

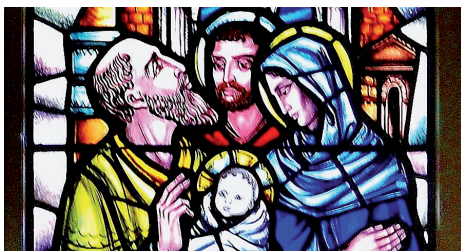
# DIOCESAN EPOST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

MAY 2021

## Messages in Glass



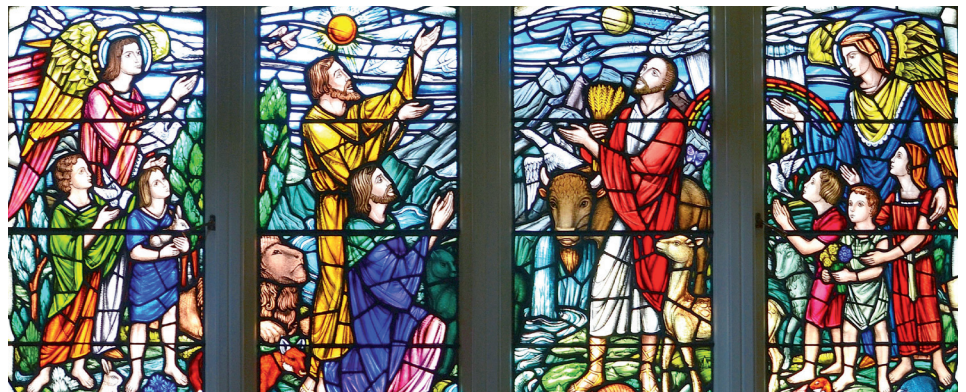
Stained glass panel depicting the Holy Family. Photo by Richard Pook.

*St. Mary, Oak Bay, parishioner authors book to preserve church's stained glass windows*

BY NAOMI RACZ

Elizabeth Laugharne, 98, has been a parishioner at St. Mary the Virgin in Oak Bay for over ten years. In 2011, then-incumbent John Macquarrie asked Laugharne and her fellow parishioner Pam Jarvis if they would be interested in sorting through the church's "archives" — at the time this consisted of several large dust-covered boxes sitting in the church's basement. Now, the dusty boxes have been transformed into a catalogued and safely stored archival collection. During the process of sorting through the boxes, Laugharne and Jarvis made some incredible and intriguing discoveries. These included a 1782 edition of the King James Bible; an old key belonging to a church in England, also called St. Mary the Virgin

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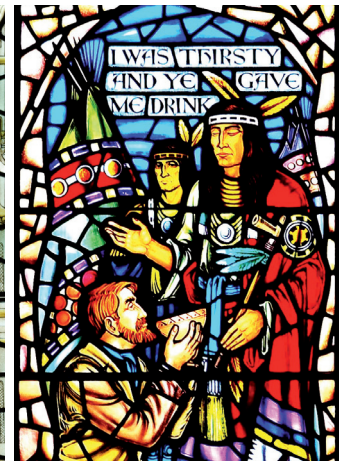
The four panels in A Song of Creation depict the splendour of the heavens and Earth. Photo by Richard Pook.



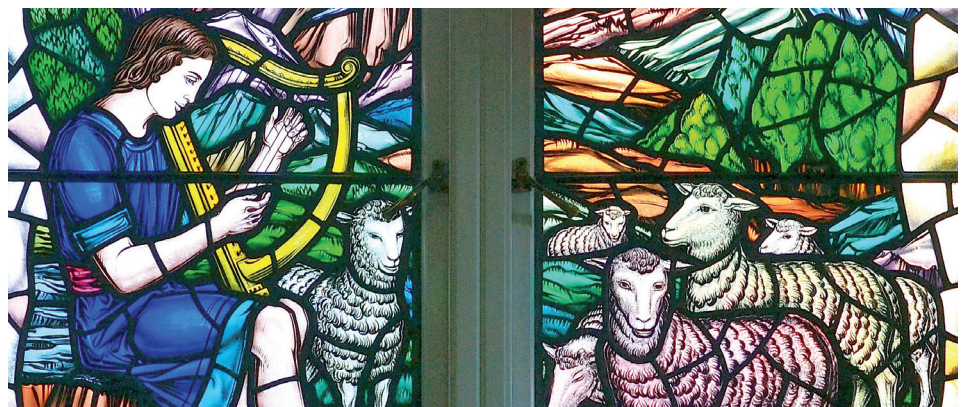
The Ascension depicts airman George Henry Corbett, whose RAF plane was shot down over England just before his 21st birthday. Photo by Richard Pook.



The central panel of The High Priest, a triptych, shows Christ raising his hands, acting as a high priest — the window was damaged by the 2001 Olympia, Washington, earthquake. Photo by Richard Pook.



A panel from The Works of Mercy — together the panels depict the parable of the Good Samaritan. Photo by Richard Pook.



David, The Harpist depicts David playing his harp to a flock of sheep. Photo by Richard Pook.

# Uncharted territory



FROM THE BISHOP'S CHAIR

THE RIGHT REVEREND  
ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

As a church in the 2020s, one of the things we need to realize is that we are living in changing times and uncharted territory.

Phyllis Tickle, in her book *The Great Emergence*, suggests we are living through religious, economic, technological and political changes of a size and scope we have not seen since the Reformation. Others define our time as VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). This acronym was coined during the Cold War, but seems equally applicable during COVID-19!

Over the month of March, some of the clergy and I attended a series of Friday morning webinars by Susan Beaumont, a church leader and author of *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*. She uses the word "liminal" to describe how we are somewhere between the old and "the possibility of something yet undiscovered." To live in liminality can be disorienting and disconcerting. The unknowing is uncomfortable and so we sometimes rush to quick resolutions or "solutions" instead of doing the true, soul-searching, spirit-infused work of discernment.

In my first few months as bishop, there have been a few times when people have asked me, "What is the plan?" "How will we know we are going to survive?" "What are we doing to do about ...?"

These questions are real, but we must all realize that we are in a liminal season and in uncharted territory. There is no map. Instead, what we have is the compass of our faith, of our tradition and of God within.

Priest and contemplative Cynthia Bourgeault writes that "we have within us a compass pointing to the magnetic north of God." I find this image to be helpful. When we stop long enough to reconnect with God, our source and our centre, we

## Bishop's Calendar

### May

- 4 Planning Meeting for the 100th Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia
- 7-8 Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination (ACPO)
- 11 Educational Trusts Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 11 Christ Church Cathedral Buildings Ltd. Board Meeting (Zoom)
- 13 Education for Ministry Graduation Ceremony (Zoom)
- 27 Diocesan Council (Zoom)
- 29 100th Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia

This calendar is up to date at the time of publication. Check the bishop's schedule online for changes. [www.bc.anglican.ca/bishop/](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/bishop/)

can and will find our bearings. This does not mean that the path ahead will be easy. There will still be mountains to climb, rivers to ford, dark and lonely nights in the wilderness, and new communities and people to encounter on the way. The

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# Diocesan Post

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- March issue - Jan 25
- April issue - Feb 25
- May issue - March 25
- June issue - April 25
- Sept. issue - July 25
- Oct. issue - Aug 25
- Nov. issue - Sept 25
- Dec. issue - Oct 25

**All material is subject to editing.**

### Subscription Changes

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### Submissions

News, letters and other articles are welcome. Please limit articles to 500 words and letters to 200 words. Submissions must include name and contact information of the author.

Pictures must be a resolution of 300 DPI and in sharp focus. Clearly and accurately identify the name of all subjects as well as the person who took the picture.

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**Volume 55, No 5**

# Hope in a changing world

*Lenten challenge returns to St. Mary, Metchosin*

BY SHARLEEN THOMPSON

St. Mary of the Incarnation, Metchosin, has been running the Metchosin Challenge for members of the church and the community for five years. The challenge runs for six weeks during Lent, and during those six weeks we host weekly talks from experts on the many challenges that the church and the wider world are facing.

Through the challenge, we invite the community of Metchosin and the surrounding area to get informed about and develop a deeper understanding of issues including climate change, reconciliation and human rights. We hope the talks will inspire action and change, ultimately leading to a better world.

Why does St. Mary run the Metchosin Challenge during Lent? We live in a world that is largely secular in nature. Many people are raised without any experience of religion, and their opinions of Christianity are shaped by news headlines portraying a Christianity that is very different to the Canadian Anglican experience of being Christian. The Anglican church is a church that engages the world as it is. We do not take all of the Bible as literal. We believe in our duty to care for the world and its people. We do not hide our heads in the sand or believe that we will be saved from the consequences of our actions. This is why many of us ended up in the Anglican church.

Our church is responding to the issues of the world: through funding that enables our churches to have less impact on the environment, through programs that reach out to the disadvantaged, and through programs that help those suffering from alcohol and drug abuse. During Lent we are called to try to live more in line with Christ's ideals. We examine ourselves and try to change for the better. Why not challenge the world to do this with us?



*Elizabeth May speaking during the 2017 Metchosin Challenge. Photo by Sharleen Thompson.*

We have just finished this year's series, called "Hope in a Changing World." The series focused on climate change, one of the biggest issues we face, and the talks were delivered on Zoom. We had six speakers, all experts in some aspect of climate change and all with a message of hope — because without hope, people won't act to make a difference. The first speaker this year was Dr. Robert Gifford, who presented some of the reasons people give for not taking action on climate change ("It won't affect me in my time" or "Technology will figure it out") and provided some arguments to counter these objections. The second speaker was Nicole Bates-Eamer, who spoke about forced migration due to climate change. Dr. Elin Kelsey, author of *Hope Matters: Why Changing the Way We Think Is Critical to Solving the Environmental Crisis*, was the third speaker. The fourth speaker was Fiona Hamersley Chambers, who spoke about saving seeds as a way to protect species diversity. The fifth speaker was Shay Wyatt, who presented En-ROADS, a simulation that demonstrates the impact our actions as individuals, communities and countries will have on the future of global warming. The last speaker was Paul Manly, the MP for Naniamo-Ladysmith, who talked about the struggle to get the changes we need through our political system. This year's Metchosin Challenge was well received by the church and the wider community, with feedback including "very interesting" and "glad you are bringing this to the community."

Each year, the Metchosin Challenge has a different theme. In the first year, we looked at some of the big issues we face, including climate change, species diversity and

reconciliation. The second year coincided with the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the third year, we looked at how individuals can make a difference. Last year, we got halfway through exploring how we can implement practical changes to live more sustainably when the series was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Through the years, we have had speakers such as Elizabeth May (twice) and Herbert O'Driscoll, as well as scientists, Indigenous leaders and thought leaders. We have had anywhere from eight to 60 people per session — some from the church and some from the wider community. The Metchosin Challenge has brought many into the church who would not normally have come. Some have stayed. ■

## Uncharted territory

*Continued from page 2*

journey will no doubt still be difficult; it will still be longer than we wanted; it will still test and try us. But it will not be in vain, and it is not a journey we undertake alone. The risen Christ walks with us.

In the months and, dare I say, years ahead, please journey with me in the uncharted territory that is the church and the world in the 2020s. Let's avoid the temptation to look for easy answers and quick solutions. Let's not pretend we can "conquer" this uncharted territory. Let's try instead simply to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Let's follow Christ's path of humble service, remembering his words: "Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it." (Luke 17:33) ■

# Shining a light in the dark

BY NAOMI RACZ,  
WITH JANE MORLEY

If you've ever taken the ferry between Victoria and Vancouver, you will have passed by North Pender Island, which forms part of the Anglican Parish of Pender & Saturna Islands together with South Pender and Saturna Islands. In summer, the populations of Pender and Saturna balloon, but the Pender Islands are home to about 2,250 year-round residents, while Saturna Island has a permanent population of around 350. Many of those residents are retirees, attracted to the islands by their beauty, temperate climate and sense of community.

The islands are home to three Anglican churches: St. Peter, North Pender (1915); Church of the Good Shepherd, South Pender (1938); and St. Christopher, Saturna (first church built prior to 1913, current building 1963). In recent years, the parish has faced many of the same challenges that churches across the diocese have had to grapple with as a result of an increasingly secularized general population, an aging and dwindling congregation and financial issues. For Pender and Saturna, the consequences included the loss of a full-time resident incumbent and the closure of the well-loved Church of the Good Shepherd. Despite these challenges, the parish has worked hard to turn things around.

The process began in October 2011 with a retreat on Saturna Island where about 20 members of the church and parish council gathered. They sat in circle and began by introducing themselves. These introductions ended up taking the entire day as people poured out their individual thoughts and feelings, including their relationships with the church. By the end of the day, the group

had bonded in a way that continued to strengthen the parish in subsequent years. Following on from this retreat, and with the leadership of the then part-time incumbent Chas Belknap (who lived on Salt Spring Island and traveled to Pender and Saturna islands on his boat), small groups of parishioners met to discuss the future. It was felt that the parish needed to get beyond problems for which there appeared to be no solutions — after all, they couldn't exactly change the larger demographic and secularization trends or reverse past diocesan decisions driven by financial necessity. These meetings took an appreciative inquiry approach. Parishioners were asked to reflect on their positive experiences within the church and what a church where they had those kinds of experiences more often might look like.

Through these meetings, the parish council identified a number of common elements that were most valued. These included sacred and varied liturgy, music, social connections with others, inclusivity, engagement with the broader community and the leadership of a fully engaged priest. They began to ask questions: How could they maintain these positive aspects given the current circumstances? What would that look like without a full-time incumbent? What does an incumbent do and how could they fill that role? The parish council reorganized and collectively took on the role of church warden to avoid the burnout they had experienced when the role was taken on by just one person. They adopted a circle approach to meetings that eased old tensions and allowed the development of consensus on deeper issues. The council felt more open to the Spirit. Three objectives emerged that were adopted and guide the parish to this day: approaching parish ministry with an attitude of abundance, engaging with the community and providing spiritual leadership. A fourth — reconciliation — was added later.

In pursuit of these objectives, several retreats and workshops were held at the St. Peter parish hall, involving



*A brightly lit Christmas tree shines out of St. Christopher, Saturna. Photo by Jeanette Amundson.*

community members and supported by the Diocesan Vision Fund. These included a “silent ear” retreat in 2012; a food retreat in 2015 that started with a Friday night community event to celebrate local food, followed by a Saturday workshop reflecting on banquet themes in the Bible; and a labyrinth workshop in 2016 that celebrated the opening of a labyrinth built with and for the community on St. Peter's lawn. In 2015, Ellen Willingham took on the role of part-time incumbent. She was a farmer on Pender Island for many years and her deep roots in Pender have helped the parish engage with that community. Recently, the parish took the initial steps towards building an affordable housing unit on St. Peter's property.

Just before the pandemic hit, the church received funding from the diocese to host a symposium — “Crammin' for the Finals: A Compassionate Community's Response to the End of Life's Journey” — to create a space for the local community to reflect on their role in supporting others who are aging or dying on the islands. Unfortunately, the event had to be postponed, but

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# A sense of déjà vu: on the Trans-Canada Highway from Calgary to Banff



## Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

During our years at the Anglican Parish of Christ Church, Elbow Park in Calgary, I used to take Monday as my day off. Sometimes, my wife Paula and I would drive west to have lunch in the Rundle Lounge of the Banff Springs Hotel. I used to think of the experience as enjoying the best burger in the world while looking out on the finest view in the world.

There is a very special point on that drive. As you drive west through the Foothills, you ascend a kind of vast staircase. Three times you come over a rise and there are the Rockies, blue and white and stretching from one end of the horizon to the other. I remember I used to think of them as the ramparts of a magic kingdom, impregnable and unassailable.

The last rise before the descent down Scott Lake Hill to Morley Flats is breathtaking. It's as if the mountains that seemed infinitely distant have suddenly leaped forward to form a massive wall of rock pierced by valleys that call you into them. Whenever we came over the brow of that hill and gazed upon this vast and ruggedly beautiful panorama, a peculiar thing would happen. I would have an unmistakable, unavoidable sense of having seen this scene long ago. Obviously, that was impossible. So what was going on? I didn't believe in reincarnation. But the feeling of déjà

vu was palpably present every time we took that drive west.

Then one day it came to me. I don't know why it happened on this particular occasion. I can only assume that I had subconsciously buried a childhood experience with overtones of fear and loneliness. However, the moment of remembering was wonderfully liberating, because it solved a tantalizing mystery in my life.

When I was nine, I became seriously ill. I've never been quite sure what the condition was. I do know that my parents were deeply worried. I have vague memories of dark dreams, of crying out, of being held by loving parents in the night hours. I was kept to my room for about two months. Every day, my mother would hang a sheet on the door soaked with some sort of disinfectant. In that long-ago south of Ireland of the 1930s, medicine was very limited in what it could do.

Two months is a long time for a nine-year-old to be a prisoner of his bedroom. Fortunately, I received a constant supply of boys' magazines, comics, adventure stories, hard cover books, in fact books of every kind, all of which I devoured. Those bedridden weeks probably laid the foundations for a long lifetime of obsessive reading.

But then one very special present came. Somebody in my class at school had received a gift from an infinitely far-away Canada. In those days, it was a recent and fascinating invention. It was called a View-Master. There in its box was the viewing unit. Stored with it were some small cardboard discs with tiny pieces of colour film set into them. Each circular card held seven different views of a Canadian landmark or tourist attraction. My goodness, you would not believe how thrilling those views of Canada — especially Western

Canada — were! They were crystal clear when you held the viewer to the light, and the mountains and valleys and rivers stood out with marvellous, three-dimensional clarity.

So now you know why many years later I would come over the rise of Highway 1 and be mysteriously affected by seeing this wonderful panorama. In a sense I had indeed been here before, in the long-ago land of childhood.

Recently, a friend added a whole other layer to this part of my life, by pointing out that someone else had stood at this same point on one of those great exploring journeys that opened up the west. In November 1800 David Thompson gazed out from this hilltop and marvelled at this panorama. Here is what he wrote in his journal:

"To the westward, hills and rocks rose to our view covered with snow, here rising, there subsiding. Never before did I behold so just, so perfect a resemblance to waves of the ocean in the wintry storm. When looking upon them and attentively considering their wild order and appearance, the imagination is apt to say, these must once have been liquid, and in that state when swelled to its greatest agitation, suddenly congealed and made solid by Power Omnipotent."

What a gift Thompson had for writing, not to mention a soaring imagination! Reading that excerpt from his journal makes it even more thrilling to drive west, swept along on today's great highway through Morley lands and along the Bow Valley. Yet another of the many gifts we received from our years of ministry in Calgary. ■

*In addition to his new book of memoirs, I Will Arise and Go Now (available in bookstores everywhere), Herbert O'Driscoll has recently published privately a small collection of reminiscences from his time as rector of Christ Church, Calgary from 1984 through 1992, entitled Echoes of Elbow Park: Memories of Ministry. This month's column is from that collection, which can be ordered for \$10 (including shipping and handling) from [ianalexan@gmail.com](mailto:ianalexan@gmail.com).*

# The friends of Clare and Francis

*Youth mentoring in Parksville provides experience, education and spiritual growth*

BY ANDREW TWIDDY

In July 2020, our parish community of St. Anne & St. Edmund, Parksville, began a youth mentoring and employment program called “The Friends of Clare and Francis” with four high school and university students: Juliette, Allison, Evan and Luke.

I provided the mentoring and daily supervision for the summer program and coordinated the spiritual formation and Sunday programming elements of the program. Our church’s program associate, Mandy Truman, provided hands-on leadership and mentoring in all matters relating to the church building, grounds and cleaning during the week. Our priest associate, Christine Muise, and senior program associate, Kathy Miller, provided additional leadership in the summer. In the late fall and winter, Christine took over the lead with spiritual formation and Sunday programming.

Together, we formed The Friends of Clare and Francis, a team of eight youth and adults ready to implement “Letting Our Light Shine” – our parish’s program of outreach and ministry that we initiated at our annual vestry meeting in February 2020 as part of the wider diocesan initiative “Transforming Futures.” “The Friends of Clare and Francis” was an organic follow-up to and natural expansion of the previous year’s summer youth program, and was designed to give youth vital life experiences, education and service opportunities.

During a global pandemic, when so many of our elders and volunteers have been safely sheltering, the formation of



*The Friends of Clare and Francis team working on the renewal of the church’s memorial garden for its 125th anniversary.*

a small youth-based workforce enabled us to continue providing our services to the faith and wider community. With the help and initiative of our youth and their supervisors, we were able to address safety and sanitation in the church and carry out groundskeeping, beautification and cemetery and churchyard care — and combine this with an opportunity for compassionate action and personal and spiritual growth by following in the footsteps of Clare and Francis of Assisi, our spiritual guides from the 13th century!

Our aim was to allow our students to experience a rhythm of “work” and “prayer.” Sitting in silence for 20 minutes of meditation was “work,” just as 20 minutes of lawn mowing or weeding was “prayer.” An hour in church to create a safe environment for in-person worship, or to share in leading worship through readings, music and liturgy was “work,” just as an hour of sanitizing surfaces and cleaning floors, offered in a spirit of co-operation and gratitude, was a form of “prayer-in-motion.”

Our youth team gradually expanded their role within Sunday programming through singing and instrumental music, public reading and speaking, and serving at the altar, as well as performing the vital tasks of registering those who attended, and maintaining the new safety and sanitation routines that have become standard parts of our lives over 2020-21. We were glad to welcome one additional youth, Hope, who added both her vocal gifts in music and her volunteer participation in the team for a few days of

outdoor work, including the restoration of our memorial garden.

The educational component of the program was based on varying degrees of engagement with a number of Franciscan-inspired resources including “Beyond the Birdbath,” an online summer course with Franciscan priest Richard Rohr; the PBS documentary *The Sultan and the Saint*; the apps Time to Pray and The Daily Office from the Mission of St. Clare; and the “21-Day Meditation Experience” with Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra. We also participated in “Embers from the Fire,” an online interactive circle that ran weekly in the spring and monthly in the summer and featured readings from Richard Wagamese’s book *Embers* and resources from the Disciple booklet, authored by National Anglican Indigenous Archbishop Mark MacDonald. We were graced with two sessions in which Archbishop MacDonald also “Zoomed in” personally to participate in our sessions, including singing a song for us with his guitar.

In the summer, we ran a socially-distanced retreat for a limited number of participants at the interfaith Bethlehem Centre in Nanaimo, under the theme of “creation-centred spirituality.” We ran this as an in-person event in a beautiful lakeside environment, and also broadcasted the teaching sessions through the Spirituality Beyond Borders Facebook page. Juliette, Allison, Evan and Luke assisted in running the program and participated as retreatants. The teaching materials engaged with Scripture, the

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## Messages in Glass

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(Laugharne contacted the church, but they had no idea how the key ended up in British Columbia); and two flags, the regimental colours of the 88th Regiment, Victoria Fusiliers, which the volunteers established an archival file on.

During the clutter clearing, Laugharne also put together an archival file on the church's remarkable — a word Laugharne used throughout our correspondence — stained glass collection. St. Mary has 54 stained glass creations in or hanging on windows in the church. St. Mary was consecrated on October 4, 1911, by Bishop Perrin. When the church's first incumbent, George Andrews, died of cancer in 1924, a church committee raised funds for a stained glass window dedicated to his memory. The first of St. Mary's stained glass windows was made in England and installed that same year. From there, more donations followed, and many of the windows are dedicated to the memory of parishioners.

In the early 2000s, St. Mary's assistant curate, Andrew Halliday, conducted research into the history of the windows and placed informational leaflets below each window. By digging around on the Internet and in various archives, including the provincial archives, the diocesan archival library and the Oak Bay community archival library, Laugharne was able to build on Halliday's work. The church's own archives contained obituaries, newspaper records and minutes of vestry meetings, and correspondence from donors that provided further clues.

Many questions, however, remained unanswered. For example, the panels known collectively as *The Works of Mercy* depict interactions between early European settlers and First Nations and Inuit communities. The unique and highly unusual panels also depict elements of the Canadian landscape, including icebergs. Despite extensive digging, Laugharne wasn't

able to locate any information about who commissioned the panels and why. Many of the windows were made in England, and the firms that made them have now shut down, making it hard to track down the artists who crafted the panels. Two local artists, however, were on hand to discuss their work: Edward Schaefer, former partner in the Victoria-based Mercer and Schaefer Glass Studios; and Imke Pearson, a resident of Oak Bay, who donated her prize-winning window *Jesus and His Mother* to the church in 1982.

A year earlier, Pearson had also been commissioned to create a stained glass design for the eight-paned window above the altar. Her design, *Genesis*, consists of a sunburst radiating from a central circular window out into seven surrounding square windows to form a cross. Speaking of the window and her work for St. Mary, Pearson said, "I was approached by the architect firm Wade and Williams to create a window over the altar. It was a wonderful wall because there were no other windows, so I knew my modern design wouldn't interfere with the traditional painted windows. I wanted to create a burst of spiritual sunlight using beautiful handblown glass." Pearson's windows have now been in St. Mary for 40 years, and Pearson is hopeful that the windows will be around for many years to come. "The windows are part of my legacy. I have windows all over Victoria; I only have a few left at my home for my children. My husband was still alive then, and he helped with installing the windows. I've always created artwork, even before I took courses in stained glass, while I was teaching high school, I would come home and create artwork."

Using the information they had gathered, Laugharne and Jarvis put together a display about the stained glass windows in an old glass-covered display case. Interest in the windows grew. Churchmouse Books, which St. Mary opened in 2016, was also attracting more members of the local community into the church building, and Laugharne

was receiving many queries about the windows. The idea to write a book about the windows came to Laugharne one day while she was working the desk at Churchmouse Books. As she stood there, surrounded by thousands of books, Laugharne thought to herself, "Perhaps I should write a book about the stained glass collection!"

Incumbent Craig Hiebert was enthusiastic about the idea of creating a book to preserve the history and messages contained within the church's windows. "One of the most striking things about the church at St. Mary is the kaleidoscope of light and message that the windows provide," said Hiebert. "They cover the gamut of biblical stories, as well as the ongoing human endeavour to live as those who have the light of Christ shining through them in every aspect of their day-to-day living. Past, present and future beam into the space — and, I pray, outward into the world through everyone who is touched by the gospel message represented in these windows. We are so grateful for Liz's passion to share the story of these messengers."

Laugharne immediately set to work. Little did she know, when she started on the project, that she would be doing the bulk of the work in the midst of a global pandemic. The book, it turned out, was a lifesaver. When I spoke with Laugharne over Zoom she talked of how working on the book helped preserve her mental health: when the news got too distressing, she escaped into the book and into a world of beautiful coloured glass and past lives.

*Messages in Glass* starts with an overview of the history of the church and the symbolic use of colour in stained glass windows. The book then goes on to offer interpretations of the stained glass art in each section of the church building. While many visitors to the church asked about the use of colour or the animals that appear in the windows, Laugharne found that few asked about the messages behind the windows, so

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she felt it was important to address those in her book. To that end, each section about a window opens with a Bible quote to help readers and visitors understand the biblical significance of the images. After all, that’s what stained glass windows were originally intended for: to communicate Bible stories and Christian messages visually for those who couldn’t read.

Perhaps one of the most striking and touching windows in the church’s collection is *The Ascension*, which depicts a man wearing a life preserver kneeling and looking up at the sky. The man is George Henry Corbett, a Canadian in the Royal Air Force who was killed over England in 1940 just before his 21st birthday. For many years, relatives of Corbett placed a red rose under the window every November 11. Laugharne’s favourite window, however, is *Jesus and His Mother*, which is unusual in depicting Mary’s relationship with her adult son. As Laugharne commented: “When you stand in front of the window, it has a clear message. Mary was not just

the mother of Jesus; she lived a giving Christian life. We talk about her as a mother, but not about the rest of her life. She was more than just the Blessed Virgin — she continued to spread Jesus’ message after his death.”

*Messages in Glass* will be published in paperback in May, and it is hoped that there will be an ebook version available in the future too. All profits from the sale of the book will go towards the fund for the preservation and restoration of the windows. Laugharne also hopes that her book will increase appreciation for the windows and, in turn, ensure their preservation for many years to come. Given that the first window to be installed in St. Mary will turn 100 in 2024, there is reason to be hopeful that Laugharne’s book will achieve its goal, and that her tireless efforts to bring the history and meaning of St. Mary’s stained glass to light won’t have been in vain.

For further information, or to pre-order your copy, contact St. Mary the Virgin, Oak Bay, at 250-598-2212 or [mmcgahon@st.marysoakbay.ca](mailto:mmcgahon@st.marysoakbay.ca). You can also contact the author directly at 250-658-2548 or [elaugharne@shaw.ca](mailto:elaugharne@shaw.ca).



*A flag with the regimental colours of the 88th Regiment, Victoria Fusiliers. Photo by Richard Pook.*



*Genesis, designed by Oak Bay resident Inke Pearson, features a vivid sunburst in a central oval window which spills out into seven adjacent square windows, forming a cross. Photo by Richard Pook.*

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# God is persistent, and so should I be



## My Journey

BY WALLY EAMER

Our new editor of the *Post* asked me an interesting opening question: “What made you decide on the role of deacon as a career?” It took me several perplexing years to discern that I didn’t really have a “career optimization” choice. I could understand what most deeply fulfilled me, and in part why, and then decide whether to accept or ignore it. People of the church told me that they saw a religious calling struggling to emerge. Their discernment strengthened my resolve to try this new path, with its consequences and mystery. A dog is not a cat, though both are lovable, and a deacon is not a priest. Increasingly, in this pandemic year, I see deacons as primarily called to work towards the second great commandment — to love your neighbour as yourself — and the priest is called to work for the first: to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind. Yes, we must do both and more besides, but these are the deepest, most fulfilling tasks for priests and deacons alike.

Like almost all deacons, my work began outside the church — always coloured by

a desire for service to others. I was born in Nanaimo and grew up in Port Renfrew and Ladysmith. Our father raised my brother and me after our mother died of asthma. Our little rural communities had open doors to these two motherless boys. I craved exploration, internally and externally, and during university took three years to travel through Central and South America, canoe much of the way from Alberta to Montreal, and explore north of Yellowknife. After receiving an MBA from Harvard, I could have worked in the private sector, but I felt no sense of fulfillment at the prospect of competing for financial rewards. It wasn’t evil, just bland rice pudding. Most of my career was in government, primarily environment and protected areas, and it concluded with very intense work to help create the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR). The GBR covers both forests and the ocean, and is home to First Nations and working people similar to the ones I knew during my youth. In 2006, I left the provincial government and began working for the *Nanwakolas* Council, which was formed among the southernmost First Nations in the GBR.

The religious stream in my life began inauspiciously when, on my 12th birthday, I refused to be confirmed because the intellectual case for Christianity did not fully satisfy me. Many years later, my wife took our children to the Anglican church. In 1997-98, our family volunteered for eight months in Danli, Honduras, with an Anglican missionary. I volunteered for the non-religious work, but had time to consider the religious response to life’s mysteries. Although I still didn’t fully accept the intellectual case, I decided to walk the Christian path and took my first communion in a tiny adobe church in Corral Quemado, Honduras. The

pull gradually intensified towards more, then ordained Christian ministry — it certainly was not my conscious choice. I explored ministry as a priest. It did not resonate — “bland rice pudding.” So, I tried walking away, but God is persistent. I explored ministry in Honduras, but again it did not resonate. It was a complex path that led me to the GBR work, and at first, I expected that a religious vocation required withdrawal. Only as I got closer to ordination in November 2008 did I understand my GBR work as a deacon’s call to serve the marginalized and creation.

Our Anglican church is blessed in many ways, some of them showing as challenges. We can enrich the people who are spiritual but not religious by showing the glory and grief of spirituality in community — will we be that bold? It is so comfortable waiting for them to come to us, and so ineffective. Our church formation 500 years ago assumed that religious leadership and government leadership should be deeply intertwined — experience from Europe and then Iran suggests this is a dangerous path. That means we should not seek authority, but we do offer hard-earned experience in sin, repentance and renewal. Does the church have the courage to live as deacons are called to live: on the margins between power and those affected by power?

The vision of people and the environment in the GBR will take many more generations to fulfill, but my small contribution is complete. Again, without conscious choice, I feel pulled towards ministry in pilgrimage — especially as a way to better understand our humanity within creation — and spirituality in community, which is my understanding of religion. The pandemic put that on hold, but God is persistent, and so should I be. ■

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## The friends of Clare and Frances

*Continued from page 6*

tradition of the mystics and questions of action in our current ecological crises.

Our retreat featured seasoned spiritual teachers Pearl Gervais and Bishop Remi De Roo. Pearl is a wonderful animator, teacher, author and facilitator of spiritual growth, and a stellar teacher of Enneagram spirituality. In one of our more memorable sessions, Bishop De Roo, 96, posed as Thomas Aquinas, Pearl was Hildegard of Bingen, and I played the role of Francis of Assisi.

Juliette summarized her experience for our parish council this way: “My job at St. Anne & St. Edmund has been an immensely educational, enriching and developmental experience. I have grown in my skills and confidence as an employee and team member. I feel so much more prepared to enter the world as a qualified and spiritual individual.” ■



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## Shining a light in the dark

*Continued from page 4*

the pandemic has bought some silver linings to the parish. The parish has been conducting services on Zoom, which has allowed members from both churches to connect regularly, attend a common service and welcome far-flung relatives into the “church.”

For Christmas 2020, St. Christopher refurbished its nativity scene to make the

figures more racially diverse and spaced the figures out so that members of the local community could safely explore the nativity scene and reflect on the events that took place in Bethlehem leading up to the birth of Christ. The scene was also lit up at night and a second light was placed in the church belfry. Many in the local community appreciated the display and the lights during the dark, gloomy days of winter. A light continues to shine inside and outside St. Christopher at night to send a message of comfort to that community.

What does the future hold for the parish of Pender and Saturna? Many parishioners raised their children within the Anglican tradition, but their children’s children are being raised in an increasingly secular world. Still, “younger” older people are moving to the islands and there remains a need for spiritual connection that the parish is well-placed to address. The last decade and the last year in particular have shown that the parish can survive and thrive even in difficult circumstances. ■



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## Diocesan Council Zooms along



### Fly on the Wall

BY CATHERINE PATE

*This regular column reports on the activities and decisions of diocesan council, the “synod between synods” of our diocese. Download monthly meeting minutes at [www.bc.anglican.ca/programs/diocesan-council](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/programs/diocesan-council).*

#### Streamlining bureaucracy

As reported last month, at its March meeting the diocesan council approved motions regarding canonical wording changes to Canons 3 and 4. The changes stipulate that the frequency of diocesan council and finance committee meetings will be a minimum of five times a year (currently 10x/yr) with additional meetings being called as necessary, and that the number of voting members of the diocesan council will be reduced to 20. The revised canons will be put to a synod vote on May 29.

#### Vision implementation

Council received a report from the diocesan vision animator, Brendon Neilson, that recommended restructuring the vision implementation team model that the diocese first implemented in

2018. Going forward, a committee of representatives for each of the six vision directions under “Faith in Action” and “Faith in Formation” will work together to identify and implement areas of vision work that cannot be addressed at the parish level and are better served with diocesan and/or regional coordination. The newly established group will meet for the first time this month.

#### Finances

##### *Anglican Foundation grant applications*

Council approved two projects for inclusion in an infrastructure grant application to the Anglican Foundation. The deadline for applications for the spring cycle (there are two intakes each year) was April 1. The two projects include St. John the Baptist, Cobble Hill, which will receive \$15,000 towards the installation of a new roof, and \$10,000 for the parish of Central Saanich for exterior painting of St. Stephen.

##### *St. Paul, Nanaimo, debt forgiveness*

Council approved the forgiveness of \$355,000, which was incurred primarily through cost overruns in the development of the St. Paul Centre for Ministry and Community. The parish initially raised \$2.3m for the project and raised a further \$547,000 towards the overruns; the debt forgiveness is the remaining balance. Council acknowledged that the ministry centre is an important centre for diocesan events and that the burden undertaken by the parish has been deemed to be causing undue hardship on the life of the parish. The adjustment will be shown separately in the financial statements rather than treating it as a parish grant. ■

*Catherine Pate is director of communications for the diocese.*

## Diocesan Council Meetings

Thursday, May 27 at 10 a.m.

Thursday, June 24 at 10 a.m.

No meetings in July and August.

Thursday, Sept. 23 at 10 a.m.

Thursday, Oct. 28 at 10 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 25 at 10 a.m.

No meeting in December.

## Notices

### Have you taken our reader survey?

We would love to hear from our readers. If you haven't done so already, please consider taking a few minutes to fill out our online reader survey. Your input will help us ensure that we bring you the stories and information you want and need. To complete the survey, enter the following link into your web browser:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/diocesanpost](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/diocesanpost)

### Order of the Diocese of British Columbia nominations due

The Order of the Diocese of British Columbia honours and recognizes outstanding service to the diocese. Nominations for the 2021 investiture are due May 15, 2021. For more information, to read the eligibility criteria and to download the nominations forms, visit the diocese website:

[www.bc.anglican.ca/programs/order-of-the-diocese-of-british-columbia](http://www.bc.anglican.ca/programs/order-of-the-diocese-of-british-columbia)

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