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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 the Treaty 1 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 at:
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Cover: [Kevin Harber](#), A labyrinth in a park alongside the Potomac River in in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C.

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The first time I ever walked a labyrinth was a few years ago. I was at a church retreat at St. Benedict's Monastery for the weekend; we were there to relax, spend time in prayer, enjoy nature, and get away from the city – and our busy lives – for a couple days. We didn't have many scheduled activities for the weekend, but Saturday morning there were two options: walk the labyrinth or try out body prayer. I decided to walk the labyrinth, along with a few other people. We headed outside to where the labyrinth was marked in the grass and took turns walking through it.


I can't remember what our instructor told us about the experience of walking

the labyrinth, but I do remember that I prayed the Lord's Prayer and sang worship songs while I walked. It was calming, but I felt awkward while I was doing it; I couldn't help but think I was doing something wrong and I wasn't sure what I was supposed to "get out of it."

I later learned that was the wrong attitude to have. I'm not supposed to "get" something out of contemplative practice. Sure, there are some benefits: meditation, for example, improves brain performance and boosts the immune system. But the purpose of contemplative practice is to spend time in God's presence. When I walked the labyrinth that first time, I was doing exactly what I was supposed to be

doing: spending time with God.

This issue of Rupert's Land News explores Christian contemplative practices. We'll hear from two writers about the importance of daily practice in their own lives, and there's a beginner's guide to different types of contemplative practice for those who want to try it out. We also have an update on Bishop Don's recent trip to Uganda and a lovely piece about the late Rev. Brad Elliott of Christ Church in Selkirk.

As we move into the sorrow of Holy Week and the celebration of Easter, let us rest in the knowledge of what the Lord has done for us. 

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CONTEMPLATING THE CRUCIFIXION

Donald Phillips

In the last few weeks before Good Friday and Easter, while encouraging signs of Spring emerge around us, church worship becomes increasingly intense and sombre – focusing more intently on Jesus's coming arrest and execution. For the hour or so that we are involved in Sunday worship, the hymns, prayers, and Bible readings help us to stay focused on these events of Jesus's life, encouraging us to once again recall just how significant they are.

And then we jump back into everyday life – beginning to think about summer vacation, necessary home repairs and renovations, and the latest spring sales in local stores. However, during worship you may be challenged to *contemplate* the meaning of Lent, or Jesus's death and resurrection. But what does that mean?


The word "contemplation" has its original roots in Latin. Loosely interpreted it means, "a space created where one expects communication from the divine" (cf. Temple). And the prefix "con" means there is some dynamic intentionality to the work – it's not merely a religious "historic site." When we are invited to *contemplate* we become involved in setting

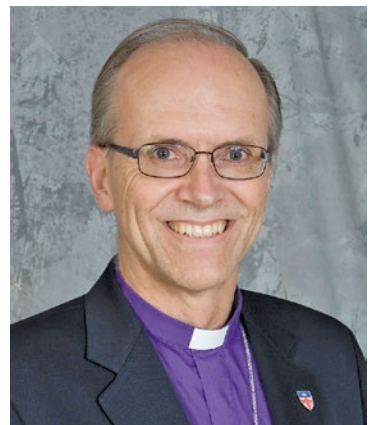
aside time, mental focus, and heartfelt depth – all with the expectation of some kind of divine encounter of insight.

But you don't need a Religious Studies degree or immerse yourself in the works of great theologians. Here is a good way to get started. Imagine the most glorious, powerful image of God that you can. Then think about the fact that this God somehow immersed all of that power and greatness into a human being: Jesus of Nazareth, whose sole purpose was to be an agent of the truth and love of this all-powerful God. Next, think about how Jesus, in his own time and culture, confronted every injustice he encountered – everything in life that presented itself over and against the way God intends life to be. Ultimately, it was the evil he confronted, as manifested in human beings like us, which crucified him. And it was his victory over that power of evil that enabled him to defeat death for all of humanity.

"Contemplating" on this is a good start – but it's not enough. Take note of Jesus's willingness to be arrested, to endure torture and a mock trial, and then the final pain of dying on a cross. With that image firmly in your

mind, re-visit the image of the all-powerful God you concocted a few moments ago and bring them together. The tortured, dying, commoner on the cross and the indescribable Creator of the universe are one in the same.

Finally, realize that all of it – the birth, life, teaching, miracles, unjust arrest, execution, and ultimate victory of resurrection – all took place because of God's love for you and me. Not a kind of vague love for humanity – but love for you personally – immersed in vacation planning, renovations, and spring sales. Let the reality of that love sink in. *That* is contemplation. 



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

LIVING AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

Central Buganda Diocese in Uganda lies nine time zones to the east and straddles the equator. Nancy and I, along with a few others from Rupert's Land, visited for a week at the end of January to attend the consecration of their new Bishop – Michael Lubowa who, along with his wife, Janepher, visited our diocese last fall. The warm welcome we received and the invitation to participate fully in Michael's consecration (being the only *mazungu* (white-skinned) bishop on the platform), was deeply significant. It came at a time when relationships in the Anglican Communion between some African dioceses and the North American Anglican Church are strained at best and completely alienated at worst. It was a poignant reminder of just how important our Companion Diocese relationship is at a time when relationships at the national level are thin indeed. 



△ *Children hug their prayer bears, which were knitted by Vicki Woods of St. Francis Anglican. These children are in the care of the Venerable Rev. Canon Jason Musoke and his wife Faith. Bishop Don and Nancy Phillips delivered the bears on their recent trip to Uganda.*

Photo: Jason Musoke



△ *Bishop Don and Nancy Phillips at the consecration reception with retiring Bishop Jackson and Perusi Matovu.*

▷ *Bishop Michael and Janepher Lebowa.*

Photos: Don Phillips



THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

Phil Barnett

One of my favourite quotations about contemplative prayer is from *Christian Meditation: The Gethsemani Talks* by John Main, a Benedictine monk who began to teach about Christian Meditation about 40 years ago.

"Meditative prayer is not an intellectual exercise in which we reflect about theological positions. In meditation we are not thinking about God at all, nor are we thinking of God's Son, Jesus, nor of the Holy Spirit. In meditation we seek to do something immeasurably greater: we seek to *be with* God, to *be with* Jesus, to *be with* the Holy Spirit; not merely to think about them."

It is a very different way of prayer from what we are familiar with today. It is equally valid, dating back to the fourth century, but not as well known. In our traditional practice of prayer, we usually talk to God about the things that are on our hearts. We talk to God about our concerns and anxieties, our hopes and dreams, the things we are thankful for, and the things that we are sorry for. In contemplative prayer, though, we do something different. We try to let go of all these thoughts and concentrate on simply being in the presence of God.



Photo: Phil Barnett

△ *The meditation group at St. Paul's Fort Garry.*

This opens up a whole new dimension for our prayer life. It gives us a chance to listen to God in a very intentional way. Our minds are usually so cluttered with thoughts about our busy lives that we don't leave much room for the Spirit to communicate with us. It is in the stillness and the silence of meditation that we become centred in the presence of God and become more open to the work of the Spirit within us.

This is very important for us, especially in the complex world in which we live today. We face many stresses and challenges, and there are often difficult decisions to make. We need God's guidance and transforming grace. People who

practice contemplation talk about how they have noticed changes in their lives over a period of time. They find that they are more understanding of others, more compassionate, not as quick to become angry, more generous, more satisfied with life. These qualities are very much needed in today's world. They are the fruits of the Spirit.

In these challenging times, Christians also need God's encouragement, guidance, and energy in order to determine what attitudes and actions we need to take. Openness to the Spirit is crucial and contemplative prayer is one of the keys to opening the door to the spirit of Christ who dwells within us. We become more motivated to "do justice, love

kindness, and walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8b).

Working for justice can be exhausting and discouraging at times because it seems to be a continual struggle against the values that drive our society. Contemplative prayer can support this central endeavour of Christian life. When Richard Rohr founded the Centre for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, he was often asked, "what is the most important word in the title of the Centre?" His answer is the word "and." The part that does not usually get much attention is "contemplation." It is not yet widely practised in the Christian community. This leads to the risk of individuals getting frustrated or burning out, or perhaps focusing on the wrong direction, because there is not the intimate connection with God that is made possible through contemplative prayer.


Another important aspect of contemplative prayer is that it is practised in all major religions, thus becom-

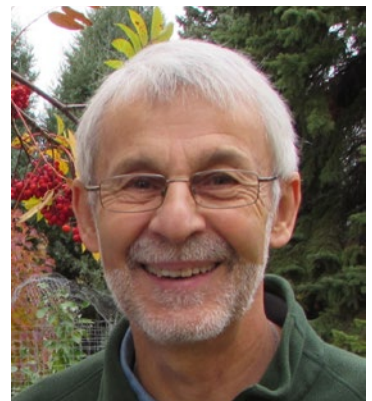
ing a uniting factor. We do not need to get into debates about beliefs or doctrines. We can sit together in silent prayer, praying in our own tradition and limited understanding, knowing that we are in the presence of the God who loves each person.

There are several methods for contemplative prayer. Christian Meditation and Centering Prayer are two common ones. Each method is simple and can be taught in a few minutes. It is not easy though. Our minds are so continuously busy that it is difficult for us to enter into interior silence. Contemplative prayer is an ongoing practice of humility because our thoughts just keep on coming. But, it is also a forgiving practice, because when you get distracted by your thoughts, you just start over – repeating your prayer word continuously (Christian Meditation), or saying your prayer word to reorient yourself (Centering Prayer).


In the same way Christians need to gather together each Sunday to support and encourage their daily living,

those who practice contemplative prayer often gather weekly to pray, learn, and share the journey.

For many people, discovering contemplative prayer has been an enriching and transforming experience. A regular practice of contemplative prayer provides benefits for the individual and, consequently, for the world. 

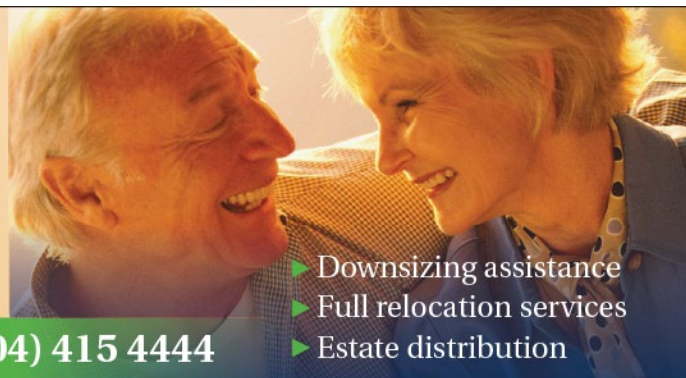


△ *Phil Barnett is an Anglican Priest who retired from parish ministry in 2008. He also worked as a mediator for 25 years and is currently the Canadian Coordinator for the School of Meditation of the World Community for Christian Meditation.*



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BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CONTEMPLATION

Kyla Neufeld

Below are four contemplative practices with step-by-step instructions on how to follow them. If you'd like to start your own practice, but aren't sure how, try each option and see which one works best for you.

MEDITATION

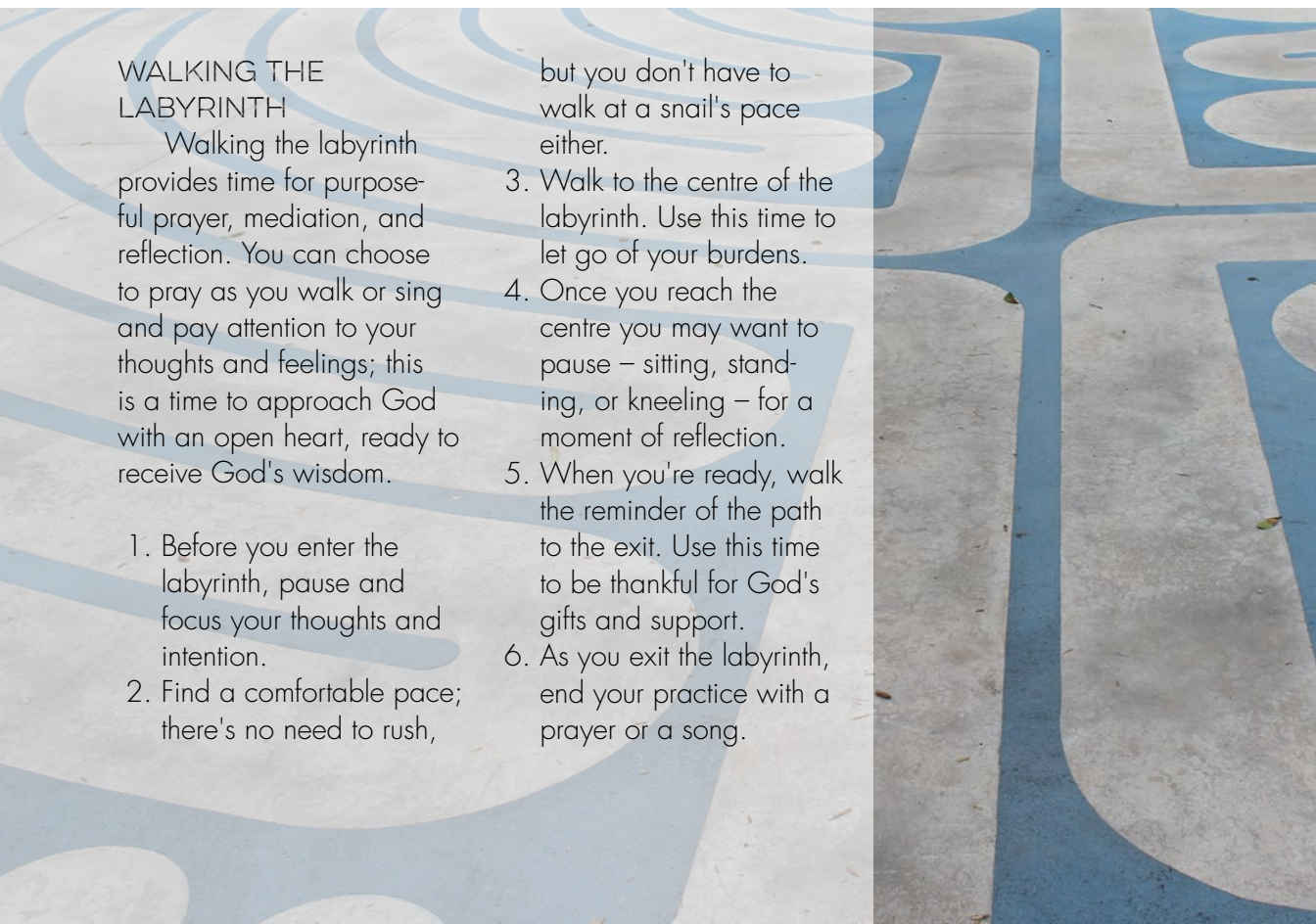
Daily meditation can quiet the mind, relieve stress, lower blood pressure, and help reduce anxiety. When we meditate on a passage of Scripture or on a prayer, it can help us cultivate the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

1. Find some place quiet and sit down in a comfortable position with your back straight. You may wish to light a candle to represent the presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. Close your eyes and focus on the pattern of your breathing for a minute or two to help you relax.
3. Begin to silently say a prayer-word or mantra to yourself. The Canadian Christian Meditation Community recommends "maranatha." Recite the word as individual syllables, "ma-ra-na-tha," gently and quietly. Do this continually for a short length of time; you may wish to set a timer so you don't become distracted by the clock.
4. If you become distracted, simply return to saying the word. Don't worry about evaluating how "successful" your time has been.
5. Say a prayer to complete the practice once your time is up.

WALKING THE LABYRINTH

Walking the labyrinth provides time for purposeful prayer, mediation, and reflection. You can choose to pray as you walk or sing and pay attention to your thoughts and feelings; this is a time to approach God with an open heart, ready to receive God's wisdom.

1. Before you enter the labyrinth, pause and focus your thoughts and intention.
2. Find a comfortable pace; there's no need to rush, but you don't have to walk at a snail's pace either.
3. Walk to the centre of the labyrinth. Use this time to let go of your burdens.
4. Once you reach the centre you may want to pause – sitting, standing, or kneeling – for a moment of reflection.
5. When you're ready, walk the remainder of the path to the exit. Use this time to be thankful for God's gifts and support.
6. As you exit the labyrinth, end your practice with a prayer or a song.



CENTERING PRAYER

Also known as Contemplative Prayer, Centering Prayer can trace its roots back to fourth century monk St. John Cassian and has a more contemporary advocate in Trappist monk Thomas Merton. Centering Prayer is meant to augment other types of prayer by adding depth to our relationship with Jesus Christ. Centering

prayer opens us up to God's presence and word. Set aside 20 minutes for this practice, though those who are new may want to start with five minutes and work their way up to 20.

- 1. Sit comfortably and quietly with your eyes closed.
- 2. Choose and silently say a sacred word or short phrase to represent your

openness and consent to God's presence, like "Abba," "love," or "come Lord."

- 3. You do not have to continually repeat the word or phrase, but come come back to it anytime you become distracted.
- 4. End your practice by bowing in place or saying a short prayer of thanks.

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio Divina is an ancient Benedictine practice of reading the scriptures. The purpose of *Lectio Divina* is to hear the word of God, and understand what God is saying to you, through the reading.

- 1. Read: Choose a passage of Scripture. Read it aloud at least twice through.
- 2. Respond: Pay attention to words or phrases that stand out to you and the images or feelings that arise from them.

- 3. Pray: Respond to the text by praying through the what you have learned.
- 4. Contemplate: Rest in silence to absorb what you have learned.

MORE RESOURCES:

Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening by [Cynthia Bourgeault](#), as recommended by Sr. Elizabeth Ann Eckert (see pg 10).

CONTEMPLATION GROUPS IN MANITOBA:

[The Canadian Christian Meditation Community](#)

[Contemplative Outreach](#)

LABYRINTHS IN MANITOBA:

[The Manitoba Labyrinth Network](#)

You can also find a labyrinth at St. Benedict's Monastery, and the Carol Shields Memorial Labyrinth at King's Park.

CONTEMPLATION AND THE MONASTIC LIFE

Sr. Elizabeth Ann Eckert



Photo: Michael Hudson

△ *The Sisters of St. John the Divine walk the labyrinth together.*

At the age of 30, I left behind my career, my life-style, my church family, and various relationships, to take up another way of life. I felt a call within: a keen desire to deepen my relationship with God. I wanted to be alone with the Alone, and to do so I hid myself off to an Anglican convent, the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, in North Toronto. There I was immersed in a regimen of prayer, work, study, and rest: living a more balanced life within a monastic community of similarly like-minded people whose ultimate goal was

union with God. We prayed together several times daily, ate all our meals in common, and worked together for a common purpose. I had classes and received mentoring to help foster my prayer and life in community.

I learned various forms of prayer that prepared and opened me to contemplative prayer. Contemplative prayer helps bring about inner conversion and transformation as we intentionally open ourselves to the loving presence of God in our lives. Far from being restrictive, the monastic life supplies a trellis, or a

set of building blocks, that enables our hearts to grow in desire and love for God; our lives bear the fruit of this prayer in our loving service for the sake of the gospel.

For me, contemplative prayer is a complete resting in God's presence. Easier said than done! Sometimes I approach contemplative prayer through *Lectio Divina*, which is a method of reading and praying with scripture. In *Lectio* I read a short passage of scripture and when a word or phrase grabs my attention, I pause, put down my Bible, and



Photo: Sr. Elizabeth Ann Eckert

praying with scripture, the purpose of practising the presence of God through contemplative prayer is to allow God's Spirit to transform us from the inside out and then to propel us into our ministry: at home, at work, in our community, or in the wider world. The monastic life gives

△ *Sisters with one of their oblates.*

silently repeat the word to myself. I repeat the word to help keep my mind from wandering as I sit in silence, waiting for the Spirit to illumine my heart.

Sometimes I respond to the word with a spontaneous prayer arising from my heart. Other times I find that the word itself has fallen away from consciousness and I suddenly realize that I have spent some time in silence in the presence of God. Contemplative prayer has happened without my doing anything, that is, except for the ground work of being attentive to God's presence in scripture, and continually turning my mind and heart back to God or my word every time I find my mind has wandered away.

Centering Prayer is another form of contemplative

prayer. I begin my time of prayer with the sole intention of simply being in the presence of God and remaining open to God's presence within. I may take up a favourite prayer word to help quiet my mind when I have a hard time quietening down. I don't repeat the word constantly, but only use it to help bring my mind back to stillness and my intention of being open to and in God's presence.

The purpose of contemplative prayer is transformation, which isn't something we can do entirely of our own volition. We rely on the action of the Holy Spirit, who works within our innermost being to bring about the changes necessary to help us become more Christ-like.

As with liturgy and

us the freedom to pursue our intention to be transformed into the likeness of Christ by giving us the disciplined lifestyle for intentionally practising contemplative prayer. rin



△ *Sr. Elizabeth Ann has been a member of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine since 1987. She Currently serves as the director of Novices and delights in singing the daily office.*

PARISH NEWS **ROUND UP**

▷ Anglican Foundation

The Anglican Foundation of Canada supports parishes across the country. Membership to the Anglican Foundation enables parishes to apply for a total of three grants per year for: ministry initiatives; construction and renovation; church music in Canada; education and programs in Canada's North; and worship initiatives, liturgical arts, outreach and community endeavours.

As of the most recent General Synod in 2016, seven parishes were members of the Anglican Foundation. Since then, another 25 have signed up, for a total of 32. During Synod, a motion was passed that the Diocese of Rupert's Land would encourage all parishes to sign up for membership. For more information, or to sign up, visit the [Anglican Foundation's website](#). Those who have already signed up are listed below.

▷ In Winnipeg:

The Cathedral Church of St. John
All Saints'
Church of the Good Shepherd
Holy Trinity
St. Andrew, Woodhaven
St. Bartholomew
saint benedict's table
St. Francis
St. George, Crescentwood
St. George, Transcona
St. Luke
St. Margaret
St. Mark
St. Mary, Charleswood
St. Mary Magdalene
St. Paul, Fort Gary
St. Peter
St. Philip
St. Stephen & St. Bede

▷ In Manitoba:

St. Luke, Dryden
St. Thomas, Weston
St. Peter Dyvenor, RM of St. Clements
St. Helen, Fairford
St. Thomas, Morden
St. Luke, Oakvilled
Pembina Hills: St. John the Baptist,
Manitou
St. Mary / St. Alban, Kaleida

▷ In Ontario:

Church of the Good Shepherd, Atikokan
St. Alban Cathedral, Kenora



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▷ Sisters of St. John the Divine

An opportunity for women in their 20s and 30s who have a passion for the gospel, who want to serve others, and who would like an experience of intentional community. The Sisters of St. John the Divine, an Anglican Monastic community in Toronto, are accepting applications for 2017-18 [cohort program](#). This is a free program offered in partnership with Wycliffe College.

For more information about the program, visit the [Companions website](#) or the [Sisterhood's website](#). Those who are interested can also contact the Rev. Canon [Sr. Constance Joanna Gefvert](#), Companions Coordinator.

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▷ PWRDF

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund is responding to the famine and drought in South Sudan and Kenya by making contributing a total of \$100,000 a couple organizations: ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) Canada through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and the ACT Alliance. [Click here](#) to read more about PWRDF's efforts or donate yourself.

▷ St. Luke's Church, RM of Emerson

The furnishings of St. Luke's in Emerson were removed to do the sale of the church. In 2005, the church was sold to the RM of Emerson, which wanted to keep it as a museum, for \$1 and they maintained it for 12 years. However, due to the cost of upkeep, the church was sold again and the altar and other furnishings were removed. Thankfully, every piece of furniture has been given away to someone who needs it.



△ Bishop Don helps to remove pews from St. Luke's.

UPCOMING ISSUES

▷ In **May** we'll be exploring **Hospitality**: what it means to open our homes to our neighbours in the example of the Good Samaritan.

▷ **June** is **Indigenous History Month**, so we will feature Indigenous voices in this issue.

Gracious and Compassionate

BRAD ELLIOTT, FEB 2, 1963 - JAN 26, 2017

Remembered by Lisa Wojna

A witch's hat. A pair of Spock ears. A headband with Valentine hearts bobbing atop a springy antenna. A shamrock tie. If there was a special occasion in the near future, chances were you might find Rev. Canon Brad Elliott of Christ Church Anglican in Selkirk donning some such article of clothing while visiting shut-ins at one of Selkirk's nursing homes or medical facilities. It was one of the many ways Brad brought a smile to the people in his life.


bite out of their chocolate, only to discover the chocolate covered a cotton ball. Life, Brad explained, is like that; you can't judge God's gifts solely by their outward appearance.

Brad was very conscious of reaching out beyond the church boundaries to the wider community. In doing so, he recognized that not everyone experiences God in the same way. As one of the T-shirts read, "God is too Big to fit into one Religion." This belief, coupled with



he greatly enjoyed hosting a blessing of the animals during the Feast of St. Francis.

Anyone who knew Brad knew his talents in the kitchen were somewhat limited. However, that didn't hold him back from cooking for anyone who'd take him up on his offer of a "no fluff, only great stuff — and service with a smile, too!" lunch with the Pastor.

Brad's personality was certainly larger than life; to attempt to encapsulate his ministry in these few short words doesn't really do him justice. But perhaps the most important quality that could be attributed to Brad was his understanding of 1 Corinthians 13. For Brad, the most important gift was love: love for life, love for each other, and love for God. 

*"And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
1 Corinthians 13:13*

"He had a wonderful sense of humour," said Christ Church secretary Nancy Bollenbach.

That quirkiness had a serious edge at times. Parishioners in both Carmen and Selkirk might recall a particular Christmas sermon that included a special gift of chocolate for every member of the congregation. There was a message surrounding that chocolate about how the outer appearance of things could be deceiving. At the appropriate time, congregants were told to take a

his deep compassion for everyone he met, made him the "go-to" pastor for many people who were weren't connected to a faith community but were searching in some way. People who were sick in the hospital, shut-in at home, or families who were suffering from the loss of a loved one often called on Brad.

His love for God's creation extended beyond the people in his midst. He had a great love of animals and nature (just don't hand him a spider or a snake), and

IS ANGLICAN DOCTRINE SELF-CONTRADICTORY?

Anthony Waterman

The Church of England separated from the Papacy in the 16th century. When Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth acceded, it became urgent to define a body of doctrine that all her subjects could agree upon. In 1563, by Royal command, the bishops and elected clerical delegates in Convocation compiled the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*. These Articles have remained the standard of Anglican orthodoxy ever since. In its "Solemn Declaration" of 1893, the first General Synod of the Canadian Church affirmed the doctrinal authority of the *Articles*. They are printed on pages 698-714 in the Canadian *Book of Common Prayer*.

Most of the English were willing to go along with whatever version of Christianity happened to be currently in favour with their Tudor sovereign. But some of the gentry objected to liturgical reform, marriage of priests, and the breach with Rome. And a smaller but highly influential group of Cambridge academics held that reform had not gone far enough. Articles I to VIII were intended to reassure the first party. They affirm the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation of God in

Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the three Catholic creeds. However, Article VI states that *unless a doctrine may be proved from Scripture* it cannot be an "article of the Faith" or taught as "necessary to salvation." This is repeated in Articles XX and XXI. Together with Articles IX to XVIII, which expound the characteristic doctrines of the Protestant Reformers, they were intended to appease the second party.

But when Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth I – and all who obeyed her – in 1570, he destroyed any hope of peace and unity in the English Church. Parliament made the *Articles* law in 1571, but those who remained faithful to the Papacy were now obliged to be traitors, and many went underground. For the next 60 years the Protestant, Puritan party remained within the Church, working continually to undermine Catholicism. After the defeat of King Charles I, the Puritans hijacked the Church at the Westminster Assembly (1643-1653) and imposed Calvinist religion and a Presbyterian order upon England. But with the collapse of Cromwell's military dictatorship and the Restoration of 1660-62, Catholic order

was restored. Episcopal ordination, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the *Thirty-nine Articles* came back. The Puritans finally deserted the Church of England, some to Massachusetts and some to "Dissenting" or "Nonconformist" congregations at home.

After 1662, Roman Catholic and Protestant dissenters were tolerated in that they were not actively persecuted, and generally allowed to practice their own religion if loyal to the Crown. But they were excluded by Parliament from public life: the legislature, judiciary, political office, and the universities. The *Thirty-nine Articles* were now imposed as a test of conformity. All clerics were required to assent: all new ordinands, those seeking to graduate from Oxford or Cambridge, and candidates for college fellowships and university appointments. This is where difficulty with the *Articles* began to appear.

Some of the most learned Protestants came to realize that it is impossible to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from the Bible. It is not contrary to Scripture. It may be implied in the New Testament. But the doctrine was not formulated by the Church

until the fourth century after long debate and disagreement; and when it was, it depended on the categories of Greek metaphysics. At its core is an account of how we can say that Christ is both truly Man and truly God. The Bible is of no help here. It merely affirms what later became known as the Incarnation (e.g. John 10:30): it does not explain it. When in the Nicene Creed we recite "Being of *one substance* with the Father," we are translating the Greek word *homo-ousios*, unknown to the Christian scriptures. How then could it be "necessary to salvation" to believe in the Trinity?

Two of the most powerful thinkers in the Church of England, Sir Isaac Newton and John Locke — each of whom came from a Puritan background and was deeply devout — wrestled with this all their lives. Newton (a Fellow of Trinity College!) was a closet Socinian (Unitarian). Locke upheld the authority of the Bible, kept his heterodox ideas to himself, and argued strongly for toleration of all religious beliefs except atheism.

Their successors in the 18th century were bolder. A group of high-minded clerics petitioned Parliament in 1772 to abolish subscription to the *Articles*. When Parlia-


ment refused, they resigned their benefices at much personal cost, quitted the Church, and formed Unitarian congregations. Meanwhile, Puritan dissenters faced the same intellectual difficulty. Many Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches in England, Ireland, and New England, became Unitarian by the end of the 18th century.

Articles I and II affirm the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation; Article V that the Holy Ghost is "of one substance" with the Father and the Son; Article VII declares that the three creeds are to be "received and believed" — all of which (save the Apostles Creed) rest on the authority not of the Bible, but of General Councils of the Church. Despite the assertion, none of these "may be proved by most certain warrant of holy Scripture." Article XXI reminds us that General Councils may err. A strict Protestant must therefore reject the Incarnation and the Trinity, together with the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, which proclaim these beliefs.

Traditional Anglican doctrine, as codified in the *Thirty-nine Articles*, is therefore self-contradictory. Does this matter? Yes and No.

Yes, because it is intellectually unsatisfactory to be

stuck with self-contradiction.

No, because even self-contradiction is better than being committed to a consistent but un-Catholic Protestantism on the one hand, or a consistent but un-Catholic Romanism on the other. Queen Elizabeth I saw this with great clarity, and felt it in her own spiritual life. She is the true author of that Anglican *via media* between the errors of puritanism and popery which resembles Winston Churchill's view of democracy: "the worst form of government — except for all the others." 



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