



the
GATHERING
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

pentecost 2018



A FEW WEEKS ago I posted this on my Facebook page. It was something I needed to say out loud. I could not have anticipated the reaction in both support from others and the words of others who felt safe sharing their own stories with me. This is part of who I am and shapes how I am priest and pastor in your midst.

My name is David, and I'm an alcoholic/addict.

It might be the worst kept secret in both my personal and professional circles, but I rarely say it out loud for everyone to hear. I have struggled with the abuse of substances and other self-medicating coping strategies since before I even remember knowing what such things meant. It has been a long and arduous journey at times, and one that has been a quiet and creeping affliction, touching almost every part of my life.

I quit drinking almost ten years ago (during my first year after ordination) but have continued year-after-year to fight a daily battle not to succumb to a deep and overwhelming desire to quell emotional and spiritual pain. For most of my adult life, I understood this to be a personal defect in my character, something I had to overcome to “be good” (terrible theology, I know). But in recent years, in coming to better understand the nature and roots of my addictions, I have come to a much better understanding of where my afflictions come from.

In the four blessed years since Rory was born, I have had my eyes opened to the joys and wonders of the early years of life—as many of you have witnessed in my telling stories of our journey together. But it has also come with serious struggles for me as well. As a survivor of childhood trauma and abuse, I have watched my little boy grow up—a little boy in

whom I see so much of myself—to the ages when I began to experience traumatic events. Unexpectedly, and sometimes quite overwhelmingly, this has awakened a lot of deep-seeded and unresolved shame, anger and pain.

Trauma rarely leaves you completely once you have experienced it. It can be a monster that terrifies you beyond your capacity to deal, or it can be hidden down so deep that you only recognize it when it slips out in ways you can't control, or, as I've learned in recent years (continuing to learn), it can be named for what it is, bound from stealing any more from you, and eventually sent away (I hope and believe).

I have always been incredibly reluctant to share this part of my story, largely because I'm not sure if I'll be treated the same. Fear of pity or judgment or some kind of perceived inability to serve as a priest. But, I believe with all my heart, that Jesus faced the darkness—from the moment of the incarnation through the torment and death on the cross—so that we could live in the light. And frankly, there are days when I'm not always so sure I can see the light from the darkness that's creeping in. So, I've begun to wonder if putting my faith in the one for whom the darkness could not overcome, means stepping out with all my own personal darkness and ask that it be dispelled by the light of the day.

I don't share this because I'm looking to open up old wounds and discuss them with every person I know, or just because I have hope that my stepping further into the light will give others courage to do the same, but I share this mostly because I can't hide it any more. No matter how hard I try, or how much I want to preserve a particular image or reputation, I can't heal or continue recovery in this way.

Years ago, a gentleman I met (who was 35 years sober) told me why the twelve-step groups always felt more like home to him than his experience with family or church or anywhere else. “I was a drunk, and they loved me anyways,” he said. “First chance, second chance, third chance and more. I was a drunk, and they loved me again and again.” I've always thought his description sounded a lot like the God of grace and mercy and love that I've come to know in Jesus Christ. I pray that we all might know that kind of radical and relentless love, a love that can redeem even the worst of trauma, affliction, and pain.



The Rev'd David Giffen



A Season of Creation: We Are the Earth

Grant Jahnke

From September 23 to October 14, CreationMatters@Redeemer invites you to join with Christians in Canada and around the world to pray and act in harmony with Creation. This is a wonderful time of year when we enjoy the bounty of harvests from backyard gardens and farmers' fields. Exceptional blue skies and sunsets give way to glorious fall colour and we begin to experience the transition we know inevitably leads to the dark and cold of winter.

Season of Creation is a time to celebrate and give thanks for the lake, rivers, ravines, great trees, and parkland we enjoy in this city; for the abundance of food and rich diversity of living things provided by Mother Earth; to reflect on our reliance on the air, land and water of this our island home and to renew the commitment we make in baptism to, "safeguard the integrity of God's creation and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth."

We invite everyone to begin thinking about how to participate in Season of Creation! For keen photographers, plan to share your most treasured photos showing the wonder and awe of Creation. We'll collect these in early September and create a computer slide presentation for all to enjoy.

Gardeners, think about what you may want to grow and share for Thanksgiving. We plan to decorate the chancel with gifts from parishioners' gardens, planters, and farmers' markets making use of edibles for the drop-in program.

Mark your calendars now to attend a special evening service on September 23. This will feature music from Paul Winter's *Missa Gaia* and an address by The Very Rev'd Bill Phipps, former Moderator of the United Church of Canada. On Monday, September 24 at 7PM, a panel discussion will be held involving The Very Rev'd Bill Phipps, The Right Rev'd Bishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, and The Rev'd Cheri DiNovo from Trinity St. Paul's. We will welcome the Primate, The Most Rev'd Fred Hiltz, to preach on Thanksgiving.

In early September, watch for a listing of "Nature in the City" outings to join in during the Season of Creation.

Recommended summer reading to get you in the spirit:

Grounded: Finding God in the World-A Spiritual Revolution by Diana Butler Bass

The Luminous Web-Essays on Science and Religion by Barbara Brown Taylor

For Earth's Sake-Toward a Compassionate Ecology by Stephen Scharper



Catechesis: A Door Is Opened

Mary Pat Moore

As I yearned for a steady mooring during 2017, the notion of enrolling in Catechesis at Redeemer in 2018 intrigued me. While I was deciding whether to enroll, it did not occur to me that being of a certain age or having a Roman Catholic background might be a barrier to participating in Catechesis. Upon enrollment, I discovered I had the option of reception into the Anglican Communion or reaffirmation of baptismal vows. I decided to renew my baptismal vows.

Catechesis opened a world of abundance for me. Bible studies with Bishop Kevin and Abigail Young; a marvelous sponsor, Craig Spielmacher; Angie Hocking speaking on engagement with our community; David Giffen's attentive leadership, and an opportunity to retreat at the Sisters of St. John the Divine convent. There were many more activities aimed at renewing my soul and my spirit.

Little did I realize that participating in the Lent and Easter cycle of liturgy would prepare me for the incidents on north Yonge Street on April 23. As we moved through the gift of bread and wine, the death of Christ, and his re-birth on Easter Sunday, we were preparing the ground for absorbing the tragic events of April 23.

Participating in Catechesis through Lent helped me to learn to be more still and more at home with waiting. It sharpened my focus on goodness being stronger than evil, love being stronger than hate, light being stronger than darkness, and life is stronger than death. We sang the words of this hymn at the Redeemer vigil service on Tuesday, April 24.

Catechesis gave me an open door to be reconciled with my life. The significant investment that our parish makes to support Catechesis has really paid off for me. Having the opportunity to get to know the other sponsors and Catechumens more deeply, opened the door to a richer life for me as a member of Church of Redeemer parish. ✝



He Wasn't Born This Way

A pastoral response from our Lead Pastor & Incumbent Priest, David Giffen, on a terrible day in our city when ten lives were taken, and more than a dozen injured in North York. David reminded us that none of us is born with violence or hate in our hearts, and that Christ continues to promise a different way:

He wasn't born this way. He can't have been. It keeps seeping into my mind as I watch my news feed scroll carnage and chaos in my city today. The name and the photo of the perpetrator stands still and all I can think is, he wasn't born this way. He can't have been.

You aren't born wanting to sow anarchy and fear. You aren't born wanting to take life and limb and leave the rest to suffer. You aren't born filled with hate or violence or terror in your heart. He just can't have been.

He was made in the image and likeness and love of God. Just like me. He was born with potential and possibility and promise. Just like you. He was known in his mother's womb and cherished by our creator. No different than any of us is.

He wasn't born this way. He can't have been.

But, like us all he was born into a broken and fractured world just like every victim and every perpetrator. He was born with the prospect and possibility of both acts of goodness and the treachery of deceit. He was born into a corrupt and corruptible world where degraded love and systemic hate can shatter the life into which we first began.

He wasn't born this way. But this is who he became.

It pains me, perpetrator, but I pray for you on this day when you rained down terror and trepidation upon my beloved home. I pray for you because I believe it is the only way I won't become what you have today. I pray for you because so much of me wants to succumb to all the hate you make me feel inside. I pray for you because Christ says it is the only way.

May the violence end with yours. May the hate end with the blood of your victims. And may the fire that burns in our hearts be a fire desperate for the world that Jesus promised us—a world where there is no more tears, no more crying, and no more pain.

He wasn't born this way.



Thanksgiving

Heather Bennett

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4: 6-7)

We often connect expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to dates on a calendar—a birthday, an anniversary or to some notable outcome such as landing a job, completing a project, moving to a new home, the birth of a child, healing. We express our gratitude or thanksgiving by posting a message, sending a card, giving a gift, making a call, hosting a celebration. Do we pause to offer thanksgiving to God?

We are challenged by “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving” when we are worried, when we cannot make sense of or understand a difficult experience—





a serious illness, the death of a loved one, the sudden loss of a job or a home, the denial of justice, a senseless act.

Early on April 23, there was thanksgiving for the birth of Prince Louis, to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. An hour later, my family rejoiced over news of the birth of a daughter to our nephew and his wife. Giving thanks for these miracles of new life was easy. Little did we know that later in the day residents of Toronto would be filled with shock and disbelief as reports of the deaths and serious injuries of 24 innocent people struck down by the driver of a van came across social media and on the news. What could possibly be the reason for this tragedy and, how could prayer and supplication with “thanksgiving” be remotely possible?

Members of the Redeemer community swung into action to prepare the worship space for parishioners, our Bloor-Yorkville neighbours, passersby and visitors to gather, to talk, and to pray. The church doors were open by 9AM on April 24, and a prayer vigil with music was planned, made known across social media, and offered at 6PM that evening, fol-

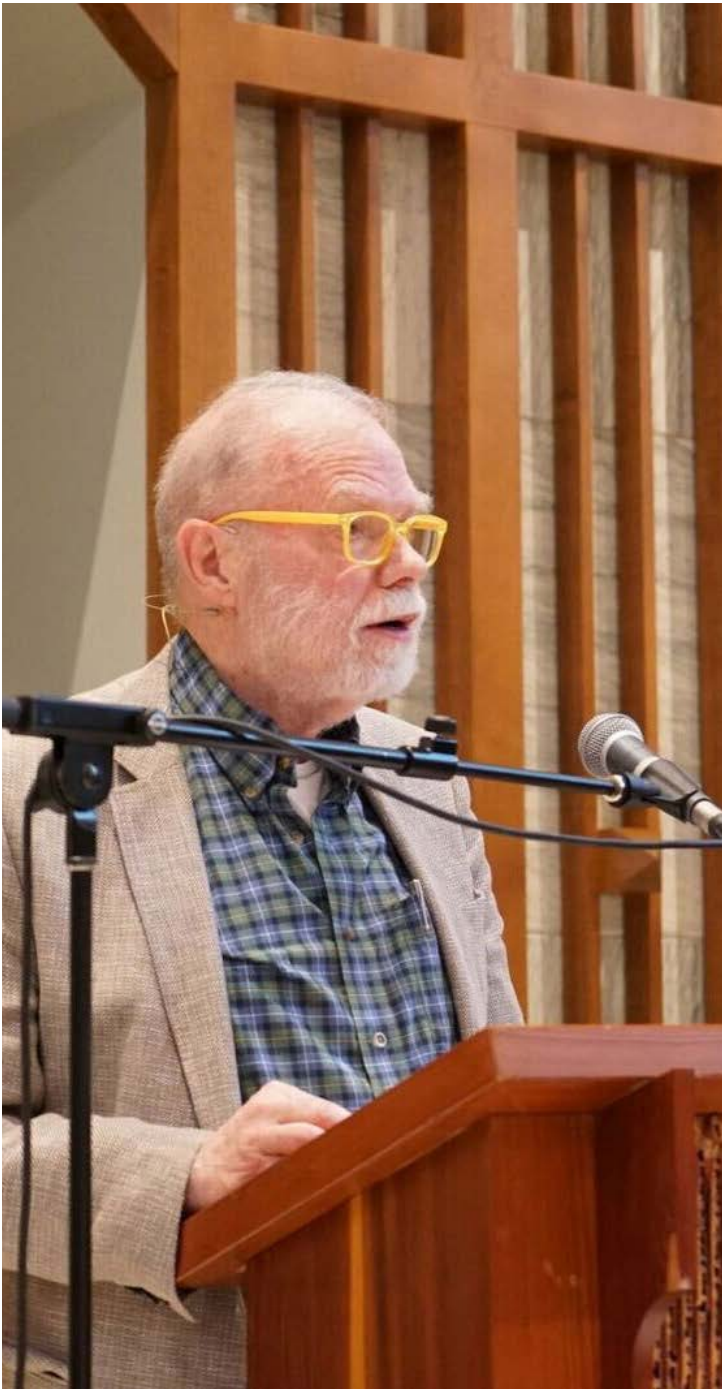
lowed by the tolling of the bell 10 times—once for each of the victims. During the day, over 90 people made their way inside to light a candle, to spend time in prayer or reflection. Some clearly wanted to be with others, to share what no one could really comprehend. Others came and went without talking. Many expressed gratitude that our doors were open to all; that they felt welcome to enter and share the grief no one could understand except that we suddenly felt connected to our fellow citizens.

We are grateful to all who support our ministry at the corner of Bloor and Avenue Road financially and all who generously give their time and expertise. These resources enable us to carry out our planned liturgies and programs day by day, Sunday by Sunday. They also enable us to offer ministry when we are called to proclaim that notwithstanding what we do not understand, “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Thanks be to God.

Heather is co-chair of the stewardship committee.



Blessed are the Peacemakers: Turning Everything Upside Down



*So tell the earth to shake
With marching feet
Of messengers of peace
Proclaim my law of love
To every nation
Every race*

Paul Pynkoski

Easter, 2016, marked the birth of our granddaughter, Morgan Rose. We rejoiced, but after joy came anxiety. She is Ojibwe. Female. And destined to inherit a broken, war torn world. Syria, Yemen, USA, MMIW. I felt powerless, voiceless. I tried to find something to hold onto by reading Merton's peace writings. And I did. Merton's writings put me in touch with the church's original witness of peace and non-violence, translated into a modern key. And also put me in touch with his friend and lifelong peace activist, Jim Forest.

I visited Jim in Amsterdam, and returned with the motivation to do something. A book study? Maybe have Jim come to Redeemer? Sharing that longing brought me to the doors of The Henri Nouwen Society, Citizens for Public Justice, The Basilian Centre for Peace and Justice, and the idea for the "Voices for Peace" conference was born.

Voices for Peace drew over 125 people from across Ontario, and as far away as California, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire, to explore Christ's call to be makers of peace.

We were challenged by the words of prophets and poets, moving us towards a new vision of peace. "Earthquake," Thomas Merton's visionary poem, was performed. Images of a destructive earthquake and marching soldiers are stood on their heads, as the ground shakes instead under the feet of a throng of peaceful messengers. We sang its refrain into our hearts:

So tell the earth to shake
With marching feet
Of messengers of peace
Proclaim my law of love
To every nation
Every race

(www.gwynethwalker.com/pdf/tell-txt.pdf)

The conference keynote speakers, 76-year-old peace activist Jim Forest and 35-year-old hip hop artist Shad K, gave fuller voice to the poet's upending vision.

Jim Forest offered, "By the skin of our teeth we have lived with nuclear weapons without their being used in war since 1945—that's 73 years." Like Merton, Jim upends the prevail-

ing wisdom: peacemaking must start not with the global, but the personal—facing the war and conflicts in our own hearts, disarming our fearful and violent selves before proceeding to reach across the divide to disarm our enemies. Peacemakers use nonviolent weapons: compassion, disciplined prayer, and love. Using these weapons leads us not to debate but to engaging persons, seeing enemies as broken bearers of God's image, not unlike ourselves. Peace is achieved not through defeating our enemies, but through loving them. (jimandnancyforest.com/2018/04/becoming-peacemakers)

Shad K stressed similar themes in his unique voice. He discussed peace and the contribution of the arts. Shad stressed the personal, the need to cross barriers through storytelling. Stories are deeply personal, but once told they become social, reaching across the divide to engage others. He could not restrain himself from expressing his thoughts artistically, offering the lyrics of a song as spoken word poetry. (It is impossible to do justice to "Remember to Remember" without quoting it in its entirety. See youtube.com/watch?v=_NBp2wwN5Is)

Shad and Jim echoed the same wisdom in different keys. They were complimented by six other presenters who teased out the two sides of peacemaking, the contemplative and the active.

I was struck by the way Voices for Peace offered a remarkable variety of approaches to peacemaking. Jim's stories of Dorothy Day's quiet, simple acts; Daniel Berrigan's theatrical burning of draft cards and hammering on nuclear war heads; Thomas Merton's poetry and subversive letter writing; Henri Nouwen's sudden urge to join a civil rights march and Shad's hip hop lyrics. As we sang the lyrics of our closing hymn and the sound of our voices filled the chapel, it became clear that we were, individually and collectively, finding our voices. Voices for peace to disarm and disrupt the powers of war, upending war's false wisdom with each act of resistance and love. My voice. Your voice.

I left the conference inspired, with my heart singing. That song is harmonized with 125 other voices and is resonating through the USA and Europe, moving us one small step closer to peace.

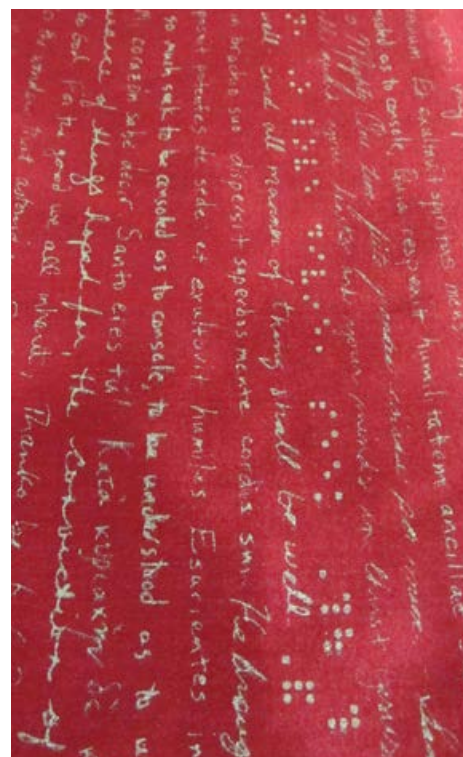




LAST AUTUMN the community was invited to write out the text of prayers, hymns and scripture that were meaningful to us as individuals to be used for a new red frontal, chasuble, stoles, burse and veil and new green chasuble, stoles, burse and veil that we were commissioning to be designed by Thomas Roach. An astonishing range of offerings, in many languages, was submitted. In mid-March a very large box arrived at the church and after unpacking the many layers the beautiful new liturgical furnishings were unveiled.

The words, in our hand-writing, were silkscreened onto fabric and the effect is stunning and powerful. The frontal has two sides to it—one for Pentecost and one for the other times when red is the liturgical colour.

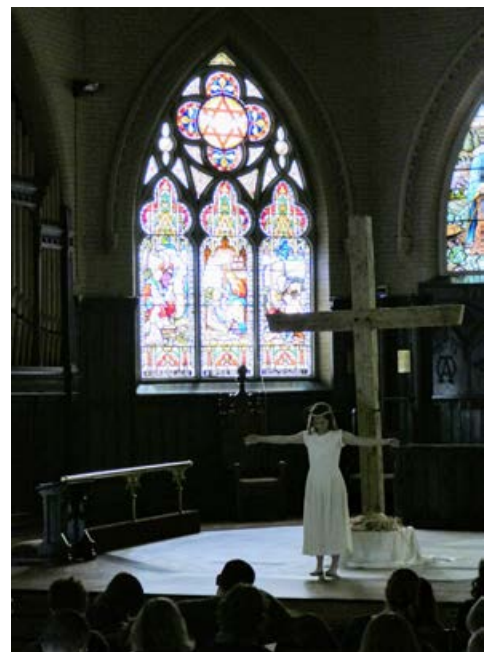
These silks were given in memory of John Gartshore (1926-2008), a Redeemer parishioner, founder of Integrity in Canada, and tireless worker for fair treatment for all. We are grateful for the generosity of this gift. ✝



Palm Sunday



Good Friday



Easter



Rock Eucharists with the music of...

Bob Dylan



Bluegrass Eucharist



Talking to One Another: Growing Understanding Between Christians and Muslims

The last session of the series is June 10, beginning at 2PM and registration is available online.



DATE – 2018	SESSION
January 7	Origins of Islam, the Quran, and Hadith Literature – Abdul Hai Patel
February 18	Sunnism and Shi'ism: Origins and Manifestations of Islamic Sects
March 11	Sharia and Muslim Worship Practices
April 8	Islam in North America—what does it mean to live faithfully in a secular state?
May 13	Women in the Muslim World
June 10	Islamic Fundamentalist Movements and Jihad Dr. Liyakat Takim – Sharjah Chair in Global Islam, Department of Religious Studies, McMaster University



We are delighted to welcome **The Rev'd Roshni Jayawardena** back to Redeemer as our assistant curate. Roshni was ordained a deacon on Sunday, May 6 at the Cathedral Church of St James. Members of the parish leadership team were able to be there to celebrate with her on her ordination day.



The Gathering Place

We come together offering greetings.

We break the fast in this community place.

Sometimes there is peace to be made either within ourselves or with others.

We feel a sense of safety and belonging, of welcome and surety.

Newcomers are welcomed and introduced to the services.

The varieties of activities are inclusive and thought provoking.

There is thanksgiving and prayer said over the meal.

The table is set.

We ready ourselves for the life sustaining meal we are about to receive.

Song and celebration lift spirits in festive seasonal and birthdays.

Those who have died are mourned.

There is hope to the sick, care to the forgotten, love to the unloved,

and an ear to the unheard voices.

A sense of radical hospitality fills the space.

People share what they can.

They come as they are and are always welcomed.

Welcome to the Redeemer Drop In

– Gathering Place 2

Krista Fry is the Community Collaborator at the Drop-in. ✝



On April 8 the grade 5 and 6 class learned about the Jewish Seder meal. This picture shows the preparation for it.



On Sunday, April 15 we said farewell to **Benjamin Gillard**, who was our student intern this year. Benjamin has been with us since September working with the children of the church school and also participating in the liturgy from time to time. We are grateful to him for all the ways he shared his love of God and his enthusiastic leadership with our youngest members. Thank you Benjamin.





PARISH NOTES

BAPTISM

Jackson Scarfe
Donald Gordon Lang
Addison Elizabeth Legere

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISMAL FAITH

Mary Pat Moore
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.

CONFIRMATION

Ryan Carlsen
Angie Hocking
Noel Koteff
Trevor Koteff
Alexandra McIntosh
Ian Poulton
Vania Selvaggi
Karen Visser

Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit; empower them for your service; and sustain them all the days of their life.



SERVICES OF NOTE

Sunday, May 20 – 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. We commission The Rev'd Susan Haig, The Rev'd Roshni Jayawardena and Nathan Wall into their new ministry roles.

Sunday, May 27 – Trinity. Today, we mark the importance of how we meet God in sign, symbol and language as we celebrate the Holy Trinity. We welcome The Rev'd Michael Shapcott at the 9.30 and 11.15AM services who will share his ministry within the community of deacons.

Sunday, May 27 – Rock Eucharist at 7PM. Join us as we gather in prayer, listen to the word opened and are fed as bread is broken, wine is poured blessed and shared. The music of Blue Rodeo will be woven through the liturgy.

Sunday, June 3 – Corpus Christi. We commemorate the gift of the sacrament that feeds our souls. Today we celebrate with The Rev'd Jim Boyles, honorary assistant and The Rev'd David Giffen, our Lead Pastor and Incumbent Priest, as they celebrate their ordination anniversaries. Jim was ordained 50 years ago and David was ordained 10 years ago.

Sunday, June 10 – Youth Ministry Sunday. The youth of the parish take on additional liturgical roles this day as part of our celebration of their leadership in the community. We will commission Lydia, Molly, Aurora and Adrian as they graduate this year.

Sunday, June 17 – Indigenous Sunday. We welcome The Rt Rev'd Riscylla Walsh Shaw as we mark Indigenous month.

Sunday, June 24 – Pride Sunday. As we celebrate the diversity that is our community and our city, we gather in worship with Lyds Keesmaat-Walsh as our preacher for the morning services.

We will walk in the Pride parade again this year as part of the Proud Anglicans contingent. Mark your calendars for **June 24** and join in this opportunity celebrate the diversity of this city and of our church.

