



THE NEW BRUNSWICK

ANGLICAN



A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL

MAY 2024

SERVING THE DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON

5 Moncton area parishes become 1

The Parish of the Six Saints is named for the saints on the new parish's buildings: George, James, Andrew, Philip, Mary and Alban

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

A solid leadership team, local decision-making and a desire to remain relevant and active are some of the reasons being touted for the success of a large amalgamation of Moncton-area parishes.

Five parishes with six church buildings, all named for saints, have come together under the new name of "The Parish of the Six Saints." Archbishop David Edwards issued the memorial making it official on April 1.

The former parishes of Moncton (St. George), St. Philip's, St. James, St. Andrews Sunny Brae, and Hillsborough Riverside (St. Mary and St. Alban) form the new parish. Its leadership includes rector Chris VanBuskirk, vicar Rob Salloum, deacons Barb Haire, Norm Dupuis, and David Alston, and honorary assistants the Rev. Wendy Amos-Binks and the Rev. Dr. Dan Goodwin.

LIGHTING A FIRE

The pandemic, plus the downward slide of Anglicanism in Canada and the western world, were factors that led to much prayer, thought and discussion about the future of the parishes.

"All of us were aware that our congregations were drastically affected in terms of attendance,"



MCKNIGHT PHOTO

ARCHBISHOP DAVID EDWARDS signs the memorial officially creating the Parish of the Six Saints, an amalgamation of five parishes in the Moncton area, on April 1.

said Chris. "Four of our congregations have 20 people or less."

These realities led to a meeting with director of mission and ministry Shawn Branch and Archdeacon Brent Ham two years ago.

The meeting was held in a neutral place, St. John the Baptist in Riverview, with parish representatives and clergy.

"Brent said, 'a year from now, if we're in still the same place, that's going to be a problem,'" said Rob. "Chris, Wendy and I took that as a challenge. That was a turning point.

"We began the process of establishing groups, planning committees, and timely and workable goals," said Rob. "We

wanted to be drawn together while we still could make decisions for ourselves, making decisions from strength, not from necessity or desperation."

Many meetings, debates, prayers, shared meals, and joint services and events have taken place in those two years.

There were a few who hardened for the good old days when churches were full and did not want to acknowledge the issue of long-term sustainability.

"It's always a challenge when it comes to change, but we worked on building trust and working together as the body of Christ," said Chris. "People have been very willing to listen and to pray as we went forward."

An open process with voting to ask, 'does your congregation want to move onto the next stage?' helped to keep everyone involved and informed.

"I think the key was we were intentional, and did our best to be transparent with information, trying to communicate clearly, timely and effectively," said Rob. "We went slowly, trying our best to create space for people to have their say and be involved. It didn't take two minutes. It took two years."

They also used the example of the Parish of Wicklow, Wilmot, Peel, and Aberdeen as a model of parishes coming together as one. It helped that Chris is a former rector of that parish.

ONWARD

How the new parish will function is a work in progress. On April 3, the parish held its first general meeting, with more than 50 people in attendance.

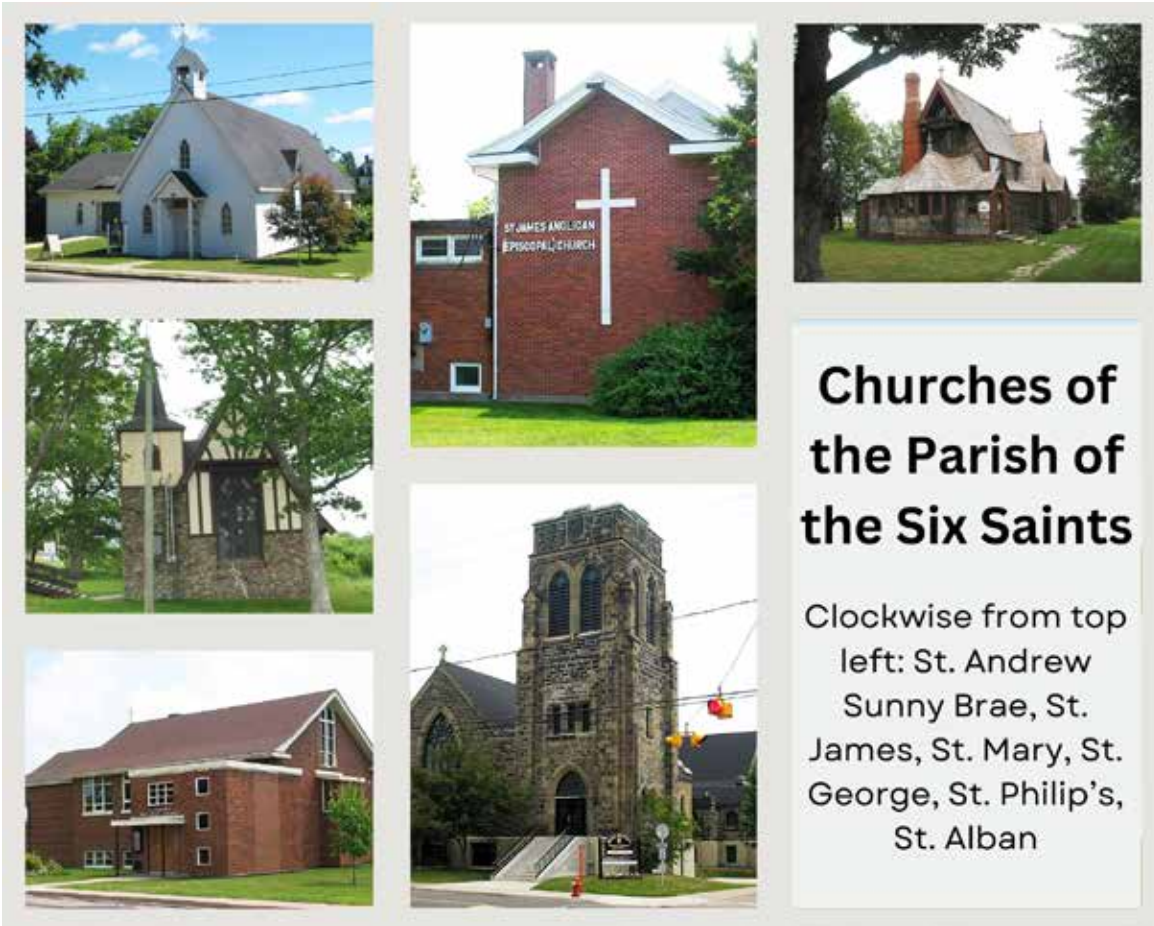
"Of note was the signing of the Liturgical Covenant by the clergy and wardens," said Chris. "Also, recommendations from the planning committee, from the work over the past 22 months, were adopted as operating principles for the new parish."

Chris is quick to point out that there is no formula, percentage or equation at play in the birth of the new parish.

"It's based on Christian char-

Parishes continued on page 2

DIOCESAN NEWS



Churches of the Parish of the Six Saints

Clockwise from top left: St. Andrew Sunny Brae, St. James, St. Mary, St. George, St. Philip's, St. Alban

Parish of the Six Saints created in Moncton area

Parishes continued from page 1

ity," he said. "It's completely based on Acts 2:44-45." *All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.*

One thing both Chris and Rob stress is the importance of each congregation's role in its community going forward.

"What we don't want to get lost in all this is the importance of community partnerships," said Rob.

Sharing space is one way to form those partnerships. With an abundance of buildings, it's time to take a hard look at how much of their building each congregation needs.

Removing pews, keeping the chancel and sanctuary inside the altar rail for congregational use, leasing the nave, and keeping the kitchen and bathrooms as common space are some options, said Chris.

"How much room do you need in your building?" he asked. "St. Philip's is really leading in this department."

While every congregation could use more cashflow, it goes far beyond that, they said.

"It's increasing visibility and relationships in the community," said Rob. "It's a reminder that we are the people of God. These buildings are dear to us, but we want to grow God's kingdom."

Brent is thrilled to see the results of two years of work.

"I think it's been wonderful to see how the parishes have trusted

each other, listened to each other and worked with each other," he said. "I hope this positions them for spiritual and numerical growth in the Moncton area."

"It's very appropriate that this takes place at the beginning of the Easter season," said Archbishop David. "Because it shows signs of new life in the Moncton area."

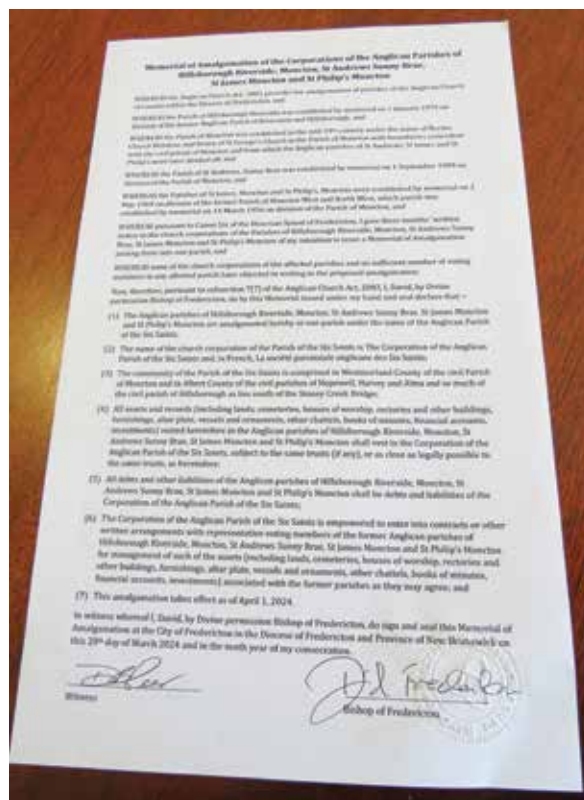
"I am grateful to the members of the parishes for their hard work and diligence, working out how best to accomplish this amalgamation."

Rob has the last word on the team in place to lead the new parish into the future.

"It is right for Fr. Chris to

be rector of this new parish. He has served for over 30 years in this diocese — 20 years in Moncton alone. It is a real thrill for me to have this opportunity to be the parish vicar and serve alongside him.

"Indeed, we have an amazing team which includes Rev. Wendy and a strong group of active and well-engaged deacons — Barbara, David, Normand and Dan — who are part of this wonderful team. No doubt, our gifts and skills complement each other. And I must mention the guidance of our dear archbishop, David, who has been wonderful."



THE OFFICIAL DOCUMENT signed and sealed.

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We welcome them! Send yours to gmcknight@diofton.ca

DEADLINE for news and photos for the June edition of the New Brunswick Anglican is May 1. Send submissions to gmcknight@diofton.ca

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Led in new and demanding ways

May 19th is Pentecost Sunday. It is the day when we celebrate God giving the Holy Spirit to the Church to empower our ministry.

As I have said in a previous article, at this time of year it can be seen as the forgotten major festival of the Church. It has often puzzled me as to why this is.

In Luke 24: 49 the disciples are told by the resurrected Jesus to stay in Jerusalem until they are clothed with power from on high, and in Acts 1:5 they are told that in a few days they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this becomes clear in Acts 1: 8. This will enable them to be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

As we proceed through the Book of Acts, we find that there is almost a constant dialogue between the followers of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, as they try to



Archbishop David Edwards

discern how best to proclaim the Gospel across the known world.

One of the things we can notice as the disciples walk in the Spirit, is that they are often led into uncomfortable and difficult situations. One example is that Peter is called to go to the home of a Roman centurion, Cornelius.

The apostle is unsure about going because the soldier is not a Jew. The night before, Peter had a

dream where he was told that he could eat any animal set before him. Jewish food laws meant that some were not supposed to be eaten, but God told him not to say that anything God had made was unclean.

While Peter and Cornelius are speaking, the Holy Spirit comes upon the whole group. It becomes clear that the Gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles.

Another example of this type comes in Acts 8. Philip was seeing great success from his ministry in Samaria. In the middle of all this he is told to go and stand by the road coming down from Jerusalem.

While Philip is waiting, an Ethiopian, the treasurer of the Queen, passes him by, reading from the scroll of Isaiah. Philip offers to interpret it for him, and afterwards, the Ethiopian is immediately baptized.

It can often appear that the Holy Spirit moves in a disorderly

fashion, but, in fact, the way Luke records it in Acts shows us it is not the case.

The pattern is as established in Acts 1: 8. The disciples are to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth, and this is the way it unfolds.

What we see, however, is that the Spirit stretches the disciples to do things they would prefer not to do.

I think it is because of this that Pentecost has become the almost forgotten festival.

Do we as followers of Jesus have the courage to be led by the Spirit into new and demanding ways?

David Edwards is
Diocesan Bishop of Fredericton.

Some thoughts on why

It's a cryptic headline for a longer question - why doesn't God do something?

The news is full of images of war in Ukraine, Sudan, the Middle East, to name a few places. It's especially heart-wrenching to see what's happening in the Gaza Strip.

I pray a lot about the events unfolding in our world, asking God to intervene, to raise up peace makers, to protect the innocent. Perhaps the reader does as well, and, like me, sometimes wonders why God doesn't do something to stop all the violence.

I don't claim to have the answer to a question which has generated sermons, books and debates throughout history. What I offer here are just some of my thoughts as I grapple with God's response to the violence that ravages so many nations today.

I start with what I believe about God. I adhere to the church's doctrine based on Scripture that God is the Creator of all things that exist in heaven and on earth. He is all-knowing, all-wise and all-powerful. He is holy, righteous, faithful and loving. He loves justice and hates evil. The list could go on!

I also believe what the Bible



teaches about humans — that God made us in His image — but that we are alienated from him because of our sin and disobedience.

When I think about wars, I don't think, 'Why did God cause this to happen?' Rather, I think about the reasons behind the war, who started it and what impact it has on the people involved.

I understand war as a human problem, a failure to resolve conflicts in a peaceful way, usually the result of human pride and greed or a desire to exact revenge for past wrongs.

Because we're made in God's image, we are moral creatures with a free will to make choices. We're not robots pre-programmed to certain actions, like pawns on a chess board, with God moving all the pieces.

Of course, the freedom to

choose involves having to live with the consequences of our choices.

I believe our world is suffering the consequences of bad choices made by many, many people — choices such as rejecting belief in the God who made us, rejecting the moral rules he wants us to follow, rejecting the love he has shown us in his son, Jesus.

Many people choose to live by their own rules, do their own thing, believe whatever they want to believe and live only to satisfy their own desires.

Imagine how different the world would be if we all loved our neighbours as ourselves. Sadly, that is not the world we live in.

Still, I'm left with the question, if God is all-powerful and loving, why doesn't he intervene to protect children who are suffering in these terrible situations? Then I think about all the ways he is at work in the world through his people.

Wherever there are conflicts, there are also people tending the wounded, feeding the hungry, working to bring a ceasefire. Many of these people and organizations are Christian.

I believe God also works through non-Christians to bring

relief to those in need.

God does not impose his will on a rebellious world. Rather, he works through his people to extend his reign here on earth.

Working through people is a slow process, but it seems to be the way God prefers. I think of Jesus choosing the disciples to carry on his work after his ascension.

I believe God also works through the prayers of his people, which is why I pray for our world, asking God to have mercy, to bless the peacemakers and to accomplish his good purposes. When and how he answers those prayers, I must leave in his hands.

So, when I begin to wonder why God doesn't do something, rather than impugn his character, I remind myself that people are to blame for the mess we're in!

And I thank God that he is patiently at work in ways that I may not see or understand.

Nancy Stephens, originally from Blackville, served with OMF International for over 30 years, including 12 years as a missionary in Thailand. Now retired, she resides in Fredericton and worships in the Parish of Douglas and Nashwaaksis.

PRINCIPAL ENGAGEMENTS

May 2
Clergy Spouses
Retreat

May 5
* Christ Church
(Parish of
Fredericton)

May 7
ACW Annual Meeting

May 8
Bishop's Counsel

May 12
* Good Shepherd
(Parish of Lancaster)

May 17
Parish of the Six
Saints Retreat

May 19
* Trinity (Parish of
Saint John)

May 26
All Saints (Parish of
Marysville); St. Mary,
(Parish of St. Mary,
York)

June 1
Diocesan Council,
Camp Medley

* confirmation

Pentecost, celebrated this year on Sunday, May 19, is a Christian holiday which takes place on the 50th day after Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary, mother of Jesus and the Apostles of Jesus while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.

wikipedia.com

Diocese welcomes new synod treasurer

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

Phil Shepherdson is taking a few weeks to get settled in his new country, and into his new role as comptroller and diocesan synod treasurer.

He began March 11, just a few days after his wife, the Rev. Maria Shepherdson, took up her new post as rector of the Parishes of Woodstock and Richmond. Both arrived in Canada from the UK in late February. They live in the Richmond rectory.

Born in New Zealand, Phil always had a talent for numbers, as did his grandfather, a chartered accountant. Phil earned a Bachelor of Management degree at Waikato University in Hamilton, NZ.

He began his career at Ernst Whinney, which eventually became Ernst & Young, a global professional services firm.

"I started working in the audit department," said Phil.

He became a qualified chartered accountant in 1991 through the New Zealand Institute of Accountants.

"Then I got itchy feet," he said. "I thought I'd like to travel."

His grandparents were from



MCKNIGHT PHOTO

PHIL SHEPHERDSON, the diocesan synod's treasurer, is getting used to both a new job and a new country. He and his wife, Maria, arrived from the UK at the end of February. Above right shows Maria and Phil dressed for a steampunk festival in the UK, part of Maria's sabbatical research a few years ago.

the UK, which meant he had right of residency, so at the age of 26, off he went. He thought he'd see some sights, then return home and settle into his career. But that didn't happen.

In those early years, Phil

had jobs in the UK that required him to travel, including to the U.S., Bahrain and Libya. Eventually he met and married Maria, moved where her calling as a teacher and then a priest took her, and shifted



SUBMITTED PHOTO

managing finances in a truck company and a network of care homes, among others.

"A lot of accounting skills are transferrable," he said.

Apart from work, Phil has used his skills as a parish treasurer, and was treasurer of a UK Rotary club as well.

For the past few years, he was the independent examiner (auditor) for a church-based charity called Hope Christian Trust.

During his first month with the diocese, he's taken on not only a new job, but also a new country.

"It's been a real eye-opener," he said. "Everyone is very helpful. Getting to know them is a joy. And it's a lovely area around Richmond and Woodstock."

He's been busy setting up an office in the rectory after the first few weeks were spent working at the dining room table. He plans to be at the synod office two days a week.

"I'm finding a rhythm," he said.

Phil is an avid hiker and has done high-altitude hiking in India and Nepal.

The Diocesan Synod welcomes Phil to his new role.

PWRDF diocesan rep visits Parish of Riverview

BY DEBBIE EDWARDS

Every month, St. John the Baptist Anglican Church, Riverview, highlights the work of various mission organizations.

During the month of April this year, the parish focused on the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF).

As diocesan PWRDF representative, I gave a short presentation during the service Sunday, April 7. In addition to background of the who, what, when, where, why and how of PWRDF, I focused my talk on two current relief projects.

First, I spoke about the In-Canada Emergency Fund. This fund, created in 2023, can respond quickly to emergency needs, resulting from climate change, within Canada. For example, damage caused by wildfires, floods and hur-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

THE PARISH OF RIVERVIEW welcomed PWRDF diocesan rep Debbie Edwards on April 7. She is seen here, at centre, with her mother, Blanche Prince, and the Rev. Julian Pillay, parish rector. The parish bulletin board displayed information about PWRDF for the month of April.

ricanes could all qualify for funding.

These funds are meant to

"fill the gap" between other sources of funding, such as those provided by govern-

ment or insurance. This money could be used to purchase such things as gift cards, counselling

and short-term accommodation.

Second, I chose to highlight PWRDF's response to the on-going humanitarian crisis in Gaza. PWRDF is raising money to support the al-Ahli Arab Hospital, which is an Anglican hospital operated by the Diocese of Jerusalem.

This hospital is still in operation, despite being bombed and suffering damage as the result of aid packages falling on it.

Even under such circumstances, up to 20 surgeries a day are being performed. PWRDF is accepting donations earmarked for Gaza.

As Diocesan Rep I am available to speak at services, to groups within churches or answer questions regarding PWRDF. Contact me using deborahcollicott@gmail.com.

DIOCESAN NEWS



MCKNIGHT PHOTOS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Layreaders Eva Morton, Cindy Derksen and Marilyn Wilson renew their vows; priests (standing) Chris Hayes, Nicholas Saulnier, Bonnie LeBlanc, Bob LeBlanc and David Peer renew their vows; lunch was a time of fellowship; Archdeacon Perry Cooper (in red) in the lunch line, with the Rev. Keith Joyce behind him, diocesan staffer Susan Dickie serving soup, and the Rev. David Peer at right; deacons Isabel Cutler and Debbie Edmondson, with layreader Eva Morton; Deacons (standing) Eddie Quann, foreground, Sharon Arbeau and Teddy Quann, at back, and Isabel Cutler renew their vows.

Vows renewed, oils blessed during annual service

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

The annual Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Vows of Ministry service took place March 21 with a good crowd in attendance.

Christ Church Cathedral hosted the event, with priests, deacons, lay ministers and readers gathering to renew their commitment to their calling. Parishes brought their containers of oil for blessing during the service.

The Rev. David Peer, the

Rev. Debbie Edmondson and layreader Cindy Derksen were readers. Archbishop David Edwards presided, assisted by Dean Geoffrey Hall.

In his homily, Archbishop David spoke of vocation in a post-pandemic world.

“For some of us, the post-COVID experience has caused us to lose heart,” he said.

He cited the poem, *The Waste Land*, by T.S. Eliot, published a century ago, and read excerpts.

“Before COVID, before

2020, we were aware our image was cracked,” he said. “Now I see us as not a cracked image, but a shattered one.”

The poem, he said, offers some hope, and reminds him of scripture and the many places where God’s people lived and ministered.

“We’re called to minister in a place,” he said. “It’s called New Brunswick, Canada. It’s divided into regions we traditionally call parishes. We, the ordained and lay, are called to serve here.”

He recounted a recent visit to a free community lunch, where the parish served 80 people at their table.

“It was clear that some had no means to meet, while others were there in business suits,” he said. “To me, it sounds like what a parish should be — a place of hospitality, where God’s glory can be seen in the mirror.”

The question is how do we become a place of hospitality, where there are no hindrances, no gatekeepers, no one saying you can’t come in.

“Be encouraging, because it is by God’s mercy that we are in this age. God has called us, as people in the Anglican Church, in the Diocese of Fredericton, to be in this place.”

After the homily, each group stood to recite a renewal of their vows. Layreader Eva Morton led the bishop’s vow of renewal.

After the Eucharist, everyone gathered at Cathedral Memorial Hall for a soup lunch, with lots of time for fellowship.

“SHARING HOPE & HELP”

Diocesan Council highlights

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

The first Diocesan Council meeting of the year was held March 7 online. Archbishop David Edwards opened the meeting with Evening Prayer.

The business of the evening began with a motion to approve two people to the Nominating Committee: Paul Mills and Rick Haddad.

"We led an extensive search and it was a frustrating one for most of us," said the Rev. Canon Gerry Laskey, adding several women were approached but declined. "We didn't have any success but we did try."

Both men have served on numerous committees in the past.

The Ven. Paul Ranson reported on the Ad Hoc Committee's task of reviewing former committees.

The group found that the bulk of the committees under Diocesan Council are not needed at this time or are working directly for the Bishop. Since the report is new, Bishop David suggested members take time to review the recommendations and Diocesan Council will have more extensive discussions or decisions at the next meeting.

NEW APPOINTMENT

Council approved the appointment of Philip Shepherdson as treasurer of the Synod, replacing Heather Harris-Jones who left in November. They also approved his membership on the Diocesan Council Executive Committee.

Philip is the spouse of the Rev. Maria Shepherdson, who recently began her new position as priest in the parishes of Richmond and Woodstock. The two are from the UK.

"Philip came out as the best candidate," said Bishop David. "He's a CPA, and has worked in industry and not-for-profits in the UK and has experience as a warden."

Philip was originally an accountant in New Zealand, then in Bahrain and in the UK.

SYNOD DATE

Council has approved Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024 as the date of the 139th Session of Synod. It will be held at Christ Church Cathedral.

MONCTON AMALGAMATION

For many months, several parishes in the greater Moncton area have discussed amalgamation.

The vestries of the parishes of Moncton, St. Andrew Sunny Brae, Hillsborough Riverside, St. James, and St. Philip have voted to request dissolution so that the Bishop can create a new parish and the congregations of St. George (Moncton), St. Philip, St. James, St. Andrew Sunny Brae, St. Anne (Hillsborough) and St. Alban (Riverside-Albert) can come together as one.

As per the canon governing such actions, three months was set aside to receive objections. None were filed, though two notes of concern were received. The new parish is in the midst of choosing a name,



MCKNIGHT FILE PHOTO

THE CURRENT DIOCESAN COUNCIL; photo taken at its first meeting, in December 2022, at Camp Medley.

which will be announced when the new parish is established on April 1.

"I can remember having this conversation with you [Bishop] 10 or more years ago," said Mike Briggs, who represents the Archdeaconry of Moncton at Diocesan Council. "It's late, but better late than never."

FINANCE REPORT

Without a treasurer in place, Finance chair Susan Jack presented to council. She noted the Finance committee gave out \$27,000 of a budgeted \$35,000 in shared ministry reductions.

For synod grants, the committee gave \$56,000 of a budgeted \$76,000, primarily for diverse infrastructure projects.

It has been a difficult task, but secretary of synod David Peer reported that he found an accounting firm willing to take on the diocesan synod's 2023

engagement review. Council approved the appointment of LeBlanc Scott CPA Professional Corporation. This Moncton company was looking to expand to Fredericton, so the diocesan request was timely.

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION

Council approved two applications to the Anglican Foundation. St. Mary, York in Fredericton will apply for a grant of \$15,000 and a loan for \$3,201 to help update the rectory. Camp Medley will apply for a grant of \$14,200 to update its audio / visual capabilities.

"This will improve the experience for campers, the diocese and for rentals," said Susan of Camp Medley's application.

"Rentals are helping to defray costs. To have this facility upgraded will be significant."

OTHER

Council appointed the Rev.

Canon Rod Black to the Human Resources committee. He replaces Canon Richard McConnell who resigned for health reasons. Rod is a retired cleric with years of experience in both the clerical and business worlds.

Two delegates to Provincial Synod were appointed. Neither of the two delegates elected at the last Synod can attend June's online gathering. No alternates had been chosen, making appointments necessary at this meeting.

When Bishop David opened the floor to volunteers, he got two: the Rev. Jasmine Chandra and the Ven. Paul Ranson, which council approved.

David Peer presented council with the Synod Cemetery Report, an annual requirement.

The next Diocesan Council meeting will be in-person on June 1 at Camp Medley.

Parish news



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

MISSION IN MOTION: community

LEFT: THE PARISH OF RIVERVIEW'S Men's Club is a great place for fellowship and friendship. We always enjoy a delicious meal prepared by the cook team. During a recent month, we had a presentation from the foodbank. Mens Club generally meets on the third Monday of the month at 6 p.m. in the church hall. Men from the parish and the community are welcome. **RIGHT:** The Anglican Church Women (ACW) in the Parish of Riverview held a wonderful gathering at Shannex Royal Court in Riverview on Monday, Feb. 26. The ACW meets once a month on the last Monday at 1 p.m. in the church lounge. All ladies of the parish and the community are invited to attend.

AROUND THE DIOCESE



LEFT AND BELOW LEFT: Members of the Parish of Grand Manan greeted Easter morning with an outdoor sunrise service. It was a crisp morning, but the view of the Bay of Fundy, and the blessed news of the risen Saviour, warmed the souls of about a dozen people who came out to the grounds of St. Paul's church to celebrate. Photos by Esther Smith and Heather Brown.

BELOW RIGHT: Director of young adult formation Kurt Schmidt led a restorative Lenten retreat on Grand Manan Island March 9, called "The Practice of Peace. Four Great Treasures of the Christian Contemplative Tradition: Stillness, Silence, Solitude & Sanctuary." It was a blessed day in so many ways. Thank you, Kurt, and thanks as well to all the cooks and bakers.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Parish news

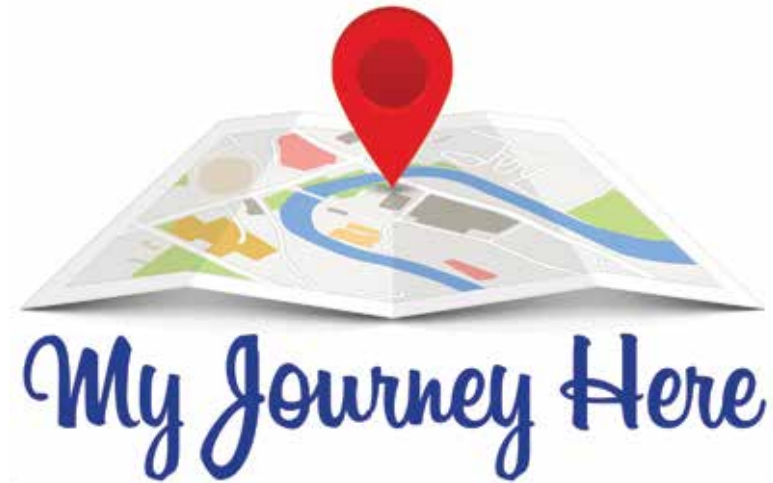


MISSION IN MOTION: community

LEFT: MOTHERING SUNDAY isn't celebrated so much as in the past, but the Parish of Bright always marks the day. This year, at All Saints Church on March 10, Ashley Watson baked and brought in a delicious Semmel cake which was enjoyed by all. The photo shows warden George Lawrence and Ashley. Crystal Gilmore photo.

ABOVE: THE PARISH OF BRIGHT was busy during the winter collecting some warm hats for men, women and children as part of their ongoing outreach program. They were donated to the Multicultural Centre, the Downtown Clinic on King Street and the Keswick Ridge School. It was such a joy to see all the smiles. Photos by Lois Poore and Sharon McKeen.

MY JOURNEY HERE



Maria Shepherdson

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

In 1965, on the day the Rev. Maria Byrne Shepherdson was born, the family lived in the last house on an estate on the outskirts of Dublin, Ireland. Her father had to run a half mile to the nearest phone box to summon an ambulance.

At that time, telephones were a luxury, as were automobiles. The Byrnes had neither. Her father worked as an musical instrument maker — a family tradition that went back centuries, but it did not pay all the bills.

Maria, named after her mother and pronounced MAR-ia, was the first of three daughters born into a strict, staunchly Roman Catholic family where the church ruled virtually every aspect of their lives. The children knew better than to ask uncomfortable questions.

The three sisters played music every Sunday at Mass. They travelled to convents and monasteries to play and met many Godly priests and nuns “who poured their lives into good works.”

Nevertheless, life in Ireland was difficult.

“Growing up in the 60s and 70s in impoverished Dublin, we suffered from the difficulties of The Troubles,” said Maria.

“The Troubles” was a low-level war the Irish Republican Army waged against the protestant British government and its historic influence and mistreatment in the Republic of Ireland. While mostly staged in Northern Ireland, it spilled over to the republic. Running the country was a government hopelessly intertwined — some would say under the thumb of — the national church.

“The power and control of the Catholic Church in Ireland ran very deep,” she said, adding that any young woman taking a trip to Britain very likely underwent a pregnancy test

before leaving to ensure she was not seeking an abortion.

DOUBT & TRUTH

It was during her teen years that doubt and truth began to impose themselves on the well-ordered life of Maria.

The Madeline Sisters Homes, Catholic homes for “fallen women” and their babies, once ran profitable laundries, but were about to close in 1979 after more than 100 years of abuse, neglect, forced labour, a mass grave and other untold atrocities.

“I was acutely aware of how close several friends were to being there,” she said of pregnant classmates in 1978-80 had the homes remained open even a year longer.

Maria described the church as an “imposed faith.”

“I remain eternally grateful for that part of my upbringing, but the God I was presented with was an old man with long white hair, with a tally chart in his hand,” she said.

If you had more ticks than Xes on your chart, you went to heaven. More Xes than ticks, you went to hell, and if you had a tie, you went to purgatory to work it off, she said.

“That bore no relation whatsoever as I encountered the teachings of Jesus,” she said.

And she was beginning to learn about Jesus in a most unorthodox place — an Anglican church.

She was 14, on an errand for her father, when she slipped into a favourite building, the Anglican (Church of Ireland) Christ Church Cathedral. She was fascinated by its tale of the cat and rat, mummified and found perfectly preserved behind the organ in the 1850s and on public display.

“I arrived at the end of the consecration, and I heard ‘though we are many, we are one body because we share in the one bread,’” she said. “It was an invitation to the Lord’s table,



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The Rev. Maria Shepherdson, centre left, in a wassailing parade in Avebury. Wassailing included the blessing of apple trees in the village and the performance of a Plough Play. Maria dressed up for the day, adding a hat to go alongside her normal vestments; Maria and her sister, Frances, reunited after decades apart. Leaving home, becoming Anglican and then becoming an Anglican priest were too much for her family to accept for many years; Maria as a child, with her father, Charles.

and anyone who wanted to receive, could. No questions.”

She had been taught that the Catholic Church was the one true way. God was angry and judgmental. He sat in judgment of women, who, in the church in that era, were only allowed to clean and occasionally light candles. Thankfully, that has changed.

But to hear that everyone was the body of Christ, and anyone could partake, was an epiphany!

“But I couldn’t go home and say, ‘hey, Mom and Dad...’” she said. “I was restless, but I couldn’t show it.”

UNIVERSITY

Maria was the first in her family to attend university, and she pursued higher learning with gusto. She studied history, Latin and the classics at University College of Dublin. At

night she earned a degree in music and Italian and trained as a teacher for non-English speakers. She also studied holistic medicine, due to her arthritic condition which began in her teens.

But she learned more than academics. She discovered that any reference to contraception, adoption or abortion in a women’s magazine was removed before it went on the store shelf.

“Imagine being a woman and being sexually assaulted in your small village,” she said. “If you spoke to a doctor about your injuries or a subsequent pregnancy, he told your parents and your parish priest. And that would lead to consequences.”

As her eyes were opened, she began volunteering at the Well Women’s Centre, where she helped support teen prostitutes who worked the docks.

CAREER

After a poor start, with very little work to be had, she finally got a job at a school for boys of all abilities and disabilities.

“That was absolutely fantastic,” she said, adding that she made lifelong friends at the school.

One student, a boy of 16 who was musically talented, was undergoing surgery after losing his sight.

“I promised him he could play at my wedding, should it every occur,” said Maria. “He played me up the aisle in St. Martin in the Fields in Trafalgar Square.”

Her education career also saw her teach in Italy, South Africa and Libya. “That’s where I met Phil,” she said.

Social life in Libya was limited, to say the least. There was the embassy crowd or the dart league. She chose

darts.

“Phil was part of the darts league,” she said. “He’d just come from a trip to Egypt and Jordan with ladies who needed a safe man to travel with.”

After her one-year contract in Libya, she took a job in London as head of a school for children with severe emotional and behavioural disturbances, and Phil, an accountant, went on a planned tour of Africa.

“I didn’t want to go back to Ireland,” she said.

MARRIAGE

Phil returned and they were married by the Rev. Clare Herbert, one of the first ordained women in the Church of England, at St. Martin in the Fields.

Now a practicing Anglican, she knew her family would not attend unless there was a Catholic priest at

the altar.

“We were saddened by the absence of my family, but delighted to see so many close friends who are family in all but name,” she said.

For Phil, from New Zealand, denominational faith was not complicated at all. But it was literally the core of her family’s identity in Ireland.

“In the 1980s and 90s in Ireland, it would have been easier to come out to my parents as LGBTIQ+ or be pregnant [than leave the church],” she said.

“My parents did the best they could. I can see that,” she said. “But they were coming from a place of theology so different from what I’ve encountered God to be.”

It took a long time, but only a few years ago, Maria was able to reconnect with one sister and with her father before he died.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



THE CALLING

“I didn’t want to be a priest,” said Maria. “I had my fingers in my ears.”

She’d wrestled with the question and felt she had the answer: no.

Nevertheless, God was not about to be ignored. Maria and Phil had just moved to Bristol for Maria’s new job, and Phil’s parents arrived from New Zealand for a stay. It was September 2001.

As they walked through the country lane to church, “I was feeling quite smug that my testing of a call to ordination was done. I’d won. I would stay as head teacher and serve God that way.”

As they entered the church for the first time, the elderly warden, Mary,

My Journey Here continued on page 10

MY JOURNEY HERE



Maria Shepherdson

My Journey Here continued from page 9

rushed toward them.

‘Thank God you’ve come,’ she said. ‘You’re cutting it a bit fine. Where’s your robes?’

While Maria tried to convince the warden she was not the priest, it was not working.

‘Don’t be ridiculous. You’ve a white collar,’ said Mary, stopping abruptly. ‘I saw a white collar on you.’

Maria was not wearing a collar, of course, and explained that she had been exploring a calling but that the door was closed.

‘Well, I think he just re-opened it,’ was Mary’s reply.

Jumping on that bandwagon, the rector came calling that very afternoon! Within two months, she was on the discernment path again.

What she had in mind was self-sustaining ministry, a part-time vocation.

‘I would be a teacher during the day and a priest on weekends,’ she said.

But when she went to speak to the director of ordinands, ‘it was the most humbling, worst experience of my life.’

‘How dare you offer yourself to God with hooks?’ he demanded, meaning with strings attached.

‘I realized that unless you disarm and surrender to God’s will fully, for any type of vocation, you cannot serve. It’s impossible,’ said Maria. ‘You have to hand it over, and keep handing it over. That was a step in leading me here [to New Brunswick].’

In 2004, she entered full-time stipendiary ministry training.

‘It was a three-year process to bash me into shape,’ she said. ‘That’s what it was — I was being formed. I was completely stripped away.’

She was ordained a deacon in 2007, a priest in 2008 and continued to serve in the Bristol area.

HEALTH

It was Easter 2008 that Maria got what she had long needed — a hysterectomy. She shared



SUBMITTED PHOTOS



MCKNIGHT PHOTO



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Maria Shepherdson playing the fiddle at a Celtic rock festival; Maria after arriving in New Brunswick; Maria and her dad, Charles, whom she reconnected with after decades of estrangement. She was able to be with him in his last days; the old tradition of wassailing was resurrected in Avebury, where Maria and Phil lived. Here they are dressed for the festivities, which included a play.



this information because she knows there are other women who might have similar problems and seek her insight on the long-taboo subject.

‘I was losing a half pint of blood a day,’ she said. ‘I could not function, but it was getting in between my ministry.’

She noted God’s ironic sense of humour. Just after her surgery, she preached on the story of the bleeding woman who touched the cloak of Jesus for healing.

One of the highlights of her curacy was leading a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2009.

A NEW ROLE

In seeking a more permanent role as rector, Maria applied for eight positions, and was rejected by all.

Later she had two more interviews, and the answer was no for the first one.

Her second interview turned out better. Ahead of the appointment, she visited and prayed in all eight churches in the five-vestry shared ministry of Upper Kennet.

She was so taken with the place, she felt certain this was her calling by the time she arrived for the meet and greet.

‘Don’t you dare!’ she told God. ‘Don’t you dare get my hopes up only to have me turned away.’

God provided her the perfect place. She has spent the last 12 and-a-half years ‘growing a team, with ups and downs, live streaming (for this dyslexic technophobe), delighting in finding common

ground with people who walk a creation-centred path of God’s love.’

During that time, she trained to become a Mennonite Bridge Builder which helps facilitate change. She needed that training to help shepherd the five vestries through the process of becoming one.

AVEBURY

Hundreds of thousands of people visit the Avebury World Heritage Site, in her parish, each year. It’s something of a smaller version of Stone Henge, with the village in the middle of a neolithic standing stone circle.

Many of those visitors are pagan, creation-focussed worshippers, which sparked a curiosity in Maria.

In 2021 during her sabbatical, she undertook a research project to investigate the relationship between Christianity and pagan/alternative spiritualities.

‘During the sabbatical, I went to Goth festivals, fairy festivals, steam punk festivals,’ she said. ‘I sat with people confirmed in all the great faiths and brands of Christianity who had walked away from church, but not necessarily away from Christ.’

What she found from her research was that 85 per cent of the people had once been part of the Christian church.

‘My report to the bishop included 129 requests from pagans and an equal number from Christians for setting up a centre of reconciliation, dialogue, interfaith training where the reasons why people were leaving could be explored, where training for priests and lay could take place, with a home for a pagan seminary,’ she said.

The proposal is still on the table, but there are many hurdles. Maria had a sense that she had done all she could.

CANADA

At the same time, with the transition to one vestry in her parish almost complete, she began to wonder if her job there was done. She saw three vacancies in Scotland, but realized they were all wrong for her.

So in May 2023 she sought the advice of Bishop Andrew.

‘That’s when I said the fateful words, ‘I wish God would send me an email.’

The bishop pushed her to say where she felt she might be called.

‘I found myself saying ‘Phil and I always had an affinity to Canada,’ she said, adding they had a dream to explore North America in an RV, but in retirement. They had always assumed they were too old to qualify for working there.

After some discussion, Maria made a bold promise: If an ad appeared in the *Church Times* for Vancouver, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland, she would apply. She said this knowing full well there hadn’t been a Canadian ad for a priest since 2017.

That was a Tuesday. On Friday, the *Church Times* was published — with an ad for the Parishes of Woodstock and

My Journey Here continued on page 11

Doing what you can for others **85-year-old Rita Beers helps those in need, five days a week**

BY GISELE MCKNIGHT

Rita Beers is 85 years old, yet every weekday morning, she's in her car, on her way to St. George's church in Moncton by 7 o'clock.

There is no sleeping in for this volunteer, because she is needed. Her job is to oversee the shower ministry at the church, where those without such facilities are welcome. It's a simple but necessary service: hot water, soap, shampoo and a clean towel.

Rita has been in her role for more than two years.

"Father Chris [Van Buskirk] came to see me at home and he asked me, 'would you like to volunteer?'" she said. "I said, 'I'll be there tomorrow.'"

So each morning, she folds clean towels and takes names.

"I call out their name, give them a towel and face cloth," she said, adding there is a strict, 20-minute time limit.

She's so used to enforcing the time limit that she once shouted to her son, in the shower at home, that he had five minutes left!

The time limit is necessary so that the morning runs smoothly and everyone gets their shower without having to wait too long. This all takes place during the daily breakfast St. George's offers.

Money from the diocesan synod helped the parish buy an on-demand tankless hot water heater, without which they



MISSION IN MOTION: community

MCKNIGHT PHOTO

RITA BEERS STARTS EACH weekday at St. George's in Moncton, folding towels for use in the shower ministry she oversees.

could not offer this ministry.

Sometimes her job is challenging, because addiction is all around her.

"It was upsetting at first," she said. "I'd never been involved with people on drugs."

Even after witnessing an

overdose, she's learned to cope, and has a good friend in Justin Melanson, the outreach coordinator at St. George's.

He looks out for all those accessing programs, and keeps an eye on Rita. They work as a team to do what needs to be

done.

Next to Rita's chair is a second one, which invites visitors to sit and chat. That's where Rita makes friends of the people who frequent St. George's for some of their basic needs.

"You get to know them, and when you don't see them for awhile, you get concerned. Are they OK?"

Sometimes the shower ministry is just a sideline to even greater tasks. Rita recounted a young man named Martin who came for breakfast each day. Always willing to help clean up after the daily breakfast, he told Rita he was on EI benefits, but was eagerly looking for a job. His EI was not allowing him to pay rent and eat.

"He was walking miles to interviews and would come back disappointed," she said.

One day, as he left for yet another interview, Rita was suddenly hit with the realization that Martin's appearance was making a poor first impression.

She and Justin jumped into action. Justin found him some dress clothes, bought him a new pair of shoes and arranged for a haircut. Rita, using her

experience working at NBCC, set up a mock interview so Martin could practice.

"The next morning he went to an interview," she said. "He came back the next day and gave me a thumbs up. He's been working for two weeks. He's very happy. I really love that story. It made me feel so good."

Even though Rita has been attending St. George's for a long time, and was married there, she never knew about some of these behind-the-scenes ministries.

"I had no idea, but my eyes have been opened," she said.

And now that they're opened, she cannot look away.

"Some people think I'm silly because I'm here," she said.

"But I just can't sit at home. It's not that hard. I can do it. And it gives me a chance to help people."

For Canon Chris, Rita is the perfect person to do the job.

"I hear her calling out names, 'do you want a shower?'" he said. "It's a motherly thing. She's really made for the role."

"She's such a good fit, thanks be to God."



Maria Shepherdson

My Journey Here continued from page 10

Richmond.

"We laughed! My heart leapt! And I threw together a CV," she said. "And I found myself being interviewed by the warmest group of parish reps I've ever encountered. The way we just talked back and forth was a delight."

In the meantime, she met Archbishop David and Debbie Edwards while they were in the UK last summer. She had a chat with Shawn Branch, director of mission and ministry.

She was shepherded through the process with much help from Cheryl Jacobs and Ben Bourque, "who kept me from pulling my hair out!" she said.

On Nov. 15 last year, Upper Kennet held its first meeting to elect a parish warden and vestry members, so the process Maria had overseen for so long had come to fruition. But throughout the months, the couple had doubts about their future.

"Phil and I had a huge

wobble," she said. "God, are you really taking me away from these people? Are you really calling us to Canada? Can we really go there?"

They decided to pray about it, sleep on it and ask God for answers the next morning. He did not disappoint.

When the phone rang the following day, it wasn't God, but Archbishop David, telling Phil the diocese needed a synod treasurer, and was he interested in applying. Shortly after, Maria's employment contract arrived.

"We took that as a final sign, and that's how we ended up in Canada," she said.

As of March 1, Maria is the rector of the Parishes of Rich-

mond and Woodstock. She and Phil are settling into their new jobs, as Phil was the preferred candidate in the search for a new treasurer. They live in the Richmond rectory.

"The welcome we've received is beyond anything we've experienced in our lives," said Maria. "To arrive to a clean rectory, with the lights on, heated, food in the freezer — was wonderful."

Her plans for the two parishes are simple ones, she said.

"I want to help people find that God's encompassing love is for all. I want to help deepen their understanding of the nature of God. I want to meet people where they are and walk with them to where God

would have us go."

Maria's passion, she said, is for fairness and equality for all, for everyone is made in God's image.

"If that is true, then we're not complete until the diversity of God's creation is represented in the Church. All are welcome."

"I was heartened to hear the people of St. Luke's (Woodstock) say 'we're the church you come to if you haven't got anywhere else.' What can we offer to people who don't feel they fit the mold? And who's mold is it?"

The Diocesan Synod offers best wishes to Maria and Phil as they begin their Canadian journey.

CLERGY COLLEGE

Diocesan Clergy College lineup includes three scholars, three courses

The Diocesan Clergy College, which previous to the pandemic, ran continuously from 2001-2019, is back!

Clergy will gather in a new venue for the college, the Villa Madonna (Renforth) Rothesay.

Clergy College is an optional opportunity for diocesan clergy to access continuing education.

The 2024 College will be held June 17-20 (with accommodations available overnight Sunday, June 16 for those requiring it). The College program runs from Monday morning to Thursday afternoon.

Each of the three courses costs \$125, including meals and accommodations. Courses must be paid in full by the participants, but Continuing Education funds, for those with access to them, will reimburse 80 per cent or approximately \$100 per course.

Our bishop, traditionally, begins the College with a celebration of the Eucharist.

THIS YEAR'S COURSES

Course 1: Monday – Tuesday, June 17/18 – The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis, Knox College, Toronto on “Preaching and Trauma.”

Dr. Travis is currently Associate Professor, Ewart Chair in the Practice of Ministry and Faith Formation at Knox College, where she has been teaching since 2012.

Travis is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and currently serves as part-time minister at Norval Presbyterian Church.

Her primary areas of research and teaching are preaching, worship and the practice of ministry. From



The Rev. Dr. Sarah Travis

decolonizing worship practices to trauma-informed preaching, Sarah has published several books aimed at facilitating a conversation among Christians about topics that matter for the church today.

She is a 2023 Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Teacher-Scholar Grant recipient, exploring how playful theologies can enhance the worship and self-identity of very small congregations.

Dr. Travis' publications include several academic articles and the following books:

Unsettling Worship: Reforming Liturgy for Right Relations with Indigenous Communities. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2023.

Unspeakable: Preaching and Trauma Informed Theology. Eugene, OR: Cascade, June 2021.

Metamorphosis: Preaching after Christendom. Eugene, OR: Cascade, July 2019.

Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014.

Course 2: Tuesday - Wednesday, June 18/19 – The Rev. Dr. Michael Cover, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin on “The Fourth Gospel: Encountering the ‘Glory of the



The Rev. Dr. Michael Cover

Crucified One.”

The Rev. Dr. Michael Cover is Henri De Lubac Chair in Theology and Associate Professor of Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity at Marquette University.

A specialist in the New Testament, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity, he is the author of two books: *Lifting the Veil: 2 Cor 3:7-18 in Light of Jewish Homiletic and Commentary Traditions* (De Gruyter, 2015) and *Philo of Alexandria: On the Change of Names: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Brill, 2024), as well as numerous articles.

He was the 2016 recipient of the Paul J. Achtemeier Award for New Testament Scholarship from the Society of Biblical Literature (2016) and a Humboldt Fellow at the University of Münster (2018–2019).

Ordained to the priesthood in 2010 in the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas, Fr. Cover serves in the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee, where he leads the Canterbury Fellowship at Marquette and serves as priest associate at Zion Episcopal Church in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

He and his wife Susanna live in Wauwatosa with their four daughters and a cat called Juniper. In his spare time,



The Rev. Dr. Heather McCance

which is increasingly miniscule, Fr. Cover enjoys fishing, running, and playing chess.

This course will offer a (re) introduction to the joys and challenges of reading and preaching the New Testament's most perplexing witness to the person of Jesus Christ.

After briefly situating the Fourth Gospel in its canonical and liturgical contexts, we will approach the work from three angles: John and drama; John and theology; and John and history.

In addition to the three main sessions, Dr. Cover has indicated his willingness to lead a bonus session on the Greek of the prologue (John 1:1–18) for any intrepid souls wishing to dig into the original language of the Gospel.

Course 3: Wednesday – Thursday, June 19/20 – The Rev. Dr. Heather McCance, President, Atlantic School of Theology, Halifax, NS on “Leadership in the Church: Past, Present & Future.”

Dr. McCance has a wealth of experience and expertise in theological education and leadership.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), University of Waterloo, a Master of Divinity

(M.Div) and Master of Theology (Th.M), Trinity College, University of Toronto, and a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min), Tyndale University.

Dr. McCance has also served as the Director of Field Education at Montreal School of Theology and Director of Pastoral Studies at Montreal Diocesan Theological College.

Dr. McCance is a passionate theological educator and Anglican priest with teaching and administrative experience in both church and academy, 20 years' experience in congregational ministry, and 14 years as a ministry supervisor-mentor.

Her past research has focused on mentoring relationships for leadership formation in the church.

McCance's course will be divided into three sections: Wisdom from the Past: Systems Theory in Ministry Leadership; Present Practices: Adaptive Leadership in Ministry Leadership and; Future Directions: Ministry Leadership in Liminal Times - giving insight into a practice of biblically and theologically grounded leadership that makes use of the best of current leadership studies.

The course will include teaching of theories, discussions, and resources to strengthen ministry leadership in parish and other contexts.

More details and online registration available on the diocesan website (nb.anglican.ca/events/). We look forward to seeing you at the Villa in June as this beloved tradition of our diocese returns.

Clergy College Committee: the Rev. Canon Gerry Laskey, co-ordinator; the Rev. Thomas Nisbett; the Rev. Bob LeBlanc; the Rev. Rob Langmaid.

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LENTEN RETREAT

Lenten retreat features 40 key words

Trinity, Saint John held a one-day Lenten retreat on March 2 discussing a number of words from the *Easter Readings to Touch Your Heart – 40 Days – 40 Words* by Ken and Randy Petersen.

David Goss, along with Rev. Steven Scribner, guided those present through a number of the words which prompted much reflection and conversation.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* estimates that there are around 170,000 words in current use, with an additional 47,000 being considered obsolete.

Suffice to say, words say and mean a lot, but we often let them roll off our tongue with little thought. This Lenten retreat was designed to cause a pause and reflect the deeper meaning into some very common and often used words in our Christian vocabulary.

The morning opened with The Litany from the Book of Common Prayer. This was followed by a brief discussion on how Lent is described on social media and an introduction of the book *40 Days – 40 Words*.

The following words were selected by the presenters from the 40 words listed; Forty, Ashes, Abstain, Fasting, Lament, Prayer, Repent, Heart, Meditate, Grief, Giving, Temptation, Sin, Clean, Confess, Penance, Feasting, Flesh, Self-Control, Humility, Holy, Judgement, Baptism, Deny, Forgive, Desert, Conversion, Sacrifice, Nail, Passion, Cross, Resurrection, Palm, Hosanna, New, Salvation, Maundy, Good, Tomb, and Easter.

A few are highlighted below. **Holy** – The presenter asked those present, “When do we feel holy?” When we are in church, when we listen to particular music or when we are in nature?

No surprise to know that the Bible uses the word ‘Holy’ more than 500 times. Apostle Paul calls us to be holy like God. Well, we may try and try we may by certain practices such as attending church, putting our life actions in check against what would God will of me in this instance or just by trying to live a life worthy of God.

Maundy – What do we think

of when we say Maundy – Maundy Thursday? The Last Supper, Foot Washing, Worship & the Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar or do we think of the brightness of our life before it goes dark on Good Friday?

The authors state that the term Maundy has been in use since the Middle Ages as the day before Good Friday but where did this unique term come from?

The word comes from the Latin “Mandatum novum do vobis” or in modern translation has it as “A new command I give you.” Mandatum or its verb ‘mandare’ means to command and it became ‘maundy’.

Should we be sad or glad as we celebrate Maundy Thursday? The presenter would suggest we should be glad, as it is one of the last times where Jesus’ love was so present leaving us with His final words in community – His charge for us, to show the love He has shown to us for us to show that love to others.

Good – The authors start us out by stating, “Since Good Friday is all about the horrible suffering Jesus went through, why do we call it “good”?”

There does not appear to be any concise reasoning that

satisfies all researchers over the past, however we as Christians can align with the fact that although this was a horrific day bar none, it was this day Jesus saved us and our eternal life was won on Good Friday.

Cross – The presenter asked the simple question, what does an image of the Cross represent in our life today? Why should we have a Cross in our home, on my person or in my church? Does an image of the cross leave us at the Crucifixion or by this image do we journey through the Passion narrative in our minds as well?

Through the Passion narrative we get to feel the pain, the loneliness, the suffering and question of where all those who shouted hosanna just days before were at these last hours.

The cross was without doubt the most horrible instrument of death – why would anyone want to embrace this as an image or have it displayed?

Have we become blind to the image of the cross or do we go into a deeper place?

Do we get hung up on the brutality of the cross or do we pass over to the promise, joy and the life the cross represents to us as Christians?

We will soon travel with

Jesus through the Passion Narrative and on with him to the cross. Are we ready for this journey - a journey only his closest of friends were willing to take?

The authors leave us with the final thoughts on this word, “How does a deeper consideration of the meaning of Christ’s death on the cross affect our walk with him today?”

At the completion of this word, each present was given a small wooden cross for their pocket and the words of ‘The Cross in my Pocket’ as a reminder going forward. We do not take this journey we call life alone.

Forgive - This final word was chosen by those present out of the remaining 34 words. At the height of the pain and suffering of Jesus on the cross, He says, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34

In the New Testament forgiveness moves both vertically and horizontally in that God forgives us and we are to forgive others. This is stated in the Lord’s Prayer, “and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.” (Luke 11:4).

The authors remind us

forgiveness begins at the cross and a deep awareness of our own sin.

It is by a deeper understanding of God’s forgiveness of our sins, our own forgiveness of others takes on real meaning. Paul writes in part, “Forgive one another ... Forgive as the Lord forgave you”. Col 3:13

During an earlier bible study, the presenter shared a conversation that ensued, where this questions was posed: “who suffers more, the one who is responsible for the issue or the one who fails to forgive”? The latter for certain.

At mid-day, following Noon-Day prayers, all present were treated to a home style lunch of a hearty soup along with all the fixings provided by Donna Goss. Thank you, Donna for sharing your gifts and hospitality.

The day finished with all entering into prayer through the BCP Compline service.

Thanks go out to David Goss for his suggestion and follow-through in making this Lenten retreat such a success.

Submitted by the Rev. Steven Scribner, incumbent in the Parish of Saint John.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

DAVID GOSS WAS ONE OF THE LEADERS of a Lenten retreat at Trinity in Saint John which delved into specific words relating to Easter, such as cross, forgive and holy.

Save June 2 for Say Yes! to Kids Sunday

Say Yes! to Kids (SYTK) is an annual fundraising appeal sponsored by the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC).

Launched in 2021, to fund church-led programs and initiatives that support children, youth, and young adults, the Say Yes! to Kids movement has provided more than \$625,000 in funding to 125 beneficiaries and fundraising partners for youth-focused ministry and outreach across the Anglican Church of Canada.

Programs and initiatives have included faith formation, better learning outcomes, diverse enrichment opportunities, improved health and well-being, and restored community connections.

According to data collected by AFC since 2021, virtually every SYTK program has helped to create a more youth-centred climate in its church or diocese, thereby breaking the cycle of loneliness impacting youth and young adults in their community.

The 2024 SYTK campaign will launch on Tuesday, April 2 and close on Sunday, June 30. A new campaign component will be a liturgical resource to promote the celebration of Say Yes! to Kids Sunday on June 2.

The hope is that Anglican

parishes across Canada will join forces on that Sunday, or another Sunday in the season of Pentecost.

AFC executive director Scott Brubacher explained that the resource is intended to be used by all churches, whether they have young people in the congregation or not.

“If you don’t have youth to involve as readers, greeters, or elsewhere, the service can be a time of prayer for children and youth in your community and across the country.

As with the 2022 and 2023 SYTK campaigns, AFC will continue to support parishes who wish to take part in the online, team-based fundraising component, but that is not a requirement to use the SYTK liturgical resource.

All Canadian Anglicans are invited to be part of the SYTK movement. For more information about the 2024 Say Yes! to Kids campaign, download the media backgrounder (<https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2024-01-24-Media-Backgrounder.pdf>) or contact Michelle Hauser, AFC’s Development & Communications officer (613-354-6387, Email: mhauser@anglicanfoundation.org).



The Rev. Maria Shepherdson, new rector of the parishes of Richmond and Woodstock

Favourite book of the Bible - Gospel of John

Birthplace - Dublin

What you love most about God – That God is simply TOO BIG to know everything about

Favourite place on Earth - Here, right now

Farthest you’ve been from home - Depends on what home means. I’m Irish but home is where the flock gathers, so actually now the furthest I have been from here is New Zealand.

Favourite meal or dessert – Palestinian: Tagines, falafel, hummus, Arab salads, couscous, Im’Jadera (poor man’s rice), Maqlubeh (upside down stew with rice), Tabbouleh (parsley salad)

Biggest fear – Heights — and humungous spiders

Hidden talent – Singing like Marlene Dietrich, Eartha Kitt and Marilyn Monroe

Favourite movie or book – *Casablanca*

Your hobby – Needle and wet felting, spinning and crafting with wools

Three things always in your fridge – Bread, milk and raspberry jam

Favourite sports team - Irish rugby team, New Zealand rugby team and ANY team playing against Australia!



2023 RFP goes green

Canadian Anglicans put on their green-coloured glasses in 2023 and responded passionately and creatively to the Anglican Foundation of Canada’s (AFC) Request for Proposals (RFP) under the theme: Viriditas—God’s Greening Power.

“We received a number of applications, and the Board provided \$75,500 in funding to 11 projects in 10 dioceses,” said Dr. Scott Brubacher, AFC’s executive director.

“The initiatives showed incredible diversity in terms of ministry impact and reflected the goals of the RFP, which were to emphasize creation care—but also the broader theme of newness, of God’s greening or regenerative power at work in the church.”

Approved projects include two from our diocese:

Community Garden: \$5,000, St. Paul’s, Rothesay

“We are thrilled that we have been awarded an RFP. This gardening project will be for our seniors, our parishioners, children of the after-school program and the community at large.” Pam Iype, St. Paul’s

Community Raised Garden Bed: \$5,000, St. George’s Anglican Church, Moncton

“We are excited about connecting people of all walks of life, teaching those who are interested about the wonder of God’s Creation, and encouraging community partnerships in downtown Moncton.” The Rev. Canon Chris VanBuskirk

AFC releases Say Yes! to Kids Sunday liturgy

The fourth annual Say Yes! to Kids campaign, of the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) comes with a new Say Yes! to Kids Sunday liturgical resource.

“The liturgy will provide a spiritual focal point for the SYTK movement,” said Dr. Scott Brubacher, executive director, AFC, “and will be a flexible resource that any church can use, whether it has an active campaign or not.”

The liturgy has been developed by a team of AFC’s clergy board of directors from across Canada. It is hoped that Anglican parishes throughout the country will join forces on Sunday, June 2, or another Sunday after Pentecost, to pray for the health and well-being of young people in their

churches, communities, and beyond.

Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of Algoma and Moosonee, Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, and vice-chair of AFC, welcomes the liturgy, emphasizing that it is meant to be used with the permission of the Ordinary.

“As a bishop I am pleased to have such a comprehensive, user-friendly liturgical resource where a variety of options for prayers, readings and hymns can easily be inserted into a bulletin and adapted for local use.”

Archbishop Germond added that the SYTK Sunday liturgy supports the direction of many dioceses, “where children’s ministry is increasingly

intergenerational worship.”

The resource is intended to be used by all churches, whether they have young people in the congregation or not.

“If you don’t have youth to involve as readers, greeters, or elsewhere, the service can be a time of prayer for children and youth in your community and across the country,” said Scott.

“What matters most is rallying Canadian Anglicans to celebrate children, youth, and young adults in our midst and pray for the creativity and compassion to make young people a vital part of the fabric of our church now and in the future.”

Access the SYTK Sunday resource page by visiting <https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytkSunday/>

A hymn of praise for the Easter season

Last month this article featured a look at a hymn for Lent, so it makes sense that we also look at a hymn for the Easter season, and it is a big hymn this month!

Known for its soaring descant in the last verse, and its sweeping melody, "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven" is used at many times of the year, and is especially suitable for major festivals.

It sounds wonderful if sung by large groups or small, and has often been arranged for large groups of instruments, or one alone. In short, it is a great hymn for everyone, any time!

The man behind the text, Henry Francis Lyte, was a fascinating man who was born in Scotland in 1793. His father abandoned the family when Henry was young, though arrangements had been made for him to attend school in Enniskillen, Ireland.

Henry later studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and became an Anglican priest in 1815.

He has been described by some as, "...unusually handsome, a bit eccentric, with great charm and wit, and ... possessing a deep knowledge of humanity, as well as being a very able poet and scholar." (B.G. Skinner, biographer of Lyte).

If that wasn't enough, he was also a gifted flautist (flute player); he spoke Greek, Latin, and French; and could speak



intelligently on literature and wildflowers.

Henry Lyte wrote a number of collections of poems, and one such volume was called *The Spirit of the Psalms*. This is where our hymn text comes from, based on Psalm 103.

By the way, he also wrote another poem that became the text for a hymn called, "Abide With Me" from this same collection.

In a time when hymn writers faced enormous pressure to confine their texts to the direct words of Scripture, Lyte chose instead to be more open and fluid, believing the message was more important than the specific words used to convey it.

If longevity is any judge of his success, then he easily made the right decision, as many of his texts are still in use today.

Lyte was in poor health most of his life, suffering from several respiratory illnesses. In spite of this, he was known as a very present clergyman in his parish, visiting many, and finding time to fight for just causes.

He was a close friend of



ABOVE: HENRY FRANCIS LYTE; Above right: Commemorative stone at Ednam Parish Church. This stone, dedicated to Henry Francis Lyte, is built into a wall at the entrance to the churchyard. Photos courtesy of Wikimedia Commons/Walter Baxter.

Samuel Wilberforce, and likewise opposed slavery, working hard to bring about its end.

Though progressively sicker in his later years, he continued to be cheerful, faithful and interested in the world around him.

He died in Nice, France, in 1847, with his last words being recorded as, "Peace! Joy!" He was all of 54 years old.

This speaks of the peace and joy that its author knew. It can be understood as both a call to praise and an expression of praise at the same time.

The structure is both logical and beautiful: we praise the king of heaven in the first verse, and the following three give reasons why.



Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven

words by

Henry Francis Lyte

1- Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing:
Alleluia, alleluia,
praise the everlasting King.

2- Praise him for his grace and favour
to our forebears in distress;
praise him still the same forever,
slow to chide and swift to bless;
alleluia, alleluia,
glorious in his faithfulness.

3- Father-like he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
alleluia, alleluia,
widely as his mercy flows.

4- Frail as summer's flower we flourish;
blows the wind and it is gone;
but, while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on:
alleluia, alleluia,
praise the high eternal one.

5- Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia,
praise with us the God of grace.

Save the Dates
ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF FREDERICTON
Clergy College 2024
June 17- 20
Villa Madonna

COURSE 1: Monday – Tuesday, June 17/18
The Rev'd Dr. Sarah Travis, Knox College, Toronto
"Preaching and Trauma"

COURSE 2: Tuesday – Wednesday, June 18/19
The Rev'd Dr. Michael Cover, Marquette University,
"The Fourth Gospel: Encountering the 'Glory of the Crucified One'"

COURSE 3: Wednesday – Thursday, June 19/20
The Rev'd Dr. Heather McCance, President, AST Halifax
"Leadership in the Church: Past, Present & Future"

The Rev. Canon Chris Hayes is a musician as well as a priest serving in the Parish of Salisbury and Havelock.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Save the Date
St. Michael's Youth Conference
 Maritimes For Youth 13-19
 More info: SMYC.CA

- Prayer
- Learning
- Recreation
- Friendship

August 19 - 24, 2024
 @ Camp Wildwood
 McKee's Mills, NB (near Bouctouche)

What do you do?

JON LOWNDS, DIOCESAN REGISTRAR

The Rev. Canon Jon Lownds' role as diocesan registrar involves recording, for history's sake, all official notices specific to clergy and parishes in the diocese, such as ordination and appointments of clergy, amalgamation or dissolution of parishes and consecration or deconsecration of church buildings. The role is defined under Canon 5 and all entries are made in a book called the Register of Ecclesiastical Episcopal Acts of the Bishop.

THE REV. CANON JON LOWNDS

A SACRED CHORAL WEEKEND FOR AGES 16 YEARS AND OLDER

65th Choir School

JULY 11-14TH, 2024

WITH MUSIC LEADERS:
 DR. JOEL TRANQUILLA
 SPENCER BELYEA

TO REGISTER VISIT:
ANGLICANCHOIRSCHOOL.ORG

MAY 1-10

ONLINE AUCTION

IN SUPPORT OF LUNCH CONNECTION

The auction will be on our Facebook page facebook.com/TheLunchConnection

icym.ca

LUNCH CONNECTION SUPPORTS STUDENTS, SCHOOLS, AND FAMILIES BY PROVIDING 65,000+ LOW-COST AND SUBSIDIZED LUNCHES IN SAINT JOHN SCHOOLS EACH YEAR.

INNER CITY YOUTH MINISTRY

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nb.anglican.ca/subscribers/new

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Join AFC and celebrate Say Yes! to Kids Sunday on June 2nd

Be part of the movement to grow a brighter future for children, youth, and young adults!
 Visit anglicanfoundation.org/sytkSunday

2024 SAVE THE DATE JUNE 2