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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.

We acknowledge that we meet and work in Treaty 1, 2, and 3 Land, the traditional land of the Anishinaabe, Cree, and Dakota people and the homeland of the Metis Nation. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land and their hospitality which allows us to live, work, and serve God the Creator here.

RLN welcomes story ideas, news items, and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please [email the editor](#).

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## The Season of Harvest

Photo: William Morris

My maternal grandparents lived on a farm outside of Estevan, Saskatchewan, on which they grew wheat, oats, barley, mustard, and canola. By the time I was born, it had passed to my uncle, who raised cattle. I didn't get to visit the farm much, but every time my family made it to Estevan to see my grandparents, we would make an effort to get to the farm as well. I remember running around with my cousins and their dog, Lucky, jumping on hay bales, and riding horses. As I grew older, I learned more about the ins and outs of farming and the struggles farmers often face when their crops don't do well or the economy shifts. I also learned that my grandpa lost part of a finger to a combine harvester.

We're in the season of harvest. In September, the Rupert's Land chapter of PWRDF reported that the canola for Grow Hope had

been harvested from Chris Lea's fields. I plucked the last zucchinis and green beans from my garden.

It's also the season of dinners. Parish Fall Suppers crop up, and, of course, we gather around the table with friends and family for Thanksgiving. We take time to appreciate and give thanks for God's provision in our lives.

In this issue, we're not only exploring the harvest, but what we do with it. We've got a spread about the Agricultural Church Year, in which Suzanne Rumsey from PWRDF details the Rogation service she attended at St. Luke's, Pembina Crossing in June, and Chris Lea explains what Rogation means to him. Micheal Gilmour follows up with three reasons why going vegan is his form of Christian protest.

There have also been several position changes in the diocese over the last few months, so we'll hear from those who are retiring and those who are coming on board. And, in via media, Jane Barter explores the importance of *Reclaiming Power and Place, the Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, which she and 15 others grappled with over the summer.

Enjoy this season of bounty.



Kyla Neufeld is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

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# To be a Labourer

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT



This past July, whilst navigating and participating in the Anglican Church of Canada General Synod, I was constantly reminded that we are called as *labourers of the harvest*. None of the accomplishments, affirmations, and struggles would have happened if it were not for huge amount of sowing, cultivating, and nurturing that brought us to where we are today.

For 11 years, Archbishop Hiltz visited, guided, prayed with, lamented, listened, visited some more, and loved us to be the *beloved church*. The Primate nurtured labourers.

Task forces, coordinating and standing committees, and established communities of the Anglican Church of Canada prepared members of General Synod to make decisions that will not only impact the next three years for us, but also the world for a long time to come. In particular, our relationships with Indigenous people on Turtle Island; by moving forward with Self-determination, we are in a process of seeing God move with strength to tend the garden planted countless years before colonization. Our relationships

with both Jewish and Muslim partners received overwhelming support and promise. And the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Episcopal Church of the U.S., the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America joined with the Anglican Church of Canada to affirm our full communion, our deep desire to

support one another, and to answer God's call to love kindness, do justice, and walk humbly with God.

There was, however, one thing that stood out for me in all parts of General Synod: the profound impact of younger Anglicans' participation, interaction, and voice. This is where the Church really needs to pay attention to the possibilities God has harvested on our behalf. Rupert's Land's younger delegates were always prepared, acted with integrity, and respected the dignity of others. From the second day of General Synod, it was clear that this group had several messages for the Church, and not the least of these was their deep desire to combat Climate Crisis as a call from Creator God. Younger Anglicans courageously participated in debate, questioning, and, yes, lobbying between sessions. They also prepared two motions, calling our Church to greater awareness of Climate Crisis and leading us to action.

In my mind and heart, the generations of Anglicans that follow the middle and later-aged Anglicans are the bounty of God's harvest already gleaned. I saw in that younger group activity in the world, yearning for God's call to the Church and themselves specifically, and a freshness that made me think that I had entered a new Church.

The harvest is plentiful, yet the labourers are few... I encourage each of us, myself included, who have pondered "Where are all the young people?", to reach out of Sunday morning experiences to rekindle our relationships with the younger Church, a Church we know exists and flourishes in the world today.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,  
Bishop of Rupert's Land



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# The Agricultural Church Year

The Church Year is embedded in agriculture. The Church of England developed feasts, prayers, services, and traditions to pray for and celebrate the labour of sowing crops and, later, harvesting them. For the early English Church that observed these services, we can see how they valued the hard work that goes into sowing crops and the hope that comes with the promise of a full table during the year.

In Rupert's Land, we celebrate Rogation with a service to ask blessing on the crops, especially those sown for Anglican Grow Hope. Some parishes, like saint benedict's table, have also observed the tradition of "beating the bounds," though they have walked the entire neighbourhood rather than just the parish bounds as a sign that the Church happens everywhere.

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### Plough Sunday

*Observed: First Sunday of Epiphany*

This celebration goes back to Victorian times. In winter, when work was scarce, the observance of Plough Sunday looked forward to the time of sowing and subsequent harvest.

### Lammastide

*Observed: August 1*

Lammas, or "Loaf-mass," is a feast held on August 1 in thanksgiving of the first fruits of the harvest. Traditionally, a loaf was baked from newly-harvested wheat and presented to God during the service. The loaf was also sometimes used during Eucharist.

### Rogationtide

*Observed: the three weekdays before Ascension Day, though in practice many churches observe it on the Sixth Sunday of Easter.*

During this time, farmers ask for blessing on their crops. Some parishes may also perform the tradition of "beating the bounds," during which parishioners and their minister would proceed around the boundaries of the parish and pray for its protection.

### Harvest Thanksgiving

*Observed: First Sunday of October*

As the name suggests, this is celebration for the harvest, which coincides with the secular Thanksgiving Day. In the 1800s, many local English parishes had their own traditions for this celebration.

# Rogation Service Celebrates Growing Hope

SUZANNE RUMSEY

We drove southwest from Winnipeg along highways and country roads, along fields green with spring planting. After about two hours, the endlessly flat eastern prairie vista opened suddenly below us to reveal the Pembina River Valley.

There, nestled at the bottom was our destination, was the small white church of St. Luke's, Pembina Crossing. A large white tent had been erected behind it to hold the more than 100-member congregation gathered from parishes in the valley, from the Morden area, and from Winnipeg to celebrate Rogation Sunday together.

Rogation Sunday is celebrated on the fifth Sunday of Easter, though it is not part of every church's calendar. In Pembina Crossing, this year it was moved to June 9 to accommodate other schedules.

I was invited to bring greetings and gratitude from PWRDF. This special gathering was asking for particular blessings on a large field of newly sprouted canola, and a small calf that together represent the "Anglican Grow Hope" project in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Now in its second year, Anglican Grow Hope has brought together urban and rural parishes in an effort to raise funds for the PWRDF account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank with the goal of ending global hunger. Last year, this effort raised \$14,588 in addition to the regular donations to PWRDF from the diocese.

Chris Lea, the farmer who donated the land and is growing the canola crop, led us in worship. During his homily he described a recent visit to Ethiopia, the people he had met there, especially the children, and the difference that Foodgrains Bank-supported food security programs were making in their lives. Nancy Howatt, a local cattle farmer who is donating the proceeds from the sale of the calf to Grow Hope, spoke about her recent visit to Haiti and how

that experience has affected the way she views the relative abundance that surrounds her in Canada. Both Chris and Nancy movingly recounted the hospitality and generosity they experienced from those they visited who, out of their scarcity, shared so abundantly.



Photo: Suzanne Rumsey

**Cathy Campbell has been instrumental in connecting rural and urban parishes in the Diocese as they raise funds for Anglican Grow Hope.**

Together we asked for God's blessing upon the canola seeds and sprouts, upon the calf and his mother, upon the farm machinery and the farm, and upon PWRDF, the Foodgrains Bank and the Grow Hope project. And then, we asked God's blessing on the country feast that awaited us following the service. Because as the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, said when launching PWRDF's 2013–2016 Fred Says food security campaign, "It all begins with food."

This Rogation Sunday together we prayed, "Loving Creator God, we acknowledge you as the source of growth and abundance. You provide us with food for body and spirit. With your help we plant our crops, and by your power they produce our harvest... In your kindness and love, make our work fruitful. Grant favourable weather to make these fields productive... Loving Creator God, be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face to shine upon us."

*This story was originally published by [PWRDF](#).*

Years ago, when the British settled the country, most immigrants from U.K. were farmers and, of course, of the Anglican faith. So a lot of traditions came with them.

When I was a child, I can remember the yearly Rogation service in the little church at Pembina Crossing. The elders would bring sacks of grain, farm animals, and farm equipment to the church yard. Then, during a specific time in the service, the priest would lead us outside to bless all these things, along with the land surrounding the church and the people who were involved with food production.

These Rogation services were always a festive occasion, with a potluck lunch being served afterwards. It was more of a community festival as opposed to an Anglican church service.

That was my first experience with Rogation.

As the years went by, farm sizes increased. There were fewer farmers and, thus, fewer congregation numbers. But our little church has still maintained our annual Rogation services.

Over the years, my appreciation of God grew as I could feel the spirit of God within the land, the farm animals, and the farming community within me.

Even now, I take great comfort in knowing that God is with me, my family, and my community during the beginning of the growing season with this very special Rogation service that is held annually. It is not only a form of livelihood for us in growing food for all. It is the sustenance of life that God has provided for all that have faith.

That is what I believe.

– *Chris Lea, farmer and priest in Pembina Hills*

# Christian Veganism?

MICHAEL GILMOUR

Photo: Roksolana Zasiadko

To paraphrase St. Paul, I have no commandment from the Lord on this topic, but I give my opinion. Christian veganism makes sense to me, and I am deliberate in my choice of adjective here. I am vegan *because* I am Christian. My diet is an outworking of my faith, an attempt to live out what I think the Bible says. Veganism is for me a form of fasting, my diet an expression of worship – however clumsy, ill-informed, and insufficient it may be.

I realize no matter what I say on this topic, I will come across sounding sanctimonious and self-righteous. So, let me take the wind out of my own sails at the outset with reasons why I am unfit to comment on this subject. For one thing, I know complete avoidance of harm to other living things is impossible, which leaves me open to the charge of hypocrisy many times over. I drive on government-funded roads, which means I benefit from the economic prosperity of southern Manitoba that owes much to the tax revenue generated by animal agriculture. I'm also reasonably healthy, which is to say I owe much to medical advances made on the bodies of millions of animals in research facilities around the world, and over hundreds of years. I am also aware plant-based diets, dependent as they are on the machinery of modern agriculture, are not morally neutral. Ground-nesting birds and animals die in the process of farming vegetables. Even before the inventor John Deere came along, the 18th-century poet Robbie Burns understood this in "To a Mouse, After Turning Her up in Her Nest with the Plough":

**I'm truly sorry Man's dominion  
Has broken Nature's social union,  
An' justifies that ill opinion,  
Which makes thee startle,  
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,  
An' fellow mortal!**

I am also aware of moral blind spots. If I direct my limited energies and resources toward animal welfare, I neglect a hundred other issues to which the Church must attend. I am a hypocrite, and while my meat-free, dairy-free, feather-free, leather-free lifestyle can come across as moral condescension, I hope it is not. I am riddled with guilt on this and many other issues, and I confess my culpability and failures often. But inability to do everything, and inability to do anything perfectly, is not permission to do nothing. Jesus said the poor will be with us always. He did not add, "So don't bother trying to help them."

There are three reasons why I choose to be vegan. First, Christian veganism is for me a form of protest against animal cruelty. Second, it is an attempt to protect vulnerable people. And third, it is a proleptic act, by which I mean the representation of something that does not yet exist, an anticipation of and longing for something yet to come.

My favourite character in the Bible is the unnamed angel who confronts Balaam. The prophet is guilty of many failings but the angel's first words to him are, "Why have you struck your donkey?" Not "why are you prepared to curse

## How do We Ensure the Animals We Consume are not Mistreated?

There is no verse forbidding Christians from eating meat, but there is also no verse requiring us to do so. The Eucharist is bread and wine, and beyond this there are no imperatives about what we must eat. Since there is no religious reason to eat meat and dairy, and since we don't need it for health, why consume it at all if abstention reduces harm to animals and humans and the environment? But, while there is no Scripture forbidding meat consumption, there are texts warning against cruelty to animals, which raise questions:

- Were they subjected to bodily mutilations like debeaking, tail-cropping, or castrations without the benefit of anaesthetics?
- Were they given adequate space, allowed access to sunlight?
- Were they allowed to live a full life or slaughtered young?
- Were they transported to abattoirs in extreme temperatures?

*Most animals bred for food in Canada do not experience lives free of deprivations, mutilations, psychological distresses, and physical pain. For me, the most important question becomes: how do we reconcile that with our faith?*

the Israelites," not "why are you so greedy," but "why have you struck your donkey?" Perhaps that servant of God would ask us the same question.

Animals matter theologically, but, like Balaam, humanity tends toward self-absorption. We are at best indifferent toward the rest of creation if not openly hostile. Consider that human-caused environmental degradation and climate change devastate habitats on which animals depend. We hunt and fish species to extinction for sport and profit. In the name of entertainment, we turn dogs on foxes, who run them to exhaustion and tear them to pieces; we watch human adults beat-up baby cows in rodeos. And most devastating of all, we kill as many as 70 billion land animals each year for food, and somewhere in the area of seven trillion fish from the world's seas and oceans. The scale of this bloodshed is staggering and disturbing.

Veganism is my Christian protest. I don't want to inflict more pain or distress on any creature if I can help it. And the most direct way to do this is through my decisions as a consumer. I leave meat off my plate, put no down coats in my closet, or place any leather-bound Bibles on my bookshelves.

I am also a Christian vegan because the Bible tells me to protect the world's most vulnerable people. If this sounds odd, it's because many Christians view religiously-motivated animal ethics as a muddled priority, insisting the Bible has more to say about the poor and hungry than porcupines and hippos. That may be true, but there's a troublesome assumption behind that line of argument. Is the love of God really in such short supply that we need to pit one against the other? The Bible's repeated calls to care for society's most vulnerable offers good reasons *for* veganism, not arguments against it.

**Veganism is my Christian protest....I leave meat off my plate, put no down coats in my closet, or place any leather-bound Bibles on my bookshelves.**

Consider the heavy human cost of meat production. A growing literature examining conditions in slaughterhouse and meatpacking industries, like Rebecca Jenkins, "The Other Ghosts in Our Machine: Meat Processing and Slaughterhouse Workers in the United States of America," points to severely negative impacts on the welfare

not only of the animals involved, but employees whose job it is to kill and process them. These studies make connections between consumer demand for cheap meat and human rights abuses inherent in the industries supplying it. Issues include racism, workers' health and safety resulting from processing speeds and long hours, compensation, and a wide range of psychological and social impacts, including post-traumatic stress disorder, higher incidents of domestic violence, and alcohol and drug abuse.

And who are these workers? According to a recent Canadian Press report, "Meat-Plant Worker Shortage Despite Sour Economy," companies often hire workers from abroad to fill positions in this sector because not enough Canadians want these jobs, and this is not unique to North America. Migrants to the European Union make up 69 percent of Britain's meat-processing workforce, and as a result, the potential for abuse is significant. Many of these workers know little about their rights or how to complain of unfair or abusive labour practices.

This should raise questions for those of us who accept the Bible as religiously authoritative because Scripture is not indifferent to the plight of labourers or migrants. Do our dietary preferences support industries that exploit them? Who has to kill the turkey or sheep we choose to eat, and is that person treated well? Exodus warns against wronging or oppressing resident aliens, what we might call immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, or migrant workers (22:21). Deuteronomy warns not to "withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers... who reside in your land" (24:14–15). Might the conditions deplored by the prophets of old have modern-day counterparts in contemporary meat production systems?

And there is yet another way meat consumption in affluent societies harms the world's most vulnerable. Intensive livestock farming is a major contributor to climate change, and it's the world's poor who often experience its devastating consequences first. A 2017 UN working paper, "Climate Change and Social Inequality," explores relationships between economic

inequality and climate change, finding that the less advantaged "suffer disproportionate loss of their income and assets." Christian veganism makes sense because it attempts to protect the people who need protection most.

Finally, Christian veganism makes sense to me because it embodies eschatological hope. It is proleptic, an anticipation of the coming kingdom of God. The New Testament vision of redemption involves more than the rescue of the individual. Christ is the firstborn of *all* creation, and reconciliation extends to *all things* on earth, according to Colossians (1:15, 20). Creation "will be set free from its bondage to decay," according to Romans (8:21). The Christian awaits the redemption of the body, but she does not do so alone. Nature waits right by her side, groaning, anticipating release from its suffering. And in some profound, inexplicable sense, that liberation from misery connects to the Church: "the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (Romans 8:19).

I'm convinced this has moral implications. The Church regularly reminds us that we are not to sit idly by waiting for divine intervention to set wrongs to right. We are the manifestation of God's presence in the world. God cares for the poor by sending us to feed them. On what basis do we exclude animals from that community of care, if Scripture insists redemption extends to them too? There will be no abattoirs in heaven. Christian veganism is a witness to the coming kingdom of God, to the renewal of creation. It is the refusal to tolerate animal suffering here and now on earth, because it has no place there and then, in the heaven of Christian expectation: *Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*



Michael Gilmour teaches at Providence University College and is the author of *Eden's Other Residents: The Bible and Animals* (2014) and *Animals in the Writings of C. S. Lewis* (2017).

## Parish News Round Up

### Ride for Refuge with St. Aidan's and Naomi House

The Ride for Refuge is a family-friendly cycling and walking fundraiser that supports charities who provide refuge and hope for displaced, vulnerable, and exploited people everywhere.

St. Aidan's is organizing a team for this cycling and walking fundraiser event on October 5 in support of their partner ministry Naomi House. Dave Labdon, incumbent at St. Aidan's and Rupert's Land Archdeacon, will be on the team, riding his bike for a daunting 50 km. It is great to see one of our leaders walk the talk. Or in this case, cycle the talk.

Naomi House is a seven-bedroom transitional home for newly arriving refugees and asylum seekers. [Click here](#) for more info on Naomi House.

You can also [click here](#) to support the St. Aidan's team riding for Naomi House, or [send me an email](#). –Chris Barnes, Mission Coordinator



**Team captain Chris Chypyha and St. Aidan's priest Dave Labdon.**

### The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund



PWRDF is receiving donations for hurricane relief in the Bahamas. Funds move through existing church structures which is not only a very effective way to make sure the help reaches those who need it most, but it also keeps the overall admin costs down as well. [Click here](#) for more information.

PWRDF's newsletter, [Under the Sun](#), is also out. This issue focuses on youth empowerment in the Anglican Church of Canada.

### St. Andrews-on-the-Red

There are two events happening at St. Andrews-on-the-Red on October 6. The first is a special service to commemorate the ministry of Archdeacon Cockran, who was buried at St. Andrew's in 1865. This service is at 11:15.

Following the service is a performance by The Back Pew Boys, a local all-male vocal group, at 2:00. This is part of St. Andrew's 170th anniversary celebration. Admission is \$5.

Call 204-338-7483 for more information about both events.

### Food for the Journey: Queer, Quaint, and Quarrelsome

The first of St. John's College's Food for the Journey series for 2019/2020. Led by Andrew Rampton, this breakfast and discussion will be held on October 26 at St. John's College from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Admission is \$15 (free for students). RSVP to [Amy Craddock](#) or call 204-474-8531.

## Anglican Foundation at General Synod

The Anglican Foundation accepted the invitation to be this year's Visionary Sponsor for General Synod 2019 in Vancouver. This made it possible for AFC to have a significant profile at the Synod with a vibrant presentation from its Executive Director, Judy Rois. They also set up a creatively designed display showcasing the breadth of ministry supported by Foundation donors across the country.

During the presentation, Judy asked the gathered delegates to stand if they had ever received funding from the Foundation, and close to the entire gathering of some 300 people stood. It was a moment that needed no words to convey the incredible generosity of donors to the Anglican Foundation.

AFC produced 25 short video clips from all across the country featuring grant recipients and donors who spoke of the importance and transforming impact AFC had made in their faith communities.

As one of the invited speakers at the celebration dinner for retiring Primate Fred Hiltz, Judy said, "we will remember you as a faithful ambassador, a gracious peace-maker, and unflappable chair of synods and councils and commissions. We thank you for serving the Church. You did it superbly well. You did it bravely and conscientiously. You did it with a deep and abiding grace. Thank you for being the Chair of the Anglican Foundation. Thank you for being a good and faithful Primate."

If you had never heard of the Anglican Foundation before General Synod, their presence at General Synod this year changed that for sure! –*Scott Brubacher, Executive Administrator*

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## Pancake Breakfast for West Broadway Community Ministry

St. Chad's is hosting a pancake breakfast for WBCM on October 19 at Applebee's, 2065 Pembina Hwy, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. Tickets are \$12. Call 204-832-7195 for more information.

## Music for Angels: A Kreative Kids Fundraiser

Join St. Thomas, Weston on October 20, at 3:00 p.m., for an afternoon of music, refreshments, and a closer look at their newly restored pipe organ with organist Peter Fyne. All in support of Kreative Kids.

Kreative Kids is a community drop-in crafting program that offers the children of Weston a safe place to hang out and express their creativity.

Admission: Collection at the door or e-transfer to [St.thomas1567donations@gmail.com](mailto:St.thomas1567donations@gmail.com).

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## Position Changes in Rupert's Land



Over the last few months, there have been a number of position changes in Rupert's Land. Some are retiring from their long-held appointments, and new people are stepping in to take their place. I asked those who are retiring to reflect on their time of service, and those who are stepping into new positions what they're looking forward to. Here's what they had to say. – KN

### **Gord Pawling** **Retiring Treasurer**

My volunteer connection with the diocese began back in the 1970s as a member of the Finance & Administration Committee. In 1987, I was appointed Treasurer of the Diocese by Bishop Walter Jones, who decided that the Treasurer should also be Chairman of the Finance Committee.



To add to the responsibilities, I became a director of the Rupert's Land Capital Fund Inc. and in 1990 a member of the Bishop of the Diocese of Rupert's Land (a Corporation) and the Investment Committee.

I became well versed in all aspects of the financial dealings of the diocese during my tenure as Treasurer and very fortunate in having excellent advisors and financial officers of the diocese work with me.

One of my proudest moments during my term was receiving the Order of Rupert's Land in 1998 from Bishop Patrick Lee.

It has been a very fulfilling experience as Treasurer, and I know that my successor, Sharon Routley, will serve the diocese well with dedication and expertise.

### **Jim Dugan** **Retiring Archdeacon of Kenora-St. Alban**

Retirement... well let's see how this one goes.

In July 2011, I retired as Archdeacon of Huron, only to become Dean of St. Alban's Cathedral and Archdeacon of the Southern Region of the Diocese of Keewatin on a three-year contract.



Three years later, when the Southern Region became a part of the Diocese of Rupert's Land in 2014, Bishop DonPhillips invited me to continue on at the parish and as Archdeacon of the Kenora-St. Alban Archdeaconry.

So... I will try again. This time I plan to do more travelling with my wife, Mary, more entertaining, more chillin' on the dock at our cabin, and undertake some minor repairs and maintenance that are overdue, as well as more reading, especially books of which osmosis did not work.

I am a volunteer on a hospital committee and have offered my time to the Canadian Mental Health Association. I continue on a local committee working to reduce poverty and will become a certified trainer in "Bridges Out of Poverty." I continue on a community refugee committee and am taking a course called Sacred Spaces, which seeks to equip people to offer opportunities to groups to develop a deeper sense of compassion and action through contemplative practices (part of The Charter for Compassion).

Oh, yes, I will also preside at Eucharist in Red Lake about once per month. Ah, retirement!

**Ann Timonin**  
**Incoming Chair of the**  
**Rupert's Land Archives**  
**Committee**

I am a retired teacher with an interest in history and in writing. As President of the Lake Winnipeg Writers' Group, I have experience in administration and in chairing meetings. I have a reputation for seeing things through, and I'm looking forward to the challenges of learning more about the Archives and their on-going needs.



**Robert Thomas**  
**Incoming Registrar**

I was born and educated in Toronto, then Waterloo and Southampton, and lived in Zambia before coming to the University of Manitoba, where I taught mathematics for 41 years. I still do a little mathematics, but mainly edit a philosophy journal for Oxford University Press. My wife, also retired, substitutes in school libraries. Our two children are a mathematics professor and a medical physicist.



While I do several things at St. George's, Crescentwood, I have been involved in diocesan affairs for many years, serving first (oddly) on the Executive of Council in the mid-70s. In a short-lived administrative structure in the '80s, I was responsible for, among other things, the Rupert's Land News. From there I went to the Board on Canons and Rules of Order in 1985, where I've been ever since with gaps. I have written the minutes of the last six regular sessions of Synod. My care with written documents has been noticed, and I have been asked to take on responsibility for the non-financial records of the diocese, current and archival, as Registrar.

**Naboth Manzongo**  
**Incoming Archdeacon of**  
**Kenora-St. Alban**

It came as a surprise to be appointed in this new role after arriving in Canada less than six months. However, I accept the role knowing that the same God who has called me will sustain me.

I believe that the Archdeaconry of Kenora-St. Alban is called to be an area of our diocese that creates a circle of disciples to make Christ visible in the world. We are Christ's hands and feet. We must work and walk for him. I concur with Bishop Geoff that the Church should depart from measuring itself by numerical forms but rather through a narrative form. There are a lot of things happening in this part of the diocese that shows that Christ is really visible in our communities.



**Sharon Routley**  
**Incoming Treasurer**

I am an accountant who has been in public practice for 40 years, most of them as a CGA [Certified General Accountant] and recently CPA [Certified Professional Accountant]. I am part of an amalgamated parish and have been active as treasurer, vestry member, and synod delegate, as well as people's warden over the years. I have enjoyed helping my clients and parishes set and work toward achieving their goals. I hope to continue this focus in my new role as Treasurer of the diocese.



# Thinking as Church about the National Inquiry's Report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

JANE BARTER



Over the course of the summer, a group of 10–15 people from a variety of denominations met at Saint Paul's, Fort Garry to discuss the recently published, 1,200-page document, *Reclaiming Power and Place, the Report of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. It was not easy. We often buckled under the sheer magnitude of the issue, which by conservative estimates involves the murder and disappearance of over 1,100 women, girls, and LGBTQ2 Indigenous persons. We asked ourselves: *What is our (i.e., the Church's) complicity in this problem? What is our responsibility?*

The churches' complicity in the suffering of Indigenous persons in our country is less apparent than in the case of residential schools, but it is no less real. As the document traces the trajectory of colonization, it looks not only to the residential schools as sources of harm perpetrated by the church, but also to the ways in which traditional gender roles, economies, and kinship systems were dismantled by the Church in Indigenous communities, largely through the relegation of women to diminished roles, in spite of the matriarchal nature of many Indigenous cultures. As the Report puts it:

**Indigenous Peoples were economically marginalized by the dispossession of their land and resources and the related destruction of their economies. Indigenous women experienced political and social marginalization through the imposition of patriarchy by Christian churches and the Government of Canada. Colonization also gave rise to racist and ethnocentric ideas that continue to dehumanize Indigenous**

**women and make them targets of violence. The cycles of intergenerational trauma, set in motion by colonization, are a root cause of domestic violence in Indigenous communities today.**

This sobering insight was sharpened further as the Report controversially argued that the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women constitutes a genocide. The Report defends the legal use of the term in through reference to Article II of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. According to the UN, genocide includes:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

In Canada, Indigenous women and girls are subject to all these genocidal acts. From forced sterilization, to the apprehension of children, to harm, injury, murder and destruction of ways of life, Canada participates in the deliberate and ongoing genocide of Indigenous women.

Given this reality, why does the Church appear to be particularly oblivious to this issue, with the Report receiving little to no attention in our local and national conversations? In part, I

believe this has to do with the Church's historic inability to discuss sexual violence in any meaningful way. We are on the heels of over 40 years of consultations and debates around sexuality and, if General Synod is in any way instructive, we are no further along in terms of our ability to confront sexuality in its diversity, its violence, and in our own exclusionary habits in trying to regulate it. Given our vexed conversations in the Church about sex in general, is it any wonder we fail to do justice to the situation of women and girls who are being trafficked? Should anybody be surprised that the Church is silent on the targeted violence against Two-Spirited persons?

In my own research, I have become convinced by the writings of Indigenous scholars who regard the murder and disappearance of Indigenous women and girls as an indicator of their *disposability* within the colonial project. If colonization is predicated upon the erasure of Indigenous people from the land, what better way than to target women – for it is they who secure Indigenous posterity? The disposal of Indigenous women and girls is made most manifest in the kinds of violent deaths they faced. Many of the women's bodies were found in dumpsters; their bodies were disposed of on



Photo: Jen Castro

### The annual Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, British Columbia.

the edge of town, in a river, or a garbage dump. Even the Crown in the Cindy Gladue case deemed it appropriate to admit portions of her severed vagina as evidence in court. The use of Indigenous women's bodies and the representation of their bodies and lives as disposable are deeply embedded within the Canadian colonial imagination.

This is why it is all the more urgent that these women do not disappear in our public memory. The work of such groups as Sisters in Spirit (including many of the women in our own diocese who helped to start its Winnipeg chapter) and the family members serve to keep the women's memories alive. Through art, ceremony, vigils, marches, walks, and searches, women have been actively countering the narrative that their loved ones are disposable. They refuse to forget them for they know that reconciliation is deferred as long as women remain missing and as long as deaths like theirs continue. For these women, the wound of their sisters' loss is ever palpable. And as such, remembering them remains the only hope that a nation such as Canada or a church such as ours has to begin to move beyond its colonial violence.



Jane Barter is a priest in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, who is currently serving St. Peter, Dynevor (Selkirk), St. Phillip (Hodgson), and St. Matthew (Peguis). She is also Professor of Religion and Culture at the University of Winnipeg.



## What If I Got Hit By A Bus?

(or not able to communicate with my family?)

Presented by Margaret Meush  
and sponsored by the  
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and Richard Rosin




*Bookings are being taken for seminars available beginning in March*

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