



the
GATHERING
newsletter of the Church of the Redeemer

summer 2019



*"Words form the thread
on which we string
our experiences:"*

Shouting our way toward a Holy Silence

— how the secular and the sacred
voice opinions on same-sex marriage.

ALDOUS HUXLEY, whose quote is offered as the first words in the title of this article, rightly describes "words" with the metaphor of a thread. Fragile yet imperishable, supple and often all too subtle; the fabric of our experience is woven with the threads of language. The words we choose and the phrases we use have the power to harm or heal; and the effect they have depends on the tongue that weaves them. With words, hurts can be mended; or if the tongue that speaks them is too sharp (or blunt for that matter) then relationships are left tattered and torn. The issue of same sex marriage has been about...words.

It seems as though we have been exchanging words over the issue of same sex marriage for decades now and given the pronouncements of the last General Synod—we will continue to exchange words. However, as Christians and Canadians, we are called to go beyond the words that are bandied about in this debate. Rather than attending to the words that are *spoken* for or against, the real issue surrounding same sex marriage involves the written word; it involves how we *interpret* sacred texts.

Obviously, as Christians, when we seek to do God's will, we first turn our attention to the pages of God's inspired word to look for direction. Scripture, viewed through the lenses of tradition and reason, is the basis of how we live our lives. But this call to interpret *sacred texts* is not for Christian ears

alone, it is also the way in which we, as a nation, found our way to a firm footing on the moral landscape of same-sex marriage. For, in discerning the way forward, as a nation, it has not been the rhetoric of politicians or the shrillness of the conservative right or liberal left that has most guided our legislative conscience. Rather, it is the interpretation of sacred texts that decided the day.

In seeking to be faithful to the best intentions of our forebears, the legislature of Canada has consulted its own sacred text: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter states that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability." In a sense the judiciary has *interpreted* this hallowed canon to include discrimination against sexual orientation (see the text of Bill C-38 below.) And while we all agree with the decision, I'm sure, the issue is one of interpreting sacred texts.

For just as we Christians—and Anglicans in particular—do not subscribe to a facile literalism that takes their texts at face value, so too our judiciary has grappled with the charter of rights and freedoms in an attempt to discern the meaning and best intentions of those who drafted it. It is ever thus with sacred texts. Whatever bone of contention is being picked clean by public debate, in the church and in our country, how we choose to live our lives, what freedoms we are granted, and what constitutes justice for all, is determined by the painstaking, and sometimes painful, task of interpreting sacred texts.

In the past few decades, we as the Anglican Church of Canada have also grappled with our sacred text to discern God's will on this issue. But unlike our legisla-

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ture or judiciary, the aim of how we interpret our sacred texts is not unison, but unity. The purpose of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is to ensure that the last word on a particular issue has been spoken—subject to occasional reinterpretation, of course. Its decisions are binding, its pronouncements, law. In other words, when the charter has been interpreted, the legislature and the judiciary speak with one voice, an authoritative unison in which all subsequent whisperings are void. But in the Church we seek not unison, but unity. For, as Christians, when we raise our voices, even in conflict, we do so with the intention of creating unity; a blending of many disparate voices into a harmony of thought and opinion; for us, unity is not uniformity. So, sadly and paradoxically, as Christians

we continue to grapple with the issue of same sex marriage, despite what the laws of the land have declared—voicing the various interpretations of our sacred texts until we no longer hear discord in one another's words.

As our own sacred text tells us “there is nothing new under the sun.” We have seen heated religious and political issues wax and wane in the moral imagination of our church and of our country. The remarriage of divorced persons and the ordination of women, for example, while stridently debated in their time, are, for all intents, settled. The voices that once clamoured for or against on these issues, both in the church and in our culture, are now silent. Through interpreting our own sacred texts—both Holy Writ and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—we have spoken our way to consensus and unity. We have *moved-on* in our moral journey as a nation and church and no longer see these issues as “us against them” kinds of conflicts. We have stopped speaking about them so much because our sacred texts have spoken to us and guided us on the path to the truth of God's will. We have

come to a holy silence on these once divisive concerns and we pray for the same holy silence on the issue of same sex marriage; not a silence that seeks to quell the voices that need to be heard on both sides of the debate, but a silence that indicates our commitment to go forward together, not despite the differences of our convictions, but because of our commitment to the unity of the One in whose image we were created and have our being.

Steven ✠

From the Department of Justice

Proposal for an Act respecting certain aspects of legal capacity for marriage for civil purposes.

WHEREAS marriage is a fundamental institution in Canadian society and the Parliament of Canada has a responsibility to support that institution because it strengthens commitment in relationships and represents the foundation of family life for many Canadians;

WHEREAS, in order to reflect values of tolerance, respect and equality consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, access to marriage for civil purposes should be extended to couples of the SAME-SEX;

AND WHEREAS everyone has the freedom of conscience and religion under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and officials of religious groups are free to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs;

NOW, THEREFORE, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

1. Marriage, for civil purposes, is the lawful union of two persons to the exclusion of all others.
2. Nothing in this Act affects the freedom of officials of religious groups to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs.

The Start of Something New

Sheree Drummond

So, we are at that point in the summer when thoughts of fall and the start of the school year are upon us. For me that brings mixed feelings. I am excited by the energy and excitement that something new is about to start but at the same time I mourn the loss of the summer pace and the return to hectic schedules. This year, however, the scales are tipped for me to the positive side as one of the special ‘new’ things that is adding to my sense of excitement and

In a world that seems to be becoming more focused on what divides us rather than what we have in common, it behooves us as a community to ensure that we demonstrate a radical hospitality and openness—in every possible way. Steven clearly embodies this approach.

energy is the arrival of our new Incumbent, Steven, and his family. It will probably come as no surprise to those who know me that I was the kind of kid who looked forward to the first day of school and to meeting my new teacher. I am feeling a little bit like that now. While I had the privilege to serve on the selection committee, and as such, had an opportunity to meet Steven through that process, unlike some in our community I was not a member of Redeemer when Steven was last here. His arrival marks the start of another new beginning—for me, but also for Redeemer.

As was noted in the article in the *Pentecost Gathering*, the selection committee was deeply struck by how much

Steven’s experience and values resonate with our ‘Redeemer ethos.’ As he responded to our questions (that were formulated based on the input we had received from the community), the skills and experiences that were outlined in his resume came alive in an authentic and powerful way. I could see how his earlier experience at Redeemer had provided a foundation for his subsequent experiences of ministry. I was energized by his detailed descriptions of the social justice initiatives of St. George’s in Montréal—the Drop-In Centre and Civitas^X—and the prospect of our being able to continue to build on our own strengths in this area while also expanding into deepening our interfaith activities. In a world that seems to be becoming more focused on what divides us rather than what we have in common, it behooves us as a community to ensure that we demonstrate a radical hospitality and openness—in every possible way. Steven clearly embodies this approach.

Among the things I am most proud of the Redeemer community is the depth and breadth of our lay leadership. We have a vibrant ministry at the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street and this is because of the deep passion and commitment of the laity as well as our clergy. In Steven I believe we have an Incumbent who will work in partnership with our lay leaders and with our community as a whole. The leadership model he described is one where a leader acknowledges one’s gifts and humility. Together we will continue to build the community “at the corner.”

As we bid farewell to summer, let’s all embrace the energy that comes from the start of something new, not forgetting where we’ve been, but coming together in hope, love and fellowship to radically welcome Steven, Holly, Madeline and James—and as a whole community move forward. ✝

PARISH NOTE

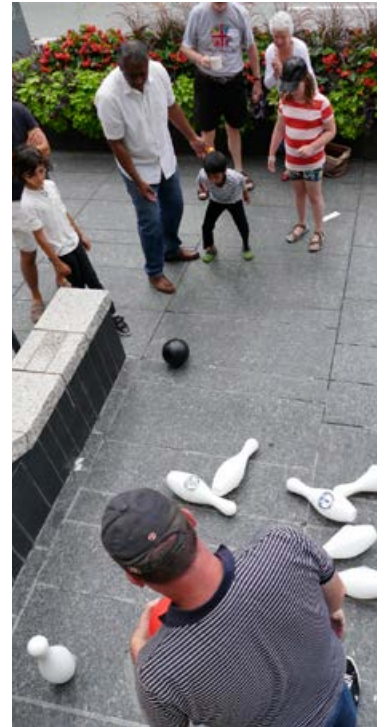
IN MEMORIAM

Dane Gaskin

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

OPEN STREETS TORONTO

On Sunday, August 18 we combined the morning services so that we could come together as a community to worship together and then enjoy fun and festivities as part of Open Streets TO. Displays inside offered a glimpse of who we are as a community with parishioners available to answer questions. Outside, games of all sorts and a bouncy castle proved to be a great hit with all ages.





SEASON OF CREATION 2019



Grant Jahnke

I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live. Deuteronomy 30:19

IN THE summer of 2018, Lodie Gilbert, community relations coordinator for the Centre for Whale Research in Washington State, witnessed at least five female whales gathered around a mother orca, known as J35, who had been holding the body of her dead calf above water for seventeen days. The whales swam “in a harmonious circular motion” at the water’s surface, for a least two hours, as if they were performing “a ritual or a ceremony” as darkness fell and the moon appeared. The Lummi Nation in Washington State refer to orcas as ‘relatives that live under the waves.’ Jay Julius, chair of the Lummi Nation, interpreted this behaviour as a clear message to humans: “Look at what you’ve done. Shame on you. Look at what we’re going through. We can’t survive any longer.” (Grief or Instinct? Bridgette Watson, CBC News, July 20, 2019 <http://bit.ly/orcagrief>)

This year, Redeemer’s *Season of Creation* begins on

Sunday, October 6 at 7PM with a service of music, sacred and secular readings and prayer. **The Rt Rev’d Andrew Asbil** will be our guest preacher, reflecting on this year’s theme, *How Shall We Then LIVE?*

The theme arose out of conversations following *We ARE the Earth*, the theme of last year’s *Season of Creation*. An awakening on many levels, we had reflected on our interconnectedness with all beings on Earth. In turn, these reflections led to the increased focus on the implications, individually and collectively, of using Earth’s finite resources as if they were infinite. In the months since, many parishioners have courageously expressed

their feelings of grief associated with the climate crisis, species extinction, pollution of water sources, destructive wild weather, extensive wildfires, and the loss of beloved habitats.

Throughout October, we will reflect deeply on our responses to the question, *How Shall We Then LIVE?* As Christians, we are people of hope, joy, peace, love and reparation. How do the Gospel message and the tenets of our faith help us to confront and to reconcile the profound existential issues of our time? In our liturgies, we’ll hear from The Rev’d Canon Steven Mackison on *Living in Gratitude*; Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat on *Living in Reconciliation with Creation*; and Nate Wall, Scholar-in-Residence, on *Living in Wonder*.

On **Wednesday, October 16 at 7PM*** Paul Pynkoski, will present and lead a discussion on “**Woods, Landscape, and City: The Prophetic Spirituality of Thomas Merton.**”

On **Sunday, October 20 at 10.45AM***, our church school and youth will host an all ages event to experience **birds of prey**, up close!

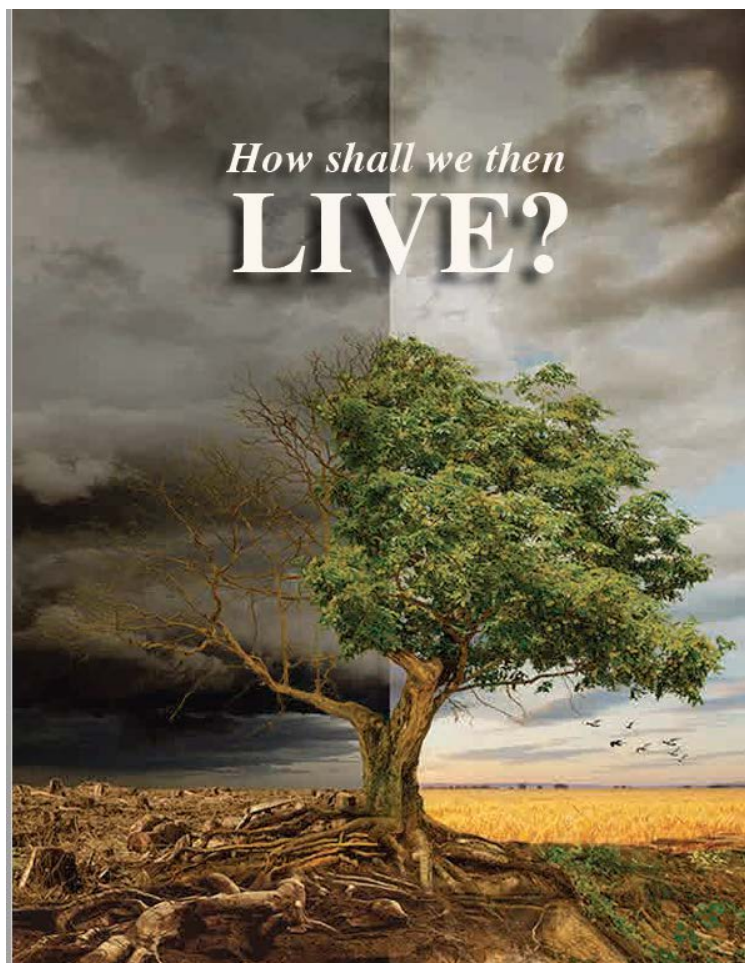
On **Wednesday, October 23 at 2 and 7PM***, we’ll screen the award-winning documentary, **RIVERBLUE**, which

portrays the global fashion industry’s ruinous impact on the planet. Lynda Young will host and lead a discussion on the implications of fashion consumerism.

**We ask that you register to participate in these events, so we have enough materials for all.*

Throughout *Season of Creation*, we will also experience the All Beings Confluence, a unique art installation inspired by the music of Carolyn McDade. We will be hosts to a sampling of these beautiful painted silk panels, many of which have been seen around the world. The words of Carolyn McDade describe the intention of the All Beings Confluence:

...I often wonder what it would be like if we dared to



love this life ~ the fragile and the vulnerable, the endangered, daring to be humble before the magnitude of our beginnings, daring to lean our species into a stubborn and pliant wonder, until reverence shines in all that we do ~ until we live an economics of reverence, a theology of reverence, a politics of reverence ~ until it permeates education, development, and health care, homes and relationships, arts and agriculture ~ a reverence for life, for planetary, social, and personal wholeness. (<https://www.carolynmcdademusic.com/>)

We encourage you to invite others to participate in the liturgies and events throughout Season of Creation, and to prayerfully consider what it would be like if we dared to love this life as if our very lives depended on it.

Season of Creation is hosted by Creation Matters, Redeemer's eco-spirituality group. We meet monthly to centre ourselves in creation; to learn about and reflect on the state of the world in which we live; and to bring more awareness of creation into the life of the church. All are welcome.

THE ALL BEINGS CONFLUENCE: A Celebration of Who We Are Together

Grant Jahnke

During our Season of Creation 2019 at the Church of the Redeemer,

we will experience an installation of 36 silk panels from the All Beings Confluence. Martha Cole, the artist who resides and paints from her home in Disley, Saskatchewan, northwest of Regina is the curator of the Confluence. Martha describes the installation thus:

All Beings Confluence is a community-based, interactive arts project that was directly inspired by Carolyn McDade, a composer, social



activist and environmentalist whose music has sustained and nourished many over the decades.

All Beings Confluence is an ever-expanding installation created by many individuals. It consists of a series of long, narrow sheer panels, each representing a single living Being — perhaps a grasshopper, a bird, a tree, or blue-green algae that first provided our planet with oxygen. The completed panels are installed to fill a whole area and a single panel is never seen by itself. It is always “in community” with other Beings. Everyone is invited to walk amongst them—they move gently with the air currents, merging into different patterns & combinations of colour and light. For a brief moment we can feel ourselves as part of the vast, complex and interconnected community of creation.

All Beings Confluence began in 2010 when four Canadian prairie

women, Madeleine LePage, Martha Cole and Shannon Carson and Fenella Temmerman were learning the music for Carolyn's McDade's latest CD, **“Widening Embrace.”** By August 2011, when the CD was being recorded, 75 of the panels were installed at the Banff Centre of the Arts to offer support and inspiration to the singers who had gathered from across North America. Since then, **All Beings Confluence** has been seen in over 50 venues across Canada and the United States, including the Sisters of Earth Conference in Indiana, “Bioneers” in Detroit, and the Western Women's Conference at the Naramata Retreat Centre in Kelowna, BC. Over 17,000 people have moved through these Beings and the number of panels has increased to over 350! The installation is, indeed, a point of hope for us and for the planet and is a celebration of who we are together.

Source: <https://allbeingsconfluence.wordpress.com/>

Used with permission.



RIVERBLUE

Lynda Young

Our Rivers are dying!

The fast fashion documentary, *RIVERBLUE* investigates the real cost of “cheap fashion” as our ever-growing consumption of clothing continues to escalate. Fast fashion doesn’t just clog our landfills; the factories where cheap clothes are produced are killing some of the world’s most important rivers.

Factories in China, Bangladesh, and Indonesia are poisoning the rivers that millions of people depend on for survival. Our demand for cheap clothing has given us a global problem. Toxic chemical dyes and acid used to tan leather, distress jeans and colour our clothes have been found as far away as the Arctic.

Scientists have found similar toxins in the polar bears. If the polar bears have toxic water, so do we!

In an interview, executive producer Roger Williams, explains the catalyst for this documentary. “Fashion wasn’t a personal



interest for me, but water was. I wanted to create an environmental film about water, because water doesn’t have a voice.”

The story doesn’t end with water. It isn’t just environmental. The fishermen can no longer fish, the rivers can no longer support any life, and people have to buy bottled water and since the toxins don’t break down, they continue to flow down wards to the sea and out into the world.

On **Wednesday, October 23**, please join me at a matinee or evening session for the showing and discussion of this

very important film, *RIVERBLUE*. I promise you will look at your relationship with water and fast fashion in a very different way.

Some parting thoughts:

“Buy less, choose well, make it last”

-Vivien Westwood -

“Wearing clothing 50 times instead of five (the fast fashion average) reduces carbon emissions by 400%, per item, per year.”

“Fast fashion isn’t free.

Someone is paying for it!”

-Lucy Seigle -

“Fast fashion is the second largest water pollutant in the world.”

Moving Forward with Learning at Redeemer

David Townsend and Amber Aulen

As with so many aspects of our life as a parish community, our adult educational programming is at a crossroads. A long-running series, *Telling the Story*, ended last year. Independent initiatives like the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group, *Creation Matters*, and *Redeemer Readers* bear witness to the vigorous grassroots energy that has blessed the parish for so long. Attendance at an evening of visioning for future educational programming in May was substantial and energetic. The Summer Readers program has been popular and animated. A series on the thought and spirituality of Thomas Merton, coordinated by Paul Pynkoski, will bring well-known scholars to us this autumn and winter. “As If,” Scholar-in-Residence Nate Wall’s series on basic aspects of the Christian path, will run again in the coming months.

Learning@Redeemer itself is in a transitional phase—even the name of our committee going forward is up for consideration. This spring, Amber Aulen and I assumed

leadership as co-chairs, and we’re blessed to have added five new members: Hilary Keachie, Richard van Delft, Craig Spielmacher, AJ Finlay, and Joan Robinson. Along with returning members Karen Turner, Nate Wall, and John Sutton, this infusion of fresh energy and enthusiasm will help us to revamp our programming as we seek to support existing initiatives, fill in gaps, and reach a wider, more diverse range of parishioners.

Redeemer’s strong lay leadership, long a precious resource of our parish, is something for the committee to celebrate and foster. Ground-up initiatives also present a challenge: how do we minimize the “silo effect” and encourage cross-pollination and synergy between ministry areas? As Learning@Redeemer moves forward, one of our tasks is to optimize collaborations and fill in gaps to meet the needs of parishioners at different stages in their faith journeys, diverse social experience, different learning styles and needs, and every stage of the life cycle.

We’re taking the long view of building programming to enrich the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual experience of our community. We need and welcome your input. What would you like to see more of? What kind of events would excite you and nourish your faith?

Redeemer Kids in the Summer

Over the summer, our Redeemer Kids have been enjoying a variety of experiences on Sunday mornings including going outside and planting herbs as a reminder to care for God's good creation.



INDIGENOUS SUNDAY

We welcomed Sandra Campbell, the pastoral care worker with the Toronto Urban Native Ministry, as our preacher on Indigenous Sunday.



Wild Rice, Blankets and Orange Shirts

Stephen Allen

In his Letter to the Romans, Paul writes: “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2)

We can take Paul’s message to heart by learning about the impact of colonization on Indigenous people and about the long, slow process of de-colonization.

Call to Action #59 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s report challenges the churches ‘to develop on-going education strategies to ensure that their respective congregations learn about their church’s role in colonization, the history and legacy of residential schools and why apologies to former residential school students, their families and communities were necessary.’”

This Call to Action is being lived out at the national level of the Anglican Church of Canada and in parishes across the country. The Church of the Redeemer’s Indigenous Solidarity Working Group, with the support and participation of the parish, seeks to live out this Call to Action. Here is an overview of our fall program.

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Manoomin

On **Saturday, September 14**, there will be a visit to Curve Lake to learn about harvesting wild rice (manoomin). The visit will be hosted by James Whetung, founder of *Black Duck Wild Rice* which is located in Curve Lake First Nation. *Black Duck Wild Rice* is a social enterprise involved

with seeding, harvesting, processing and educating about manoomin or wild rice—a traditional food of the Nishnaabe people. (see further details in Carolyn Bett’s Travel for Reconciliation article)

Survivors’ Circle and Blanket Exercise

Our long time Honorary Assistant, The Rev’d Canon Andrew Wesley, and his wife, Esther, former coordinator of the Anglican Church’s Healing Fund, will facilitate two Saturday events to which all are invited. Both events take place in the parish hall.

SURVIVORS’ CIRCLE

The first event takes place on **Saturday, September 21**, 9.30AM to 12.30PM with survivors of residential schools.

Learning about the history of residential schools and the impact on Indigenous children, who by law had to attend the schools, is enriched by listening to and meeting with survivors. The stories are challenging and at times painful but are told by survivors with great courage and dignity. Lunch will be served.

BLANKET EXERCISE

Whether our ancestors came as settlers to Canada or we are recent newcomers, we have learned about the relationship between Indigenous people and Canada through textbooks.

The Blanket Exercise will take place on **Saturday, September 28**, 9.30AM to 12.30PM. This is an opportunity to learn about the history of Indigenous people and Canada most of us never learned in school.

Please register for these events through the church’s web site.

Orange Shirt Sunday

Orange Shirt Day is **Monday, September 30**. The day was inspired by Phyllis Webstad’s experience. When Phyllis was six years old, she had to go to a residential school. Her grandmother bought her an orange shirt for school. When Phyllis arrived at the school, her clothes, including the orange shirt, were taken from her. This happened to all Indigenous children. September 30 was chosen because this was the time of the year when Indigenous children were taken from their homes and communities to residential schools.

On **Sunday, September 29**, please wear something orange to church. Our guest preacher will be Melanie Delva, the Reconciliation Animator for the Anglican Church of Canada.

Join the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group

New members are welcome. If you are interested in becoming involved in this ministry, speak with Stephen Allen (9.30AM service) or Tony Crosbie or Pamela Thomson (11.15AM service).





TRAVEL FOR RECONCILIATION

Carolynn Bett

Travel for Learning is the outward-bound branch of the Indigenous Solidarity Working Group. For several years Indigenous teachers came to speak to us at the Redeemer. Now we are meeting them in their communities, where we can learn more immediately from Indigenous people. We organize two out-of-town excursions per year and have already visited the following:

- ◆ Manitoulin Island: week-long retreat
- ◆ Six Nations: Mohawk Chapel
- ◆ Tyendinega Mohawk Landing Ceremony
- ◆ Peterborough Petroglyphs: medicine ceremony and teachings
- ◆ Peterborough Canoe Museum and meeting with Curve Lake elder

On **Saturday, September 14**, twenty adventurous canoers will travel to Curve Lake Reserve, north of Peterborough, to

gather and prepare wild rice in the traditional manner with instruction from Indigenous knowledge keeper, James Whetung. This is a special program and will include an Indigenous lunch. Registration is required.

An astounding forty participants drove to Crawford Lake on Saturday, June 1, to see a 15th century Wendat village reconstruction on the original footings of the longhouses. Our guide related recent archeological finds, indicating much longer occupation by Iroquoian people, and urged us to visit the grindstone where women ground the corn meal for their families. What an awe-inspiring moment to kneel where they knelt for millennia. The park is open to the public all summer and worth a visit even without a guide.

This past winter, Travel for Learning undertook to promote excursions around Toronto, choosing randomly from a wealth of theatre, music, lectures, dance, pow wows and film as listed in the Weekly Indigenous News Digest (WIND) produced by Redeemer's Pam Thomson.

- ◆ Barbara Croall's oratorio Miziwi, drew many of you to Koerner Hall where we were invited to listen to the voices of animals and elements such as the wind, deepening our understanding of "all my relations."



- ◆ The lecture on governance at City Hall, built on Bishop Mark Macdonald's teachings on perspectives of the Medicine Wheel, by incorporating the laws of Nature.
- ◆ As part of a series at The Cathedral Church of St James, Debbie Danard talked of the buried river, Garrison Creek, which often floods the Cathedral basement. Then she expanded on women's responsibilities as water carriers and guardians of the water.
- ◆ Luminato offered several Indigenous events, most notably the festival closing massed choir composition by Metis, Chris Derekson, which integrated the many ethnic voices of our city, sometimes in desperate cacophony, but resolving in harmony.



Did someone say we live in the New World?—with no history? Piece by piece, we are learning the ancient history and wisdom of this land from the living descendants of the original people. Please watch for our future excursions and join us as you can to share in these wonderful experiences with friends from the Bloor Faith Corridor and beyond. ✚

Learning Thomas Merton @Redeemer

Paul Pynkoski

This autumn, Learning @Redeemer is presenting four sessions on the life and work of Thomas Merton.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) was a Trappist monk marked by seeming contradictions. In the midst of a life of silence and prayer he authored over fifty books, several volumes of poetry, and compiled an array of photographs, calligraphies, and prints. Merton's writings brought insights from the contemplative tradition to a non-monastic audience, yet he spoke prophetically on the issues of war, race, and the economy. He was a chaplain to the peace movement of the 1960s, influencing Jim Forest and the Berrigan brothers. A pioneer of interfaith dialogue, he corresponded with the Buddhist philosopher Suzuki, Hindu and Sufi mystics, and Rabbi Joshua Heschel. A few weeks before his death in 1968, Merton met with the Dalai Lama.

Merton is a contemplative, social critic, and poet whose voice continues to have a sense of immediacy in the twenty-first century. His insistence that social action requires a grounding in contemplative vision make him the ideal saint for The Church of the Redeemer.

We have planned four sessions, each with a guest speaker, to help us explore Merton's legacy and how he points us towards the future. The sessions begin at 7PM.

Wednesday, September 18 – Thomas Merton: Global Visionary – with Michael Higgins. A native Torontonians, he is an author, Vatican Affairs Specialist for The Globe and Mail and CBC Radio documentarian. He is currently Distinguished Professor of Catholic Thought at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

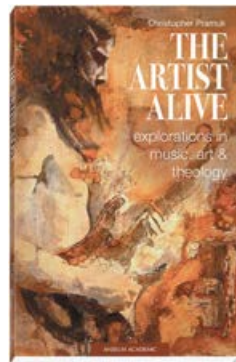
Wednesday, October 16 – Woods, Landscape, City: The Prophetic Spirituality of Thomas Merton – with Paul Pynkoski who is a retired civil servant, the facilitator for literature and film discussions at the Common Table, and is a founding member of Voices for Peace, an annual ecumenical

conference on peacemaking. He has written for *Orthodoxy in Dialogue*, *The Anglican*, and *The Merton Seasonal*.

Wednesday, November 20 – Thomas Merton and Wisdom-Sophia: Awakening to the Feminine Face of God – with Christopher Pramuk, the author of six books, including two award-winning studies of Thomas Merton: *At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine*, and *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton*. He is currently Chair of Ignatian Thought and Imagination at Regis University in Denver.

Wednesday, January 15 – We Are Already One: Indigenous Peoples and Race in Thomas Merton – with Paul Dekar, professor emeritus for evangelism and mission at Memphis Theological Seminary and long-time member of the Baptist Peace Fellowship. He is author of *Thomas Merton: Twentieth-Century Wisdom for Twenty-first Century Living*.

Registration for each session is available through the parish website.



The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art, and Theology

By Christopher Pramuk, [Anselm Academic, 2019]

Reviewed by Paul Pynkoski

Christopher Pramuk is a theologian who has caught my attention recently. His award-winning book, *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton*, was meticulously researched, forward thinking, and beautifully written. Exploring his writing further, I stumbled on an essay that used the lyrics of Bruce Cockburn to bring two writers into conversation. My first thought was, "How does this American get to quote Cockburn?" But as I probed further, I found other essays by him that tapped into music as an aid to theological investigation.

Pramuk's most recent work, *The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art, and Theology*, asks whether secular music "can bear us into the realms of the holy and sacred" and "To what extent do songwriters, painters, filmmakers, and other artists play a prophetic role in society and church?" He first explores the role of wonder in our experience, and then devotes eight chapters to issues that mark twenty-first century life. War, alienation, and empathy are investigated through the writings of Thomas Merton and the music of Pink Floyd. The suffering of the Earth and possible eclipse of human culture are explored through the storytelling of Jean Giono and the cinematic art of Godfrey Reggio's *Qatsi*

trilogy. The boundaries of race are challenged through John Howard Griffin's *Black Like Me* and Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life*. Human longing for relationship, solitude, and communion is examined through the music of the Indigo Girls, the Song of Songs, and the poetry of Rilke.

This is not theology in the academic sense. It is a sapiential and imaginative approach that is simultaneously contemplative and communal; an approach that takes its cue from human experience and brings it into creative contact with the tradition.

Pramuk's approach is contemplative, as he asks the reader to stop and gaze deeply at a work of art or listen intently to a song or story. It is communal in that he is not providing final answers, but rather invites us to engage with the music or poetry and reflect on our responses before engaging with his. We become fellow pilgrims, engaged in deepening our sense of the human and divine. He invites us to fill "in the gaps along the way with your own images, your own music and poetry, your own silence."

"Tradition," too often implies being closed to new possibilities. Pramuk, however, is bold to offer, "the enemy of authentic religion is the lie that there are 'no new gifts to be given,' no new dreams, no new pages yet to be written in the life-story of God and humankind."

The Artist Alive offers us the opportunity to learn theology anew, in a way that goes beyond a constricted vision of logic and rationality, bringing together heart, head, imagination, and spiritual praxis.



No One Travels Alone

By Jon Brooks,

[Borealis Records, 2018]

Review by Paul Pynkoski
Poets may have more to say to us today than theologians and economists. The poet can offer an imaginative way

of engaging the issues of our time, a way that speaks to the whole person. "There is no revolution without poets who are seers. There is no revolution without prophetic songs," offered Thomas Merton. We might ask, then, what contemporary voices can assist people of faith who pursue a vision that transcends the economic and technological mythologies of our culture?

Jon Brooks is one of those voices. Brooks is one of Canada's most literate and insightful songwriters. His 2018 album, *No One Travels Alone*, delves into our current cultural conflicts. Brooks weaves the theme of pilgrimage throughout the album and uses a poetic structure that takes inspiration

from John Donne's *La Corona* sonnets, where the last line of one poem becomes the first line of the next. The gravel in Jon's voice, his percussive guitar work, and Alec Fraser's bass and backing vocals anchor the musical landscape and drive lyrics that stick in your head, refusing to let go.

He examines the impact of digital culture in "01," *lamenting We're done with wonder—in a click,/We can Wikipedia it*. "All Life's Meaning" suggests that *that simple, imperfect love/Is all life's meaning...and could it be on such a weightless thing/Together we are leaning?* He asks, in "Proxima B," were we to leave this dying earth behind for another planet, what would we take with us? *Baby, pack light*, is the admonition, but his list grows to include the music of Leonard Cohen, Michelangelo's *Pieta*, lashings of Australian wine, and the smell of orange peels. He insists *We're done with all that's failed before*. Jon asks if we have eyes to see, or ears to hear the beauty hidden in plain sight—the wind off the lake, the touch of a lover's hand, and the seeds of flowers that *teach us to love*.

"Todos Caminamos Por Este Caminito" has all of nature crying out in song, drawing us into its chorus of joy. The ending words, *we all walk over this little trail*, bring us to a specifically human pilgrimage in "Standing at the Gates." Here a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew and a Buddhist end their pilgrimage at the (pearly) gates, and find themselves looking in. They ask, *Will we be saved or will we be lost*, but Brooks redirects, insisting, *Wrong question, dear./Will we take care of each other?* And in the response of the whispering wind we hear, *All is hunger, all is Love./Brothers! Sisters! Sing!* The final song offers the monastic wisdom of St. Silouan, *Keep your mind in hell and despair not*

This commentary on culture, relationships, and planet never deviates from the deeply personal. There is a consistent hint of a "you" close to Jon's side. Digital despair is contrasted with *my love for you*; he is *standing at the gates with you, my love*; in the midst of cultural confusion and global warming, *if we can go for a walk/If we can tell a friend/We can come back from most things*.

Jon offers us a vision that can look straight into the darkness and brokenness of our times. But it is a vision that can see still see beauty and love, tapping into our deepest longings to find hope:

Let us pause of ourselves and count another's tears,/Let us share the cup of suffering more evenly this year/Sing us something we can't say, sing us the unspeakable!/Like, 'it feels like we're a seed dying for a new fruit to grow...'

Highly recommended for tired activists.
(www.jonbrooks.ca)



Youth Ministry Sunday/Pentecost

This year as part of the celebration of Pentecost and Youth Ministry Sunday, our youth posed some thoughtful questions to our priests, Susan and Roshni, as part of engaging all of us with the readings from scripture. It also wouldn't be Pentecost without balloons!





The B's (and More) of Young Adults at Redeemer

Hilary Keachie

Brunch, books, beach, Bible, beer. These and more are what brings together a diverse and enthusiastic group of 20- and 30-somethings a couple times a month. Our young adults' group has grown to about twenty people who regularly come to events, worship and social activities.

The most popular event seems to be our monthly brunches at different local restaurants. These are largely unstructured events, intentionally, as it allows for conversation and relationship building between the members of the group. The conversations have been engaging and varied, from sharing our faith stories to discussing our favourite books to relishing in our shared love of macaroni and cheese.

We have also had a number of other events this year. We've done two book clubs, first reading Michelle Obama's *Becoming*, and more recently reading Rachel Held Evans' *Searching for Sunday*. The discussions generated by

these books have been inspiring, challenging and funny. We are looking forward to our next one—I've already received tons of interesting suggestions!

We also helped make over 800 Hot Cross Buns for St. James Cathedral's Foot Clinic fundraiser and spent a hot July

day, riding roller coasters and eating way too much sugar at Canada's Wonderland. We are planning some more fun events coming up including a beach day in August and apple picking in the early fall. Our young adults have also been taking leadership roles in the monthly Rock Eucharist services including reading, leading prayers, greeting and serving beer afterward. Many in the group love to come for the music and have been keen to be involved in the liturgy and hospitality. We are looking forward to these starting up again in September.

Next year, we are also planning a pilgrimage to Taizé, in France. Our hope is to go around the May long weekend, and spend a week in prayer, Bible study, communal work and fellowship. Taizé was founded in 1940 by Brother Roger as an ecumenical monastic community with a focus on youth and welcomes over ten thousand young people from around the world every year. Many of our young adults have expressed a desire to go on retreat together, to explore their faith, to practice contemplation and meditation, and it is our hope that this pilgrimage will support and inspire them as they continue on their faith journey. We are working closely with Michael Perry, the assistant curate at the Church of St. Peter and St. Simon at Bloor Street and Sherbourne Street, who lived in Taizé for two years and is passionate about introducing young people to this community. We also will be collaborating with other churches in our diocese and inviting their young adults to participate. This pilgrimage is open to all young people between the ages of 19 and 30, with some additional spots for people up to 39 years old. Of course, a trip such as this costs a good bit of money, and so we'll have some fundraising initiatives in the fall and winter to help alleviate some of the costs for our young adults. We will have an information session later this fall, so watch for details soon.



Redeemer Kids Church School and Registration

The church school team and Redeemer Kids are getting prepared for a great year ahead! Join us starting in September for a year filled with learning, fun, community, music, food and more. Coming up in the fall, the Redeemer Kids will be involved with, and learn about, the Season of Creation. Then we will take part in a unit exploring the life of David.

Families should register their child for the church school year by **Sunday, September 8**. Registration forms are available by the Redeemer Kids activity table, or you can get a soft copy by emailing Rev'd Roshni. (roshni@theredeemer.ca)

Back-to-Church-School Party and Blessing of the Backpacks

On **Sunday, September 8**, Redeemer Kids are having a Back-to-Church-School party during the 9.30AM service. Join us for snacks, games, music and a fun time together starting the year off right. Also, back by popular demand, we will have the blessing of the backpacks (and other bags) during the 9.30AM service. Children are invited to bring their school bags to church and place them around the altar at the beginning of the service and they will be blessed as we ring in September. ✝



CLAY Gathering 2020

Our youth group is planning an exciting trip for next summer! The Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering occurs every two years in a different city in Canada and it will be taking place in Calgary from August 20 to 23, 2020. This is an amazing opportunity to meet young people of faith from around the country, to hear inspiring and thought-provoking speakers, to put our faith into action through community service and to worship together. We will be doing lots of fundraising starting in the fall, and we will be sharing more about the theme and the specifics of what we'll be doing. Stay tuned! ✝

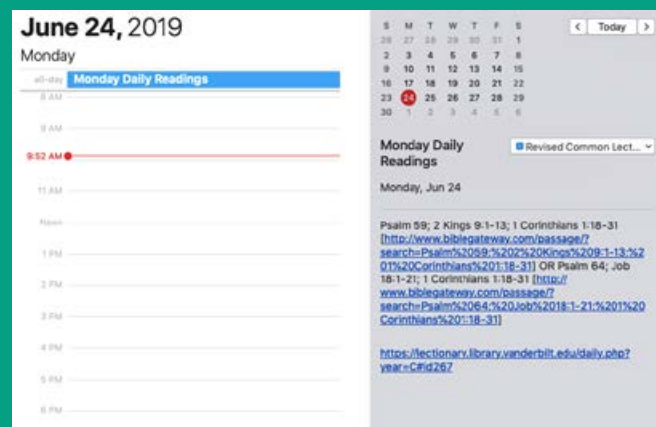
DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that there are wonderful resources online to support and encourage a routine of daily prayer and bible study? Judy Burnham sent us a note about one of them that she has found helpful that said, "This link changed how I read the bible." and went to say, "I recently found this link online It gives a daily reading that is short and digestible, and it also follows the lectionary readings we have in church over the year." The link? **lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu**. Judy shares a helpful tip for using the resource:



Click on the little calendar picture at the top of the page (circled above) and follow the directions.

Once you follow the directions you can open your calendar, click anywhere on the blue underlined link to each day's readings. It's just one click away.



Thanks, Judy, for sharing this great resource.

WELCOMING THE STRANGER: Redeemer's Refugee Settlement History

At Redeemer we pride ourselves on being a welcoming space—from opening our doors to the public to being an inclusive congregation and caring for the marginalized to welcoming newcomers to Canada.

Redeemer has a history of sponsoring refugees. In 1987 a mother, widowed by the violence in war-torn El Salvador, fled with her children and found welcome and support through our church. One of those children, Lorena Azucena, became an integral member of our refugee settlement committee in 2016.

In September 2015, when Canadians saw the photo of little Alan Kurdi's lifeless body lying on a Turkish beach, thousands were moved to sponsor Syrian refugees. At Redeemer, our committee, headed by Luke McRae, chose instead to sponsor whatever refugees were most in need, from any country. AURA (Anglican United Refugee Alliance) has been the Settlement Agreement Holder, or umbrella group, offering valuable guidance through all our recent sponsorships.

The first person we helped, in the spring of 2016, was Ibrahim, a young man from The Gambia. Committee members worked diligently to register him for OHIP, banking, phone, internet, and to find housing, arrange medical and dental appointments, and enroll him in school. He was fortunate in already knowing English, as language is often a major hurdle for newcomers. Ibrahim eventually settled with other family members in Ottawa, and we wished him well in his new life.

Next to arrive, in November 2016, were six members of an extended family from Burma (Myanmar), members of the Karen ethnic minority. Ta Kai Hae and Lah Wah's family had lived in a Thai refugee camp for many years and faced numerous obstacles in moving to a new country. Not only did they need to learn a very unfamiliar language, but the things Torontonians take for granted—using a laundry machine, navigating the transit system, crossing a busy street—were new to them. So, besides all the registrations, and many medical appointments, there were basic cultural lessons to be absorbed. Alongside the challenges, there were highlights—shared potlucks, a concert at Redeemer by the Karen Baptist Church, a picnic in High Park. Our financial

responsibility for the family ended after twelve months, but a team of dedicated volunteers helped with homework for another school year. Co-chairs Mary Horan and Anne Christy led the committee through the challenging, but very rewarding, experience of helping this family to adjust to life in Canada.

Our current sponsorship has been a completely different experience. The Eritrean community's Saho tribe members, 500-strong in the GTA, had raised funds to help sponsor four young men, Ibrahim, Omer, Taha, and Abdu. They had approached AURA, looking for a partner organization, and we agreed to be that partner. Mehamed and Abdul, themselves refugees to Canada several years ago, joined us, and we have enjoyed a very productive relationship.



The newcomers arrived in February and March this year. Mehamed and Abdul had found them an apartment, which we furnished and set up with generous donations from members of Redeemer and the community at large. The usual registrations took place, with either Mehamed or Abdul attending to translate, and the young men started ESL classes. They are keen learners and have all moved to level three, which is what is required to find a job in Canada. With committee members' assistance, they have developed resumes and are now eager to begin work in Canada. While in Israel for the past seven years, they all worked in restaurants, and have cooking and/or cleaning experience. If you can help these hard-working newcomers find their first Canadian jobs, please contact Co-chairs Alison Colvin (acolvin@sympatico.ca, 416-960-5362) or Henry Krol (henrykrol@yahoo.com, 416-449-7659).

On a lighter note, the committee and the Eritreans shared a cordial, and delicious, potluck meal in June in the parish hall at Redeemer. The photo shows three of the newcomers, along with Mehamed, Abdul, and their mother Saida, a key member of the welcoming team.

Thank you to the Redeemer community for the support and interest you have shown over the years. It's a reflection of the welcome and hospitality that grounds us as Christians. May we continue to welcome the stranger, whether on our doorstep or from across the world.



Mid-Year Financial Review – 2019

Lee Shouldice, Chair, Board of Management
and Richard Heystee, Treasurer

For a number of years now, the senior leadership of the Church has called a mid-year parish meeting for the purpose of providing the congregation with an update on our financial situation. This year we planned to hold that meeting after the completion of morning services on Sunday, August 18. As it turned out, Open Streets Toronto was scheduled for that same day. Our sense was that it would be difficult to hold a successful mid-year financial review meeting on a Sunday afternoon during the summer when a popular street festival was taking place right outside of our doors. We also thought that it would be the best use of Steven's time for him to be out on Bloor Street, introducing himself to our neighbours and friends. At about the same time as we were debating our options, it was announced that a summer edition of *The Gathering* would be published around the same date as the street festival.

The decision was obvious. We cancelled the live mid-year review meeting in lieu of this article and a future, live, mid-year review meeting on **Sunday, September 22** after the 11.15AM service. The latter date is a bit past "mid-year," but it will provide us with an opportunity to communicate to the parish the financial state of the church as at the end of August, 2019, as we gear up for fall programming.

So, where do things stand?

Briefly put, our most recent financial information suggests that this year is developing in a manner consistent with the budget passed by Vestry in February. The bad news is that we remain on track to end the year with a significant financial deficit. However, there is some good news as well.


It was communicated to the parish at Vestry that, if we were to meet our aggressive undesignated donation goal of \$835,000 this year, our year-end deficit would be \$115,000. That appears to be where we will end the year. As currently forecast, if we achieve our undesignated donation goal by the end of 2019, our deficit will be \$113,500. It will take a considerable push during November and December to achieve our undesignated donation goal, let alone the amount required to balance our budget for 2019. If we do not achieve our undesignated donation goal of \$835,000, our deficit for 2019 will be higher than currently estimated. In fact, if our undesignated donations equal those received in 2018, our deficit for 2019 will be \$220,000. Any deficit we have this year will have to be covered by drawing funds

from our investment account, which currently sits at approximately \$1,000,000.

Looking at revenues and expenses, as a general observation our revenues are in line with what we anticipated in February, and our expenses have been kept under control. To date, personnel expenses are slightly below budget, and property expenses are slightly above budget, due to an unanticipated expenditure for a condenser. Church programming is estimated to come in slightly below budget, as will the Common Table. General office expenses are higher than budget, primarily due to costs incurred to move our new Incumbent, The Rev'd Canon Steven Mackison and his family to Toronto from Montréal. Otherwise, our expenditures are largely on track.

As noted above, there is some positive news. Since early May, when it was announced that Steven would be joining us as our new Incumbent, our weekly donations have been consistently higher on a year-over-year basis. We are also buoyed by the fact that, between February and July, five parishioners have added their names to our monthly PAR donation program, and another 12 have increased their monthly PAR donation. That said, we have also lost a number of PAR donors, primarily because some parishioners have moved out of Toronto. Accordingly, our monthly PAR donations have, for the most part, remained relatively constant.

At and after Vestry, the parish was provided with a very frank message regarding the poor state of our Church finances. Although a number of parishioners have increased their donations to the Church since then, for which we are extremely thankful, we remain on track to end 2019 with a significant fiscal deficit. But there are a number of optimistic signs which suggest that we are turning the corner. The parish is delighted to have a new Incumbent, and we have some exciting fall programming which will engage parishioners. Over the next four months, we hope to learn that we have turned the corner and are on the road towards a healthier balance sheet.

We will have a much more detailed presentation to make at our meeting in September. In the meantime, should anyone wish to discuss our current financial situation, please feel free to contact Lee, at managementboard@theredeemer.ca, or Richard, at treasurer@theredeemer.ca. 

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Pride Sunday & Parade





Chris Ambidge and Lyds Keesmaat Walsh of this parish were delegates to the 42nd Session of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada held in Vancouver from July 10 to 16. Each of them was invited to share their experience of synod during a morning worship service. Chris's reflection was offered on Sunday, July 21 and Lyds was the preacher on Sunday, August 11. We are grateful for their presence at synod, for sharing those experiences with us on a Sunday morning and for providing texts of those comments for The Gathering. (They edited their texts slightly for print)

A General Synod Update

I was one of 21 Diocese of Toronto members of General Synod 2019 in Vancouver and this is an account of what happened. The first thing to say is that all of us in Vancouver knew that people in the pews across the country were holding us in prayer, and that knowledge was tremendously supportive. Thank you.



Synod was six days long and they worked us hard. There was a lot done, and I'll try and touch on what happened, from the headline events, to others that are less obvious, but also important. Synod has representation from 32 different dioceses and jurisdictions. There are lay and clergy and youth and bishops in the membership, which totals about 230. Larger dioceses have more people—Toronto is biggest, no diocese has fewer than six members. And when you get that many Anglicans in the same place, there WILL be worship and singing—both in the synod hall, and at Christ Church Cathedral, a ten-minute walk away. The United Church moderator goes to a lot of such meetings, and says the Anglicans sing the best. Not surprising.

One of the things that we did at the cathedral was elect a new Primate. Archbishop Fred Hiltz retired at the end of synod after 12 years (well done, good-and-faithful servant). As our next Primate, the 14th, we elected Linda Nicholls, the first woman to hold that position: this is very good news. You may know her as the Bishop of Huron, or you may remember her as the Bishop of Trent-Durham here in Toronto before that. She is very experienced, both in Canada and internationally. We will be well led as we move forward.

Archbishop Linda will need to do some healing, especially in the wake of the marriage canon vote—I'll come to that later. She will also preside over an expanded church: Synod voted overwhelmingly to establish a self-determining Indigenous

church, which will function somewhat like another province of the national church. The details of membership and function and decision-making are left to the Indigenous people. Mark MacDonald, the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop is now an archbishop, and presides over that part of the Anglican Church of Canada. Members of Sacred Circle and of Council Fire will now sit as of right in General Synod—previously they have been observers.

Speaking of healing: you may well have heard that Primate Michael Peers apologised in the 1990s to Indigenous people for the Anglican part in the disastrous enterprise that was the Indian residential schools. But we settlers did more damage than that: we assumed that the natives were ignorant savages and needed to be civilised and brought to faith by us—when in fact they'd been managing just fine, with a clear connection to our Creator, long before the Europeans arrived. That steam-roller attitude, that spiritual arrogance—that we had all the answers and they didn't, so we needed to fix it—did tremendous damage to our Indigenous folk. Archbishop Fred made an extended and heart-felt apology for our spiritual arrogance toward the Indigenous church. That was a healing time.

Synod also condemned human trafficking, improved interfaith relations with Jewish and Muslim faith communities, and increased our relationships with Lutherans, Mennonites and the United Church of Canada. Synod adopted the UN Sustainable Development Goals, added supplementary material to the Book of Alternative Services, and adopted observation of the Season of Creation every autumn.

Council of General Synod asked the synod to endorse five affirmations known as "A Word to the Church." These were designed to facilitate our deliberations, and our living together as a church after the marriage canon vote (however it went). The affirmations recognise Indigenous self-determination, that diverse understandings and teachings exist within the church, and make commitments to presume good faith, and to stand together. These were passed by a huge majority—85% as I recall. The first two—Indigenous self-determination, and acknowledgement that some parts of the church believe that the existing canon does not prohibit same-sex marriage—were also incorporated into the motion to amend Canon XXI, the marriage canon.

That was of course the third major agenda item—along with the Indigenous Church and electing a new Primate. Canon XXI was coming back for second reading of changes which would have explicitly allowed for equal marriage, in dioceses where the bishop assents. After 2½ hours of debate, the motion failed on second reading, by two votes in the order of bishops. There were large majorities in the two other houses (taken as a whole, synod was in favour by 75%).

While we tried to receive the vote in silence, there were some suppressed wails of distress. It was a very difficult evening—both the debating process, and of course the vote count.

“Anglicans turn down same-sex marriage,” not surprisingly, was the headline in the secular media (sex, religion AND politics, this story has it all), and that did huge and immediate damage. Damage that will take time to repair. People next day at synod were receiving texts and email from friends and family members, “that’s it, I’m done with church.” One bishop received email from a couple he was to marry in August, saying they were taking the wedding to another denomination. Pride Day happened to be the next Sunday in St John’s, Newfoundland and the clergy in the Proud Anglicans section of the parade were yelled at, “take off your collars”—and that’s by the hugely secular crowd, who don’t normally “get” the finer points of church-land. I know that it caused significant hurt in THIS parish, with people wondering if they should stay or go: those people may even have left already and are not hearing this. And for all that hurt I am profoundly sorry. That damage will not be un-done soon.

However, we are a resurrection people, and I am a LOT more optimistic now than I was on the evening of the vote. Synod protocols require that the House of Bishops withdraw during a primatial election and sit apart: they’re sequestered so they don’t know how the election is proceeding, but they may be needed to provide another nomination. So, the day after the Canon XXI debate, while the vote, (and the very apparent distress with the result) was still fresh in everyone’s mind, the bishops were locked in a room together. I understand that “full and frank” discussions ensued, then and in three later meetings of the house, for ten hours total. After that, the bishops issued a message of apology for the hurt that had been caused, the message included the phrase “local option.”

Synodical acknowledgement that the canon (as UN-amended) does not prohibit same-gender marriage, and acknowledgement of local option—these are acts of synod—opened the gates. Before General Synod, there were four dioceses offering equal marriage in churches: Niagara, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. After the vote, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island was the first to say they were moving, and since then they have followed thick and fast. As of now (I think), there are 14 jurisdictions for equal marriage: British Columbia, New Westminster, Territory of the People, Kootenay, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Rupert’s Land, Huron, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and the Military Ordinariate, on top of the previous four. Other dioceses—Brandon, Algoma, Ontario, Quebec, and all three Newfoundland dioceses, are bringing it to their next synods. You have to be nimble to stay out of the way of falling dominoes here.

By my estimation, more than 75% of the population of Canada now lives in dioceses that offer equal marriages. The only major urban centre not in the group is Calgary. I really believe a tipping point has been passed. What we were hoping for before synod has now come to pass.

Some are saying what we have is better than had the amendment passed: first, the marriages can start now, not 1 January 2020; second and more importantly, the diocesan bishop would have been able to veto the process had the amendment passed, but it didn’t. So, the diocesan bishop can’t veto the process, bishops don’t appear in the UN-amended canon. They voted down all the concessions made to the conservatives.

It’s not neat or tidy (and I *much* prefer neat and tidy); as someone said, “we saw the sausages being made, and it wasn’t pretty.” The damage done by the failing vote will take a lot to repair. We also need to be careful not to blame this on Indigenous bishops—I’ve done the arithmetic: most of those voting “no” were European-origin conservatives, and the conservatives as a whole get the responsibility for the pastoral and evangelical mess created by the negative vote.

Nevertheless, the church has moved, and we have gained most of what *this* gay Anglican could have wanted. Equal marriage is here in Toronto, and across the country, and will only increase.

We also have a new Primate. We have a renewed and improved relationship with Indigenous Anglicans. Thanks be to God.

People, We Were Made For Love

Lyds Keesmaat Walsh

Love, Love, Love, Love
People we are made for love
love your neighbour,
love yourself
and love your God



When the youth delegates of General Synod learned that song at an outdoor Eucharist the day before synod started none of us ever imagined that less than a week later it would have become a song of protest. We never imagined that just days after learning it some of us would be singing it in front of all of synod with broken hearts and tears streaming down our faces. But it did and we did.

This song, this call to love, became the song that shaped my experience of General Synod. I saw places where this love was shown, where this love for our neighbours and ourselves and our God was so visible and so beautiful. I saw it in the presentations by our Indigenous siblings, I saw it in the apology that Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, made to the Indigenous peoples for the spiritual harm done by the church to their communities. I saw it as Bishop Mark MacDonald became the first national Indigenous archbishop of the new self-determining Indigenous church. I saw it in the hope and joy we all felt as we elected Bishop Linda Nicholls as the next Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, the first woman to be in that role. I saw it in the climate change motions that were brought forward by the youth and passed unanimously by the house of synod. I saw it in changing a prayer for the conversion of Jewish people to a prayer of reconciliation. In these moments, we were moving towards being a church that can be a sneak peek into the Kingdom of God.

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I wish I could say that synod was only full of those moments, where this love shone through. But I can't. The Friday night of synod, the night the motion to change the marriage canon to include all couples, regardless of gender, wasn't passed by the House of Bishops. That night, that vote, we didn't show love to our neighbour, to our LGBTQ2S+ neighbours. We didn't show love to ourselves, ourselves as a

church that is full of people who are far from straight. I mean look around this parish, we are not a straight church, as much as some bishops wish we were. And it didn't show love to our God, a God who made us all in God's image, all our queerness, transness, all of us, in the image and likeness of God.

If I'm being honest, I still don't quite know how to talk about that night and the days following. When I was writing this I was trying to find a creative way to tell the story while engaging the text in a well-shaped sermon. I barely know how to tell just the story, but I'm going to try to at least do that.

I know some of you were watching the livestream and saw me stand up and talk at the beginning of the debate about the mental health implications if this vote were to

fail. I spoke about risks of suicide and self-harm should the motion not pass. And those were very real concerns among the delegates to General Synod in the days that followed. The next morning during the Eucharist service at the Cathedral, my friend Sydney and I were seized by panic as we realized that one of the queer youth hadn't been seen since the night before, a youth who we knew had been suicidal when we thought the vote had failed in 2016. Thankfully when we got back to the hotel and finally made contact with them, they were safe in their room, talking to loved ones back home. But they confirmed that they had felt that way the night before. In talking to them as I was writing this sermon, they shared with me that the Sunday night of synod they left their phone in their room and went for a walk without intentions of coming back alive. Many of us had to have sharp objects removed from our rooms for the fear of relapsing with self-harm, and my room became the bedroom for whatever queer youth needed a safe place to sleep. That's what I was talking about when I stood up and spoke at the beginning of the debate. When I stood up and said that, I honestly thought that would be my three minutes in the spotlight for the rest of synod. I was already tired, I didn't want to have to keep standing up in front of everyone, I didn't want people looking at me. But that all changed the moment I saw the results posted on the screen, seeing that 62% in the House of Bishops where we needed 66%.

That moment was one of the most painful moments of my life. Those of you watching the livestream would have heard my wail, in that moment it physically felt like someone had stabbed me in the chest. I couldn't breathe, I couldn't move, I just collapsed. And then I saw a bishop I believe voted "no" looking at me and I couldn't stay in the room with them anymore, not after what they had done to me and my community. So, I fled the room. Everything from that point on that night is a blur to me, there are little moments I remember clearly and there are whole chunks I don't remember at all. That night my friend Sydney and some of the other queer youth stood outside the meeting hall singing our song of love, but I couldn't sing that night, love was something that I had been told wasn't important. By defeating the change to the marriage canon those bishops had told me that my love isn't valid, isn't worth celebrating, isn't worth the sacrament of marriage.

That night, a group of queer youth spent the night in my room. We got through that night by holding each other as we cried together, as we ranted together. We held each other's broken hearts. We got through that night because we had each other.

Friday night might have been a blur, but Saturday morning is clear as a bell.

We knew that the night before we had been seen, we had been heard, even though it wasn't something we chose or had control over. Our reactions to the failed vote had made us visible, and that visibility was something we needed to use. The night before synod had been closed with the words "Our children are crying." They had seen us, and we needed to make sure they kept seeing us. So, my friends, Sydney and Lizzy, and I got to the cathedral early before the morning Eucharist, joined hands and started to sing

Love, Love, Love, Love
People we are made for love
love your neighbour,
love yourself
and love your God

Among the three of us we had one Proud Anglicans shirt, a trans flag cape, a bi flag cape, and Sydney's rainbow hair. We were right by the doors. We were making sure they saw us. During the time we stood there singing, our circle fluctuated in size, at one point there were 11 people standing and singing with us. Other youth joined us, lay delegates joined us, priests joined us, affirming bishops joined us. We sang loudly, we sang softly, we sang with heads held high, we sang with heads hanging, we sang clearly, and we sang through tears and sobs. But we didn't stop singing. We wouldn't stop singing. We sang until we were told the service was starting, and then the three of us who had started the singing walked into the cathedral, holding hands, heads held high, still singing, loudly and clearly. We made the people who voted "no" see us, see that even though they said we couldn't get married we weren't going anywhere; this is our home, too. And we weren't going to just sit down and take it quietly either. When we walked in, we didn't know that Archbishop Fred was in the middle of speaking, but when we walked in he stopped and listened and watched us, and we didn't stop. The three of us sang a few rounds then Lizzy was ready to stop, so Sydney and I were singing and standing—the two of us. A few people in the congregation had joined in singing with us and a couple stood up as well. After one more round, Syd and I looked at each other and knew that it was time to let the morning continue. We stopped singing and I said, loudly and clearly, "my heart has never been more broken."

Shortly after sitting down we realized that no one had seen the youth I mentioned earlier, so Sydney and I weren't even there for most of the service as we had to run back to the hotel to make sure that that youth was alive and safe. After finding them and making sure they were safe we were walking back to the cathedral and we were mad. We had literally not known if one of our friends was still alive

because of those bishops defeating that motion. As we were walking, we were talking about how if we got back in time for communion we didn't know if we could receive the sacrament, not in that space with those people who had just told us that we weren't worthy of a different sacrament. But our whole thing that morning was to be visible, to make ourselves seen. So, we publicly declined communion by going up and saying, "if I'm not worthy of one sacrament, I'm not worthy of any of them!"

But even through all the pain, love shone through. Love was there in the affirming bishops who went out of their way to make sure we were safe, who gave us their room numbers, email addresses, and phone numbers, and made sure we knew we could call on them if we never needed them. It was there in other delegates always checking in on us and helping up put together safety plans for after synod. It was there in countless messages, texts, and emails of love and support from not only Anglicans across Canada but from friends around the world. It was there in the observer who brought their dog out into the hallway to comfort me and the other queer youth who fled the room. It was there in our Diocesan Bishop, Andrew Asbil, as he followed me when I fled and held me as I cried. It was there in the Primate, Fred, who took so much time out of his week to talk with Sydney and me and really listen to us and hear us. It was in the bishops who pushed the House of Bishops to make a statement publicly affirming local option for the first time. And it was here that Sunday morning in this church with rainbow ribbons hanging out front, declaring that you stood with the LGBTQ2S+ community in our pain and grief and were grieving along with us.

So today when I sing, it's still a song of protest against those who say my love isn't worthy, but I am also singing a song of hope—hope because of the love that there was at synod. Hope because of all the bishops across the country who have said that their dioceses will be moving forward with equal marriage anyway. Hope because, even in the midst of our anguish and grief, God was always there, God was grieving with us. The Holy Spirit was holding us in our pain and she was in our song. And hope because of the love that is here in this parish, in this room, here today. So today I sing with hope.

Love, Love, Love, Love
People we are made for love
love your neighbour,
love yourself
and love your God



STEP CHOIR

In July, our music team partnered with some members of The Common Table to bring the gift of song to the front steps through The Steps Choir.



The Sunday after the vote on the Marriage Canon, the parish leadership wanted to ensure that we, in some way, acknowledged the disappointment of the failure of the vote but to also say that the vote didn't change who we are as a community. Sometimes it is better to say that with something tangible and visible rather than with words, so we put the fabric rainbow streamers on the railings as a sign that we are a people of hope and welcome. And then we shared a picture on social media so that those from our community who couldn't be with us that morning, as well as from our diocese and indeed all across the country could be reminded that we held firm to the belief that love is love is love.

Thank you Lyds! At the end of June, Lyds Keesmaat Walsh concluded their youth ministry apprenticeship with our parish. We were blessed by Lyds ministry in our midst.



WELCOME STEVEN!



SERVICES OF NOTE

As summer moves toward autumn, we note the following worship services that will be on our calendar in September and October.

Sunday, September 1 – in the morning:

through the laying on of hands for healing, prayers are offered.

Sunday, September 8, 9.30AM – Blessing of the Backpacks and Book Bags

– as we mark the beginning of a new school year and the return to busier work schedules after the summer, the community is invited to place their backpack, book bag or other bag that they use throughout their day at the altar at the beginning of the service to be blessed.

Sunday, September 15, 4PM – Celebration of New Ministry: With our area bishop, The Right Rev'd Kevin Robertson, we officially celebrate the ministry we share with our new Incumbent, The Rev'd Canon Steven Mackison.

Sunday, September 22, 7PM – Rock Eucharist: Our first Rock Eucharist of the autumn will feature the music of **Pink Floyd**. Join us for word, sacrament, and song.

Sunday, September 29, 9.30 and 11.15 – St Michael and All Angels: Melanie Delva, reconciliation animator for the Anglican Church of Canada will be our preacher.

Sunday, September 29, 7PM – Bach Vespers for St Michael and All Angels:

We celebrate the feast of St Michael and All Angels with BWV 130 *Herr Gott, dich loben alle wir* (Lord God, we all praise thee). This festal cantata with brass and drums is part of a vespers service that includes glorious choral music, thoughtful preaching and hymns that reflect the vespers tradition.



SERVICES

Sunday, October 6, 7PM – Earth Song: we launch the Season of Creation and welcome our Diocesan Bishop, The Right Rev'd Andrew Asbil as the preacher and presider.

Sunday, October 13 – 9.30 and 11.15AM – National Thanksgiving: our celebration of the Season of Creation continues as we mark the national day of Thanksgiving

Sunday, October 20 – 9.30 and 11.15AM: Sylvia Keesmaat is our preacher

Sunday, October 27 – 9.30 and 11.15AM: Nate Wall as preacher.



EVENTS

Wednesday, October 16 – 7pm

Presentation & Discussion led by Paul Pynkoski, Parishioner: *Woods, Landscape, and City: The Prophetic Spirituality of Thomas Merton**

Sunday, October 20 – 10:45am*, between the morning services, WildOntario, our Church School and Youth will host an all ages event to experience birds of prey, up close!

Wednesday, October 23 – 2 and 7pm

Award-winning Documentary & Discussion led by Lynda Young, Parishioner: **RIVERBLUE** – The fashion industry's ruinous impact on the planet*

*Event registration: www.theredeemer.ca

In the Spirit of Reconciliation...

Indigenous Solidarity Working Group events.

Saturday, September 21, 9.15AM to 12.30PM

Survivors' Circle – an opportunity to hear the stories of Indian Residential Schools survivors, coordinated by Andrew Wesley

Saturday, September 28, 9.15AM to 12.30PM

The Blanket Exercise – led by Esther and Andrew Wesley. This is an opportunity to take part in an interactive learning exercise focused on Canada's history and the interactions between settler and indigenous peoples.