens to the interests and desires of the internal parish community and the surrounding neighbourhood. In this way, the role connects people and organizations for collaboration, acting as a bridge between different intentions, missions, and capacities for the benefit of all involved.

Over the past five years, many activities have demonstrated how this role strengthens stewardship at St. Paul's. During COVID, virtual engagement supplemented worship, including the COVID Pen Pals program and an

online Parish Retreat—both of which deepened parishioner connection with lasting effect. More recent offerings include the Indigenous Layette program, Kids Crew (an early-dismissal program for Grovenor children), monthly Community Dinners, providing volunteer opportunities to the community through Just Serve, Christmas Hampers for Grovenor Elementary School, and the annual Parish Retreat at Camp Nakamun. Numerous one-time activities have also emerged through the "Event One-Pager," a tool that clarifies responsibilities between lay leaders and staff and enables parishioners to offer their gifts with confidence. In addition, the COF role has supported partnerships with community organizations and neighbouring churches, creating collaborative opportunities that are mutually beneficial. The introduction of the COF and its ongoing development has been a wonderful support to St Paul's.

This work continues to help us grow into the kind of parish St Paul's seeks to be, with God's leadership: connected, attentive, and ready to share our gifts for the good of one another and our community. Though stewardship considers resources, it is first and foremost about people and relationships, supporting one another and showing up for our neighbours in real, practical ways.

In God's Time: A Deacon's Journey from Age Nine to Fifty-Nine

The Diocese of Athabasca's newest deacon reflects on stewarding his call

THE REV. JAMIESON McILVENNA

Fort McMurray

Interviewed by THE REV. PETER CLARKE

Athabasca Editor

Would you kindly provide me with some background detail regarding your journey to become a Deacon?

I know from experience that these things do not happen overnight, and family as well as friends often see changes in us on our journey.

The question makes me smile, because "overnight" hardly describes a journey that began when I was six years old and culminated in ordination at age fifty-nine. That is fifty-three years, long enough to make Abraham's twenty-five-year wait for Isaac look almost speedy by comparison. As I have learned, God's timing operates on a different calendar than ours, and here and now where we live our faith, we cannot always see or comprehend the fullness of what God is orchestrating.

How long has your journey been?

Four decades of formal, intentional formation stretches from my 1976 confirmation to my October 5, 2024 ordination. But the deeper answer goes back further, to a six-year-old child who felt the presence and pull of God upon his heart yet could not grasp nor properly articulate what he was being called to. I grew up on Canadian Forces bases where military chaplaincy taught practical ecumenism, where a different Protestant Church Padre rotated weekly through Anglican, Lutheran, United Church, and Presbyterian services, and where once a year we switched chapels with our Roman Catholic neighbors to experience each other's worship. Those early experiences planted seeds that worship matters, that sacramental practice shapes belief, that the church is bigger than any single expression of it.

The journey wound through Up with People's idealistic internationalism in the 1970s into the 1980's, through Youth With a Mission's passionate evangelism, through serving meals at the Mustard Seed and hosting faith conversations at the Burning Bush Coffee House in Calgary, Alberta. I attended Promise Keepers gatherings in Cochrane, Alberta, enrolled in the Anglican School of Lay Ministry, and participated in the emerging Perpetual Diaconate Program of the 1980s, Christian Conferences and most importantly in 1981 before 164,000 people in attendance,, I ran down the aisle to the field when Dr. Billy Graham invited anyone present to come forward and publicly declare their faith in Christ, where I became a born-again believer. Much to my surprise, there were not 164,000 others standing shoulder to shoulder with this then 15 year old boy from St. George's Military Chapel at CFB Calgary, but a mere dozen at best. Boy did they miss out!. Each experience added another layer of formation, another instrument to God's symphony and by the time I was privileged to attend the 44th General Synod in London, Ontario, I had learned that the church's dance is messier than we sometimes would, "grey but not black and blue," as I came to describe it, but that we keep dancing together despite stepping on each other's toes.

My family heritage adds generational depth, ancestors who arrived in British Guiana in 1838 and completed St. George's Cathedral in Georgetown in 1889, carrying Anglican faith across oceans and centuries. Standing for ordination, I stood in a line of witnesses stretching back through my family, through the



English Reformation, to the ancient missions that first brought Christianity to Britain.

So how long has the journey been? Fifty-three years from first sensing God's call. Four decades of intentional formation. A lifetime of learning to dance in God's symphony.

Who guided you on this journey and what did you learn along the way?

I cannot speak of this journey without speaking of my wife, whose constant support and encouragement sustained me through times of despondency about the length of my formation. When I questioned whether this call was real or merely wishful thinking, when the waiting stretched so long that I wondered if I had misheard God's voice entirely, she remained unshakeable in her conviction that God would complete what He had begun. Her love, understanding, and steadfast faithfulness—her willingness to walk this long road beside me without knowing when or if ordination would come—has been the bedrock upon which everything else was built. She saw changes in me that I could not see myself, reminded me of God's faithfulness when I forgot, and never wavered in her encouragement. I would not be here without her.

God also provided extraordinary mentors along the way. Major Randy Wood, Command Chaplain of the Canadian Armed Forces, modeled how ministry transcends denominational boundaries while remaining rooted in one's own tradition. The Reverend Canon Dr. Richard LeSueur brought theological depth and pastoral wisdom, helping me understand that Anglican comprehensiveness is not theological mushiness but a way of holding complexity in creative tension. The Reverend Deacon Canon Peter Clarke taught me what diaconal ministry looks like in practice, that the deacon stands in liminal space between altar and street, between sanctuary and suffering, embodying the church's servant mission. The Right Reverend David Greenwood provided episcopal oversight and patient discernment, never rushing the process even when I wanted it accelerated. The Reverend Father Leon Cadsap, OSMSJ, offered spiritual direction and liturgical formation, grounding me in the rhythms of prayer that sustain ministry. As I now begin my ordained ministry, The Reverend Canon Dr. Grayhame Bowcott, Program Director at Huron, is helping me and others to explore what ones' calling looks like and means, providing a learning opportunity to discern the shape of the priesthood that may lie ahead.

What did I need to learn? Everything. I needed to learn that Anglican identity is not a compromise but a third way, sacramental yet accessible, ceremonial yet participatory, holding Catholic form and Reformed substance

in embodied tension. I needed to learn that the church's mission encompasses both evangelism and social justice, both personal holiness and systemic transformation. I needed to learn that synods are messy, that faithful Christians disagree profoundly, and that we keep dancing together anyway. I needed to learn patience, fifty-three years' worth of patience. I needed to learn that complexity reinforces simplicity with all of the theological nuance, all the historical study, all the ecumenical experiences combining to serve one simple reality, Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, present in Word and Sacrament, calling his church to worship and witness.

Most fundamentally, I needed to learn that I am a participant, not a passive observer, in the communion of saints. I stand in liminal space, not at journey's end but in its midst, with more questions than answers, but with a way of holding questions that is distinctly Anglican.

What are your hopes for the future?

At fifty-nine, being ordained to the diaconate reassures me that I will live out and fulfill God's will and purpose in my life. My next logical step, which I have prayerfully considered, is toward being priested, though much of this has to do with timing rather than capacity. I know that God continues to equip us sufficiently for the service He calls us into, and I anxiously await how this will unfold. As I remind myself when impatience creeps in, Methuselah lived to be 969 years old, so there is still hope.

More seriously, I hope to explore what reconciling ministry between divided groups might look like, though I am first discerning through ongoing learning with Canon Dr. Bowcott what my priestly calling actually means in practice. I hope to preside at the Eucharist, that central act of Anglican worship where Christ hosts the meal and sets the terms of fellowship. I hope to preach and teach in ways that help others discover what I have discovered, that Anglican comprehensiveness is not wishy-washy centrism but a robust, biblically-grounded, historically-rooted way of following Jesus.

I hope to serve faithfully in the particular liminal space to which God has called me between altar and street, between sanctuary and world, between the communion of saints who have gone before and those who will come after. I hope to keep learning the dance, even when I step on toes or get my own toes stepped on. I hope to participate fully in God's symphony, contributing my small voice to the great composition with multiple composers that is bringing humanity back together in praise.

Also I hope, though I dare not presume, that the journey from six to fifty-nine is not ending but entering a new movement. That ordination to the diaconate is not the conclusion but another beginning. That God, who has been patient with my slow formation for over five decades, will continue to shape me into whatever instrument He needs for His kingdom work.

In God's time, not mine. In God's way, not mine. But with profound gratitude for every year, every mentor, every experience, every grace and especially for a wife whose love never failed and never doubted, even when I did.

The dance continues and the symphony plays on. At fifty-nine, with Methuselah's 969 years as my benchmark, I believe that I am just getting started!

Stewarding Memory and Finding the Heart of the Gospel

All Saints, Fort McMurray, hosts Holodomor commemoration

THE REV. LEON CADSAP
All Saints, Fort McMurray
Dobryi den (добрий день). Good afternoon.

I am grateful to the Ukrainian community for welcoming us and inviting us to take part in this solemn commemoration.

The first time I encountered the word Holodomor was in 1989, while I was a college student browsing through the shelves of our college library. I was taking a Sociology course at the time, and in one of the journals, I came across an article by a Polish American writer whose name, sadly, I no longer remember. But what I do remember is the weight of the story he told, the cruelty, the starvation, the immense suffering deliberately inflicted on a people. Even then, I could sense that this was not simply a tragedy of the past; it was a wound in human history.

Over the years, as life carried me forward, the word slipped from my immediate memory, much as it has for many in the world who have never heard of it or remain unaware or indifferent to it. But memory, as we know, has a way of being awakened.

Upon our arrival in Canada from the Philippines in 2016, I began my ministry in a small Anglican parish in High Prairie, Alberta. One day, a parishioner, herself a Ukrainian whose family had come to Canada in the late 1930s, asked whether I had ever heard of the Holodomor. Her question stirred something profound within me. I told her, 'Yes, I read about it many years ago. I remember the word, and the horror surrounding it.' In that moment, the memory of that article, and of that devastating chapter in history, came rushing back.

The Holodomor was not a natural famine. It was not an accident of history. It was a genocide, a deliberate and systematic attempt to break a people, to erase a culture, to eradicate a nation's spirit. Millions of Ukrainians were starved, punished, and silenced. They were denied not only food but the most basic recognition of their humanity. Their imago Dei, the divine image God has placed in every person, was trampled, ignored, and violated by an ideology that valued power over human dignity.

It is a tragedy that many around the world still know little or nothing about the Holodomor. For some, it remains buried beneath other narratives. For others, it is dismissed or denied. Yet silence is dangerous. Forgetting is dangerous. Because what we refuse to remember, we risk repeating.



The Rev. Leon Cadsap is honoured to join Fr. Ivan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Edmonton, who makes the monthly journey to Fort McMurray to provide pastoral care to his faithful community.

And painfully, we acknowledge that the evil that once manifested itself in the Holodomor has found new shapes and new faces in our own time. The aggression, the attempts to suppress identity, the violence against freedom, these shadows reappear. But unlike the 1930s, the world is watching. And thanks be to God, the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people have inspired nations around the globe to stand with them.

At the heart of the Gospel is the commandment to love God and to love our neighbour, a love that sees and protects the dignity of every human being. In our Christian baptism, we promise to "respect the dignity of every person." These are not abstract words. They are moral commitments that forbid us from turning away from suffering, from pretending that injustice elsewhere has nothing to do with us. Love requires remembrance. Love requires solidarity. Love requires truth. And what does this commemoration ask of us today?

It calls us not only to look back, but to look within ourselves:

- To refuse to be indifferent.
- To honour those who perished by ensuring their story is never silenced.

- To stand with all who still face oppression, displacement, and violence in our own time.
- To be courageous witnesses to truth, even when truth is uncomfortable.

It also invites us to see the Ukrainian people not only as victims of a past atrocity, but as living icons of resilience, hope, and the uncrushable dignity God has given every human being. In the face of darkness, whether in the 1930s or today, Ukrainians have shown the world what it means to resist evil with courage, to preserve identity with pride, and to proclaim human dignity with unwavering conviction.

As we remember the Holodomor, may we renew our commitment to justice, peace, and the protection of human dignity. May we draw strength from the memory of those who suffered and from the courage of those who continue to defend freedom today. And may God, who is near to the brokenhearted, bless the people of Ukraine, here, abroad, and in their homeland, with healing, unity, and enduring hope.

Vichna im pam'yat' (Вічна їм пам'ять). Eternal be their memory.

Lenten Retreat with Bishop Steve

Bishop Stephen is excited to be leading a Lenten retreat on his favourite subject: growing into maturity in Christ!

He writes: "This is a retreat about the challenge of spiritual growth in Christ. The time together will be an extended reflection on Jesus' words: 'You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' (Jn 8:32) We know that the encounter with Jesus Christ sets us free. The Gospel is all about the transformation of the human heart. However, this healing is never simple or uncomplicated. Life is hard, and people struggle. This retreat won't solve your problems; however, it will provide a framework and practices to understand what it means realistically to bring our whole selves to Christ."

Join him at the Providence Renewal Centre from Friday, February 27, to Sunday, March 1, 2026. For the registration link, visit <https://providencerenewal.ca/events-at-a-glance/>

