

Lent 2017



the Gathering

The Newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer



Dear Friends,

We are on the hinge between Epiphany and Lent.
You are on the hinge between one David and another.
I am on the hinge between Redeemer and the next church.

Hinge moments are valuable and uncomfortable, but it is in the movement, as the swing happens, that something new can emerge. A change within.

Epiphany Sundays have offered you a series of stories about how people stumbled into noticing God's presence. Divinity in a peasant baby, Jesus says something and Peter blurts out the first thought in his mouth, writings from a culture you can hardly grasp, point you to a hidden truth in your own heart now.

Epiphany is the season of God dropping little bags of spiritual goodies along your path. "Oh look!" you say as you open them.

Then it is Lent. A season where everything gets taken away. Well, you let go of it voluntarily. It is a season of spiritual de-cluttering. When you empty your sitting room to refinish the floor and repaint the walls, then, astonishingly, you see the room as for the first time. Your container of daily life is shown to you again, as it was when you first walked in before the movers brought all your stuff. You have an invitation to re-think furnishing, decorating and, above all, what you will chose not to bring back in. You can re-imagine a better way to live.

Epiphany is about looking out. Lent is about looking in.

Both are about choosing to look for ways that you can be more Christ-like in your living, in your outgoing-ness and in your inward-being-ness (I just made these compound-words up).

Both of us Davids, as we experience the swing of passing through the hinge of our ministerial transitions, need to look at the outward expressions and



practices that define who we are. And we need to detach from the way that has been expressed before, and look inwardly to see what has changed within and how it needs to be manifested differently, even if only subtly.

The community of the Redeemer also needs to look at your outward practice of being the Body of Christ on this corner, and inwardly at the way you have come to understand yourselves, both as individuals and as a body with an identity.

What have you been shown and given? (Epiphany) What do you need to put aside to see better who you are in God's eyes? (Lent) What is the freedom you find here to let you rise up and go forward? (Easter)

Together at Easter, as the buried Jesus bursts into new life in resurrection, the Church of the Redeemer can chose to burst in to a renewed life under the faithful visioning, prodding, leading and love of David Giffen.

The great thing about following the path of Christ is that you are never quite sure about which way it will lead you next. (If you don't like the sound of this don't get ordained, I would say) You don't know what your church can do next, and you have yet to find out what you can do as a disciple becoming an apostle.

I am so pleased, may I say again, that David Giffen is the next incumbent. I cannot imagine a person with a better set of skills, with a mind as sharp and as fresh, and with the vision and courage you need in a leader to open the next chapter of the Redeemer's life in Christ. He brings learnings and teachings that will challenge and stretch you,

and set you free. He will find doors and open them, and he will learn from all your wisdom and practice of faith.

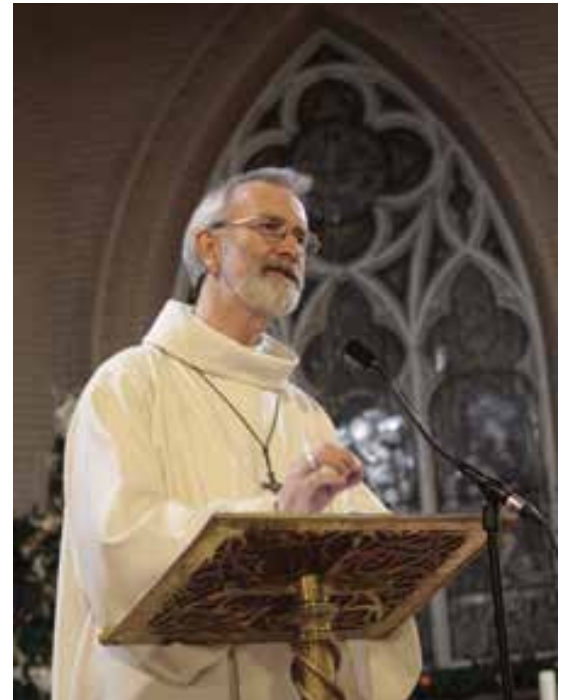
Finally, I want to thank you all for the privilege and honour it has been to be your priest-in-charge in the interim. It has been a blessing, a learning, a playful time and a time of hard and challenging work. I have been changed by you and am not the same person who arrived here in January last

year. And for that, I am glad. It is said, "To grow is to change. To be perfect is to have changed often." On the solid foundations built over the years of this Church, enter new ideas and practices with a forward-looking joy.

In peace



David



Farewell David Howells

The Rev'd David Howells was appointed by Bishop Patrick Yu to be our interim priest-in-charge effective January 17, 2016. The work of an interim is a specific ministry. As Archbishop Colin Johnson had said in his letter to the parish announcing Andrew Asbil's appointment as Dean of Toronto, "[A process...to search for a successor] ... will take time and should not be rushed, in spite of anxiety to do so." An interim is tasked to keep the parish going, to offer pastoral and practical encouragement and to facilitate preparation for a new incumbent's leadership to flourish.

Most parishioners had not met David before, but members of the catechesis group a few years ago had met David and his wife, the Rev'd Lucy Reid, when they led that year's off-site retreat. Within three weeks of his arrival, David chaired the annual Vestry meeting and did so as though he knew all of what had happened in the previous year! From that quick start, and coached by the Rev'd Megan Jull and Ann Cope in our liturgical practices, we went from welcoming him as a "newcomer" to happily feeling he had been among us for a long time.

Parishioners relished David's ability to listen and connect deeply with them. His humility, willingness to share his abiding faith and the breadth of experiences he had within the Anglican Church in the UK and across Canada, as well as his superb preaching, combined to attract parishioners Sunday by Sunday.

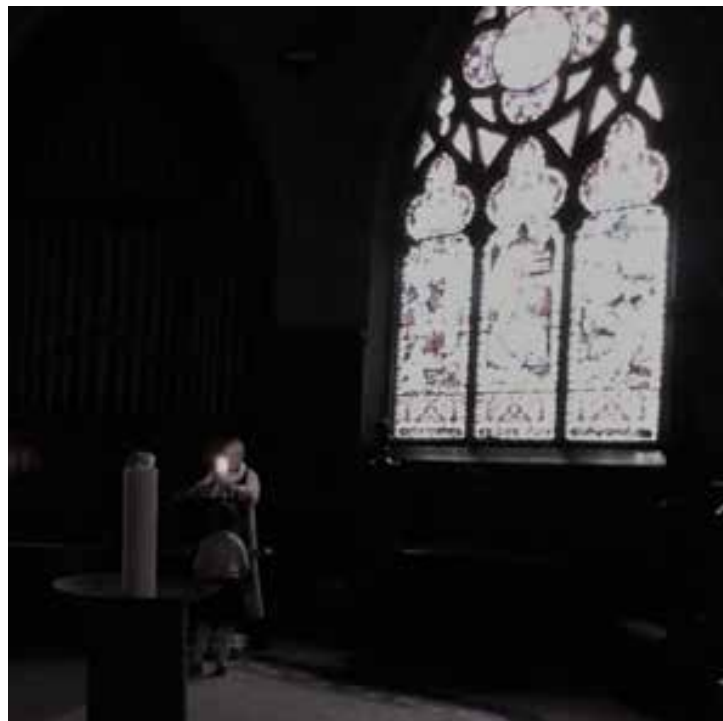
The Board chairs and members of the Board of Management and Advisory Board appreciated David's



gentle guidance and wise counsel as we went through a very busy and challenging year. We had been encouraged by Andrew Asbil in his farewell sermon, and reinforced by Bishop Yu, to faithfully keep going forward, offering the ministries to which we had been called. Meeting this daunting charge would not have been possible without David Howells' support, as we offered an array of events, programs, worship services and carried out the *Step into the Future* project.

We know that the next parish to have David as its incumbent will be led by a highly skilled and deeply spiritual priest who will love and support them as the people of God in his care. We will welcome David into our midst, any time!

*With deep gratitude and affection,
Heather Bennett and Ryan Carlsen*



The Year in Review

Heather Bennett and Ryan Carlsen

At Vestry we looked back on the accomplishments and challenges of 2016. And, what a year it was for Church of the Redeemer. Throughout the year, we felt the guiding and strengthening of the Spirit through the faithful witness and work of the clergy, staff, members of the boards, ministry area leaders and members to carry out the incredible range of ministries we offer week by week.

In January, we said farewell to the Very Rev'd Andrew Asbil, as he became Dean of Toronto. Later that month, we welcomed the Rev'd David Howells as our part-time interim priest-in-charge. David very quickly got to know us, how we do things and competently but quietly, took charge. Throughout the year, he shared his wisdom, experience, sense of humour and deep care for the parish.

The Parish Selection Committee (PSC) led by Chris Jones, got up and running in mid-February. By the end of March, we had already celebrated Easter and Catechesis had concluded. We said farewell to the Rev'd Jeff Stone, who finished his training as our assistant curate in April. That same month, the PSC asked parishioners to complete a survey and hosted consultations with church school parents and staff, the youth group and held a very well-attended "Town Hall" with Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam; Jean Blacklock, owner of Prairie Girl Bakery; Zoë Johnstone, head of the Yorkville Library; and Staff Sergeant Matt Moyer, community relations police officer. They gave their perceptions of the parish and the potential they saw we could have to impact the Yorkville neighbourhood in the future. These inputs contributed to preparing a comprehensive parish profile, which was used to attract candidates to apply to become our new Incumbent.

In May, we held a special vestry to approve contingency funding for the replacement of the steps, new sign and improved lighting. Ibrahim, a young man from The Gambia arrived and the refugee settlement committee swung into action to find housing, schooling and assist him to adapt to life in Toronto. In mid-June, following the nightclub shooting in Orlando, we set out a cross wrapped in rainbow fabric and opened the doors of the church for several days in the late afternoon, offering

a witness of support for the LGBTQ community and a place of welcome for all to pray.

At the end of June and into early July, the Rev'd Megan Jull took members of the youth group on a life-changing trip to Yukon. A large contingent of clergy and parishioners marched in the annual Pride Parade. Finally, in August, the *Step into the Future* steps replacement project got underway, after experiencing unexpected long delays getting permits and demolition of the old steps.

In September, the drop-in program began along with programs and events offered by Learning@Redeemer and AIWG. Bach Vespers, Rock Eucharist, and church school also resumed. That month, the Christmas pageant director was engaged.

The drop-in participants proudly held a successful book sale in October as their contribution to the program they value so greatly. The refugee settlement committee swung into action again, this time to prepare for a family of six, who arrived from Myanmar toward the end of November. Through November, the PSC continued visiting parishes and interviewing potential candidates to discern a potential new incumbent to recommend the Bishop appoint.

Following the Advent Lessons and Carols service, in December we offered the annual Blue Christmas service, a dramatic reading of *A Christmas Carol*, the choir sang Christmas carols outdoors for passersby, and finally, celebrated the birth of Jesus.

All of the services, events, programs and projects were creatively and ably led by clergy and laity committed to carrying out their baptismal covenant "*to seek and serve Christ in all persons.*"

We are grateful for the following members of the Board of Management and Advisory Board who stepped down as of this year's Vestry meeting:

Peter Bennett, who was a member of the stewardship committee for many years and led the committee for the past two. We thank him for the work the committee has done to educate, inspire and ask parishioners to share their stories. He has challenged us to be more generous

than we imagined possible. He also completed his term as a Synod member.

Peter Tovell, was not only chair of the property committee, but headed *the Step into the Future* project that saw the renovation of the chancel space, the restoration of the south face, the rebuilding of the bell cote and the front steps. These were enormous project phases to plan and oversee. We are grateful to him for sharing his professional expertise and commitment to the parish.

Jenn Whinncup served on the Board of Management for several years. A lawyer by profession, she not only provided valuable input for decision-making, she connected us with resource people when we needed legal advice and counsel.

Joanna Campion served ably and faithfully as chair of the Board of Management for nearly three years. In September she took a leave to attend to a family matter. The timing coincided with determining, with Bishop Yu, the candidates to interview. As a result, under canon law, she was unable to continue as a member of the Parish Selection Committee. This meant that Ryan Carlsen became Board of Management chair and in this role, as a member of the PSC. Joanna's leadership on the Board of Management and her contributions to the PSC were greatly valued and we recognize that it was a great disappointment not to see through her commitment to both.

Several members of the Advisory Board completed their terms and we thank them for their contributions to the Advisory Board:

Alexandra Pohlod and *Matthias Mayer*, were able to serve only one term each. Alexandra had chaired the

Getting Connected team and Matthias was a member at large.

Carol Scovil served several terms on Advisory Board as accessibility advocate and as a key member of the *Step into the Future* project. We are grateful she shared her professional expertise in these capacities!

Rich Whate coordinated our vibrant church school program for three years until June and continued on Advisory Board until the recent Vestry.

John Stevens was a member at large and offered his consulting skills and experience to facilitate building a sense of strong community among members of the Advisory Board. Our meetings have focused on support for one another to carry out the ministries.

Chris Jones, served on Advisory Board for two terms as a member at large. He also chaired the Parish Selection Committee. He worked closely with the diocesan consultant appointed to facilitate the process of recommending the next incumbent and was the PSC's contact with Bishop Yu throughout the process. We are very grateful for Chris' leadership in both capacities.

Heather Bennett completed her term as Advisory Board Chair and *Paul Pynkoski* was elected at Vestry to move into this role.

Several new members of the Boards who were also elected at Vestry. *Frances Humphreys*, *Lee Shouldice*, and *Kate Werneburg* have joined the Board of Management. *Chris Ambidge* (Vice-Chair), *Dennis Duffy*, and *Lyn Sibley* have joined the Advisory Board. Along with current members, they will offer gifted leadership to support our next Incumbent, the Rev'd David Giffen. 

GROUNDLED: Finding God in the World — A Spiritual Revolution

Reviewed by Grant Jahnke

Diana Butler Bass is no stranger to the Redeemer community. A few years back, more than 120 of us

participated in the Summer Reads program, meeting throughout that summer in small groups to discuss her book *Christianity After Religion*. Those who were stimulated by that book are bound to find her latest offering, *Grounded: Finding God in the World*, an inspiring read. Butler Bass illustrates in compelling detail that what appears to be a decline in religious belief actually signals a global transformation in how people experience and understand God. This is a book that, like its predecessor, deserves to be read and discussed by entire congregations.

Butler Bass begins by reminding us that until recently, Christians confidently asserted a three-tiered universe: God inhabited heaven, a distant place that is the ultimate reward of the faithful, the world below where we

live, and the underworld, where we feared we might be sent after death. God occupied the high places, looking over the world and caring for it from afar. Religious authorities mediated the gap between heaven and earth, explaining right doctrine and holy living to assist the faithful in attaining the reward of life with God in heaven. Butler Bass notes that the three-tiered cosmology continues to be reflected, confusingly for many, in a great many Christian hymns and prayers.

The paradigm began to falter and crumble in the last century with The Great War, World War II, the Holocaust and Hiroshima. As Elie Weisel, the Jewish humanist who experienced the horrors of the human incineration in the death camps cried, "For God's sake, where is God?"

In recent decades, people have been increasingly vocal in their questioning. Where was God at the World Trade Centre? At the slaughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School? In tsunami-ravaged Thailand and Indonesia? In African villages stricken with Ebola? And on and on. Some have averred that a distant, judging God permits sacrifice for national sins. Others have concluded that "God is dead" and we are alone. Humanism, agnosticism, atheism and post-theism, all perfectly logical responses, Butler Bass acknowledges, are on the rise.

Nonetheless, Butler Bass observes that around the planet there is a shifting, vital conception of God in a variety of cultures. She notes that in recent years while many still worship a distant, majestic deity and others deny its existence, a cultural language of divine nearness has become common. For many, the divine can be found in the very midst of life experience, in a sunset, at the seashore, in our homes, our gardens, in the sharing of food and in our shared suffering. A personal, immediate and intimate sense of the God is emerging. "What was once reserved for a few saints," she observes, "has now become the quest of millions around the planet—to be able to touch, feel and know God for one's self." This, she acknowledges, provides an unexpected challenge for the world's great faiths.

So begins Butler Bass's engaging exploration, a mix of spiritual memoir, theology, history and analysis of global cultural trends, tracking what she calls a spiritual revolution. This revolution is the search for an experi-

ence of God who resides with us...in dirt, water, and sky, in our homes and neighbourhoods, at work and in our communities; in our celebration and in our pain. Butler Bass explores each of these zones, providing myriad examples of God's self revelation in each of them.

A primary source of Butler Bass's reflections is her own spiritual journey and her own ongoing conversion. Each chapter contains personal anecdotes that trace her spiritual evolution beginning in childhood when, after moving from the city to the remote country, she found herself "immersed in a world that was charged with

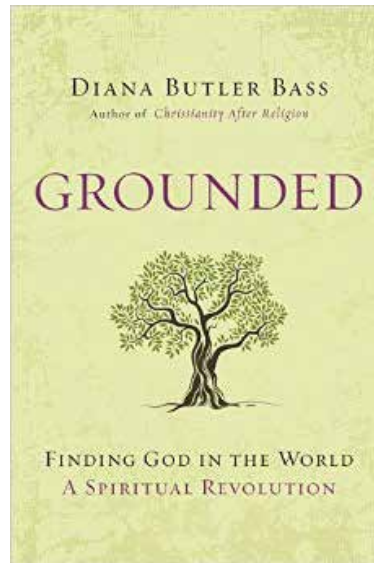
the Word of God. There I not only heard about God, I *met* God....finding heaven as much under my feet as over my head." She tracks key moments of her evolving story through the decades, to the transformation resulting from a spiritual crisis precipitated by 9/11.

Butler Bass quotes theologian Karl Rahner, who predicted that in the future, devout people would either be "mystics," people who have "experienced something," or they would cease to be anything at all. The faithful of the future, predicted Rahner, would be those with a living awareness of the spirit in the world, rendering them "profoundly present in and committed to the world." The implication for Christians and all people of faith is to respond to experiences of God's presence by coming to see ourselves as "co-creators" *with* God in the ongoing

process of creation, a process grounded in radical, non exclusive compassion for all beings, not just for our own clan.

Butler Bass observes that Rahner's prediction has proved accurate. More and more people experience a "pattern of God" all around us, "a spiritual theology that relates to contemporary concerns and provides meaning and hope for the future and possesses surprisingly rich ties to wisdom from the past."

The present spiritual revolution, says Butler Bass, "rests on a similar insight: God is the ground, the grounding, that which grounds us. We experience this when we understand that soil is holy, water gives life, the sky opens our imagination, our roots matter, home is a divine place and our lives are linked with our neighbours' and with those around the globe. This world, not heaven, is the sacred stage of our times.... God is with us. Here."



**Grounded:
Finding God in the World –
A Spiritual Revolution**

Diana Butler Bass
2015 Harper One

Yes, You Should Go to the Funeral

Megan Jull

We begin the season of Lent with the Ash Wednesday rite. It is an occasion to remember our own mortality and human frailty. This year, it got me thinking about funeral rites and how society's expectations have changed. It seems they've changed dramatically from when I began to work in professional ministry.

A recent debate started, as all modern debate does, with a Facebook post. I belong to a Facebook group for clergy under 40 and we often post and seek advice from one another. A colleague posted, "the chancellor of the diocese has died. I didn't know him personally. Professionally, do I have to go and make an appearance?"

The comments raged. Some landed squarely on no. Many, including my own, landing squarely on yes, you must go.

It seems we've lost a common set of etiquette when it comes to funeral rites these days. I'm always surprised by some shocking displays of behaviour when I lead funerals. People who photograph the procession as we leave the church. Drivers that give us the finger as we proceed to the cemetery. It seems, as a culture, we've lost a communal and ritual approach to death. It used to be that everyone would pull over for a funeral procession. Men would stand and remove their hats. Those days seem to be gone. But the impetus to communal grief stills seems to be a current in society. We see it emerge in vigils and flower tributes and memorials that sprout up as response to tragedy.

We lose something when the rituals of grief and healing and recovery are diminished.

I always encourage people to go to the funeral. Make every effort to get there. And I often remind people that you never regret going, but sometimes, you regret not going.

When you go, even when you don't know the person who has died, you give an incredible gift to those who mourn. It's much easier for family and friends who are speaking to stand up in front of a full room. That gives energy. A sense of collegiality. A cheering section.

I preached at my own father's funeral. Many friends, particularly colleagues, encouraged me not to. But my Dad had asked me to and it was important for me to fulfill that wish. A colleague gave me a great gift. At the time, we were just acquaintances. I was surprised to see him arrive at the funeral and mentioned that I was nervous about preaching. He told me he was going to sit in my sight line, and that when I got nervous, or emotional, I should look at him and know that he would smile back and that he would be cheering me on. And indeed, that day became pivotal in the development of our friendship. We've become so much closer since.

Of course, nobody *wants* to go to a funeral. Nobody wants to be there. Death reminds us of own mortality. It reminds us of other deaths and other losses. It is unnerving. You might find that it makes you nervous. And when you're nervous, you might say the wrong thing. You forget how to make conversation at the reception. You wonder if it's appropriate to laugh at the funny story in the eulogy.

Not going may spare you some social awkwardness. It might spare you the hassle of getting there and rearranging your schedule. But I promise you, once there, you will never regret going. But you just might regret not going.

At my Dad's funeral, I was surprised by some who had made the effort to come. And surprised by those who didn't come. There were people who were quite close to me that didn't get themselves there. That hurt and damaged the relationship. And others who I barely knew, but made the effort. Who demonstrated

their support. Their collegiality. And they bore witness to our common humanity and our common mortality. They entered into a dark space with me and helped me to grieve, and ultimately, they helped me to heal. They gave me a great gift.

So yes, go to the funeral. Always make the effort. You might come to regret not going, but I promise, you will never regret going.

*It used to be that
everyone would pull over
for a funeral procession.
Men would stand and
remove their hats.*

Advent/Christmas







Supporting Rehabilitation in Nepal

Carol Scovil

I wasn't sure what it would be like to return to Nepal this past November. It was my first visit since the devastating earthquakes in April, 2015 that were followed by months of political unrest. I was both discouraged and encouraged by my visit. Most of the destruction from the earthquake was cleared away in the capital Kathmandu, and rebuilding is underway in the damaged World Heritage historic sites. Not as immediately visible, were the people still living in tents in the capital and in temporary shelters in the rural areas, still awaiting government funding to rebuild their homes. Due

to the number of people injured and disabled by the earthquake, there is much greater government awareness of the importance of rehabilitation services, an encouraging change to emerge from the devastation of the earthquake.

This was my sixth visit to Nepal to support rehabilitation services there. I again went with NepalAbility, a Toronto-based organization that has sent 17 volunteer teams since 2006 to enhance rehabilitation within Nepal through financial support, continuing education and hands-on training in for local hospital staff. This trip I also went as a representative of the recently formed International Nepal Fellowship (INF) Canada board. INF is a Christian mission that has been serving in Nepal for over 60 years, offering support for poor and disadvantaged people through health and development. It was through INF that I lived and worked at Green Pastures Hospital for 16 months in 2008-9. I am pleased to be able to serve INF Canada, to allow more direct support from Canada to INF's work in Nepal.

The NepalAbility team was primarily based at United Mission Hospital Tansen, a general hospital in a small hilltop town. It was wonderful to return with Josh and Sarah Riggsbee (doctor and speech language pathologist) who are on home leave in the US between terms working at Tansen Hospital. They have been important on-the-ground support for the neuro-rehabilitation department NepalAbility started, encouraging the interprofessional team working with patients who have had a stroke, brain injury and spinal cord injury (SCI). It was good for all of us to return, to support the team, particularly as there has been significant staff turnover.





For me, it was great to go with a team where we all spoke some Nepali language, and could connect at a deeper level with the local clinicians.

We worked with the rehabilitation team, did some bedside teaching, and talked about the ways NepalAbility can support the overall vision for rehabilitation in Tansen. We also were able to go with the team to visit two patients with SCI in their homes after discharge. The first had a fully adapted home, and was planning to start a food stand on the roadside by his home. The second had gone home recently, and he and his family were still coming to terms with his injury. We were glad of the counselling skills of the Nepali pastoral care worker to support him. NepalAbility had also provided support to bring some donated wheelchairs to Tansen for patients. We got participate in the for-

mal program where the patients came to receive the wheelchairs.

I was so glad to have the chance to visit Green Pastures Hospital (GPH) where I had previously lived and worked. All sorts of exciting things have been happening there in the past year. Dr. Dipak Maharjan, a Nepali orthopaedic surgeon NepalAbility has worked with at Tansen, is now the medical director of GPH. He and his team have a vision to transform GPH into a centre of excellence for disabilities related to SCI, trauma, leprosy, and cerebral palsy. I was encouraged to see the revitalization of the centre, and explore how future NepalAbility teams and INF Canada can support further development of rehab excellence there.

There was a lot of construction going on—significant renovations to repair from earthquake damage and to update the facilities, including the operating theatre. Doing more surgeries and general rehab for paying patients will help ensure self-sustainability in the longer term, while still providing excellent donation-supported care for those who cannot pay. It has been a time of transition for the colleagues I worked with before, which I know has been hard, so I



was encouraged to hear that they feel positive about the new directions. It is great to have dedicated Christian Nepali leadership for GPH, and we can pray for them and GPH hospital during this time of exciting change.

A new experience for me this trip was to visit the Sahodar ministry in a remote village in the hills, not too far from the epicentre of the earthquake. Sahodar—a Nepali word meaning community and family—emerged from the vision of four brothers who grew up in an untouchable caste family in the village. The eldest brother got a scholarship to study at a Christian school in the city, and he helped his younger brothers find opportunities as well. They converted to Christianity (freeing them from the caste system), and got a good education. Now successful doctors and program administrators, they wanted to provide opportunities for those still left in their home village. Sahodar started a hospital, built a church that doubles as a community centre, is supporting the local schools, and working in community development.

It was an adventure just to get there—I took a tourist bus from Kathmandu, then a very full local bus from



the main road, and finally walked an hour from the small town where I got off the bus. As I walked, everyone was happy to point me in the right direction, and the beautiful scenery more than compensated for the long journey. Before Sahodar, the nearest hospital was a four-hour walk away. Roads are just beginning to come through that area, and when I left, I was able to take the infrequently-running local bus right from the village—though given how long and bumpy the ride was, I think walking in was preferable.

Following the earthquake, the new hospital became the centre of relief efforts in that very remote area. The church became shelter to many whose homes were destroyed. Because of the existing programs, they were able to mobilize earthquake relief immediately and are providing long-term support with rebuilding and development in the wider area. Unfortunately, the government has been slow in distributing relief money to individuals who need it most. It was hard to see houses destroyed and many people still living in temporary shelters more than a year later. I was glad to know the Sahodar holistic ministry was there to support the physical, social and spiritual needs of this remote community.

A highlight of the trip was spending three days at the Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Centre outside of Kathmandu. I work at Toronto Rehabilitation's Lyndhurst Centre for Spinal Cord Rehab, and it was great to be able to consult with their team about research and



quality improvement projects. They have done amazing work since the earthquake—initially tripling their beds to accommodate people who sustained a SCI from the earthquake, and have since helped raise awareness of the importance of rehabilitation services with the Government of Nepal.

They also are working with the mechanical engineering department of Kathmandu University to help them design a wheelchair that can be locally manufactured. This was very exciting development for me. When I worked as a rehabilitation engineer in Nepal in 2008-9, I was involved in providing more appropriate wheelchairs for the rugged local conditions. At the time we looked into the possibility of developing local manufacturing, but the time was not right. Now, since the earthquake, there is a push to have locally manufactured wheelchairs, and I was glad to be able to meet with the engineering and rehab team to discuss the design. I hope to be able to support this project further from Canada as it develops.

I flew back to Toronto on grandmother's 100th birthday—and since she is known to the Redeemer community, I wanted to share a picture of the family celebration.

Thank you to the Redeemer community for your prayers and enthusiastic support of my work in Nepal over the years. Through your generosity, I raised more

money than I needed for this trip, and the extra funds will go directly to support treatment for poorer patients at GPH. It is always a blessing for me to be able to return to serve in Nepal, a place that remains close to my

heart. I am encouraged by my connections to old friends there, and the faith of the Nepali Christians. I look forward to future trips to Nepal to support rehabilitation for people with disabilities. ■

Carol has been our accessibility advocate. We are grateful that she shares her experiences—and pictures of the beautiful scenery—of Nepal with us.



Mystical Landscapes

Paul Pynkoski

The artist is a sacrament maker, a creator of emphasized, clarified beauty designed to make us see.

~Andrew Greeley

The Art Gallery of Ontario recently presented an exhibition of 19th and 20th century art. *Mystical Landscapes*, as it was titled, brought together art from Europe, Canada, and the United States and featured artists as diverse as Georgia O' Keefe, Dulac, Monet, Emily Carr, and Jansens. These artists rejected the rationalism and materialism of their times and chose, instead, to explore the possibility of a spirituality rooted in the natural landscape. Only rarely do humans make an appearance in these paintings.

The techniques of the artists showed little in common. But the interplay of line, colour, space, light, and detail conspired over and over again to bring me to awe and wonder. Themes of light and darkness, movement, creation and redemption, and transcendence were explored. Not every painting spoke to me to the same degree and depth, but there were several works that drew me in, almost compelled me to stay in their presence and gaze.

More than 250,000 people saw this exhibit, and it was held over an additional two weeks.

The attendance at the AGO suggests two things to me: First, in spite of the fragmented social and political nature of our society and its materialism, there exists below the surface a hunger for transcendence and spiritual depth. Second, people feel that there is something in nature that speaks to that longing and hunger.

Many of the artists represented at *Mystical Landscapes* broke with the church and society of their era. Several found it necessary to look for resources in other spiritual traditions. Lawren Harris was a proponent of Theosophy, and Monet studied Buddhism. Van Gogh found it difficult to function in "normal" society and wanted to found a colony of artists. Emily Carr was more comfortable among

First Nations people and more often than not worked in remote, isolated areas. But each, in their own way, witnessed to a sense of transcendence and spiritual longing in the fields, forests, mountains and sky.

We have been remiss in not attending to nature. The western perspective that sees in nature only resources for industry, and extracts them through calculation and technology, is a sign of diminished consciousness. It is a departure from our Christian spiritual roots that found the revelation of the divine in two great books—the scriptures and nature. Harris, Carr, Gauguin, and others stand at the margins calling us to return to our roots, pointing us to divine immanence and divine transcendence revealed in the material world. Their voices are to the Christian community a judgment and a blessing. A judgment on our negligence, but a blessing if we should heed them and become attentive to their message.

While all of the works at the exhibit have something to teach us, I found three paintings of Paul Gauguin and two of Emily Carr spoke deeply to me. My reflections on these paintings are not those of an art critic. They are the reflections of someone who has found, in the exploration of the Christian contemplative tradition, that art, music, and literature have conspired to both surprise and grace me over and over again, underscoring the theme that—if our eyes are open and, at times, when they are not—Christ can be revealed to us in every situation.

Gauguin stands as an exception to "pure" landscape, and he appears as a subject in the three paintings. In "Vision after the Sermon," he appears as a priest. In "Yellow Christ" and "Christ in the Garden of Olives" he appears as Christ. Each of the paintings was set outdoors, in the landscape of Brittany. The human subjects in the paintings were attired in the every-day clothing of farmers and peasants.

Strong colours and a flattened landscape shape "Vision after the Sermon" in a way that separates the vision of Jacob wrestling with the Angel from a group of



peasant women and the priest (Gauguin). We are onlookers to the vision. We see the women caught up in the scene, watching the battle as though real. But Gauguin, as priest, misses it as he looks away.

A similar approach to landscape and colour are used in the other two paintings. However, in these works, Gauguin is the focal point, placed in the foreground. In the “Garden” as the disciples sleep far away, Gauguin as Christ agonizes in prayer. The olive trunk behind him and a row of trees in the background conspire to suggest the form of a cross. In “Yellow Christ,” it is Gauguin on the cross, while below him three peasant women pray and others travel against a background of rolling hills and autumn colours.

There are many interpretations of these paintings, but they spoke to me in a particular way. The intersection of scripture story, art, and local landscape conspired to question me. “Vision” warns me that while the Divine may be revealed in the landscape, in word, and in preaching, I remain completely capable of missing it. Like Gauguin, who as priest should be able to assist in the mediation of spiritual experience, am I looking the other way? He is out of touch with what is happening. The cost is missing the deep spiritual experience of those around me.

“Yellow Christ” and “Garden of Olives” give a sense of immediacy to the presence of Christ. He is found in the landscape of Brittany, surrounded by the local inhabitants. The incarnation is an immediate reality. The model for the paintings—Gauguin—is intimately identified with Christ. I am prompted to ask how closely I identify with Christ? To what extent do I see in my life the sufferings and glory of Christ (Col.1:24-27)? Can I see the face of Christ in those suffering around me? In all three paintings, divine activity emerges from within the local farm land and in the presence of the local inhabitants. If nothing else, Gauguin calls me to pay attention!

Two of Emily Carr’s paintings depicted the British Columbia forest. “Indian Church” and “Forest, British Columbia,” are lush creations. Dark and light play together. Carr uses shades of deep greens, blues, dark browns, and simplified shapes. Carr makes no attempt to capture the forest realistically. Her abstract,



simplified cedars and firs pulse with life and movement.

In “Forest,” light shines through the centre of the woods changing the hues of the foliage, transforming them into ribbons of colour that draw your eyes up to a final arch of green. “Indian Church” shows a simple, whitewashed building against a background of tall firs. The church, a colonial imposition on a First Nations landscape, seems almost

out of place. So does the cemetery with its white crosses. But the lush green leading to the Church entrance draws you towards the surrounding firs. Their strong trunks form pillars that tease your eyes ever upward. You are connected to living green shapes forming natural spire-like peaks and arches. The trees create a different place of worship.

In October 1933, Carr wrote in her diary about her attempts to capture the forest. “On, on, deeper and deeper, with the soul of the thing burrowing into its depth and its intensity till that thing is a reality to us and speaks one grand inaudible word—God.” Two years later she would write, “Surely the woods are God’s tabernacle” and you can stand “before the trees, recognizing one Creator of you and them, one life pulsing through all, one mystery engulfing all...”

Emily Carr did not paint the woods to show us what a British Columbia cedar looked like. Rather, she attempted to capture on canvas the depth of her spiritual experience as she stood in the forest, in silence and awe. She constantly despaired of her ability to portray her sense of God’s presence, but in spite of her misgivings, her forest paintings stand as a testimony to the life of the Divine pulsing through all of creation.

The presence of the holy, in creation and incarnation, are revealed to us in the work of these two artists. Gauguin and Carr—in fact, all of those represented in Mystical Landscapes—can open us up to the presence of the Divine in the natural world. Indeed, wherever our immediate landscape might be. They also demonstrate that visual art can be a vehicle to express to others the experience of beauty and longing for the holy that lives in each of us.

Paul is involved in many parts of the life of the parish including as chair of the Advisory Board.





Epiphany

At the 9.30AM service on the Feast of the Epiphany, the children joined Megan in following the star, along with their trusty camel, until they arrived at the manger to find Mary, Joseph and Jesus. At the 11.15AM service we were delighted to welcome an incense boat-bearer for the first time in a long time. The cotta that she wore may have been a touch too big, but the enthusiasm of our wee assistant was immense.



Farewell Jim

We were sad to receive the news that our Facilities Manager, Jim Kotisfas, was leaving Redeemer to accept a new position at the cathedral. As seen on the cover of this issue and with these pictures, at the conclusion of the 9.30 and 11.15AM services, on Sunday January 15, we surrounded Jim with prayer and blessing as we sent him on his way. Thank you, Jim, for all you have been to the Redeemer community. We miss you.





Visit by our Bishop Patrick Yu, our area bishop

On Sunday, December 4, we welcomed Bishop Patrick Yu for his final visit to our community before his retirement. In Redeemer tradition, we surrounded him to offer our prayers and blessing as he begins this next stage of life.



Drum Blessing

The Aboriginal Issues Working Group learned how to make indigenous hand drums and on Sunday, December 4 participants brought their drums to the church to be blessed and in celebration, played. Andrew Wesley led the blessing of the drums.



Leaving Home, Finding Home

Susanna Jacob

Imagine that you are a farmer in the jungle or high in the mountains of Burma, taking pride in caring for the land, respecting the earth, and growing your own produce, planting and harvesting according to traditional ways. You value family, your culture, and your language. Your life is simple, but satisfying. Then imagine that civil war and persecution force you from that land. You protest peacefully, and the military dictatorship responds with brutal violence. And so you flee.

That is the story of the Karen people, members of an ethnic minority in Burma. Thousands of Karen fled from the Myanmar military, across the border to refugee camps in Thailand, hoping to return home to Burma, but knowing it would not be safe to do so. Thousands of these refugees have lived in the camps for years.

The nine refugee camps along the Burma/Thai border range in population from 4,000 to over 60,000. They are fenced, and no refugees may leave.

NGO personnel may enter to provide specific services—food, education, medical assistance—but may not live in the camps. Life in the camps is organized into committees and activities, with an emphasis on leadership training. There are monthly deliveries to provide rice and other foodstuffs to the refugees lining up for their basic allotments. Education in the camps continues only through high school; there are no post-secondary opportunities. In the past Karen sick or injured people stayed at home and were treated with traditional medicines and healing ceremonies, as hospitals were many hours away on foot. In the refugee camps, clinics are provided by the NGOs, but no hospital services are available.

Housing is basic, consisting of bamboo huts rebuilt each year, with thatched roofs that must be replaced to provide shelter from the rainy season. Life in the refugee camps is very simple, much time being spent on activities of daily living—hours spent chopping and cooking

over open fires, repairing shelter. However, to the Karen people, culture and language are vitally important, and continuing traditional practices, including singing and dancing, maintains a sense of pride and community.

In mid-September 2016, the Redeemer Refugee Settlement Committee learned that the Karen family we had agreed to sponsor would be arriving within two months, and that another part of the family, being sponsored by a different settlement group, was arriving in a few days. “Our” family was made up of two older parents, Ta Kai Hae and Lah Wah, and their children, ages eight to 15. The part of the family arriving in September consisted of “our” parents’ oldest daughter and her husband, Tee Mui and Pah Law Kaw, and their four young children. With a heartfelt call for compassion, after several hours of pleading, an apartment for “our” family was found in the same building as Tee Mui, Pah Law Kaw, and their children. Family is extremely important to the Karen, and there were tears of joy in Tee Mui’s eyes upon learning that her parents would be so close.

During October and November, many Redeemerites and community members offered furniture, clothing, and other supplies for the family. On November 19, the move took place, with over twenty people involved in moving furniture and setting up the apartment. Special

thanks to John Sutton, who rented a truck and, with a team of helpers, made furniture pick-ups all across the city, and to Tania Natale, who created the furniture layout implemented by a second team. It was a community effort, and participants felt a strong sense of living their faith.

And on November 23, Bill Horan, Duncan Garrow, Micky Fraterman, Pah Law Kaw, and Mie Tha (translator, minister, and settlement worker) went to the airport, and after a four-hour wait, greeted the newcomers.

The months since then have been filled with documentation and learning:

OHIP cards, banks, visits to doctor and dentist offices, school and ESL registration, finding settlement services, navigating North American grocery shopping and learning to cook on a stove, dealing with rashes and headaches (literal and figurative)—and joy—attending Karen church, Christmas Eve morning and day at the Karen Baptist Church and Redeemer, going to the zoo, celebrating Karen New Year, and visiting the Ontario Science Centre.

Family is extremely important to the Karen, and there were tears of joy in Tee Mui’s eyes upon learning that her parents would be so close.

On January 20, a celebratory pot-luck dinner was held, with the extended family (12 members), other members of the Karen community, including Mie Tha, his wife Jocelyn, their children, and father Ka Law Lah, minister and leader in the Karen community, in attendance, along with Redeemer and Wilkinson-St. David's settlement teams. It was a true community event with over fifty people attending.

Among many highlights, four stand out for this article:

- ☞ A member of Redeemer attending a youth training session in Windsor, where other Karen people had settled, reported that the Karen youth could teach them, the Canadian leaders, about training and facilitating.
- ☞ Lorna, a Karen outreach worker who has lived in Canada for ten years, talked about the challenge of learning English, and the length of time it took her to master the language. All the children and adults are eagerly engaged in learning English, and we must support this in all the ways we can.
- ☞ After the pot-luck, there was much enthusiasm for getting together again, both socially and for all the communities to work together. Mie Tha is

eager to prepare a group of Karen singers to come and sing at an event in the spring at Redeemer. We look forward to all members of the Redeemer community and friends joining us on this joyous occasion.

- ☞ a wise elder, herself the victim of racial persecution in the past, said, at the pot-luck on January 20, Inauguration Day, "We think there are big things (US inaugurations) and little things (refugee settlement), but we really don't know what is big and what is little. We don't know the effects of what we are doing."

We welcome Ta Kai Hae and Lah Wah, as well as Tee Mui, Pah Law Kaw and all the children, with great hopes that this "little thing" will have big effects. If you are interested in becoming more involved with this settlement ministry, please contact Anne Christy or Mary Horan, co-chairs, or visit the church website (theredeemer.ca) for regular updates and more details.

Susanna has been a core member of the refugee settlement committee from the beginning days of the group's work and helps us stay up-to-date on news from those whom we are helping find a new home in Canada ☒

Faith in Action

Ali McIntosh

At the beginning of the season the youth group and I sat down to discuss what they wanted to experience at Redeemer in the coming year. Mainly, my aim was to discern what would best enable them to explore the questions of faith and spirituality that young people deal with every day. As always, the group expressed their enthusiasm for outreach and their conviction in the commandment to "love thy neighbor." Consequently, we have continued to work with the wonderful Didy Erb to cook meals for the drop-in program at the church, and help out with the many events Redeemer runs. We've also made an effort to reach out into our community and find new ways to offer our support. Just before Christmas the group assisted at the W.A.T.C.H. holiday dinner at Hart House which provides a festive experience for underprivileged Toronto children.

In addition to volunteering, the group articulated an interest in hearing stories of questioning and faith from members of the parish. Exposure to stories of doubt and belief spark conversations within ourselves and amongst us, and equip us with the vocabulary to continue the discourse of what it means to be a young Christian. We've launched a series of guest speakers who have shared pivotal moments from their journeys, and have been the catalyst for important discussions about our spirituality. Notably, we welcomed a speaker who converted from the Roman Catholic tradition to Islam and has been kind enough as to invite us for a follow up visit to his Mosque in February. A huge thank you to those who have shared with us.

Looking forward, the youth love hearing about and would enjoy carving out time to work with the numerous social justice programs at Redeemer. We are also busy planning our summer service trip 2017—so keep an eye out for us at coffee hour for more information.

Ali has grown from childhood to being our youth ministry intern within our community and is an amazing role-model for our youth. ☒

The Women's March on Washington:

A Reflection from Toronto

Paul Pynkoski

*You rub your palm
On the grimy pane
In the hope that you can see
You stand up proud
You pretend you're strong
In the hope that you can be
Like the ones who've cried
Like the ones who've died
Trying to set the angel in us free
While they're waiting for a miracle*

(Bruce Cockburn, *Waiting for a Miracle*,
Waiting for a Miracle, 1987)

Tania and I arrived at the steps of the Ontario Legislature in Queen's Park on January 20, 2017, ready for Toronto's version of the Women's March on Washington. There was already a crowd gathering. All sorts of people. There were small children with their parents, seniors, and teens. There were folks from Peterborough and



Fort Erie. And people kept coming and coming.

We bumped into a group of Anglican priests we had known through a Facebook page, and met a female Jewish theological student who wants to be ordained as a rabbi. Some marchers had their dogs with them. Others carried homemade signs or were

in costume. And people kept coming and coming.

Five women gave speeches. At one point we engaged in a sort of call and response:

Sexual violence, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, and other sins that diminish our humanity were named. Each time the crowd responded, "Shame!"

"What does diversity (unity, community, love, etc.) look like?" the speaker cried. "This is what diversity looks like!" we responded.

The responses rang through me, causing a lump to form in my throat, rendering me mute. Excitement? Joy?

I don't know. I was overwhelmed by the power of the crowd's response.

People kept coming and coming and when we left to march together down University Avenue we were 60,000 strong: there was the rabbi-to-be with a sign quoting Leviticus on one side and Stevie Wonder on the other, the Anglican priest with the rainbow Eucharistic stole, the ninety year old grandmother in a wheelchair pushed by her daughter, the little boy with the sign that said "Be Nice," the teens strewing rose petals in front of the coffin marked "Patriarchy," and the woman with the sign that read, "They tried to bury us. But they didn't know we were seeds." There were flags from unions (CUPE, OPSEU, OFL), LGBT+ rainbow flags, and women's groups; there were signs for Black Lives Matter, First Nations groups, and there were Muslim women in hijabs. There were teachers and labourers. I was awed by the creativity of the costume and signs. We marched. We sang. We shouted. Peacefully. We made superfluous the mounted police in riot gear near City Hall.



The throng filled Nathan Phillips' Square at City Hall. There were more speeches and the promise of future gatherings. And we dispersed. Peacefully.

Had this taken place in Toronto alone it would be significant. But similar marches, all organized by women, took place across the globe. Reports vary, but estimates suggest there were some three to six million participants worldwide. Amsterdam, London, Saskatoon, and even Antarctica held marches.

Three to six million voices crying out! What do I make of this as a person of faith? The experience has ignited hope and raised questions.

First, I am led to ask, "Is the Church listening? Can we discern the signs of the times?" Those signs are not to be found inside our church buildings. They are more likely to be found among "the ones who've cried...(and) the ones who've died/trying to set the angel in us free," or, as Bruce Cockburn suggests elsewhere, perhaps from the voices of marginalized poets: "gay...drugged...female.../ slave or free/peaceful or disorderly/...you need him to show you new ways to see." Can we hear the voices of those calling from the margins? (Bruce Cockburn, *Maybe the Poet, Stealing Fire*, 1984)

Second, I do not believe the March was about party politics. It may have been generated by election rhetoric, but it was about more than election politics. It was about a vision of a society marked by dignity, respect, love, and diversity. It was about recognizing the humanity of each person, about love and no one being left behind. It was about the polis, the community of persons. It was about people connecting and longing for a new vision for humanity. It demonstrated spiritual hunger and hope. In the language of faith, it was about the Kingdom of God.

Third, it was organized by women. Women who wanted to ensure we include all those who society has relegated to the margins. Passionate women brought together First Nations groups, people of colour, immigrants, those without legal status, those who don't conform to gender norms, and many more. In their vision everyone has a right to public space. Can we embrace this feminine wisdom and learn from it?

Thomas Merton, in his remarkable poem *Hagia Sophia* (<http://www.unz.org/Pub/Ramparts-1963mar-00065>), depicts Wisdom as feminine. He writes: "...Wisdom cries out to all who will hear...and she cries out particularly to the little, to the ignorant and the helpless..." But there is risk in not discerning Wisdom's voice: "...He who has defended himself, fought for himself, guarded himself, loved himself alone...is killed at last by exhaustion." But those who can hear her voice, "...will have awakened not to conquest and dark pleasure but to the impeccable pure simplicity of One consciousness in all and through all: one Wisdom, one Child, one Meaning, one Sister." There is potential to experience the Divine and the human in a new way!

Can we put aside our political opinions, our economic theories, our cynicism about the efficacy of protest, and just listen? Can we hear the longing for something better emerging from a Western society whose social fabric has been stretched and torn? Can we hear the fears of those who feel they may be left behind or shoved to the margins? God "speaks to us gently in ten thousand things, in which His light is one fullness and one Wisdom" suggests Merton. And if we can hear it, how will we respond? I don't mean respond with some definitive religious answer—because we don't have one.

Can we, as church, listen and hold those longings and fears in silence? Not the silence of being overwhelmed, but in a prayerful, contemplative silence in

the presence of God. A silence that waits, a silence that is pregnant with possibility. And in that silence, can we hear the resonances between the wisdom of women who brought together so many diverse groups and the Hagia Sophia who is "the inexhaustible source of creative realizations...the mercy of God in us...(who) does in us a greater work than that of Creation: the work of new being in grace, the work of pardon, the work of transformation..."

The hopes expressed in the March were a response to human brokenness that yields to fear and shows itself in the sins named in the call and response. Can we stand in solidarity and also name those sins? But more importantly, can we see how, in our actions, inaction, and silence, the church (and each of us as individuals) share in those sins? Could our gift be to model for the Marchers what repentance looks like? Could we model what forgiveness and new life look like?

Can we be a community that offers safe space? Can we be a church that offers—without cost or expectation—contemplative space that nourishes deep spiritual longings and creates a framework for fruitful action? Can our church building be a place of meeting, welcome, and safety for those outside the boundaries of the church who long for the Kingdom of God?

In a gathering of such diversity, unity will never be uniformity. Patience and creativity will be required. Has the church any wisdom or experience to contribute?

There is tension here. We are living between our torn social fabric and the vision of the heavenly banquet to which all are invited. "Why," laments Cockburn, "does history take such a long, long time?" Inside our walls we work towards that vision by feeding the hungry, assisting refugees, advocating for our First Nations sisters and brothers, and learning to live responsibly in God's creation. But what about outside our walls? When women march again, will we be there—not as individuals, but as church, to hear with compassion and love the longing for something better? Are we willing to go into the streets and add our voices?



Will you let me be your Servant?

Peter Bennett

In January, I was asked to lead the prayers of the people at the 9.30AM service. It's a task I love to do, because it obliges me to dig deeply into the day's lectionary readings, and hold its message up against the news of the day or week. I also try and anticipate what the homilist might say. Most of the time I come close, but on this Sunday I was totally out to lunch. When Ann Jervis started to preach, I thought, 'she's preaching on the wrong lectionary!' I thought the readings were all about servant leadership, but Ann went in another direction. 'Hang on, Peter. Don't panic. Just listen. She'll say something you can hang the prayers

on.' Sure enough, she did and I was able to weave some of her ideas into the prayers. She reminded us of the presence of God's love in all that we do, and all the relationships we enter.

I tell this story because it, and this time in the liturgical year, illustrates a number of themes about stewardship and servant ministry. I thought I was prepared and equipped to lead the prayers. Ann was certainly prepared and equipped to deliver the homily, but we could have been two ships passing in the night during that service, had not the Holy Spirit entered the mix, opening my eyes (and ears) to a different possibility, a new way.

During the season of Epiphany, we hear of some unlikely characters or very ordinary people who are seemingly unlikely candidates for leadership. John the Baptist would probably be classified as ripe for a psychiatric assessment, but there he is, preaching, cajoling, warning, and preparing the way for someone greater than him. Jesus is probably causing his parents untold amounts of grief, but somehow, they are smart enough to give Him the latitude to develop his gifts of leadership. However, that leadership gift is suspect, because where does he go to look for leaders (disciples)? Not to the temple, not among the learned, not to the Jewish authorities. He calls on some fishermen, a tax collector, and really ordinary men and women to join his circle. I'm named after the first disciple, Simon Peter, and as I

think of Peter's early life I think, 'There's still hope for me! I could still turn out ok!' By all accounts, he appears not to be a very good fisherman, his nets always coming up empty. He's impetuous, saying or doing something foolish, getting himself (and others) into trouble. And yet, and yet.... who is chosen to lead the church after the ascension?

In a previous parish, the servers were all teenagers. You could dress them up in a nice alb, but they were still teenagers. High-top sneakers (untied of course), fidgeting and poking each other, thinking nobody could see them in the corner of the sanctuary, hidden behind the choir stalls. In short, unlikely servant leaders. On one particular Sunday, the rector was away, and the guest preacher was celebrating. Suddenly, during the prayer of consecration, he collapsed. Boy, did those boys spring to attention! Clothes were loosened. Water was fetched.

One of them ran to the phone and called 911. Others knew the cars had to be cleared from the driveway and the gate unlocked to allow for the ambulance to get to the side door. In short, they had leadership thrust upon them, and they responded, using gifts they probably didn't know they had, and which I assumed they did not possess. Where did that come from? Why were they called? All I say is, thank God they were!

We have just finished Vestry. Recruiting people to assume leadership roles is one of the tasks of outgoing leadership. When I ask

someone to consider joining the stewardship committee, as often as not the response is a variation of, 'Why me? I don't really know anything about fundraising' or 'I'm really not comfortable talking to people about money.' Precisely! It's the other gifts I see in you that I want. Exercising servant ministry is really a discovery process. You discover gifts you didn't think you had. You are thrust outside your comfort zone. You form relationships with people who can assist you on the journey. You deepen your relationship with God.

This community is in a time of transition. Old leaders are stepping aside. Transitional leadership has held us together and kept our eyes on the future. New leadership is here or is imminent. Vestry is that time to acknowledge the gifts of time, talent, and treasure that all in this community have offered or are about to offer. My prayer is that each of us will look for signs of God's love in our

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lives, because it is this love that enables us to offer our gifts in joyful service.

I conclude with words from Paul's letter to the Romans 12.9-21. To those who serve, thank you. To those who are led by our servant leaders, let this be your guide.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one

another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Peter is the former chair of the stewardship committee and has been a key part of helping us understanding our role in being good stewards of all of our resources. ☒

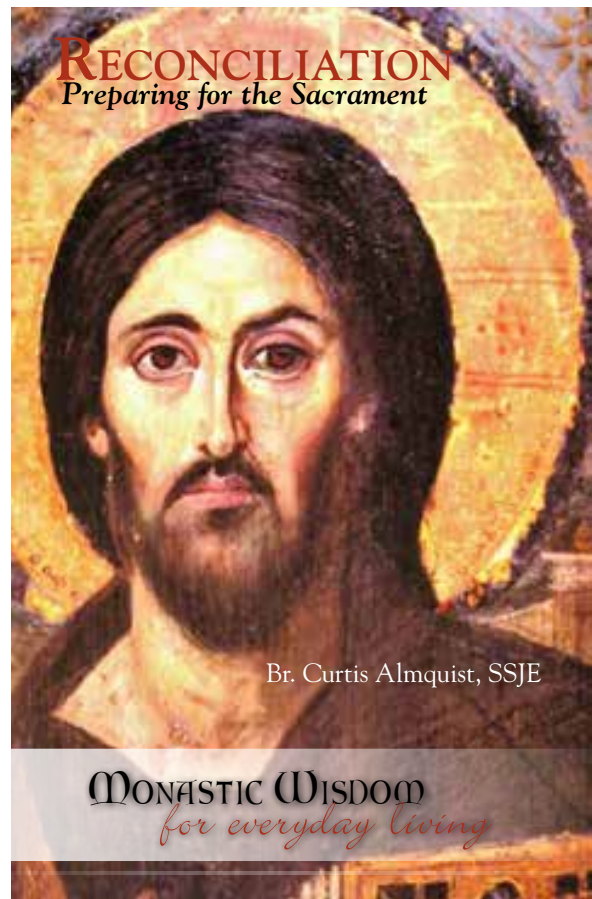
All May. Some should. None must.

This saying is attributed to Queen Elizabeth I. It is thought to be her response, when, pressed during the debates of the reformation years, and asked if she thought members of the Church of England ought to seek out private confession.

Personal, and private confession and absolution, called the Sacrament of Reconciliation or the Reconciliation of a Penitent, has always been a part of our religious heritage. But it is not well understood or widely practiced by most Anglicans. Sometimes, for any number of reasons, an individual would like to have time with a priest, to name and confess shortcomings, unburden themselves of guilt, and seek advice. Most importantly, they come seeking counsel and they need to hear, quite intentionally, a reminder of God's promise of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

During Holy Week, you may have noticed that we schedule times when a priest is available to hear confessions. And it is available by request throughout the year. If you've ever wondered about this practice and would like to know more about it, consider picking up a copy of the booklet **Reconciliation: Preparing for**

the Sacrament. Copies will be available at the back of the church beginning in Lent. This resource was prepared by Br. Curtis Almquist of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (also called the Cowley Fathers). It is an understanding of the sacrament from a particularly Anglican lens. Please help yourself. ☒



A peek into the Sacristy:

or what's going on in that room off the Chancel?*

Anne Evers

Each Easter Eve, for the past few years, the catechumen have signaled their incorporation into the



worshiping community by dressing the chancel, which had been stripped bare on Maundy Thursday. When I am rehearsing these women and men of various ages and church backgrounds, there is often a nervous hesitation to handle the “holy things.” I try to assure them, but I think we could all benefit from some demystifying of the objects

and space we use in our worship.

The most important thing to remember is that the Eucharist is a meal: we break bread and wine together and share it. Like any meal, we need a space to gather (the chancel), and a table on which to put the food (the altar). We need dishes:



Something to hold the bread: the basket for loaves, or the *ciborium* for wafers.

Something to hold the wine: the *cruet* and the *carafe*.

A plate for distributing the bread: the *paten*.

A cup sharing the wine: the *chalice*.

Because we want the symbol of “all sharing in the one cup,” there is usually one chalice—the Principal Chalice—on

the altar, along with one or more carafes. After the blessing (consecration), the wine in the carafe is poured into the other chalices so communion can be distributed more quickly.

This is a rather fancy meal, so we also need tablecloths and the good napkins.

Tablecloth: the *fair linen*, which covers the top of the altar, laid over the frontal—that decorative cover on the altar.

Placemat: the fair linen is large and a chore to clean, so we protect it with a smaller cloth (changed at each service) called the *corporal*. That name, which comes from the Latin word for body, refers to this cloth's other function: to catch any wine or bread (the body of Christ) that might fall.

Napkins: *purificators*. Honestly, they are just napkins.

These are collectively called “the linens”—hand-sewn and embroidered from lovely Irish linen—and we have a team of parishioners who wash and irons these each week. This can be very labour-intensive, in particular when there are heavy lipstick stains on the purificators.

Lids: for some reason (possibly to keep out flies!), we have a tradition of putting a lid, known as a *pall* (and yes, this is the same word as the cover we place on caskets at a funeral), on our chalices.

Cup decoration: for some of the seasons of the church year we add a cloth covering to the principal chalice. This *veil* matches the colour of the altar frontal.

Some people imbue the dressing of the principal chalice with sacrificial symbolism, but these are later additions to Eucharistic theology, as medieval theology became generally more complex. The goal of the liturgical movement of the 20th century was to put the focus back on the shared meal, literally back into the hands of the laity. This is our space, our meal and our holy things. We should always be respectful, but never intimidated. *The chancel, in case you were wondering, is the “churchy” name for the elevated area where the altar sits. The sacristy is the small room where items needed for worship are stored and prepared. Those of us who spend a lot of time there are sometimes known as “sacristy rats” (a term of endearment, I’m sure).

Anne is the coordinator of the chancel guild, sings in the 11.15AM choir and is regularly scheduled as a preacher at our evening services.



Construction

What a joy it was to have the hoarding down and the front steps ready for use on Christmas Eve. In the weeks since then, the handrails have been installed and the finishing touches on the signage is moving toward completion.



#WelcomeDavid

On Sunday, January 8, the Parish Selection announced that Bishop Patrick Yu has appointed the Rev'd David Giffen as our next incumbent effective March 1, 2017. As a community we have been preparing to welcome David, his wife Heather, and their child Rory to Redeemer.

Born in Glasgow, Scotland into a Roman Catholic family, David came to Canada with his parents as a child, and grew up in the GTA. David joined the Anglican Church of Canada in his early twenties, and answered God's call to ordained ministry shortly thereafter. He holds both



a Bachelor's degree in Theology and a Master of Divinity from Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario.

David has a great passion for telling the transformative story of Jesus and is continually fed by making new and renewed disciples for Him. David began his ministry serving at Saint Paul's Cathedral



(Diocese of Huron). He served as theological student and Assistant Curate and was then appointed Vicar and Priest-in-Charge for the eighteen-month interim period before the appointment of the new Cathedral Dean. Since arriving in the Diocese of Toronto (2010), David has led the process of re-booting the ministry at the Church of the Transfiguration. During their six years together, Transfiguration has grown significantly in size and scope, continually seeking new ways to engage with their neighborhood and community. During his time in Toronto, David has served and led numerous Diocesan and National committees and initiatives, has been a member of the Diocesan Council and Executive Board, and is a clerical representative to Provincial Synod.

Welcome David, Heather and Rory!

Beginning Broken

To my siblings in Christ at the Church of the Redeemer:

It is with great joy that I begin ministry with you on this coming Ash Wednesday as the next Incumbent of your parish. Since the first moment I learned the news of my appointment, my life has been bursting with a busy-ness and preparation it has rarely been filled with before. Saying goodbye to my beloved parish of the Transfiguration; working diligently to build bridges into the Redeemer; I have been seen on-the-go with a pace and Spirit-filled vigour that have had me sprinting towards the starting line.

However, as we move closer to Lent this year, I have been slowed down in a pretty serious way. As much as I am frustrated and displeased with this reality, I will begin among you broken—much more obviously than usual. Having slipped and fallen on a patch of black ice in mid-February, I fractured my ankle in multiple places. When we begin ministry together, I will be coming off surgery, likely be limited to crutches for some time, and preaching and presiding from a chair. As you can imagine, this leaves me feeling quite frustrated, weak and even vulnerable.

I have found myself reflecting on these words from the apostle Paul: "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). These feel like words for me

right now—and I suspect they are for us all. You have invited me to come alongside you in leadership of this community, and I look forward to all the ways I'll have opportunity to point to Jesus' leading in the coming years. But in more ways than I knew or realized when I first received this appointment, in the initial days and weeks of my incumbency, I'm going to need you to help point me there. I will need your grace, care and patience to navigate this uncertain road I've found myself on. I'm going to rely on you to guide me, and be patient with me, and show me what it means to be weak and broken at Redeemer—and to belong.

Being this vulnerable will be a difficult and significant learning experience for me. I often find it difficult in leadership not to rely on appearing strong. But,

as a follower of Jesus and a member of the Christian community, I continue to learn that there is something far better than strength and self-sufficiency. When we are weak, we are forced to rely on the grace of God and the help of one another. When we are broken, we are bound together as one.

So, on March 1, I will begin among you more aware than usual of my human frailty and brokenness. Perhaps you too are conscious of your own—as we begin the journey of Lent together. May we find ourselves bound together as we start down this road of new beginnings. And may we find ourselves redeemed by a Saviour who gathers up every last broken thing and makes all things whole.

David+

You are Invited. . .

Peter Bennett

At our most recent annual Vestry meeting, the parish approved the 2017 Ministry Plan that requires total revenue of \$1,040,000.

Before I speak more of the numbers, I draw my inspiration from the reports from the various ministry areas that are contained in the Vestry report. To highlight one ministry area over another does a disservice to all the diverse ways this community is called to serve in God's name at this corner and beyond. I give thanks to the Board and committee chairs and members who give their time and energy to support these ministries. More particularly, I give thanks to all the members of this community for their constant and faithful participation in this ministry by word, deed, and prayer. Numbers constrain us in calculating the value of this ministry, but I am reminded of the story of Jarius and his daughter. She was very ill, and Jarius sent his servant to Jesus to ask him to come and save his daughter. Jesus responds to the call and starts to follow the servant on the journey back to Jarius' house. Somewhere on the journey through the crowded market, a woman reaches out and touches His garment. Jesus senses the touch, and stops. Neither knows the other, but that random touch is transformative. Jesus had a purpose. He knew where he was going. He knew what had to be done for Jarius' daughter. Yes, the end result was miraculous, but it was that moment on the journey that has an impact on

the unidentified woman. Your words, your deeds, and your gifts of treasure have an immeasurable impact that goes way beyond the number on a budget spreadsheet.

The revenue target we agreed to is the same as 2016, so we know that expenses have been rigorously vetted and kept under control. The issue is revenue. The 2017 number is nine-percent more than we received in 2016. In the past five years, this community has been very generous in its gifts of treasure. The current phase of pledges to *Step into the Future* is coming to an end in 2017. The pledges towards refugee resettlement are concluding this year. We need to ensure that our operating revenue returns to be aligned with the ministry plan which we agreed to at Vestry.

We ask you to review your PAR (pre authorized remittances) or Canada Helps donation levels to ensure they are consistent with your understanding of God's call to you. If you are not a regular donor, we ask you to make that commitment to this community. Each of us is called to respond in faith with your gift of treasure in thanksgiving for all that God has provided. For some of you, a nine-percent increase is a stretch. The response is to be generous to the point that it feels right and good, not because of guilt, but because of gratitude.

I think the best welcome we can provide our next incumbent is a ministry plan that is bold, responsive, and representative of the gratitude we feel for all the gifts we have been given in God's name. The Vestry has taken the first step. Now we ask for your response.

You are invited..... Please, RSVP.

Of Fonts and Swans

Ann Cope

This morning I went for a run.

This is not news. I run almost every day all year 'round. In all weather. Regular workdays and Saturdays. Feast days and holidays. The only day I don't run is Sunday—unless I have a race.

This morning I went for a run.

The routine is the same. The time of day is the same. I am a creature of habit. Monday through Friday the route is through the neighbourhood just north of where I live. Saturday and holiday Mondays, I run to the lake. The time of day is always early in the morning—sometimes before the sun is breaking the horizon.

This morning I went for a run.

In the quiet of the morning before much of the city is even awake I begin. Somewhere along the way my stride evens out, my breathing is easy, by body is at ease and even though I'm in motion—there is stillness. And in the stillness I listen. I listen for God. And in the stillness I call out. I call out to God. In the stillness I pray.

This morning I went for a run.

There is one part of my Saturday run that isn't about running. It is when I pause. The point where it is time to turn around and head back is the beach and there, I pause. I walk to the water, I stand and turn to the sun or the wind and feel it on my face; I close my eyes and listen to the water lapping on the shoreline and the birds calling to each other; I breathe deeply to smell the change of the seasons. In the feel and sound and smell of all that surrounds me—there is stillness.

This morning I went for a run.

I hadn't planned on writing anything for this issue of the newsletter and then I went for a run. And I paused at the beach and I turned my face to the sun and I soaked up the warmth. I closed my eyes and I listened and the birds were singing from the shore I was on to the one at the Island. I breathed deeply and that moment when

one season begins to change to another was on the air. And I listened.

I turned to head back to my run and was drawn further down the beach and there, swimming on the water where the whisper thin layers of ice danced on the surface, were two swans.

And I stopped.

I sat down and I watched them move so gently. I closed my eyes and I felt and listened and breathed in.

And I was still.

When I was ready, I stood up, dusted the sand off, put on my mittens and headed toward the path to continue my run. There was the sound of wind and I turned back to watch the swans rise from the water, their wings propelling them forward and they were on their way.

This morning I went for a run and I was reminded of Lent.

Because, you see, not that long ago an email about upcoming worship services was sent to me and I laughed when I read the subject line as "Fonts and Swans" rather than "Fonts and Swarms." I couldn't figure out what swans had to do with fonts and Lent and Redeemer and then I read the email correctly. And now I knew that it really could have been swans.

In a moment on a beach I was reminded that during the days of Lent, the water from the font will touch us, the prayers of the community will call us to stillness, the music of the liturgies will surround us, the Light of Christ will break through and like the sound of swans taking flight, the Spirit will urge us forward.

This morning I went for a run.

And God reminded me to listen.



Parish Notes

Walking with Refugees

On Wednesday, November 30, in our ongoing *Walking with Refugees* series, we welcomed Ilamaran Nagarasa, a journalist from Sri Lanka who was arrested and jailed for several months after arriving off the coast of British Columbia on the MV Ocean Lady in 2009. We heard Maran's experiences and from lawyers who represent those facing barriers as they seek safety in Canada. Pictured here, in the middle are Allison Rhodes and Catherine Bruce (Lawyers), Ramiya, Dishaly and Maran Nagarasa, surrounded by Redeemerites Heather Steeves, Ruth Dale, Gloria Nafziger, Karen Turner, Peter Dale and Susanna Jacob.



This past autumn, our George Black Fellow, Will Reid and Jenny Danahy were married. From the joy shown in this picture of their wedding day, it is easy to see how wonderful the celebration of the beginning of their married life was. They offer this word of thanks to the community:

To the Redeemer congregation,

Thank you all so much for the love and support you have shown to us on our journey of marriage. Your gift was unexpected but extremely generous! We are so thankful to be a part of a community that is so inclusive, supportive and kind.

*With thanks and love,
Jenny + Will*



MARRIAGE

Karen Elaine Turner and
Heather Christine Steeves

*May their lives together be a sacrament of
your love in this broken world.*

IN MEMORIAM

Donald Scott Affleck

*Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with all your
saints, where there is neither pain nor sorrow nor
sighing, but life everlasting.*

The Right Reverend
Kevin Robertson
and the
Wardens of the Church of the Redeemer
cordially invite you to
the Celebration of New Ministry
and Induction of
The Reverend David Ian Giffen
as the next Incumbent of
the Church of the Redeemer.

162 Bloor Street West, Toronto
Saturday April 29th at 4:30pm
Vigil for Easter III

The Right Reverend William G. Cliff
will be preaching.
Clergy are invited to vest,
the colour being white.
Reception to follow.

Your prayers and presence
are requested.

Worship Services to Note Lent 2017

WE PREPARE FOR LENT *Lent means "spring." Spring is the season of hope, change and new beginnings. During the season of Lent we turn our faces toward Jerusalem and make our way with Jesus to embrace hope, change and new beginnings.*

The Last Sunday after Epiphany and the Burning of the Palms, February 26

The palms from last year's celebration of Palm Sunday are burned after the 9.30 and 11.15AM services in preparation for Ash Wednesday. We also say farewell to our interim priest-in-charge, David Howells.

Mardi Gras, Tuesday, February 28

Come and join us for a Mardi Gras celebration. Mardi Gras or "Shrove Tuesday" marks the eve of our entry into Lent. Pancakes will be served in the narthex between 5.30 and 7.30PM along with build your own sundaes. There will be New Orleans-style Jazz and Chris the balloon artist.

Ash Wednesday, March 1

The Lenten journey begins with Holy Eucharist and imposition of ashes at a Said Eucharist at 7.30AM and Sung Eucharists at 12.15 and 6PM.

Ash Wednesday Discovery Day at the Cathedral

Our Ash Wednesday program for children age six to 14 moves to St James' Cathedral this year. For further information, please speak with Megan.

LENT *We pray. We repent. We give alms.*

Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent

Some of us live near the church or work nearby. Why not consider coming to one of the mid-week services as a way of marking the Lenten journey.

SUNDAYS IN LENT *The penitential rite we use through the days of this season calls us to confess and accept responsibility.*

Rock Eucharist - Sunday, March 19 – 7PM

Join us as the music of James Taylor is woven through the liturgy as the word is proclaimed, the bread is broken and the wine is poured at our 7PM service.

Taize – Sunday, March 26 – 7PM

Candlelight, song, prayer, silence. Come. Be still.

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday – April 9

We enter the city of Jerusalem with Jesus. We cross the threshold of Holy Week. The exhortation on Palm Sunday reminds us of our obligation to enter Holy Week with the fullness of our being. In the evening, at 7PM, we complete the day with Holy Week Vespers. We feature Bach's *Cantata 12 Weinen, Klagen, Borgen, Zagen*.

Monday in Holy Week, Tuesday in Holy Week and Wednesday in Holy Week

Two celebrations of the Eucharist will be held each day at 12.15PM and 6PM. The ministry of Reconciliation of the Penitent (Private Confession) will be offered on each of the three days; 10.30 to 11.30AM and 4.30 to 5.30PM in the private space off the east transept.

Maundy Thursday – April 13

We gather at 7.30PM. We wash the disciples' feet, we remember the Last Supper, we strip the altar, and we watch and pray in the garden.

Good Friday – April 14

Two Good Friday celebrations will call us to be still, to descend and to let go. A service for all ages will take place at 9.30AM and a reflective celebration at 12 noon.

The Great Vigil – April 15 at 9 PM

The darkness is pierced by light. The silence is broken by the telling of an old story of redemption. We will renew our baptismal vows and prepare to engage the world as people of Spirit and Transformation. We will gather around the table and the feast will continue with our famous Redeemer Easter Vigil party.

Easter Day – April 16

Join us at 6AM for the sunrise service. The community continues our celebration of the resurrection at services at 8, 9.30 and 11.15AM (the latter service will be Solemn Eucharist with incense)

THE SEASON OF EASTER

Sunday, April 23

Our catechumen will reaffirm their baptismal faith or be received into the Anglican Communion. The Rt. Rev. Terence Finlay will be our presider and preacher at the 9.30AM service.

Rock Eucharist – Sunday, April 23 – 7PM

Come back in the evening for a Rock Eucharist with our friends from Wine Before Breakfast sharing in the leadership of the service. We gather at 7PM.

Celebration of New Ministry and Induction of The Reverend David Ian Giffen – Saturday, April 29 – 4.30PM

See previous page for details.

Sunday, April 30 – 7PM

We gather for an Easter Carol Service at 7 PM.

Rock Eucharist - Sunday, May 7 – 7PM

The music of The Beatles will be featured at the Rock Eucharist this evening. Join us as word is proclaimed, we share in bread blessed and broken, wine blessed and poured, and we are sent out into the world to proclaim the gospel.