



the

Gathering

The Newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

Pentecost 2017



The Language of Pentecost

Scripture tells us that on the morning of Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together, confused and bewildered, trying to decide what it was they were supposed to do next. In just fifty days, their leader had broken bread with them, been dragged away before their eyes, and been beaten within an inch of his life. Jesus had then been crucified, risen from the dead, ate with them, preached and proclaimed again, and had finally ascended into heaven—being overwhelmed would have been the least of how they felt.



I imagine some of them were certain it was time to build their public profile, to go out and proclaim the Good News. Others were likely content to wait—for Jesus had promised that he would return. Some were probably just so tired, and others torn apart from the struggle. But what each one of them shared, what they couldn't help but wonder, was, "Where do we go from here?"

In the midst of their unknown future and letting go of their past came the Spirit they had been promised from above; a baptism like none they had seen before. If they thought it was going to get *simpler*, just because God had kept Jesus' promise, or somehow *easier*, just because God hadn't broken his word, then they had forgotten the kinds of disruptions to everyday-life the risen one had always caused. Because this Spirit which had come upon them, this Spirit which had descended from above, had each of the gathered disciples, each of his first beloved, speaking in new languages and with different tongues.

What languages did they speak and what distant words did foreigners understand? I'm not sure we can be certain of the answer. But, what we do know is this: the gift that they had been given and the languages that they could now share gave all of God's children a new and prophetic voice—for the words "Peace be with you," and "The Love of Jesus Christ" were heard and understood in every kind of speech.

In the ever-changing world we find ourselves in, almost two thousand years later, we too are called to speak God's love to the world with a renewed language of Pentecost. Whether it is through the tools of modern innovation through social media (such as Facebook and Twitter and Instagram), or by engaging life at the

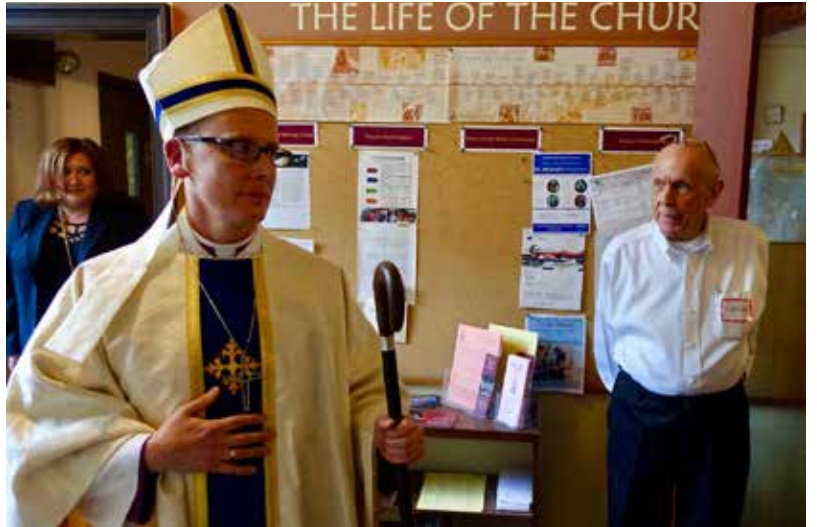
corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street (with the 45,000+ people who pass by our building every day) or through the ways we live and love in our daily lives—God is tirelessly at work to place a Pentecost tongue upon our lips, so the message of Jesus can be heard and understood no matter what device we're using or what language we speak.

The gathered disciples at Pentecost had every reason to be afraid. The idea of friends and family speaking to one another in foreign and strange languages must have been shocking and caused great distress. I don't imagine sharing the words of faith has ever been easy for Christians (whether today or in that first upper room), but just like the disciples of that first Pentecost morning, we too are called to speak words given to us from above. We too are called to understand new languages. We too are called to share God's Spirit at the corner. We too are called to share in God's love for the world.

As we enter the season after Pentecost in this first year together, let us embark on a time of Pentecost of our own. Let us move forward to speak with continued vision and a language of mission—always pausing to listen for God's gentle whisper—and then filled with the Spirit and renewed with a voice for the world, speak with our lips and live with our lives, God's abundant peace and Christ's eternal love.

David+

Celebration of New Ministry







Cree Scholar Speaks about Indigenous Spirituality

Pamela Thomson

Dr. Blair Stonechild, professor at First Nations University of Canada and author of *“The Knowledge Seeker: Embracing Indigenous Spirituality”* spoke earlier this year at Regis College. Some members from Redeemer attended this event where they learned about the challenge of reconciling with Indigenous concepts of spirituality.

A member of Muscowpetung First Nation in Saskatchewan, Dr. Stonechild discussed the “spiritual Holocaust” rooted in the Vatican’s Doctrine of Discovery which disrupted the concept of a web of life without hierarchy and born from Spirit. Harmony was present until the Abrahamic religions imposed themselves and sidelined a rational and real system of beliefs. Following the concept of the medicine wheel, we are all Spirit Beings who come from the stars to enter a physical body temporarily on earth. The price of being given an earthly body is the separation in time and space from Creator. Our duty, then, is to find our way back to Creator by observing the Law of the Great Peace. We do this by following the seven Grandfather teachings in order to discover and nurture proper relations. The Wheel (or Spiral in many American Indian cultures) shows us how to become balanced by attending to mental, spiritual, emotional and physical health through fasting, prayer, dreams and visions, and ceremony.


Those attending the lecture learned that the use of Lacombe’s Ladder in Roman Catholic residential schools resulted in cultural colonization by anthropomorphizing Spirit and reflecting “the dark side” as Indigenous. Christianity places humans at the centre from which all else is reflected. Spirit is seen in relation to self rather than as one with the land, the environment and the community of people and animals, birds, fish. When

Spirit is the centre, intelligence is heightened. Had Christianity listened and learned, the adaptation to the industrial revolution, and the evolution to modernity would have proceeded without genocide, racism and the snake of wanting more and more power. The Indigenous ability to adapt leads to continual healing of relationships through spiritual refreshment leading to access to the greater unseen consciousness of Spirit. The continual rebirth of Spirit works through the Wheel to the stars.

Dr. Stonechild called for recognition of this rational spirituality as valid, as viable and adaptable. We must

respect ceremonial practices, which appeal to a higher power above this world - the Creator who sees all, hears all and allows for consequences within ceremony. Spirit is energy however it is lived out. Language preservation is vital to restoring understanding and living out Indigenous spirituality. The Spirit Helper heals through ceremony and prayer.

The group was left with the question: Why is there resistance to blend spiritual concepts? All thought and belief is from the same Creator. Indigenous healers and medicines need to be integrated into our health system in Indigenous territories. In view of the on-going work of the

Anglican Sacred Circle and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, let us hear! 

Further information about Lacombe’s Ladder is available here: (<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/News/spotlight/01-2009.shtml>)

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Healing Through Creative Arts

Jola Mecani



“It’s time to make art. My soul is hungry!” He said, as he walked past me and headed for the arts and crafts closet in the activity room. His eyes darted between the Sharpees, numerous pencils, the sea of crayons, and the tubes of paint. He settled for cream-coloured paper and a few pencil crayons. I watched in silence beside him, afraid to break his trance. He sat for the next hour circling the crayons around and around on the paper. Patterns of colour began to emerge. I took a seat and placed my cup of coffee beside him. ‘What are you drawing? What is it supposed to be?’ I asked.

‘I don’t know yet, just colouring right now...’ He replied.

‘Everything ok?’ I felt concerned.

‘No. I didn’t sleep last night.’ The pressure on his crayon relaxed a little. He looked up, with a hint of confusion across his eyes. His eyes were heavy from lack of sleep, and episodes of paranoia he had been experiencing lately. Drawing helped him relax, and reach a slightly more comfortable place.

A lot of laughter is shared between participants, volunteers, and staff between the early morning coffee to the clearing of the tables at 11.45AM. It is easy to

forget, at times, the depth of difficult experiences, pain, and suffering many have endured and continue to endure outside of our confinements. The smiling, laughing faces mask layers and layers of trauma many have experienced in various ways. It is hard to remember the state of emotional fragility when one contemplates those who experience homelessness.

One of the valuable lessons that emerges from a space such as this one is that pain, suffering and trauma can manifest itself in exceptionally artistic and creative ways allowing opportunity for connecting and healing. Trauma has been considered a root cause of homelessness from a series of losses and disappointments along the way. Equally important to note is that experiencing homelessness on a consistent basis leads to further trauma.

In recent years, art therapy has become a creative method for self expression. Art therapies can include art, music, drama, dance, poetry, creative writing, bibliotherapy, and play within the context of psychotherapy, rehabilitation and medicine.

Art therapy is successful because it permits a relationship to form between a traumatized individual

and their audience. It is often very difficult for a person to verbalize their experiences, or effectively express their pain, and art can act as a safe medium to do so. Art becomes a stage for the individual where they can create parameters to contain their story, and later on share it. The practise of art therapy has been in existence for many years, but recent studies have provided more empirical evidence to support its success.

Art therapy remained empirically unaddressed for many years for a number of reasons. This absence can be explained by a lack of art therapists trained in experimental research methods (Tibbetts, 1995), and the inherent difficulty in measuring outcome variables. Some art therapists have discussed that outcomes of interest to them which are deeply rooted in abstract psychological constructs (e.g. self-actualization), cannot be adequately measured by empirical methods (Wolf, 1995). There still remain gaps in the literature, but art therapy has certainly gained more credibility with the increase in published, randomized, controlled clinical trials that test its efficacy (Reynolds et al., 2000).

In the context of the drop-in, art therapy takes on a less supervised model, but rather emerges as a self-regulated exercise where participants draw on their talents to share their stories, and alleviate feelings of anxiety, paranoia, and pain. Art is also shared among participants to bridge social gaps and connect to one another on a friendly level. Better yet, art more often than not, also draws out the typically more withdrawn and socially isolated participants within the space. On one such occasion, the drop-in was filled with music as a staff member led a sing-along. He was playing the guitar and enthusiastically singing a good ol' classic:

*Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (Such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
They livin' it up at the Hotel California
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
Bring your alibis...*

Immediately one of the more social types jumped in, hands raised in the air, swaying, a little bit of singing and clapping in between the rhythms. Already the mood in the room shifted, uplifting those tired slumped shoulders. Heads were raised in curiosity,

spoonfuls of oatmeal resting in mid-air. What caught most people's attention that morning was a certain individual's participation. A peaceful, more on the quiet side man who rarely shows interest in drop-in activities or partakes in group conversations stood up and walked over to the singer, reached out behind the singer's back, and retrieved a copy of the printed songs which were prepared to make it easier for participants to follow along. The man returned to his table, and in his way, continued following along, reading the songs

as the singer played the guitar. That moment represented a small victory for the drop-in. For a moment, his attention was drawn to music and he was involved in his community, partaking in a shared, happy moment.

Staff can face challenging moments in the drop-in addressing the needs of a vulnerable community, particularly during the hard, cold, gruelling winter months which we can all admit seem never to come to

an end. After spending the night in the cold, exposed to hypothermia and frostbite, participants pour into the drop-in space exhausted from not being able to rest overnight, feeling hungry and vulnerable. Walking over to someone with a cup of joe and a cheery good morning won't always work on mornings such as these.

Too often, there is tension in the room from the first few moments the doors open, cooking up a perfect recipe for misunderstandings and conflict. Bringing everyone out of this dark space usually takes a few tries and there is not always a successful ending. Having coffee and tea readily available is a must, but what usually serves as the cherry on top of the cake, is bringing out a few pieces of paper and some crayons and engaging everyone in a small creative art-filled activity. It distracts everyone from the night they had to spend in the cold, and focuses them in a more positive way on the opportunity at hand. It allows them to relieve some anxiety and ultimately feel more relaxed. Not everyone participates, but the few that do produce pieces that will take your breath away.

They partake in imaginative articulation, each sharing a part of their story. One such gentleman, once started on a project, will pour himself into his work with the work ethic comparable to a high-standing business banker at some office on Bay Street. He manages himself, his creativity, his energy and resources in a rather impressive manner. He works to his own rhythm,

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without resentment of the time and effort poured into the work. His work ethic, combined with the magnificent pieces he produces on a non-stop basis speaks volumes to his character and his story. He is an artist, and a man with a past filled with obstacles. His sharp tongue is his primary defense weapon when his vulnerability begins to pour through his work. Art can perhaps tell too much sometimes.

Another gentleman sitting close by, will pull out his favorite car magazines skimming for the shiniest model, and begin to sketch armed with a well sharpened pencil and an all-but-consumed eraser. His focus is most certainly unmatched, but in the lowest of voices, he will politely answer your questions. Once, as he sketched, he was approached by another participant who was keen on observing his work. At first there was only silence between the two and you could almost hear the pencil scratching against the paper as it slowly gave way to the image of a red 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air Convertible, a classic model in the early days. The man continued to polish the edges of the car, when murmurs began to emerge between the two, each sharing their childhood dream model cars, diving further into their family lives. Raised as foster kids, they took comfort in recounting old stories to an understanding ear. Perhaps their problems were not all solved at once that day, but their shared love of cars and the peace that came from producing an art piece representative of one's dreams certainly brought out their sensitive natures.

It's a great thing to tell a story and to share a piece of one's identity with an interested party. There is healing and self-affirmation that takes place in such moments. When one can't sketch and draw, one can most certainly write. It is through the beauty of poetry that one such fellow releases the anguish he feels deep inside his soul.

On first glance, this man rubs you the wrong way. His demeanour is not always the kindest, and

he can certainly portray himself as narcissistic and manipulative at best. You can't imagine that he is capable of sympathizing with another or feeling shame over his distasteful actions. This impression melts like snow under sunshine when you sit to read the words

he pours straight from his heart onto the paper. The first few times he was approached by new staff, he grunted them away. Eventually, after a few thoughtful stares, he walked over and put down on the table a few pieces of crumpled paper with blue ink scribbled across it. We huddled around it in curiosity and began to read: His compassion, his shame, his fear of success, his pain, his fear of existing, his sadness, his loneliness. We felt humbled. This man had shared a raw part of himself and his story with us that morning. He had extended a hand towards us welcoming us to build a friendship with him, or at least an understanding.

Art is our one true global language. It knows no nation. It favors no race. It acknowledges no class. It speaks to our need to heal, reveal and transform. It transcends our ordinary lives and lets us imagine what is possible. It creates a dialogue between individuals, and communication between communities. It allows us to see and to listen to each other.

Richard Kamler, Artist

Mr. Kamler has summarized well phenomena that weaves its way into our drop-in community leaving traces of healing and transcendence

along the way. There is beauty in pain and art is the medium servicing this call for self-expression. Art, in its numerous forms, has provided a voice for those living on the margins to share their story, and let me tell you, it is one form of beautiful storytelling that you surely do not want to miss. ❏

Jola Mecani is a member of the staff as a Drop-in worker who provides support to the drop-in program and those who participate in it.



There is beauty in pain and art is the medium servicing this call for self-expression.



Burning of the Palms





Such a Ridiculous Thing to Do

Ali McIntosh

LAST SUMMER I WALKED. I walked until my feet were bruised and blistered. Until my shoes wouldn't lace up because my toes had swollen three sizes and the two pairs of socks that I had were wearing through. On the first day I fell and devastated my knee; it bruised in a way that made others cringe when they saw it. I walked with one walking stick, then two, then tensor bandages on my knees and anti-inflammatory creams massaged onto my burning tendons. Every day I tried to outrun the sun and failed. Every day I would sigh over my shoulder as the first scorching rays conjured drops of perspiration on the back of my neck. Every day I walked, and it was hot, and my feet hurt. I limped along and defiantly couldn't stop smiling because despite being the most broken I had ever felt I was thriving.

I walked the *Camino de Santiago*, an 800km pilgrimage from the Pyrenees mountains in France to the Cathedral of St. James in Santiago. It was ludicrous, invigorating, and a living, breathing Eucharist. Something changed the moment I took my first step along the way and entered into something bigger than myself. Everyone on the path became my brothers and sisters and when they rejoiced, I rejoiced. I made many life-long friends, shared

meals with bizarre and fascinating people from all over the world, and found myself in countless outlandish situations. I was chased out of a hostel by a little old Spanish woman, had not one but two sandwiches stolen by cats, and we found ourselves entertained for a night by a local clown who keeps sick children company in the hospital. Every strange encounter left me perplexed but feeling so very alive and feeling closer to everyone I was journeying with.

It wasn't all strolling through the countryside and singing *Kumbaya*. There were times I was so overwhelmed I wanted to punch something, and there were many days I needed to rest even though I didn't want to. Every single evening presented new barriers in language and resources. Illness, weather, bed bugs, and conflicts re-defined normal for us each morning. We shared in the pain and setbacks of the trail and were loath to leave anyone behind. When I was most injured I was offered the most help and when my companions were struggling I offered whatever gifts I could. There was an intentional call to move into the suffering of others that I've encountered only a few times before, and despite the secular identity of most of the people

walking I could not help but be reminded of the teaching of Jesus.

When I returned home what I missed most were the lovingly haphazard shrines along the sides of the path. Little piles of rocks and ribbons with encouraging words had been erected by those who had come before. These were liminal spaces where I could inhale and reflect on whatever bewildering and exciting events had occurred that day. Places along the way where I was reminded to slow down and invite the Spirit in as I invited in these new experiences. I miss these overt reminders to invite God in, especially in my busy Toronto life. I find it much harder to be amazed by each new day when I am repeating the same routine most of the time. So being back in the city I am trying to remind myself to journey a little bit every day, and to pay attention to the shrines along the path. Leading the youth group at Redeemer is a big part of that for me.

SOMETHING MY companions and I kept repeating to each other as we climbed each mountain and woke up for every 5AM start was “it’s just such a ridiculous thing to do”; I have the same sentiment sometimes in youth group. Playing ‘Flame Battlers’

at the fall diocesan retreat and having to file incident report after incident report as the injuries streamed in certainly qualifies as ridiculous. As does regularly swarming our noble volunteers and taking over their kitchens to produce mountains of food for pastoral gifts, fundraising, and the drop-in program. Simple activities can feel ludicrous like losing it playing an epic game of charades, and laughing until we’re crying as one of the group tries to act out The Hamster Dance. I felt absurd during Advent when I couldn’t stop cracking up as one set of youth legs from beneath a papier-mâché camel passed by me and whispered in a deadpan voice “I’ve never felt so alive.” There are little senseless moments that just make me shake my head, and huge questions brought to me that make me reflect on the things I hold in faith. But the wonderful truth is that all of these encounters have transformed and shaped us for the better.

Giving seven teens a very conservative budget in a Whitehorse Walmart and trusting them to work together to buy groceries for the rest of the trip was surprisingly productive. A man with a megaphone announcing on Canada Day that we should get ready for a helicopter to drop 500 pounds of peanuts onto the crowd, which



included two of my youth with peanut allergies, taught me that you really can't plan for everything. Walking around with an eccentric Montrealer who wore a collared shirt and boxer shorts showing us how to remove graffiti with a power washer gave the group a chance to accept leadership from people who don't conventionally look the part. Proclaiming our support of LGBTQ2 issues in open discussion with one of our host churches forced the group to find their voice because they felt they could not stay silent. Planting fields of potatoes and walking through bear territory in order to learn about food security in northern Yukon gave us a chance to learn in community and humility. Continually sleeping on the hard concrete floors of churches, schools, and community centres around the world allows the group to bond through experience, find joy in every mundane task, and stay up way too late asking all the really hard questions. In youth group we intentionally travel into bizarre spaces in order to be removed from our routines so that we can learn to listen and see, and hopefully bring these changes back to our everyday lives.

After walking in the same direction for six weeks I finally sat in the midday pilgrim's mass at the Cathedral of Santiago, next to the bones of St. James, watching eight young men hoist the world's largest thurible 100 feet in the air. I watched the giant incense burner increase in velocity and begin to swing over our heads Phantom of the Opera-style while the organ blared and the ancient wooden pulley system supporting it squealed. I kept repeating in my head, "just such a ridiculous thing to do," and I inexplicably started to cry. I decided that even if I had just walked 800km only to have a giant incense burner crash down and kill me due to outdated engineering it still would have been worth it, because for 45 days I had lived an extraordinary life.

I have been reminded of that moment in Santiago many times this year with the youth—most recently in a game that involves stuffing our faces with a disgusting number of marshmallows and trying to communicate, or spending our long weekend shyly handing out hundreds of sandwiches downtown in Moss Park. I think the moments when we feel most absurd and out of place are the moments when God slips in through our awkwardness and excitement. For lack of wayside shrines, our dismay can remind us to

open our eyes and see what the Spirit is doing in the world, and in us. So, to those in the parish who have helped the youth group journey towards ridiculous situations—a huge thank you. Here's to many more. ☒

Ali spends extraordinary amounts of her time doing ridiculous things with our youth group—and they and we are blessed by this. With her leadership, their hard questions about faith find safe places to be asked; their willingness to serve find places to be lived out; their energy and wonder find places to be shared.



Mardi Gras



HOLY WEEK



Palm Sunday







Easter Vigil



Easter Day



Praying in the Woods: Art, and Social Critique

Paul Pynkoski

In the cycle of nature we have entered Spring. In the liturgical year we are in the season of Easter. Opportunities to reflect on themes of birth, new life, growth, and resurrection abound. There are possibilities in this season to deepen faith and forge a spirituality that honours both nature and the possibility of human transformation.

Are we able to find reliable voices to guide us, pilgrims who have witnessed to the possibilities that emerge if we are attentive to the presence of the divine in nature? Two who have caught my attention are Thomas Merton and Emily Carr. They speak to us in the example of their lives, writing, and art.

Merton (1915-1968) was born in France to artistic parents. He was orphaned by the age of sixteen and raised by guardians. He was expelled from Cambridge, but later studied (and partied) at Columbia. He converted to Catholicism while at Columbia, and in 1941 entered a Trappist monastery in the hopes of seeking God in solitude. He never achieved the type of solitude he envisioned, but he forged a new vision where solitude and engagement with the world were held in a creative tension that allowed for the emergence of wisdom, poetry, and art.

Emily Carr (1871-1945) was born into a wealthy Victoria BC family. She, too, was orphaned in her teens. She convinced her guardian to allow her to travel abroad to study art. Carr was a loner and struggled with depression. She had difficulty forming long term friendships in Victoria and was more comfortable spending time with First Nations people in isolated coastal villages or with the dogs, cats, monkey, and rat that accompanied her on her painting excursions. Carr forged her own way as an artist, in both vision and technique. She enrolled in a writing workshop in her mid-fifties and published her first book at the age of sixty. When she died, she left behind hundreds of canvasses, far more than she had sold during her life.

Merton might seem a likely candidate to provide insights into the Christian spiritual life. Carr, on the surface, seems less so. She left the church in her twenties, lost a position teaching art to women due to her smoking

and swearing in the classroom, and is portrayed by her biographer as a difficult and cantankerous person. Yet there are remarkable similarities in their experience and reflections. Merton, writing on contemplative experience, says, "It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness, and for being...Poetry, music, and art have something in common with the contemplative experience," Hearing that, my mind leaps immediately to Emily Carr. She is an artist of "spiritual wonder" seeking after truth, expressing in her painting a persistent seeking of God in nature.

Finding God in the Woods

Monica Weiss writes that Merton was "intrigued by nature and let it shape his spirituality and consciousness." This was evident from an early age, and after becoming a Trappist the intrigue intensified. He spent over twenty-five years on the grounds of the Abbey of Gethsemani. He was surrounded by woods, creeks, ponds, and rolling hills. He stands in the tradition of the psalmists, who were humbled and in awe when reflecting on creation.

His journal entries frequently speak of the impact of the weather and describe the constant change of the seasons. He says, after noting a temperature of 18F, "I have a real need to know these things because I myself am part of the weather and part of the climate and part of the place, and a day in which I have not shared truly in all of this is no day at all. It is certainly part of my life of prayer."

His Benedictine vow of stability (staying in one place to seek God) allowed for a heightened attentiveness to the landscape. "Magenta mist outside my windows. A cock crows over at Boone's. Last evening when the moon was rising saw the soft burning red of a doe in the field...Everything, every moment was completely lovely." (DWL, pp.180)

He sees "magenta mist" and "soft burning red;" he hears a cock crow and feels the eighteen degree cold. All this becomes for him the stuff of prayer. Indeed, getting permission to leave the monastery enclosure and

pray in the woods was a turning point in his spiritual development. He comments, "As soon as I get away from people the presence of God invades me."

Emily Carr made regular trips along the coast of British Columbia to paint the totems and remnants of First Nations villages. She moved beyond the abandoned villages and began to paint the forest, sensing there was something more. "I have done a sketch today of young pines at the foot of the forest...young pines full of light and joyousness." She asks herself, "What is the vital thing the woods contain, possess, that you want? Why do you go back and back to the woods unsatisfied, longing to express something that is there and not finding it?" Echoing Merton's union with weather and landscape, she writes, "God is in them all...Every living thing is God made manifest..." Carr, as artist, challenges herself, writing "Search for the reality of each object, that is, its real and only beauty; recognize our relationship with all life; say to every animate and inanimate thing 'brother'; be at one with all things, finding the divine in all."

The search for the God she seemed unable to find in a church building led Carr into the woods and ultimately, after studying Theosophy, back into a Christ-centred spirituality. She writes, "a live Christ leads you to God" and then speaking of her heart as a garden, says "Down in my garden is neither creed, nor sex, nor nationality, nor age—no language even—there is just love." Following a 1935 sketching trip she quotes Psalm 132: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. Lo...we found it in the fields of the wood. We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, into thy rest." She continues, integrating the psalmist's prayer with her own, "Surely the woods are God's tabernacle. We will see him there. He will be in his place. It is God in his woods tabernacle I long to express...Everyone has his own special tabernacle set aside for God in the place where He seems nearest."

Monk and artist, following their intuitions, move from being in the woods to a sense of communion with the divine.

Contemplative Experience and Artistic Expression

Carr is best known as painter, Merton as a writer. Less well known are Carr the writer and Merton the visual artist. Emily Carr began to pursue writing as her health waned, making her expeditions into the BC woods more infrequent. She won the Governor General's Award for

her short story collection, *Klee Wyck*. Thomas Merton was as well known for his poetry as for his writings on spirituality. He is less well known for his drawings, print work, and photography.

Carr's experience of God's presence in the woods is expressed in her painting. Her forest studies from the mid 1930s pulse with life, allowing line, colour, and light to express the joy and awe she feels. In "Forest," the trunks of cedars stand like the columns of a gothic church, while their foliage is represented as a living swirling mass. The varied greens and shafts of light form arches and aisles that draw us deep into the interior of the woods, and



one has the sense that everything pulses with the force of life. "Logger's Cull" depicts a swirling sky and trees reaching up to meet it. The beauty of sky and trees is contrasted with stumps in the foreground, the remnants of technology's impact.



Merton's photographs demonstrate simplicity and beauty in both landscape and everyday objects. His photo of a path through the woods shows sparse trunks framing a snow-covered path. The most remarkable thing about it, to my eye, is that at the particular instant the photo was taken the sun struck the trees, creating a pattern of stripes across the snow and leaving the impression of a moment of perfect stillness. Another

photo, of an old basket balanced on its edge, creates through sunlight and shadow a perfect contrast between the basket and its silhouette. It allows an old, worn implement to become a thing of beauty.



Merton has the spiritual and theological vocabulary to articulate the richness of his experience. His journals witness to hours of meditation in the woods, and his writings include entire books devoted to bringing contemplative experience from the monastery into the lives of non-monks. Carr, on the other hand, does not have that vocabulary. She reflects more the experience of the artist seeking truth, or the seeking of ordinary people. But there is no doubt that her experience was deeply contemplative. She writes that she desires “to be still enough to see and hear and know the glory of the sky and earth and sea.” She speaks of



“intense striving to get in touch,” and in another place of how she sat and sat in the forest (smoking cigarettes) until at last the landscape revealed itself to her.

Contemplative Experience and Social Criticism

Merton and Carr both move, prayerfully, from merely being in the woods, towards a unifying contemplative experience. Their experience of communion, however, is not an end in itself. It is an experience they mediate through their art, but they also bear witness to a transformation of vision. Communion leads to a heightened sense of those places in our world where there is brokenness and they are compelled to speak to it.

Merton became critical of modern technology and its effect on humans and the environment. In a passage of poetic prose he contrasts dawn and the waking of the birds, in communion with the divine, with the buzzing of electric shavers, the ticking of clocks and our obsession with being in control. He spoke out against the Viet Nam war, nuclear weapons proliferation, and racism. Carr was critical of the logging industry, speaking of tree

stumps in her paintings as “screamers” and comments, “It’s a horrible sight to see a tree felled...as you pass among them you see their screamers sticking up...they are their own tombstones and their own mourners.” Her stories of her trips to coastal villages to paint totems have a strong undercurrent of criticism of colonialism and of missionary endeavours on First Nations culture.

The critical stances taken by Carr and Merton were the direct result, I believe, of their contemplative experience of God in woods and forest. Carr’s criticisms have the feel of authentic protest, and although her writing does not take her beyond protest, her art demonstrates a sense of hope that the force of the forest can overcome and heal the damage done by humanity. Merton, in his essays, underscores the need for repentance and action, and demonstrates a cautious hope that the groundwork can be laid for a new vision for humanity.

Our Individual Experience

Going to the woods and forest, staying in the woods, and being attentive to what they experienced was not an accident for Carr or for Merton. It was part of an intentional seeking after God. The deepening of faith, the sense of communion, and the shift in social outlook took place not over hours, but years. The expression of their experience was as individual as they were. Merton had an experience of solitude and wholeness that he witnessed to in his poetry and photography. Carr developed a sense of vibrant life and communion that is seen in her paintings and also in her journals when she wrote of the landscapes she viewed. The technologies and social issues they critiqued were specific to their time, location, and experience.

Easter and Spring call us to new life and renewal. A careful reading of Carr and Merton provide a model or framework for what that may look like: Intentional seeking; attentiveness to our particular contexts and especially to nature; praying the psalms, office, and poetry while in that context; allowing the Spirit to guide us towards the truths and means of expression that are particular to our given lives and situations.

Are you feeling called towards a deepening of your experience of God, or being more attentive to creation? A prayerful reading of Merton’s *New Seeds of Contemplation*, *Emblems in a Season of Fury*, or Carr’s *Hundreds and Thousands* might be a good starting point. ■

Paul offers to our community these wonderful, thoughtful reflections on faith and the arts. We are blessed by the ways he offers us new insights to God at work in our world.

From the Street Corner

Ann Cope

It began with ashes.

We piled the palms from last year into the big cauldron and watched as the impressive ball of fire, dancing and spiralling, grew smaller; the flames giving way to embers and soon simply to ash. How strange a sight we must have been standing on a corner, watching a fire for no apparent reason.

It began with ashes.

The delicate fibers clinging to the coarse strands of palm branch, not yet broken down. A spoon and a cup, some gentle crushing of the strands, stirring of the fibers and the soft ash emerges. Kneeling or standing, eyes cast down or face uplifted, the words are repeated again and again. *You are dust and to dust you shall return.* And a cross marks the words as a reminder. These are hard words to say. For some of us, hard to hear.

It began with ashes.

There was also the invitation. *I invite you to observe a holy Lent...self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting and almsgiving...*

In hearing the words of scripture opened up; in the breaking of bread and pouring of wine, blessed and shared; in prayer; in taking on or giving up; in sharing more of ourselves or taking time apart, the days were ours to shape and mark as holy. The days were ours to offer to God with our whole selves. Some days that was hard work. Isn't a life of faith like that, though? It is not always the easy path. These days of Lent remind that as followers of Jesus we are part of the journey. We are not bystanders but called to offer all that we are.

It began with palm branches.

What must they have thought when they came upon a rag-tag group singing as they walked along the street with streamers snapping in the wind, and a band leading the way? What must they have thought when they saw the donkey? What must they have thought when they saw another group waiting on the corner? How strange a sight we must have been standing on a corner, waving palm branches for no apparent reason.

It began with palm branches.

The joy. The celebration. The hosannas. It is easy to think this is the way the story ends—the way all victories are marked—with a parade of streamers and bands and cheering. But this isn't the end. This is the beginning. This is where we discover just

how hard it can be to follow Jesus. This is where we discover that being a bystander doesn't bear as much of a cost. This is where we are reminded that we are called to do more than watch.

It began with palm branches.

When the palms were swept away and the encircling darkness crept closer we felt the weight of the days. We heard the stories and felt the echoes in our lives. Mary anointing Jesus' feet. Judas' betrayal. We gathered to remember that first time bread was broken and wine poured with blessing and how Jesus bent down low to wash feet and we bent down, too. The darkness tugged at the edges as the space was emptied out. With the cross in our midst, day became night. And the weight bent us deeper yet.

It began with light.

What an odd sight it must have been to see a group of people gathered around a cauldron on a busy street corner. After dark. On a Saturday night. What must they have thought when they passed by us? How strange a sight we must have been standing on a corner, watching a fire burn for no apparent reason.

It began with light.

From that fire came the light. A candle carried into the darkened space. A people gathered. Waiting expectantly. The shuffle of footsteps and then the song breaks the anticipation *The Light of Christ*. The light spreads down the line and then along the rows until the whole place is glowing. The darkness that tugged at the edges is scattered away.

It began with light.

Through the stories and the songs. Through the proclamation *Christ is risen. Alleluia!* and the bell ringing that joyful news we are reminded once again that this isn't the end of the story but the beginning.

It begins.

The One who is the light of the world breaks into the midst of the gatherings - his friends gathered behind closed doors, on a roadway—and reminds them that this is not the end but the beginning. A cross and a tomb do not have the final say.

It begins.

The One who is the light of the world breaks into the midst of our gatherings and calls us out into the world proclaiming good news for all who will listen. This is not the end but the beginning. Come, gather on the street corner.

We begin.



ROCK EUCHARISTS



Wine Before Breakfast — Leonard Cohen




Saying Farewell to David Howells





During that cold stretch before Christmas, I had come to the church to do some budgeting work. Jola, the drop-in program worker, was calling time even as I sat down with my computer in the parish hall. She noticed the young man at my table who appeared reluctant to leave. He was only wearing a hoodie and Jola saw he didn't have a coat. As she went off to see what she could do, I felt like I was confronting a literal instance of the biblical parable about coats. I was at a loss. What should I do? My ski jacket was old and due for replacement; I could give it to him. But how would I get home? Maybe I should take him to Winners to get a coat; that would count. Or, maybe give him my coat and I go to Winners to get a replacement. In the end, I was spared by Jola who had found a coat in the supply of clothes on hand.

As the last hours of 2016 ticked down, that image of the cold young man didn't leave me. I saw that we were still short of our revenue goals, and I was asking myself if I had done enough. On the last day of the year I thought, I didn't give him my coat, and I didn't go buy him one; but I can still give an extra coat's worth to the lunch program to help our staff do what they can for people like that young man.

It is quite moving to see how our volunteer efforts, donations of goods and clothes, and financial contributions make a difference for the drop-in participants. Yes, some come for a meal when they do have other options, but many more have limited options and few resources. What they often need is a safe place and a time of respite from the weather and from living on the edge. I am very moved at how our drop-in program provides a ministry that Jesus calls us to provide. And if I can't be there every day to give a coat, I can at least contribute to the program in the spirit of that calling. 

John Selles is the church treasurer and helps us be wise stewards of the gifts we receive and the ministry we share.

Parish Notes

BAPTISM

David Çevirme

CONFIRMATION

Sherri Golisky

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISMAL FAITH

Doug Blackburn

David Burt

Jim Lee

Sally Ritchie

Craig Spielmacher

May the power of the Holy Spirit work within them, that being born of water, and the Spirit they may be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ.

IN MEMORIAM

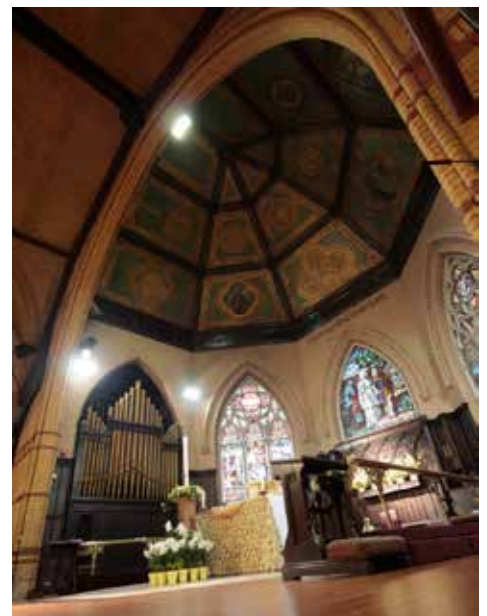
Gretel Mae McCalla

Michael Shun Wai Lee

Robert Clark

Margaret Harling

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





Sunday, May 21 – Bach Vespers

Join us at 7PM for Bach Vespers as the choir sings *Christ lag in Todesbanden*.

Sunday, May 28 – Ascension

God has gone up with a mighty shout. We mark the ascension of Jesus and are made ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday, June 4 – Pentecost

And suddenly from the heavens there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. We celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.

Sunday, June 11 – Trinity

Today, we mark the importance of how we meet God in sign, symbol and language as we celebrate the Holy Trinity. Members of the youth group will provide leadership during the 9.30AM service. Those who will be part of the youth service trip this summer will be commissioned at the conclusion of the service.

Sunday, June 11 – Rock Eucharist at 7PM

Join as we celebrate Pride month with a Rock Eucharist featuring the music of Elton John.

Sunday, June 18 – Corpus Christi

We commemorate the gift of the sacrament that feeds our souls. We punctuate our worship with prayers that have been crafted by our indigenous brothers and sisters as we mark Aboriginal Sunday.

Parish Notes



It is with joy that the appointment of Kiefer Schlosser-Shields as our new Facility Manager is announced. Kiefer has been part of the facilities team and the drop-in program for the past few years. He brings a knowledge of our community and a dedication to the care of both building and the people who come through our doors to his new responsibilities. Congratulations, Kiefer.



The Learning@Redeemer committee hopes to present a dynamic series in Fall 2017 on Islam. A potential working title is “Jesus and the Prophet: A Dialogue with Islam.” Our vision is that the speakers and presenters would all be Muslim, who could engage with us on differing aspects of the various theologies, worship practices and cultural realities of Islam. We would like to find two or three people who would be energized by working with us on this, who are knowledgeable on, or particularly interested in, the subject and/or have current connections to Toronto Muslim communities with whom we might connect. If you are such a person, please contact Karen Turner, the Chair of Learning@Redeemer, at karenturner@sympatico.ca. She would be delighted to talk to you.



Just before Holy Week we received this note from our former priest-in-charge, David Howells.

Dear Friends,

Towards the end of March your farewell gift and I managed to meet.

I was deeply grateful! Lucy and I will now buy a new bed to sleep on your generosity. And the bottle of gorgeous Scotch, after a brief tasting, awaits the end of Lent for full enjoyment.

Being at Redeemer was a huge privilege. I learned a great deal and was stretched a long way. Both good. And I valued, above all else, being in the midst of thoughtful, faithful, people of God who take being followers of Jesus seriously enough to get up and be Christ-like in the mess of this ordinary life.

May God bless you in your journey, and may you be a blessing in your journey.

In peace

David

P.S. Transfiguration is quite lovely too!