



**IN THIS ISSUE**

**6 CHANGING CHURCH**

**12 PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH**

**13 A SHREDDIES PARABLE**

**15 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**



Publisher | Bishop Donald Phillips  
Editor | Allison Chubb  
Accounting | Bernice Funk  
Layout & design | [cityfolkcreative.ca](http://cityfolkcreative.ca)

Rupert's Land News - is published 10 times per year (September - June) by the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in the Anglican Church in Canada. It connects churches and communities from Portage la Prairie, MB, to Atikokan, ON. by offering news, events, opinion, and ideas to 6,000 readers per month. RLN is available in a variety of formats:

- [rupertslandnews.ca](http://rupertslandnews.ca)
- [facebook.com/rlandnews](https://facebook.com/rlandnews)
- [twitter.com/rlandnews](https://twitter.com/rlandnews)
- [instagram.com/rlandnews](https://instagram.com/rlandnews)

We also deliver timely news and information via a weekly email. Sign up at: [rupertslandnews.ca/email](http://rupertslandnews.ca/email)

RLN exists to explore issues at the intersections of faith and life. In doing so we solicit and publish a range of opinions, not all of which reflect the official positions of the Diocese.

**Advertising:**

RLN accepts advertising in our monthly magazine and our weekly email. Our rate sheet is available at [rupertslandnews.ca/ads](http://rupertslandnews.ca/ads). To discuss advertising call (204) 996-6172 or email [rlnews@rupertsland.ca](mailto:rlnews@rupertsland.ca)

**Editorial offices:**

Anglican Lutheran Centre  
935 Nesbitt Bay  
Winnipeg Manitoba  
R3T 1W6

**Subscription queries:**

Administrative Assistant for the Diocese  
(204) 992-4200 | [general@rupertsland.ca](mailto:general@rupertsland.ca)

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please be in touch with the editor.

Contents copyright 2016 by Rupert's Land News. All rights reserved.

**Cover:** Mae plays outside St. Clement's, Mapleton, at the annual sledding party.

## A LONG STANDING TRADITION



**The Only Funeral Home Owned and Operated by the Bardal Family**



Call: **949-2200**  
(204)

[neilbardalinc.com](http://neilbardalinc.com)  
[info@nbardal.mb.ca](mailto:info@nbardal.mb.ca)

One Winnipeg Location Only  
Across from Brookside Cemetery

**3030 Notre Dame Avenue**  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3H 1B9

# THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

*Allison Chubb*



Happy New Year, Rupert's Land! I hope you are in the midst of joyful Christmas celebrations. Thank you so much to those who made donations to Rupert's Land News in 2015 and who have made it possible for the monthly magazine, RLN Weekly, and social media interactions to continue into a new year.

A new year brings new things, both those we are expecting and those which

come as a surprise. This issue has a particular focus on the changing Church and the ways both individuals and congregations are navigating that change. On pages six to nine, you will find three responses to shrinking congregations: the closure of buildings, parish amalgamation, and significant change or "reimagination."

These changes are not only being felt in our churches, but they are also experienced in our neighbourhoods, jobs, and families. Some of the responses to wider societal shifts can be found in the articles on the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine's new

program for young women (page 10), the National Church's Commission on Physician-Assisted Death (page 12), and a professional mediator's story of reconciliation (page 15).

While change is often difficult, however, it can also bring a sense of hope and new life. On page 14, you will find snapshots of the new ways of doing Church being explored by congregations throughout Rupert's Land. Send us the story of your good news response to change for the March edition on mission by February 10, or respond with your own ideas on our website. 

## PARISH NEWS **ROUND UP**

### ▷ Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 17-24. Christians from all traditions are invited to the opening service at John XXIII Roman Catholic Church in Westwood, January 17 at 7:30 p.m. [See the website for details.](#)

### ▷ St. Peter's, Winnipeg

Register now for St. Peter's' conference on Physician-Assisted Dying, February 26-27, with Eric Beresford, the Chairperson of the Primate's Theological Commission for Physician-Assisted Death. [See the full details here.](#)

### ▷ St. Bartholomew's, Winnipeg

On December 10, during the St. Bartholomew's food bank distribution, volunteers served a traditional Christmas dinner to their food bank patrons. Lee Titterington, chief turkey carver and head server, served over 70 meals with the assistance of the food bank crew and extra volunteers. A big thank you to all who helped make the day special!

▷ **St. Andrew's on the Red**

On December 12, an old-fashioned Christmas celebration was hosted at St. Andrew's on the Red, a beautiful stone church in historic St. Andrew's that has drawn parishioners and visitors since 1849. The day included tours of the historic rectory, which is filled with artifacts and displays by Parks Canada; a bonfire with marshmallows and hot chocolate; horse-drawn carriage rides; a Christmas bazaar; and entertainment by Chance and By Golly, regular participants at Winnipeg's Festival du Voyageur.



▷ **St. Andrew's, Woodhaven**

Join St. Andrew's for "[A Winter's Musical Wonderland](#)" on January 10 at 7:30 p.m., featuring the musical group "Vocal Ascent" and others. Tickets are \$15.

▷ **Fermata Retreat**

Feeling a bit worn down after the holidays? In need of some winter refreshment? "Come away and rest awhile" at a Fermata Retreat with spiritual directors Kalyn Falk and Wilma Wiens, February 5-7 at St. Benedict's Retreat Centre. [See the events page for details.](#)

**Is there something exciting  
in your congregation others  
should know about?**



**Send us your news  
for the Parish  
Roundup! [rnews  
@rupertsland.ca](mailto:rnews@rupertsland.ca)**

▷ **St. Andrew's, Crystal City**

Parishioners from Manitou, Pilot Mound, Clearwater, Altamont, and Kaleida gathered in Crystal City for the deconsecration of St. Andrew's Anglican Church on Sunday morning, December 6. Bishop Donald Phillips officiated at the secularization ceremony, assisted by the Rev. Al Thorlietson and the Rev. Deacon Mona Blackburn.

The Bishop explained to the congregation: "We who are gathered here know that this building, which has been consecrated and set apart for the ministry of God's holy word and sacraments, will no longer be used in this way, but will be used for other purposes. To many, this building has been hallowed by cherished memories, and we know that some have experienced a sense of loss. We pray that they are comforted by the knowledge that the presence of God is not tied to any place or building."

According to the Prairie Pride Land history book, published in 1998, a small church from north of Swan Lake was moved to Crystal City for the Anglican worshippers, and the first service was held there on July 25, 1954. It reads: "St. Andrew's had a large congregation with evening services and a Sunday School of up to 30 children." When the church closed in 1990, the congregation relocated to other Anglican churches in the area.

Following the secularization ceremony, the gathered assembly moved to St. Paul's Anglican Church in Clearwater to warm up and visit over coffee and muffins. (There is no heat at St. Andrew's and the mild sunny day meant it was colder inside than outside!)

*Joanne Harris.*



# THE LIVING STORY OF EPIPHANY

*Donald Phillips*

On November 26, 2015, Nancy and I received a wonderful gift on our smart phones: the ultrasound picture of Meghann and Peter's baby at 19 weeks. He appeared to be resting comfortably on his back, perhaps doing a knee lift to try out some developing muscles.

We can easily take the gift of human life for granted, probably because there are several billion of us on the planet. But when you think that every single one of us started out in this way – even persons like Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King – it makes one stop and wonder about the amazing potential of every human life.

We are still basking in the glow of the celebration of Christmas, the gift of a particular human life. No doubt, if there had been ultrasound imaging in Mary and Joseph's time, Jesus of Nazareth would have looked much like the ultrasound I saw in November. It's easy to quickly dismiss this comparison by stating, "But THAT baby was the Son of God." However, that was not evident to virtually everyone until this person had become a rabbi, gathered around himself many followers, spoken God's truth with unequalled wisdom and authority, exercised power

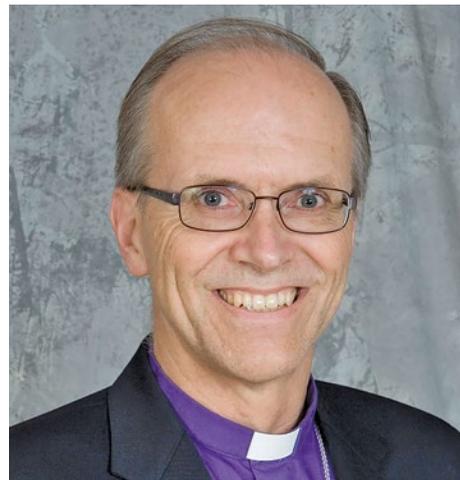
over evil, willingly sacrificed himself to a horrible death, and, most importantly, conquered death and appeared in a resurrected body. It was who Jesus showed himself to be – and our acceptance of his identity as the unique Son of God – that made his birth a one-of-a-kind event.

This realization of the true identity of Jesus is called his epiphany. And that showing forth of Jesus as the Son of God we celebrate on January 6 – the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. It is true that the birth and life of Jesus of Nazareth is unique. But if this is what God can do in the human flesh of Jesus – what does that say about our humanity? Surely every human life must have amazing potential in the hands of God – including yours and mine!

It may not be too difficult to begin to believe this on an individual scale. Perhaps we can imagine that in-utero baby as one day growing up to make very significant contributions to the lives of others and society at large. But what is one life in the midst of several billion? It seems that before we can begin to entertain the fact that one life could be the source of transformation for many others, we need to see evidence. Perhaps the person has to be born in a very

important city or they have to be a child prodigy, already known in the media before they finish grade school.

But look at the life of Jesus. He was born in a back-water town of a small, occupied country to parents of little significance in society. He revealed the epiphany of who he really was by living his life in the will of God. The influence of that single human life on the course of history is unparalleled. I wonder what the impact of your life and mine might be when we live our lives in the will of God? I suspect that the resulting epiphanies would be powerful indeed. This seems to be God's loving will for every human being. 



△ *Donald Phillips,  
Bishop of Rupert's Land*

# RESPONDING TO **A CHANGING CHURCH**

*The Anglican Church has had a presence in the area of Rupert's Land for 195 years. Over that time, congregations, liturgies, and church buildings have shifted and changed. Change is difficult for everyone, with both congregations and parishioners responding differently in each situation, whether*

*it results from immigration, changing relations between east and west, settler and indigenous populations, or cultural and liturgical reform.*

*Across Canada, there are two major options given to shrinking congregations: either close or change. But what does that look like for people on the ground?*

*Here, three Rupert's Landers tell of their own experiences living through major congregational change. A fourth story can be found on our website. Tell your own story of change or contribute your ideas by finding this article at [rupertslandnews.ca/close-or-change](http://rupertslandnews.ca/close-or-change).*

## LIVING THROUGH PARISH CLOSURE

*Shelagh Balfour, Parish Administrative Assistant*

In the North End of Winnipeg, 1893, the Anglican Parish of St. Peter held its first service of worship. Originally a mission of St. John's Cathedral, it was intended to meet the needs of the burgeoning neighbourhood west of Main Street. The parish grew rapidly. The first church building, dedicated in 1894, was quickly outgrown, with expansion added in 1899 and again in 1905. At the same time, however, the North End was experiencing major change. Newer immigrants from Eastern Europe were replacing English-speaking Anglicans who, in turn, were moving to other neighbourhoods. By the 1920's, St. Peter's was struggling to remain viable. After several years of trying to keep going, the parish accepted the inevitable and closed in 1933.

In 1907, in the south end of Winnipeg, the Angli-

can Parish of St. Alban's held its first service of worship. Originally a mission of St. Luke's Church, it was intended to meet the needs of the growing South Osborne neighbourhood. This parish also grew rapidly. By 1910, an expansion of the building was required to accommodate the congregation.

In my backyard is a small fence made up primarily of stones from that first St. Alban's, a church my great-grandfather helped build. My grandmother attended Sunday School there – I still have her Sunday School pin. I raised my children in that parish and was active in a variety of ministries. Eventually, I became active in the wider Church, first in the Diocese and then the National Church. I even received my own St. Alban's pin, for good and faithful service.

The well-being of that

little church on Rathgar Avenue meant a great deal to me and, with others, I worked hard to try to make it viable when all signs pointed to its demise. I could tell you all the ways we tried to deny the inevitable, all the desperate ideas we thought up to somehow keep going. But it was not to be. In April 2007, after 100 years of worship and service, St. Alban's closed. The process that led to closure was painfully difficult and sometimes divisive. There are people who still grieve today.

But that is not the end of the story. By April of the following year, the building that had been St. Alban's was purchased by Gateway Church, a non-denominational community consisting of two congregations. Gateway's "South" congregation had grown to the point that they wanted a permanent home. They liked what they saw in the building and arrived ready to love the neighbourhood. In fact, they soon changed their name to



△ *St. Alban's, Winnipeg, sits empty.*

Gateway Church – South Osborne as a reflection of their desire to be a meaningful part of the community.

Not long after they moved in, I went for a Sunday morning visit, wanting to “see what they’d done with the place”. Somehow, it did not feel strange to go as a visitor to the building that had been my church for so long. The people at Gateway were welcoming, the worship engaging and thought-provoking, and I quickly found myself at home. More than that, I found energy and new life in a place that, in my time, had become tired and worn down. It was clear that God was at work in his Church in this place. Work that had begun at St. Alban’s was continuing in new and life-giving ways at Gateway. Changes we had only

dreamed of, inside and out, came to fruition within a few years of the new community being there.

Over the years, I have worshipped with Gateway Church many times. I have joined in Bible studies and potlucks, funerals and celebrations. I have prayed and been prayed for in that community. The people there are part of my extended church family and I start to miss them if too long goes by without a visit. Yes, we have a different style of worship and our theologies differ in places, but I suspect God doesn’t mind that nearly as much as we do.

Today, I make the Anglican Parish of St. Peter my church home – the second St. Peter’s, which opened its doors in 1956. Originally a mission church of St. George’s, Crescentwood,

it was intended to meet the needs of another rapidly growing neighbourhood, this time in River Heights. Like the other parishes, it has experienced times of growth and times of decline. Today, at 60, it is an active, vital parish striving to live out what it believes God is calling it to.

None of us can know, however, what God has planned for the future of this second St. Peter’s, or any other parish. It is easy for us to become attached to buildings and to the habitual practices of our life together. It is easy for the place we gather to become our church, a place we need to preserve against threat. But, in doing that, we can forget that the Church is not the place, but the people. The Church is not ours, but God’s.

Closure of an individual parish can be traumatic and heartbreaking. I don’t want to minimize that. But that is never the end of the story. The closure of the North End St. Peter’s was followed 20 years later by the opening of the River Heights St. Peter’s. The closure of St. Alban’s was followed much more quickly by the opening of Gateway Church. God is continuing to work in and through his Church and maybe, sometimes, that work can best be accomplished by bringing the life of one community to an end so that something new and different has the space to flourish. 

## THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

*Brent Neumann, Priest*

There is a problem inherent to the question of whether a church should close, amalgamate, or rebuild when confronted with the realities of diminishing congregations and aging infrastructure. The problem is that asking this question raises the concept of change, one of the most difficult things to do when dealing with an institution that has a death grip on maintaining the past and a deep fear of moving into the unknown.

These two truths become even more pressing when we live in a society that has a "risk averse" perspective on all things. Our society tries to avoid feeling fear and demands an ever-increasing legislative approach to eliminate all risk. At the same time, our media continues to inundate us with messages about things we should fear.

So when we are asked to face change, we are being asked to face our fear. Fear is rarely something that

we talk about in our churches. More often than not, congregations routinely demand comfort, safety, conformity, and a strict adherence to the past, which impedes any discussion around real change. Yet change is an ever present reality.

Change – as minor as getting a raise or as major as a life-threatening illness – triggers a wide variety of emotional responses. Change brings up our sense of loss; we get hit with grief, anger, fear, lack of hope, surprise, and anguish. It can also fill us with a sense of unknowing, as we have no idea what it means or what it requires of us, and the future is no longer predictable.

It is easy to forget that the Christian message, however, is all about change. Christ came into our world in a time when things were really messy, he stirred things up so much that he infuriated the leaders and rulers, he invited people to see the world in a new way,



△ *Reconciliation between indigenous and settler Anglicans means making space for the changes that indigenous teaching will bring to our communities.*

and he died for us, proving that death is not the end. His example to us was based on living freely, fully, and open to the experience of God. Before any discussion about change can begin, our congregations need to understand that the choice to change starts with facing ourselves and living into Jesus' admonition, "Do not be afraid."

Finally, we clergy face the same demand. It was once understood that ordination meant a career with a guarantee of lifetime employment. We no longer have that guarantee. If we really want to face the reality of our Church network, we must also understand that if we help the Church to change we may also be working toward ending our own careers. I wonder how many of us are willing to put our livelihoods on the table when we are faced with the question of change. The Church is already changing quickly and we are faced with the difficult choice of reacting to the change or finding new ways to respond. [rin](#)



△ *St. Matthew's, Winnipeg, faced the choice to close or change when they decided to turn their massive nave into affordable housing and move their worship into a much smaller space, built using original materials.*

## PARISH AMALGAMATION

*Fran Anderson, Parishioner*

While the road to amalgamation can be long and winding, bumpy and wearisome, the rewards at the end are worth the tribulations experienced in getting there. Amalgamation helps to address viability concerns by allowing the creation of a more vibrant parish with energized resources. There is a larger pool to draw upon and a greater variety of talents, thus allowing parishioners to explore new ministries. This also provides the opportunity to share parish duties with a larger group of people and to explore new ideas, start new traditions, and look at ways in which to grow, both physically and spiritually. As individual parishes come together in numbers and finances, shutting down valuable outreach programs due to small, aging, and tiring volunteer groups becomes a thing of the past.

There is a greater sense

of calm and reduced stress levels for most people as they attend worship services following amalgamation, since they are no longer overwhelmed with the worries and responsibilities of keeping a small parish going. There is a larger worshipping group at Sunday services and full-time parish ministry becomes a reality, along with the hope for parish growth.

Amalgamation can enable struggling parishes to rekindle their commitment to “being Church” and to explore new options in worship. Whether a new place of worship is pursued or one of the former parishes becomes the new home, it’s comforting to bring along the cherished memorials and keepsakes, as well as the best of everyone’s inventory to help build both the physical and spiritual presence.

Conducting and participating in fundraising

activities is a more enjoyable and rewarding experience after amalgamation, as it no longer represents an inwardly-focused attempt to just pay the bills and keep the church open. The members of the new parish have made a conscious decision to be part of it; they are committed to its success and to giving their time, talents, and offerings. This provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know new people and to have fun working with them.

As the parishes unite, each with their limited number of young families, the amalgamated parish can begin to explore new adventures in ministry with more parents and little ones, as well as youth group activities. While going through the amalgamation process, there will be times when it just feels easier to give up and close. However, that’s when it will be important to know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and to remember that God will provide. 



**△** *Rupert's Land experienced a big change when we amalgamated with several parishes from the former Keewatin Diocese in August of 2014. [Here, a group of synod delegates sings a song they wrote about the new parishes.](#)*

# WOMEN INVITED TO SPEND A YEAR IN "GOD'S RHYTHM"

*Stuart Mann*

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine is inviting young women to spend a year living in "God's rhythm." The Sisters are inviting up to 10 women, age 22 to 40, to live with them at the convent in Toronto, where they will experience the Benedictine life of prayer, study, recreation, and service to others.

"It's an opportunity to take a year off to deepen their spiritual lives, their walk with God," says Sister Constance Joanna Gefvert, one of the organizers.

The initiative, called "Spend a Year Living in God's Rhythm: Companions on the Way," will begin next September. The women will live in the convent's guest house and take part in the Sisters' daily life, which includes four worship services a day.

In addition, the women will spend part of each day



Photo: Michael Hudson

△ Constance Joanna Gefvert, Molly Finlay and Karen Isaacs.

in study, either at the convent or at Wycliffe College, where they will attend classes on a wide variety of subjects, including contemplative prayer, the monastic tradition, and missional church.

Sister Constance Joanna is hoping that the initiative will raise up a new group of leaders in the Church, women who are grounded in monastic values and practices and equipped to bring the Gospel to a rapidly changing society.

"We feel this program

answers a need that is expressed by young people in our Church: how to be more grounded in their spiritual life and also to develop skills that will be useful in pioneering ministries."

Part of each week will be devoted to serving others in the wider community, possibly at a ministry supported by the Diocese of Toronto, or St. John's Rehab Hospital. The women will also assist the Sisters with their ministry of hospitality and with basic housekeeping duties at the convent.

Each woman will meet with a spiritual mentor once a month and also with the Sisters on a regular basis, to discuss how things are going. They will have four weeks off for vacation and another week for retreat. Their room, board, and daily expenses will be paid for by the sisterhood. Mondays will be a day off.

Sister Constance Joanna says one of the most import-

**St Clements Mapleton  
Columbarium and Churchyard**



1178 River Road  
St Andrews Manitoba

Call for info  
204-482-7237

*Serving all faiths as a place of final rest*

ant aspects of the year is to help the women discern where God is calling them. "We want to help them find where their joy, gifts, and passion meet a need in the world, as Frederick Buechner would say," she explains.

Molly Finlay, an associate member of the sisterhood and one of the organizers of the program, said the year is ideal for young women who are searching for "authentic spirituality" and have a passion for renewing the Church.

"I think it's an opportunity for women who have been searching and wondering about their vocation – wondering about why their spiritual lives feel a bit hollow," she says. "It's taking a time out of your usual schedule to grow in Christ and be transformed, and in turn transform

the Church. The Church is at a crossroads. It's not going to look the way it did. And we have an opportunity here to find some women who are hungry to follow Christ and to form them in an orthodox spirituality, and then allow them to go out and be change-agents for our Church and... culture."

Ms. Finlay has been an associate of the sisterhood for several years, an experience that has changed her life. A former communications professional, she is now a divinity student at Wycliffe College. "The convent has been transformational for my life, and it has made me a much more brave and dynamic leader within my own church. It has given me an opportunity to do a real about-face and follow Christ in a way that I could

not have imagined. Life has become so much richer than it ever would have been if I hadn't had this time of formation with the Sisters."

Sister Constance Joanna says the initiative has generated a lot of interest. She has been asked to speak about it at the Diocese of Toronto's synod and at other gatherings across Canada. "It's very exciting," she says.

A small committee is steering the program. The group is made up of Sister Constance Joanna; Ms. Finlay; Barbara Jenkins, the registrar of Wycliffe College; Sister Elizabeth Rolfe Thomas, the Reverend Mother of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine; and Karen Isaacs, a Rupert's Lander from St. Margaret's, Winnipeg, now working as the Administrative Assistant to Bishop Patrick Yu in Toronto. rin

*For more information about Spend a Year Living in God's Rhythm: Companions on the Way, visit [www.ssjdcompanions.org](http://www.ssjdcompanions.org).*



**△** *Stuart Mann is the Director of Communications and Editor of the Anglican for the Diocese of Toronto.*

# Roger Watson

## J · E · W · E · L · L · E · R · S



**GIFTS THAT LAST**

WEDDINGS  
GRADUATIONS  
SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Tel 1-204-956-2096  
Fax 1-204-947-0451  
236 Osborne Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba



**A Sign You Can Trust™**

CANADIAN  
JEWELLERS  
ASSOCIATION

# PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH AND THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

*Eric Beresford*

*Eric Beresford is an Anglican priest and ethicist who has worked in the areas of environmental ethics, patenting and ownership of biological materials, medical ethics, and death and dying. He is the Chair of the Anglican Church of Canada's task force on physician-assisted dying.*

In 1998, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada commended the statement on euthanasia and assisted suicide (Care in Dying) to the wider church for study and reflection. That statement was a contribution to a debate that was, at that time, very much alive. With the decision of the Supreme Court in February of last year, the debate concerning the legal ban on physician-assisted dying is, in some ways, over. It will now be an option for patients facing grievous and irremediable illness and those facing intolerable suffering.

There have, of course, been mixed reactions to this, both within the Church and in the wider society. Whatever our views, the context within which the pastoral and prophetic ministry of the Church takes place has shifted, and we need to think carefully about the implications for how we provide that ministry. In the current sit-

uation, our witness needs to focus on how we care for all those who will be involved in these sorts of decisions, and on the ways in which the new emerging practices will be governed so that every patient, whatever their circumstances, and whatever decisions they feel called to make, will be treated with dignity, care, compassion, and respect, both by medical care providers and by the Church.

Theologically, we continue to assert that human persons, being made in the image of God, are the bearers of an inherent dignity that calls us to treat each person not merely with respect, but with love. This calling, as a reflection of God's free grace, is in no way qualified by the circumstances that an individual may face, no matter how tragic, nor by the choices they make in those circumstances, even if they differ from the decisions that we might in good conscience make or recommend.

We must recognize that the new options opened by judgement of the Supreme Court will present patients with choices that will be extraordinarily challenging, no matter what their initial preferences or final decision. We also need to pay attention to how we are to

sustain communities of care around patients, respecting their choices but recognizing the challenges involved for family, loved ones, and care providers.

In this context, the Church needs to neither surrender its basic principles and insights nor expound them in a way that isolates us from the essential task of empowering individuals caught up in these situations to make sense of their lives, their hopes and fears, their pain and distress. Only in this way can we bear witness to the God who is present to us in all of the circumstances of our lives, even those where our choices are most difficult and our options most limited. 



*On February 26 and 27, Eric Beresford will be the keynote speaker at the conference, [Suffering and Hope: Theological Reflection on Physician Assisted Death](#).*

## MILLENNIALS AND OUR QUESTIONS (A SHREDDIES PARABLE) *Rachel Courey*

Does Church need to change to keep young people interested? I hesitate to answer this question hastily. In fact, it very well may be the wrong question to ask. Several months ago, popular Episcopalian blogger Rachel Held Evans sparked a fire in the blogosphere when she published an op-ed on CNN entitled, “*Why millennials are leaving the church.*” She laments the lack of authenticity that millennials experience in the Church, driving young people out its doors. The blog clearly struck a chord and was shared 228k times on Facebook alone.

Recently, Diana Butler Bass delivered a lecture called “Leaving Church?” Inspired and challenged by Held Evan’s blog, Butler Bass moves the argument a little further, saying, “Millennials have inherited three significant sets of questions that weave throughout American religious history with some regularity. These are questions related to doubt, disestablishment, and diversity.” She argues that these questions are not unique to millennials, but that millennials are heirs to a tradition of questioning.

I’m reminded of the Shreddies marketing campaign that turned the blessed

square Shreddie on its point. You remember “NEW Diamond Shreddies,” right?

This brilliant campaign is a bit of a parallel to millennials and the Church.

The cheeky brilliance was, nothing had changed! It was the same “Good, good, whole-wheat Shreddies,” that it always was. It just looked a little different, reinterpreted for a new audience.



I think this is what Butler Bass was getting at. The questions young people are struggling with are the same questions previous generations struggled with; they just look a little different. So why are young people leaving our Church? Does our Church need to change?

I believe the answer to these questions lies in the questions that Butler Bass highlights: questions of doubt, disestablishment, and diversity. The Church must be a safe space for everyone, but especially growing people. Children are people too, with their own faith journeys. They need to be encouraged to ask questions

about God. Their doubts cannot be shamed.

For various reasons, many people are leaving institutional Churches, but not necessarily their faith. Building a community of belonging for children to grow up in is important. When young people leave the Church, the best thing we can do is keep the door open and encourage them in their faith.

Our Church cannot simply be welcoming; it must actively welcome and engage the other. Butler Bass points out that young people are working out their faith in a world where majorities don’t exist.

Difference and acceptance are paramount.

Just because it doesn’t look the same doesn’t mean it’s not related. When you inherit a tradition, it is possible to rearrange it while still retaining its integrity. Young people need the freedom to re-ask the same old questions on their own terms. Don’t be afraid when the Church doesn’t look the same... it could just be a Shreddie on its side. [rin](#)

*Rachel Courey attends st. benedict's table and is passionate about creating inclusive communities.*

## SNAPSHOTS: DIFFERENT WAYS OF “DOING CHURCH”

*Throughout Rupert's Land, communities are finding innovative ways to adapt the welcome of Christ to the changing needs they find in their environments. Here are "snapshots" of how three communities are finding new ways to do Church.*

### ▷ St. Paul's, Fort Garry, Monday Gathering

The Monday Gathering at St Paul's has developed over 10 years, finally settling into a Monday evening potluck with Eucharist. Originally an alternative to the Sunday morning worship time, it soon became attractive to folk for whom a different experience of Christian community was desirable. We start with gathering and offering peace, followed by a brief reflection, a song, and thanks for the food. Lively conversation is enjoyed over the the potluck. A song follows to gather people's attention for prayers and Eucharist (or "bread time," according to the kids). The Communion is shared around the table until all are fed. A final prayer is offered by someone appointed to do so, and folks are dismissed to tidy the sanctuary and kitchen, while the kids enjoy Monday School.

### ▷ Spirit Path

Spirit Path is a building-less faith community in southwest Winnipeg, a partnership between the Anglican, Lutheran, and United churches. For several years now, we have been working together, primarily in Waverley West, to grow a worshipping community. Originally, the vision was to purchase land; but rather than planning to construct another church building, we'd imagined creating a complex with partners to include affordable housing, child care, and multi-purpose worship space, designed to respond to the needs of the community. Yet this expression of

church was not to be, at least at that time. Since joining forces with the United Church a few years ago, we gather regularly for companionship, learning, service, Messy Church, and major worship feasts in many places: homes, community centres, neighbouring churches, local pubs, and even a playground. And we are on Facebook!

### ▷ St. Thomas', Weston, Kreative Kids

It is Sunday morning in the parish of St. Thomas, and the children stand up front to make the Sunday School presentation. Covered in flour, they tell what they have learned, what it means, and how they can use this knowledge when they get home. Each week, the children learn all this while making a treat that emphasizes the story. This week, they have made sticky buns for the story of Naomi and Ruth because they always "stick together." During the week, the church is filled with neighbourhood children for Kreative Kids, an arts and crafts program. Kreative Kids offers the middle to lower income families in Weston free recreation, where the kids make crafts and play games. The lessons taught at Kreative Kids aren't based on bible stories, but are rooted in Jesus' welcome as it is extended to these kids through the program volunteers.



*Does your community have a new way of doing Church adapted to meet the changing needs of your demographic? Send in a "snapshot" for our March issue on mission by February 10.*

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: LISTENING WITH THE HEART *Diane Guilford*

A man in his late twenties sits across from the woman whose house he entered to steal articles that he could sell in order to buy the drugs he desperately needed to feed his habit. He listens as she tells him about the impact his actions had on her family, especially her young children. Her eight-year-old can't understand why he had to break the window in his bedroom to get in. Could he not ask to come into the house? Could he not ask if he needed help?

The man is full of remorse and wishes he could turn back the clock — but he can't. He can only express how deeply sorry he is. He offers to pay for the damage he caused in the house and for the things he stole. She is anxious to know if she was targeted, and explains how things have changed in their house because they no longer feel as safe. The children are afraid to be alone in their bedrooms. The offender has a young boy himself and he is clearly impacted by this as he imagines his own son

being afraid. With tears on his cheeks, he again expresses his regret, and his desire to change his life.

The woman is encouraged to hear what the man has done to get off drugs and the steps he has taken to start a new life. They reach an agreement which they both sign. This agreement is sent to the Crown Attorney, indicating a timeline for the actions to be completed. When all the commitments have been complied with, the mediator sends the information to the Crown and the charges are dropped. If they are not, a report is sent to the Crown and the offender comes before the courts to deal with the charge.

Restorative justice upholds a deep sense of the need for accountability. It is important for us to know that the other party knows the kind of impact their actions have had on us. It is meaningful for the victim to be involved in negotiating what is an appropriate agreement. As difficult as it may be to face the person,

this interaction can have a huge positive impact on the offender and the victim. In many circumstances, a sense of understanding comes from hearing what was happening in the life of the offender. Some offenders come from an environment where it has never occurred to them how their offences have impacted the lives of their victims. Restorative justice is about giving people the privilege of telling their story, and with the help of a mediator, ensuring that the listener has heard the story and understands the full impact — on both sides.

The Criminal Justice System has been designed to hold the offender accountable. In the court room, it remains the Queen versus the defence. Even when the personnel of the Criminal Justice System exercise extreme sensitivity, the process leaves no room for restorative dialogue between the victim and the offender. Restorative justice lives out Jesus' teaching of reconciliation. In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son



(Luke 15:20), Jesus portrays God, represented by the father, as fundamentally compassionate, not as a stern taskmaster who demands that we fill requirements for the sake of a reward. "So he (the prodigal son) set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him."

Restorative justice is not new. It has been a primary means of resolving conflict in many parts of the world for centuries. Its history can be traced back through time to the traditions of indigenous communities. Now we are called to use this healing pro-

cess and sit with people impacted by residential schools and hear their stories. As most of the victims are second and third generation, so are those in the Church who are called to remember the history and sit in the place of our predecessors, listening with an ear to understanding. We did not make the decisions about residential schools but our government and our Church did.

In hindsight, we wonder, "How could intelligent, caring people make this kind of legislature? How could they have thought taking children away from their parental home and community was a good thing?" Having said that, I have wondered

if I might have been one of those who felt called by God to serve in a residential school, feeling I was doing a good ministry. We have much work to do. Our country can only be as strong as our relationships within it. We are presently fractured, and desperately needing healing. Our shared future is only going to get more fractured unless we address it by sitting across from our fellow Canadians and listening with our hearts.

Like the offender who broke into the house, we cannot turn back the clock, but we can be intentional and clear how we move forward. For restorative justice to work well, it needs to have both parties at the table. We often ask the offender to read their letter of apology out loud to the victim. It is a powerful moment in the process and one seldom seen in the courtroom. 



△ *Diane Guilford is a priest and a professional mediator.*