

**JUNE 2016**

**RUPERT'S LAND NEWS**



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**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:

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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.

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**Cover:** Charles, Ruth, and Jon, from St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry, stop in one of the large, beautiful gardens featured on [this year's garden tour](#).

## A LONG STANDING TRADITION



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Spring is already upon us and our first year of having RLN exclusively online is coming to a close. 700 people have signed up for the RLN Weekly and receive the magazine to their inbox each month, and several parishes are printing off a few copies for those

## SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

without internet access. But this is just the beginning, because there are still hundreds of Anglicans in Rupert's Land who are not regularly engaged with RLN. Over the summer, and as we approach our fall diocesan synod, we will push to help those people engage with the News too, whatever form that may take. Please remember those who are elderly or unable to get out

of their homes and consider taking them a printed copy of RLN to enjoy alongside your company.

There are already many fundraisers, concerts, and other events on the calendar for the summer. RLN doesn't come out in July and August, but you can stay on top of the news and events by checking the website or by following us on Facebook.

### WORLD REFUGEE DAY

June 20 is the UN's World Refugee Day, when we remember the 59 million refugees around the world. In 2013, the Diocese created the Diocesan Refugee Fund to raise support for refugee sponsorships initiated by the Rev. Jim Wolf prior to his death. One of these families is expected to arrive in the next few months, so this June we are asking all congregations to help us raise \$25,000 for these families. Congregations are invited to pick one Sunday in June to take an offering for the Refugee Fund. Contributions can also be made by sending a cheque to the diocesan office, indicating it is for the Refugee Fund, or [online](#). For more information about refugees, the fund, or sponsorship, [email Gail Schnabl](#).

### ANGLICAN FOUNDATION MEMBERSHIP

Since its inception in 1957, the Anglican Foundation has benefited hundreds of parishes and dioceses across the country (Take a look at their most recent work in Rupert's Land on page 11 of the [March RLN](#)). The majority of these have become subscribers to the Foundation for just \$50 a year. In Rupert's Land, however, the ratio of Foundation memberships to grants received is woefully off balance. In 2014, the Foundation received only \$750 from across the Diocese, while our parishes received \$50,000 in grant funding. Individuals and parishes, please become members today so that we can say we are on board as the Foundation celebrates its 60th anniversary.

[Read more about this on the RLN website.](#)

### ANGLICAN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS HEALING FUND

The Winnipeg Free Press and the Globe and Mail published articles last month condemning the Church for accepting a refund from the settlement fund and forsaking our financial responsibility. The national Church released [a breakdown of the numbers and legal details](#) explaining why this fit the original plans for the healing funds and how the money is now being spent. RLN released an [article](#) as well, further detailing the commitment of Rupert's Land to walk the path of reconciliation, both financially and relationally.



# WALKING TOGETHER TO THE NATIONAL SYNOD

*Donald Phillips*

[The 41st meeting of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada](#) will convene from July 7 to 12 in Richmond Hill, Ontario. About 250 lay people (adults and youth), clergy and bishops from our 30 diocesan communities will assemble. They will worship, listen to presentations, participate in discussions, debate and vote on resolutions, and enjoy fellowship together. Our Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, is the president of the synod.

The word “synod” comes from two words (Greek and Latin) which mean “a way together” — in the sense of taking a way forward, or a path, together. Hence, the purpose of meeting as a synod is to enable leaders representing the whole Church to make decisions for the whole Church — to chart a path for the whole Church to follow together.


We base our hope that a synod will be successful in determining “a way together” on a gospel promise: Jesus says that when his followers gather together in his name, the risen Christ is present in their midst, leading and guiding them. The Holy Spirit is given to the Church “to lead them into all truth.” At what appears to be the first gathering of a synod (though it wasn’t called by

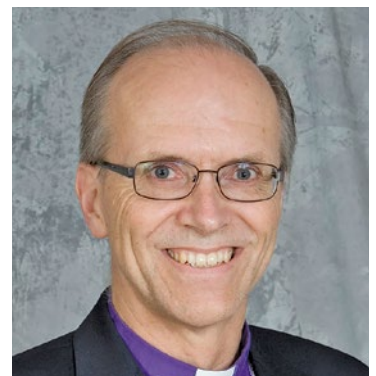
that name) in Acts 15, those gathered talked, argued, listened, and eventually came to one mind about resolving how to include Gentiles in the newly-formed Christian Church. Quite clearly, they believed that they had discerned the way that God was calling them to follow — together.

This year, synod has a number of discussions on the agenda. It will consider a proposal to amend Canon XXI on Marriage in the Church to explicitly permit same-sex marriages to be solemnized in the Anglican Church of Canada. Additionally, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (and the Sacred Circle it represents) will bring forward a description of the path it believes God is calling our Indigenous Anglican communities to follow. Both of these issues have the potential to strain the intended unity of our Church and our desire find “a way together.”

One or both of these subjects may involve changing a Canon of General Synod. Canonical change requires each of the three orders (laity, clergy, and bishops) to vote separately on the issue, and in order to pass, the resolution must achieve a 2/3 majority in each of the three orders. No order has more authority than the other in de-

termining the outcome. As is often the case with complex issues that involve competing priorities and perceptions, the proposed amendment to the Marriage Canon is particularly challenging because of the impact the result will have on a significant number of our Church.

Therefore, I earnestly request your ongoing prayers before, during, and after the synod. Pray for all of us who will be involved in the discernment around the issues at the synod itself. And pray for those who will be affected by the synod’s decisions: our own membership, our sister churches of the Anglican Communion, and the people of Canada to whom we are sent to be witnesses of the love of God in Jesus Christ. The theme of our synod is “You are My Witnesses.” Pray that we may faithfully be just that! 



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

# THE JESUS WAY AND BASIC INCOME

*Gary Russell*

Christ taught in a community struggling to live a renewed set of values rooted in an old gospel. He stood for a culture of loving engagement and mutual support, living within but rising above the profanity of power and brutality that was ancient Jerusalem. It was a community where brother and sister living in Christ looked after each other in a hostile environment, with a sense of calling and mission, while starting to build a new society of love and compassion.

But the average new Christian was caught in the middle, surviving in the secular culture where everyone strives to seek satisfaction of one's needs and wants wherever one can get it — yet also believing in their Christian culture of compassion and service to others, especially the lowly.

Every one of them except Christ was a mix of the secular and the spiritual, the sinful and the holy. Christ's commission to them was to rebalance their lives. Look a little beyond the self-indulgence and compromises needed to survive in the jungle of



Photo: Viva Larsen

Jerusalem, and move toward a higher life of loving service to others, even to the point of personal sacrifice.

He counselled a new awakening of mutual support and mutual caring, and building a new Jerusalem as their new calling in life. To put it in modern economic terms, he was calling for a new vocation, built upon the old, and for putting that vocation up front and centre.

How far we have moved in the opposite direction over the following millennia. We have fully turned down the road of self-indulgent, be-served and be-satisfied culture — to a pathological extent. We have fully bought

into the 19th century hard-core materialist ideology — where compassion is just non-linear irrational behaviour beyond reach of the sacred scientific method. We're firmly in the grip of compulsive addictive consumerism and acquisitiveness, with little hope of escape.

So where are vocation, calling, or mission to be found in this all-powerful marketing environment — where work

and career are reduced to a means for acquiring more consumption goods? There are actually islands of vocation in our career-obsessed culture. Some can find income support for a genuine calling in some service vocations — those that are able to command a price in labour markets or claim support from the charity infrastructure.

But too many true callings can do neither effectively. They are left abandoned in an economy where the chief means of receiving material support for any career is selling oneself in the market. If you really want to serve people outside the



labour market — where the greatest needs and the least money are to be found — you need a day job to support yourself.

The upshot is that an alternative source of material support is needed — for those whose calling is not marketable or may even be corrupted in the marketplace — if we are to follow Christ and take his calling seriously. Otherwise, we live in a dead-end environment for those seeking meaning in their lives.

So here's the key point. That sacred link between income and market labour, the holy grail of the economic liturgy, needs to be severed. A guaranteed income is a viable alternative, already well researched. A secured baseline income available

to each of God's children, just for being a child of God, opens the possibility of discerning one's calling — but with no requirement to corrupt that quest with the need to market oneself.


People with a drive to serve are usually terrible self-marketers. Such people can devote themselves instead to building the kind of caring and serving community that Christ called upon us to nourish.

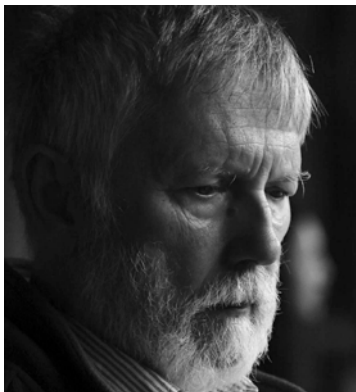
But of course not all guaranteed income recipients are going to devote themselves to serving God and neighbour. We are, most of us, too pathologically hooked on consumer culture and many would react violently to any attempt to rein in our affluence. We need to get off our emp-

ty-freedom kick and shake off our acquisition fix.

This is no easy task. So any guaranteed income program must be accompanied by a drive to establish vocation/calling as the central thrust of our economic culture. And the Church is the institution that is best positioned to turn the call for guaranteed income in that direction.

This calls for several measures — reviving our age-old story of a community that looks after each other in mutual engagement — breaking the commodity addiction — re-establishing a holistic relationship between production and consumption, where consumption is meant to be sustenance for our productive vocation.

But it won't hurt to start with the economic factor. Hey, it's cheaper than welfare! 



△ Gary Russell has taught economics in both Canada and China. Read his blog at [profaneconomy.com](http://profaneconomy.com) or contact him at [gary@gwrussell.com](mailto:gary@gwrussell.com).

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# THE URBAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRY DEVELOPER MOVES FORWARD

It began with a seemingly impossible dream, but after years of planning, the role of Urban Indigenous Ministry Developer has finally been filled. Vincent Solomon, a priest of the Diocese who originates from Nelson House, Manitoba, started his new position on May 1, 2016. Previously, he served as the Indigenous Neighbours Coordinator for the Mennonite Central Committee following a position with the St. James School Division as an Aboriginal Liaison.

Vincent has moved into office space at the Anglican Lutheran Centre, where he will spend the summer discerning the shape of this ministry. His base will move to the St. Francis Mission in September (St. Barnabas' church before it amalgamated with St. Anne's and St. Martin's to become St. Francis). The mission's North End location is ideal for the new ministry, as many indigenous Winnipeggers call it home.

Vincent has essentially been commissioned as a chaplain for indigenous people in Winnipeg. Eventually, he will seek to establish an indigenous worshipping community, one which takes a shape familiar to those he serves and which has at its heart a focus on indigenous culture and healing. But starting a new congregation, especially one which targets

a particular demographic, requires a great deal of patience, sensitivity, and openness to new possibilities. National Indigenous Bishop Mark MacDonald calls this "contextualisation": creating worshipping communities which are natural and "native" to a particular population. Vincent imagines that in this new community, this will mean a 7:00 p.m. worshipping time, a shared meal, drumming, and smudging.


But Vincent is careful not to get ahead of himself. "The pain has to come before the healing," he explains. "There is a lot of pain out there... but more people are choosing healing."

Before a worshipping community forms, the indigenous ministry will seek to create a safe space for healing from trauma, particularly the intergenerational impact of the residential school system. Vincent imagines this will begin with talking circles, much listening, and liaising with other indigenous leaders. It is a role that he would never attempt to fill on his own. It was only with the encouragement and blessing of the Rupert's Land elders that he accepted the position at all. An advisory committee has been formed to support and mentor him in the work, made up of two elders and two priests.



△ *Vincent participates in a smudging ceremony with elder Barbara Shoomski.*

Bishop Mark has indicated that this is a "needed ministry," with nothing quite like it happening elsewhere in Canada. Vincent believes that the Anglican Church is particularly ready for this kind of work, as he has watched God "opening doors" over the course of years and even decades. Many indigenous people in Canada consider themselves Anglican but do not feel comfortable in the average Sunday worship service for a variety of reasons. Vincent believes that some of these include: the colonial history of the Church, feeling unwelcome and with no sense of belonging, and the foreign timing and structure.

As part of this new role, Vincent will also continue his ministry at St. Philip's on Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, where he leads worship services twice a month. 

## THE DAILY EXAMEN: WAKING THE CONSCIOUS SLEEPER

*Connie Gefert*

*"The majority of people are sound asleep more than half the time!"*

So complained the famous American writer Henry David Thoreau in his book *Walden*, published in 1850 but perhaps even more relevant in 2016. Thoreau built a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond in beautiful rural Massachusetts and lived there alone for two years. His purpose, he said, was "to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Thoreau consciously practiced awareness. In his time at Walden Pond, he became more and more wide awake to the amazing life around him — bugs, tiny animals, fish, plants — the world became alive to him in a way he had never noticed. And when he went into town, he noticed the interesting people he met in a way he had never done before.

"Consider how the wild flowers grow," Jesus said. "They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these" (Luke 10:27).



Photo: Byron Howes

Consider. Be aware. Wake up and look.

But most of us are "sound asleep" or unconscious to our surroundings much of the time. We make ourselves so busy as we rush from one thing to another (or from several things to several other things as we multi-task) that we have no idea what we are missing.

I have found a simple prayer exercise which wakes me up to the reality of God's presence in my life, in the lives of those around me, and in the incredible beauty of the natural world. It's called the Awareness Reflection (or, more traditionally, the Consciousness Examen). Its purpose is to heighten our awareness of


God's presence and activity in our lives, in order that we might live more fully, more consciously. We are always in the presence of God, but we are not always aware or conscious of that divine presence. In the words of St. Richard of Chichester, this kind of prayer can help us "see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly, day by day."

Here is a very simple approach that you might find helpful. Many people do this at night before they go to bed. I usually do it first thing in the morning before I have started thinking about the challenges of the day ahead, before any of its cares have made a claim on my consciousness:



1. Thank God for the day that has passed, and ask for the awareness to see God's activity in your life.
2. Think back over the day just past, and ask these questions:
  - When did you feel most thankful (happy, content, satisfied)?
  - Where were you conscious of cooperating with God?
  - How was God present even when you were not conscious?
3. Then ask yourself:
  - When did you feel most unthankful (unhappy, frustrated, anxious, depressed)?
  - Where were you conscious of putting God out of your mind?
  - How was God present even when you weren't aware of it?
4. Is there anything in the previous day that makes you want to do something differently in the new day?
5. Conclude with a short prayer of thanksgiving for the past day.



You might want to record the fruit of your prayer in your journal. The important thing is to become more and more aware of God's constant presence in your life, more conscious of how you cooperate with God, where you put up blocks, and how you can be more open to walking *consciously* with God alongside you. 

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△ *Connie Gefert is a Sister of St. John the Divine at their motherhouse in Toronto.*

INTO THE SILENCE:  
**A LOOK AT QUAKER WORSHIP**

*Elaine Bishop*

“Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God’s presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God’s love drawing us together and leading us.” *Quaker Advices and Queries*

I am a Quaker, but not like the picture of the old chap on the porridge box! Most Quaker worship is grounded in silence because there is no plan other than that those present sit together, gathering into silence. But the silence is not the worship. The silence, like garden soil,



△ *George Fox, an English dissenting preacher in the 17th century, is the founder of the Religious Society of Friends. Photo: George Fox Marketing Communications*

is seeded by the light of God. Worship grows in ways familiar to those who have come before, yet it is still unknown. We wait in expectancy, seeking to listen to, and

be led by, the living presence amongst us. Spoken ministry may arise from any one. Those moved to speak are expected to discern whether their words truly are a message for everyone, or for themselves alone, and so do not need to be spoken.

“Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.” *Quaker Advices and Queries*

Our formal name is the Religious Society of Friends, and we are also known as just “Friends.” We seek to live our faith through our traditional testimonies, the most known of which is the Quaker peace testimony, calling us to “live in that life and power that takes away the occasion for all war.” Other testimonies call us to simplicity, equality, integrity



Photo: Lynn Friedman

and truth, and community. There is also a growing testimony to care of the Earth. Individually and corporately, we strive to live these values, which are grounded in our understanding of God and the relationships to which God calls us, with others and with all life on Earth.

Quakers will not swear oaths, because God calls us to one standard of truth. We seek lifestyles that reflect simplicity, commitment to justice and peace, and conscientious objection to war and preparations for war. Each Quaker is expected to discern how to live these testimonies in their individual and family lives. “Committees of Care” and “Clearness Committees” help Friends with discernment and support during hard times.

Friends do not have paid clergy because we share in a ministry of the whole. Everyone brings gifts and needs

to the community. The structure of Quakerism is based on frequency of meetings to address church affairs. The basic unit, empowered to discern and confirm membership, is the Monthly Meeting. It generally meets weekly for worship. The monthly meeting for worship with attention to business, facilitated by the clerk, proceeds through unprogrammed worship in confidence that God is an active presence in the discernment.

Friends are expected to attend without minds made up, and worship takes place between spoken contributions. Minutes are written during the discernment and read back for approval before moving on to the next item on the agenda. There is no rule book, only a book of Faith and Practice, sharing the wisdom of Friends past

and present, and a book of Organization and Procedure. Both offer guidance, but the key question in any discernment is: to what is God calling us in this situation? The clerk assists in articulating the questions to be discerned and helps those gathered to stay on topic. I have seen this process work effectively in a gathering of over 600 Friends!

There have been Quakers meeting in Winnipeg since 1957. Many meet Quakerism without knowing it. How many knew, when reading Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, that they were reading a Quaker quote by William Penn at the beginning of the book: "Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas"? All are welcome to share worship with Quakers and get to know us better. In

Winnipeg, we meet weekly at the Centre for Christian Studies, or you can find us at [quaker.ca](http://quaker.ca), [quakerservice.ca](http://quakerservice.ca) and [winnipegquakermeeting.edublogs.org](http://winnipegquakermeeting.edublogs.org). 



△ *Elaine Bishop is the presiding clerk for the Canadian Quakers. Prior to her retirement, she served as the executive director for the North Point Douglas Women's Centre in Winnipeg.*



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# MONEY MATTERS: MUCH ADO ABOUT DEBT

*Leigh Taylor*

I was asked, having “seen it all” over the many years that I have been involved as a professional in the Bankruptcy and Insolvency business, what advice would I offer to people before they get into financial difficulty? The answer is neither a secret nor a surprise: it is simply to gain and maintain financial control of your life. This is often called budgeting or stewardship, but it will result in a better quality of life on the same income.

It never ceases to surprise me when I talk to people who don’t really know how much money they earn. They may have some general idea, but their pay cheques may vary from week to week. In the same way they do not know what their costs of living amount to. Sure they might be able to tell you what their rent is, or what their car payment is, but beyond that they only guess. As so often happens, they can spend more in one month than they earn, which generally shows up as a recurring balance on a credit card. If they have money left over at the end of a month it is merely a coincidence.

It is easy to see how this sort of scenario can play itself out over a reasonably short period of time, resulting in a substantial amount of



Photo: [taxrebate.org.uk](http://taxrebate.org.uk)

accrued debt. The solution to this ongoing problem may sound trite: Keep track of your income and keep track of your expenses on a monthly basis. This sounds easy, but it’s harder to do than it sounds. It really is a question of developing the habit of keeping track of your expenses. There are some substantial benefits to this process:

- It will help you live within your income
- If you overspend in one month, you can quickly adjust within the next month or two to make up for the over expenditure
- It helps you prioritize your expenses so that the important expenses get paid, and the less important ones can be adjusted

Part of good budgeting is savings. That is putting money aside for unexpected or unusual expenditures. By having a savings account for contingencies, you avoid the situations where the immediate financial demands don’t require you to leave your rent unpaid that month. It’s amazing how much you will appreciate having a savings account for unexpected expenses when those expenses suddenly arise.

Most people get into debt a little at a time. Deficit spending every month accumulated over a few years results in a large financial burden. However, this is not true in every case. Financial problems are often linked to a particular event in our lives, such as illness, loss of a job, relationship break-up, etc. Having good control of




Photo: Kaley

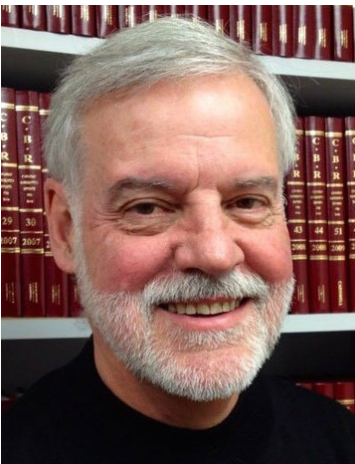
we are called upon to obey laws and act with integrity. These same laws and mores offer other solutions.

The answer in these kinds of situations is often a statutory remedy such as found in the federal Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. This legislation acts as a safety net for the honest but unfortunate debtor who finds themselves over their head in debt. Whether the solution is filing an Assignment in Bankruptcy or filing a Consumer Proposal, such remedies allow us to get back on our

feet financially, settle our debts with our creditors and get back to a productive life.

The details of people's financial situations can vary considerably, and there is no hard and fast rule as to whether one should go bankrupt or file a Proposal. To a large degree, it depends on the individual circumstances; however, it is necessary, before any of these steps can be contemplated, to meet

with a Licensed Insolvency Trustee. These are qualified licensed individuals who can show you a path through the financial difficulty to get you back on your feet. Which path may depend to a large degree on what you want to accomplish, what your resources are, and just how far in debt you are. All too often, people wait until the problem gets so bad that their options are very limited. The key, if financial difficulty can't be avoided, is to recognize it early and find out what your options are. 



△ *Leigh Taylor is a licensed insolvency trustee and a member of Holy Trinity, Winnipeg.*

your finances will, in many cases, allow you to weather these kinds of storms.

The next question I often hear in these circumstances is, "What if such financial crises are too much and you can't afford them?" Notwithstanding the best laid plans and careful budgets, financial trauma does wreak havoc in people's lives. The first thing to do is put the problem into prospective. It is only money! As Christians

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# PARISH NEWS **ROUND UP**



## ▷ St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry

The annual garden tour in support of St. Matthew's Maryland is in the Wolseley neighbourhood this year on June 18. [Tickets are available at several Winnipeg locations.](#)

## ▷ Kairos

The workshop which teaches about the history of colonialism in Canada is being held en masse on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislative buildings in support of the TRC's calls to action on June 4, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. [Join them.](#)

## ▷ St. James on the Assiniboine

Old St. James is celebrating 165 years this month with a visit from Primate Fred Hiltz. [Join them for a celebratory service June 26 at 10:00 a.m.](#)

At the same location, St. James is hosting its annual summer concert series each Thursday, beginning with Winnipeg's award-winning Don Amero on July 14. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m.

## ▷ St. John's College

A social justice day camp for students entering grades 8-10 is being hosted by the College July 18-22. College students are being hired to assist with the camp. [Visit the website](#) for details and registration.

## ▷ Northern Justice Tour

A tour is being hosted by Tataskweyak First Nation (Split Lake) to give visitors the chance to explore relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada, learn about issues of social justice facing the north, and engage in concepts and practice of reconciliation. Our National Indigenous Bishop, Mark MacDonald, is one of the guest speakers. [A couple of spots are still left in the group leaving from Winnipeg.](#)

## ▷ Primate in Winnipeg

The Primate and Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, Fred Hiltz, is holding a special gathering with Rupert's Landers. He'll be at St. Alban's Cathedral on June 24 and St. John's Cathedral on June 25, 3:00-6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

## ▷ St. Alban's Cathedral

A day-long Bridges out of Poverty workshop is being hosted on June 14 with a guest facilitator to explore the cycle of poverty in our communities. Gain a deeper understanding of both the challenges and strengths of people living in poverty and how to best engage them in our own contexts. Find more details [on the website](#) or [email St. Alban's](#) to register.

## ▷ Changing the Marriage Canon

A diocesan meeting is being held at St. John's College to explore the document released by the national Commission on the Marriage Canon, "This Holy Estate." All who have read the document are welcome to join the discussion at St. John's College, June 18 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.



# WILL HEAVEN BE BORING?

*Michael Gilmour*

In a Gary Larson *Far Side* cartoon, a man in heaven sits on a cloud wishing he brought a magazine. The heaven of pop-culture cliché — white robes, angel wings, pearly gates, harps — tends to assume a complete break with present experience, with no sign of the material world remaining. No more mud, flowers, rocks, birds, and trees. Sounds dull. There's not much to do on a cloud. I wish I brought a magazine.

C. S. Lewis suggests "The hills and valleys of heaven will be to those you now experience not as a copy is to an original, nor as a substitute to the genuine article, but as the flower to the root, or the diamond to the coal" (*Letters to Malcolm*). If correct, the implications are startling. It means this world — and its human and nonhuman inhabitants, its prairies and mountains, rivers and oceans — all of it is in some incomprehensible way eternal. All of it anticipates heaven and contains within it the potential for glory just as a lump of coal anticipates a diamond. There is continuity from one to the other just as Jesus's resurrected body had the recognizable scars of his humiliation.

Yet, for many, nature has no meaningful place in theological discourse. They maintain this world of space, time, and matter we

call home is temporary and destined for dissolution. It is broken beyond repair with no eternal meaning, and ultimately doomed to a final destruction, a *Star Wars*-like Death Star fiery explosion. For them it follows that collapsing eco-systems, climate change, species loss, animal cruelty, and the like are of no concern for the Church.

Some even find warrant for this devaluing of nature in passages like 2 Peter 3, which describes heaven and earth passing away. But does the Bible envisage the end of the world? I wonder if resorting to such banal literalism is merely an excuse to dismiss awkward questions about our responsibilities. It is more likely that such passages indicate the world's renewal, not its destruction. John writes of God making all things new, not the making of new things (Revelation 21:5). To dismiss this language, adopting instead a gnostic, world-negating theological outlook, is to lose sight of important biblical threads, among them the goodness of creation and its participation in singing God's praises (e.g., Psalm 148).

Recognizing continuity between creation and new creation presents us with an inspiring corollary. "Thy kingdom come," we pray, "thy will be done on earth




as it is in heaven." *On earth as in heaven*. That which we do now in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit contributes to that kingdom. Recall also that the biblical picture of ideal humanity includes interaction with nature. It is humanity's first vocation. Adam tills the soil in Eden and names its animals (Genesis 2). Hints, just hints, but it suggests the wellbeing of earth is a corollary of the spiritual wellbeing of those given dominion over it. One exists for the other, and so it is we find Adam in the presence of animals, getting dirt under his fingernails — lovely images that remind us that any theology fixated on humanity alone is incomplete. The story of Eden hints at creation's potential, offering a glimpse into the glories of new creation. No need to bring a magazine. There will be plenty to do, and more to explore.



Again, C. S. Lewis:  
"To treat [Nature] as God, or as Everything, is to lose the whole pith and pleasure of her. Come out, look back, and then you will see ... this astonishing cat-  
aract of bears, babies, and bananas: this immoderate deluge of atoms, orchids, oranges, cancers, canaries, fleas, gases, tornadoes and toads. How could you ever have thought this was the ultimate reality? How could you ever have thought that it was merely a stage-set for the moral drama of men

and women? She is herself. Offer her neither worship nor contempt. Meet her and know her. If we are immortal, and if she is doomed (as the scientists tell us) to run down and die, we shall miss this half-shy and half-flam-  
boyant creature, this ogress, this hoyden, this incorrigible fairy, this dumb witch. But the theologians tell us that she, like ourselves, is to be redeemed. The 'vanity' to which she was subjected was her disease, not her essence. She will be cured in character: not tamed

(Heaven forbid) nor steril-  
ised. We shall still be able to recognise our old ene-  
my, friend, playfellow and foster-mother, so perfected as to be not less, but more, herself. And that will be a merry meeting." (*Miracles*)  
Renewed creation — heaven — as unruly and wild, yet beautiful and endlessly 'explorable.' Not tamed, presenting us a play-  
ground and workplace far more interesting than idleness on a cloud. 

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