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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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A Common Peace

Photo: Lea

In March, a gunman attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 50 people. In the aftermath, Jewish congregations around the world expressed their sorrow and support. In Toronto, several Jewish groups gathered at city mosques to form a "ring of peace" around them so that worshippers could mourn.

In the wake of tragedy, big gestures of love like this are heartening. But the small, everyday reminders of people walking together are as well. And there are so many examples right here in Winnipeg.

In July, the Manitoba Islamic Association and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints organized the 14th annual food drive in support of Winnipeg Harvest. Cropro Funeral Chapel has a long-standing partnership with the Manitoba Islamic Association so that Muslim volunteers can prepare bodies for burial. And the Hindu Temple on St. Anne's Road opens its doors every week to the community for yoga and lunch.

Our Church is also forming interfaith relationships. At General Synod, the resolution to amend Canon XIV, which called for the conversion of Jews, passed its first reading; it will now be replaced with a prayer called "For Reconciliation with the Jews." Synod also voted to sign on to "A Common Word Between Us and You," a letter that invites Christians and Muslims to "look at two foundational principles present within both of our respective scriptures: the call to love God above all things, and the call that follows from that, to love our neighbours. Love of God and love of neighbour is the starting ground."

The full title of this issue is "People of Faith Doing Stuff Together." We're looking at examples of people of different faiths working together to achieve a common goal of peace. The Manitoba Multifaith Council takes this title to heart as they explore the importance of interfaith relationships. The Jewish Congregation of Shaarey Zedek synagogue explains the reasons behind the annual Christmas dinner they hold for guests of West Broadway Community Ministry. And, in an interview, Gail Schnabl, our Diocesan Refugee Coordinator, talks about refugee work in the diocese. This issue also has two reflections about General Synod from Helen Kennedy and Don Phillips, as well as a look at this year's Urban Retreats Garden Tour held through St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry.

Let's remember that there's good news all around us. All we have to do is listen up.



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

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Come to the Rock

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT



Grandfather Rock is placed at the Peace Meeting Site of the Winnipeg Forks. Installed in 2015, the Rock embodies the living memory and dream of Nelson James (deceased), to have a monument honouring the survivors of Indian Residential Schools and their families. Nelson, himself a survivor and victim of abuse, desired to make known to the world that survivors have much to teach our country and our local community.

Some time in late 2013 or early 2014, Nelson’s wife Sylvia told me about Nelson’s dying dream and story; I was shaken by its reality and moved by its truth.

Not long after that meeting, while preparing a couple, Maryann and David, for marriage, David asked if he could offer a gift to the Church. His family owns Larsen’s Memorials. David, himself a stone cutter and artist, agreed to put in a small bench beside our memorial garden; he said soon after, that “surely there was something else” he might offer. It was then that the light came on, and I quickly introduced David to Sylvia. Not long after that introduction, Sylvia formed a committee of elders, David, and me, to consider what, where, when and how.

While no ideas were bad, one shone above the rest: the Forks. From our very first meeting with Toby Chase, then Director of the Forks Management Team, we knew that the plan to install the monument was more special than any of us originally thought; it was gaining momentum and public attention, and even a few political eyes were upon us. David asked Sylvia and elder Velma Orvis to check out an idea of using a piece of field stone, rather than traditional polished granite or marble. The chosen stone is

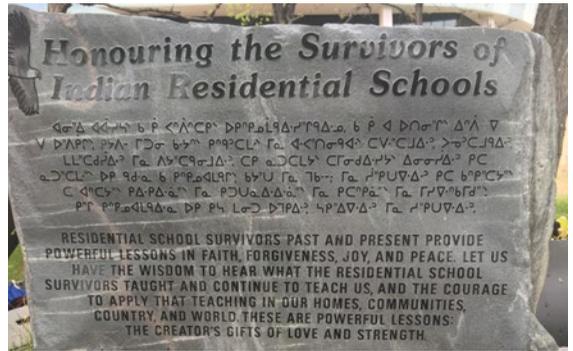


Photo: Courtesy Geoffrey Woodcroft

quite rough on one face, but almost completely smooth on the opposite side – Sylvia says it symbolizes the roughness that survivors went through, and the resiliency survivors have now.

Toby asked us all to consider the Peace Meeting Site, almost at the doors of the Human Rights Museum; We loved the reflective grotto and resolved that it would be a gathering place for healing and growing.

The stone was installed in May of 2015, and an installation ceremony happened on May 26 of the same year. Every year, we gather to commemorate and honour survivors and their families with a pipe ceremony, followed by the commemoration. An Indigenous keynote speaker offers an address, and drummers, singers, and jingle-dress dancers are invited to offer their gifts. Representatives from the wider community and Mayor’s Office bring words of appreciation, and the Churches (particularly Roman Catholic and Anglican Bishops and Indigenous clergy) bring prayers for healing and reconciliation. We have met folk from various world religious traditions, many of whom stop to ask questions, and offer reflections and blessings.

Grandfather Rock has become one the destination points for marches and memorials, especially for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. One man’s dream has been realized. A sign of healing for all people is active in our midst.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert’s Land

People of Faith Doing Stuff Together

MANITOBA MULTIFAITH COUNCIL



A story is told about a leading liturgical scholar, who was asked about “peace liturgies” during the heyday of the peace movement. This individual responded with something along the lines of “Aren’t all liturgies peace liturgies?” The story may be as much legend as fact, but the insight remains. Is not the hoped-for end for any liturgy the arrival of a reign of peace and harmony between all of God’s children, even all of God’s creation? Similarly, is not the calling for each of us to be *people of faith doing stuff together*? Millennia upon millennia have demonstrated that it’s not quite so simple... or is it?

Communities across Canada, in recent years, have seen the rise and removal of “tent cities.” Recently, after a visit to his hometown of Peterborough, Ontario, our Manitoba Multifaith Council Treasurer came back feeling a deep sense of discomfort at reactions to homeless folk who’d put up tents at various locations (including in a park across the street from, and on the front lawn of St. John’s Anglican Church).

Back in Winnipeg, he penned a Letter to the Editor of the *Peterborough Examiner*:

“‘We’ have homes, or apartments, or condos, and ‘they’ have tents that they’re setting up on public property, or in public camp-grounds. ‘We’ pay taxes. ‘They’ take free lunches when offered,

resort to aggressive panhandling... and add an addiction-infused lifestyle to our fair city. ‘Us’ and ‘them’... ‘We’ and ‘they’... Can lines be so conveniently drawn, really?

“Another community leader, in another time and place, who also, apparently, was ‘homeless’ or at the very list, ‘of no fixed address,’ was recorded as having said, ‘The poor you will always have with you’ (Matthew 26:11, NIV). How accurately prophetic those words, calling us not to divide the world, or even communities ... into ‘us’ and ‘them.’

“I wonder if the root discomfort I was sensing during my brief visit to the Lift Lock city has more to do with how the presence of homeless encampments reminds us that society is rife with divisions, and yet, need not be that way. Or that the presence of those whose only option for shelter is to erect a perhaps unseemly tent points to not just an individual’s poor choices, but society’s choices that have brought about failure to provide adequate food, water and shelter for any and for all?”

For Brad Smith, priest of St. John’s, Peterborough, reaching out to homeless people has been a bruising experience, but it has also deepened his faith and his calling as a priest. “I’ve been ordained almost a decade and a half now and I’ve never felt more intensely connected to my vocation as I have this summer,” he says. “The experience of going out and meeting the people and listening to their stories and connecting them with the supports they need has been life-giving...” ([Diocese of Toronto website](#)).

People of faith doing stuff together moves us beyond zones of comfort and affluence. It can also bring about conversations, and choices, that are anything but simple, and a far cry from what’s “known” or “acceptable.” We might do well to remember jazz musician Duke

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See You There!

Ellington's instructions to his band members: to play the notes as written, but "leave some dirt in there somewhere..." In other words, when old patterns and assumptions need tweaking or discarding, we do well to pay attention to those frustrations, and prayerfully, soulfully consider how these might be transformed into gift.

Here's another of the key principles with *people of faith doing stuff together*: not underestimating the value of listening, not to provide a rebuttal to another person's argument, but instead to understand more about where the other person is coming from, and what that can teach us about ourselves.

Through our work as Manitoba Multifaith Council – whether coordinating sales of the Multifaith Calendar, receiving nominations for the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the Advancement of Inter-Religious Understanding, offering leadership through each February's Multifaith Leadership Breakfast, or, most recently, co-sponsoring with Winnipeg Police Board "A Path to Safety," a conversation for community members as together we seek to promote an inclusive culture of safety – what's clear is that the more we explore and learn another's point of view, the more we learn about ourselves. Whether we self-identify as "Anglican," "Lutheran," "Roman Catholic," "Jewish," "Buddhist," "Atheist," "Agnostic," anything or nothing in between, *people of faith doing stuff together* brings opportunities both familiar and unfamiliar, demanding and rewarding.

In a world punctuated by 30-second soundbites and 140-character tweets, the act of "holding space" for heart-inspired, soul-filled conversations can be rather refreshing. It can be as countercultural as it is empowering, freeing us for the kind of conversations, in some respects, for which we've been waiting our whole lives. *People of faith doing stuff together* involves attending to the manner by which values are expressed, always with openness to further conversation and dialogue. First and last, and at points in between, we become aware of what it means to be a caring community of seekers.

We recently learned of a newspaper clip in

the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada's archive collection. From the December 3, 1942 edition of Winnipeg's *YMHA Review*, it announces an Inter Faith Symposium held that same night at the YMHA [Young Men's Hebrew Association] auditorium, with Dr. E. Crossley Hunter, pastor of Knox United Church, Rabbi Solomon Frank, and Father Frank R. Wood, reported as "one of the leading Roman Catholic clergymen in the city," discussing "Things We Have in Common." In the still frighteningly unpredictable years of World War II, the writer reported how they'd "had occasion to discuss religious matters with Fr. Wood at great length, and had found him to be keenly aware of the need of creating better understanding between Jews and Gentiles." Indeed, it's quite remarkable how such an event took place at a time when Protestants and Catholics did not automatically consider themselves as part of the same faith group.

Clearly, *people of faith doing stuff together* has been happening long before we arrived on the scene. In these troublesome and challenging times, it is also never finished.



Manitoba Multifaith Council, and its predecessor, Manitoba Interfaith Council, has been engaging individuals and faith communities throughout our province and beyond since the 1950s. Its mission: To promote multifaith dialogue and understanding, while collaborating to serve the community as a whole. Its vision: People of diverse faiths working together to build a just and caring society. For more information, email: info@manitobamultifaithcouncil.ca.

MMC Executive: Belle Jarniewski (President), Payam Towfigh (Vice-President), Paul Peters Derry (Treasurer), and Ray Harris (Secretary).

[Click here](#) to sign up for MMC's Constant-Contact emailings, "MMC Connects."

Expressions of Hope

CONGREGATION SHAAREY ZEDEK

Congregation Shaarey Zedek has been spreading Christmas cheer to its neighbours since the year 2000.

At one of the darkest times of the year, in and around the winter solstice, Jewish tradition celebrates the miracle of light during the holiday of Chanukah, which falls on the 25th of the Hebrew month of Kislev and coincides with Christmas

Day approximately every 18 years. For the past 20 years, however, Congregation Shaarey Zedek has found a way for the celebration of holiday spirit to coincide on an annual basis. Since 2000, the synagogue has added a new Chanukah tradition, which brings light into the lives of many underprivileged guests who are welcomed at the West Broadway Ministries Annual Christmas Lunch. Lynda Trono, Community Minister, notes that, "Many people in Winnipeg's inner city do not have the means to provide a holiday meal on Christmas Day – and many do not even have a home to go to." This luncheon gives guests an opportunity to celebrate the holiday with dignity. "Having a place to celebrate the holiday, surrounded by family and community, is a way of giving people back their dignity," says Rena Secter Elbaze, Director of Engagement and Education at Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

Preserving people's dignity is connected to the Jewish concept of "Repairing the World" or *Tikun Olam* in Hebrew. It is an important universal value in Judaism and calls on the Jewish community to take action to offer assistance to those in need in the broader community. Congregants of Shaarey Zedek, which has been at its current location since 1950, felt that serving a lunch on Christmas Day to the underprivileged was a fitting occasion to act on that value.

"It is beautiful to see three generations of family members come out to spend a day providing for others," says Elbaze. "Many of these congregants have been doing this together as

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a family activity for years... it's not only about giving gifts and going to parties; it's about experiencing shared values and uplifting others."

Thanks to the generosity of businesses who donate food for the luncheon such as the Viscount Gort Hotel, Salisbury House, Rae and Jerry's and Gunn's Bakery, volunteers from Congregation Shaarey Zedek have been able to provide a hot meal for Christmas lunch to 150–200 people at the West Broadway Community Ministry. Synagogue staff coordinate ordering and collecting the generous food donations, and volunteers prepare the space, heat the food, serve the meals, and clean up as well. The synagogue organizes a food and toiletry drive prior to the lunch that also includes new toys for kids, chocolates, candy, and personal care products like face cream and body lotion. Elbaze works hand in hand with the staff from West Broadway who provide assistance before and during the lunch. She notes that, "Our hope is that every individual there feels a lot of love and warmth on Christmas Day. That means going beyond the bare necessities... It means making people feel special."

For the past few years the synagogue has been collecting new hats, scarves, and mitts so that guests have something special to take home including a personal gift and any extra food that is packed up for them.

Guests enjoy a delicious, hot meal in an atmosphere of good cheer and share meaningful exchanges with volunteers through activities and games such as "spin the dreidle," a Chanukah game for children. Rabbi Aníbal Mass of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, along with his family, lead the assembly in lighting the *Chanukiah* or candelabra and singing traditional Chanukah songs, while other community leaders and elders bring guests together to light the Christmas tree and sing carols.

The Christmas lunch is truly an expression of hope and faith that takes donors, volunteer hosts, and guests to a magical place beyond monetary concerns, social status, and religion for a shared moment in time where we celebrate humanity together.

“Preserving people’s dignity is connected to the Jewish concept of ‘Repairing the World’ or *Tikun Olam* in Hebrew.”



Top Right: Guests of West Broadway community ministry enjoy Christmas dinner. Faces have been blurred to protect the guests' privacy.

Bottom Right: Congregation Shaarey Zedek collects hats, scarves, mitts, and gifts that guests can take home.

All photos by Candace Maxymowich.

Diversity is a Strength

AN INTERVIEW WITH GAIL SCHNABL



Gail Schnabl is the Diocesan Refugee Coordinator. I had the chance to sit down with her and ask some questions about refugee work in Rupert's Land. – KN

Can you tell me about the refugee work of the diocese? How long have you been involved and what is your role?

Each constituent group, which is the various churches, have committees that work on sponsorship and settlement. My position as the Refugee Coordinator is essentially to manage all of these different groups, to promote refugee work in the diocese, and to consult with and educate the various groups about the requirements on them when they undertake the sponsorship and settlement of newcomers. I also communicate with and manage the documentation required by Immigration.

I've been involved in refugee work for about 26 years, but I've been the Coordinator for the last nine or 10 years. Before that, I was part of Crossed Hands Refugee Committee, which is a partnership between St. Paul's, Fort Garry and St. Matthew's, and has been in existence for probably 30+ years.

The diocese itself has been involved in doing refugee work since 1979, when they sponsored the first [Vietnamese] boat people. This is now, in fact, the 40th anniversary of private sponsorship in Canada through private sponsorship agreement holders.

What are some misconceptions about refugees that you've come across in your work?

Well, I think people have the impression that refugees take more from us than they give to the wider community. You hear people say, "They're taking our jobs," "They're living on welfare," and of course there are some refugees who are not able to support themselves

financially, but that is the minority. For the most part, refugees begin to work before their year of sponsorship is up, and, if they can't, often the reason is that they're going to school to improve their English. So that's a big misconception.

Why do you think people have these misconceptions? How do we begin to change their minds?

It's very timely that we're even talking about this with the federal election in the offing, because there is, sadly, a rise in this kind of view, that we've got too many immigrants. I think a large part of this is that immigrants of all kinds are seen as the "other"; they are not like us, they have different values, they have different aspirations, they don't look the same, they don't dress the same. I think that's at the root of the problem – as it is often at the root of other problems – that the other person is seen as different.

Most Canadians probably really do not have an opportunity get to know refugees on a personal basis, so they have this image. And sometimes what gets in the media is kind of the extreme of people who have done things wrong, or people who are in the criminal system, or we have these wonderful stories about how we have helped people.

Do you think that a benefit of different faith groups working together to help refugees is that they address some of these misconceptions?

I often think, when I'm meeting newcomers and have gotten to know them, I think "I wish the greater population had this opportunity to actually sit down and talk, and to find out that – yeah they dress differently, but, you know, they have the same aspirations for their children as we do, and they want a kind of life that is peaceful, where they can have a job and live comfortably."

So, I think that when faith groups get together to sponsor and then help settle, they do get to know newcomers. They might not become life-long friends, but they do get to know newcomers on a personal basis. They aren't "the other" anymore.

I think it's easy to forget that most of our Canadian population is made up of immigrants – my grandparents were immigrants.

My parents were immigrants; my husband's an immigrant. The thing is, a century ago, the first part of the 20th century, it was mainly the British who were here in any positions of authority and prestige, and they didn't want the Ukrainians, they didn't want the Germans, they didn't want the Poles. So it's just kind of shifted. All of those white, mainly Christian groups feel they don't want these other people who are different because they are a different colour or a different religion. So, I think when people get involved [in sponsorship], they get to know newcomers, and that helps shift their perspective.

There has been so much conflict around immigration lately, like with detention camps at the U.S.-Mexico border. How can faith groups respond to that conflict?

When you're in conversations with people who make statements like, "We have to watch these people who are getting in," "We have to be careful about who we're letting in," "We have to keep the numbers down because it's going to change what our country is," you have to respond in a way that challenges those statements or provide some information.

Yes, ultimately people from diverse backgrounds come here, and it changes us. But that's inevitable. We are not the same country we were 100 years ago, and we won't be 100 years from now. There are good things in that. Diversity is a strength, not something you have to be afraid of.

Do you know of any different faith organizations working together to help refugees in Winnipeg or Manitoba? Does the diocese work

with any other organizations in Winnipeg?

Through Crossed Hands, we have sponsored a lot of Somalis, who want to bring their relatives here. We partner with them; they are co-sponsors. And we have been doing this for years and years and years.

More recently, we have partnered with the Jewish Child and Family Services of Winnipeg to bring over quite a number of Yazidis. They are a child welfare agency, but they are also a settlement agency. For this particular partnership, they have raised all the money themselves, through an initiative they have called Operation Ezra, to support these families who are quite vulnerable and have been war-affected.

We have also partnered with the Canadian Palestinian Association of Manitoba to bring Palestinians from a couple of different places. One family has just completed its one-year sponsorship, and part of another family just arrived in July, with the other part arriving in September.

We do ongoing sponsorship of Muslims from Somali and Sudan. We have also sponsored a lot of Eritreans, who are Orthodox, with their relatives here.

I just wanted to add this: there is a group in our diocese from Emmanuel Mission, who are trying to bring their relatives here, but they need support. I would like to see some other groups from the diocese who could step up to that need or offer some financial support. Folks from Emmanuel Mission are quite capable of the settlement tasks, like registering at Manitoba Health, but they may not have the financial resources that Immigration expects.

We've been involved in refugee sponsorship for 40 years; it's so important that the diocese continues to do this.

Gail is planning to retire and hopes that two people can come on board to take over as Refugee Coordinator. If you'd like more information about the requirements of this position, please email refugee@rupertsland.ca or general@rupertsland.ca.

Parish News Round Up

A New Book from RLN's Advertising Manager

Angela Rush, who manages advertising for Rupert's Land News and many other diocesan papers, has published a new book called *Meghan's Beads* about her experience losing her child; at the age of 15, her daughter, Meghan, was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder called HLH, and later cancer.

Says Rush: "This was the beginning of a journey none of us ever thought we would have to share with her. Her courage and love that she constantly displayed during her battle inspired everyone. She, in her own words, taught us: 'It's not about how long you live, it's about how you live your life.'"

To purchase your copy, email miss-meghansbeads@gmail.com. You can also [find the e-book on Amazon](#).



Job Opportunities at St. Aidan's Anglican

Wanted: Part-time Organist. This is a contract position for five hours per week.

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Wanted: Youth Coordinator. This is a contract position for 10 hours per week.

This position will be responsible to lead and coordinate St. Aidan's Youth Ministry. The Youth Coordinator will develop initiatives to enable young people to grow in their knowledge and love of God, and become strong disciples of Jesus Christ. Ideal opportunity for someone exploring discernment for part-time ministry work.

Specific skills and attributes desired include:

- Training in youth ministry
- Experience in coordinating youth activities
- Creative thinking for engaging and inspiring young people
- Strong interpersonal leadership skills
- Strong organization and time management skills

Those interested in either position can email a resume and cover letter to staidans.churchoffice@gmail.com by September 20, 2019. A full job description can be provided to anyone that wishes to apply. Due to the volume of resumes we may receive, only those candidates offered an interview will be contacted.



This page of the Parish News Round Up is sponsored by Richard Rosin. For more information, see his ad on page 16.

General Strike For Climate

On September 27, cities across Canada will join Greta Thunberg's call for a general strike for the climate. The Manitoba Youth for Climate Action are inviting everyone to join them in this strike at the Legislative Building from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.:

"By joining us, you are standing up for those in Canada and across the world currently experiencing floods, droughts, wild-fires, drinking water shortages, and health risks caused by our unjust and unsustainable extraction-based economy. Let's demand a fast, fair transition to a safer future together."

In July, Bishop Geoff [sent out a letter](#) entreating Rupert's Landers to make climate crisis and the restriction of fossil fuel extraction a matter of conscience in the provincial election.

If you'd like more information about the strike, you can email mbyfca@gmail.com. You can also donate to the Manitoba Youth for Climate through the [Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition](#).

Apply to the Anglican Healing Fund

The Anglican Healing Fund's purpose is to address the legacy of the Indian Residential School Experience by advancing the healing of former students and their families, descendants, and communities; to support development of capacity building skills and life-sustaining values; and to inspire them to embrace the spiritual renewal of their individual lives, and collectively as communities. Information for the next round of grants is available online, and all **applications are due October 1**. [You can find more information here](#).

Save the Date: Faith Horizons

October 4 and 5 at St. John's College. More information will follow.



The youth across Canada are petitioning the federal government to make a binding commitment to implement the following seven demands:

- 1. Bold Emissions Reductions Targets**
- 2. Separation of Oil and State**
- 3. A Just Transition**
- 4. Environmental Rights**
- 5. Indigenous Rights**
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Photos: Peter Sim



The St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry Urban Retreats Garden Tour and Tea celebrated its 20th anniversary on June 22, 2019. This annual fundraiser visits a different Winnipeg community each year, providing tour-goers with a chance to explore some of the most beautiful gardens in the city. The self-guided tour also features a Manitoba Tea and Craft Sale, where people can enjoy a tasty snack and purchase goods from a wide range of local crafters. The tour was first envisioned in the spring of 1999 as a means of raising funds to support a community garden program in the West End of Winnipeg.

St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry, an outreach ministry founded in the '70s through a partnership between Anglican and United Church congregations, hoped that these community gardens would provide opportunities to build meaningful relationships with vulnerable West End residents facing difficult realities such as poverty, racism, mental health issues, and addiction, while also providing a source of fresh, healthy food for the community. The first garden tour was a huge success, and so were the community gardens!

Twenty years later, St. Matthews Maryland no longer offers community gardens. Other local community organizations have taken on that important work. But the garden tour is still going strong, becoming one of the community ministry's largest sources of income. Today the garden tour funds all kinds of valuable programming, including such things as Sharing Circles that allow a diverse group of community members to explore healing and reconciliation, weekly art workshops for socially isolated

seniors, and an Emergency Food pantry that supports more than 1,000 West End families.

Of course, the Garden Tour didn't become such a huge success by accident. Rather, its growth has been carefully tended to by an incredible and ecumenical group of Anglican and United Church women who work diligently year-round to make sure the tour is all it can be. Their work includes choosing a new neighborhood for the tour each year, finding the right gardens, soliciting sponsorships, finding a venue and crafters for the Tea and Craft Sale, advertising, and recruiting an army of volunteers to make sure everything goes smoothly on the big day.

It was once said that "generosity blooms like a garden in spring," and that seems an apt metaphor for the Urban Retreats Garden Tour. When spring rolls around and the gardens bloom, the community follows suit.

Maybe you've attended every St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry Urban Retreats Garden Tour in the past 20 years. Maybe this is the first time you've heard of it! Either way, make sure to mark your calendar for our next tour: Saturday June 20, 2020 in Scotia Heights. It's your chance to enjoy some of the most beautiful gardens in Winnipeg, while supporting some of its most vulnerable citizens.

See you there!



Josh Ward is the Community Minister at St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry.

Reflections from General Synod 2019



Hope for the Future at Synod

Although much of Synod was seen under the dark media cloud of the defeat of the Marriage Canon amendment, so much good work was done as well. I left with a sense of hope for the future, and I believe that the Spirit of God was working to make a much better outcome than any of us could have hoped for.

The Indigenous Self-Determination rationale was very well thought out, well presented, and well received. Conversations will now begin within the Indigenous community to determine the structures, polity, and procedures for a self-governing Indigenous church, one that reflects the practices of an Indigenous way of life. Archbishop Mark McDonald is now the spiritual head for all Indigenous expressions of the Anglican Church in Canada. This very historic moment represented a move towards reconciliation in our church. Archbishop Fred anointed Archbishop Mark and presented him with a metropolitan cross, a symbol of his authority and responsibility. The Primate also made an apology for the "spiritual harm" done to Indigenous Peoples and for denying their own spirituality.

Over the past three years, the Council of General Synod has been working on a document that would help the Synod learn how to "live well" with each other after the vote on the Marriage Canon. The group spoke to all dioceses, listened to the concerns, paid attention to community needs, and carefully crafted a document called, "A Word to the Church," which set out for us a way to move forward. This document affirmed that there are a variety of understandings around marriage; it affirmed that our existing canon does not prohibit same-sex marriage; it affirmed difference; it affirmed a commitment to stand together regardless of the outcome. This document was accepted wholeheartedly, and praise for the working group was extended.

It came as a shock to many that the canon

failed in the Order of Bishops. There were many stunned faces in the room. Tears, anger, and disappointment closed our evening. However, after some time, some clarification, and a greater understanding of the implications, a hopeful turn shifted in the Synod. The document, "A Word to the Church" was sufficient to allow a local option clause to be adopted by any diocese who wanted to marry same-sex couples, effective immediately. This realization took a little while to settle in, and during that time, there was harmful media activity suggesting that the Anglican Church had turned its back on the LGBTQ2 community. This is certainly not the case. There was a sense of frustration that the Church is not of one mind, however, love, acceptance, and care was shown in all manner of ways to the wider community.

The Faith, Worship, and Ministry working group have been writing "collects" for the three-year lectionary that coincide with the readings of the day. That was a huge undertaking, and now those resources have been authorized for use. They will be available to purchase soon.

I was most impressed with the behaviour and conduct of our young people at Synod. Each diocese had the opportunity to send a youth delegate, aged between 16 and 25. Those who were there conducted themselves with a maturity that some of the older delegates did not display. They passionately brought to the floor of Synod a motion for the Anglican Church to take seriously the Climate Change emergency that is facing our planet. Their motion was supported by many Indigenous delegates, as they spoke about the effects that CO2 emissions are having on the reserves, noting that the resulting change in climate is also affecting the animal population in the North as well as the Indigenous way of life.

Finally, we said our farewell to Primate Fred Hiltz, and we welcomed Linda Nicholls as our

new Primate and head of the Church of Canada in a beautiful and moving service.

The whole week was full, and we worked very hard, but it was emotionally exhausting too. It certainly has been a great experience and, as

tough as it was, one I would love to do again.

– Helen Kennedy, incumbent at St. George's, Transcona



Primate Fred Hiltz blesses and prays for Archbishop Mark MacDonald.



Members of the General Synod comfort each other following the results of the A052 – R2 motion. The motion received the required 2/3 majority in the order of clergy and laity but not in the House of Bishops.



Newly elected primate – Bishop Linda Nicholls of the Diocese of Huron – addresses the General Synod. She is the 14th primate of the Anglican Church of Canada and the first woman to be elected into the office.

All photos by Anglican Church of Canada / Milos Tasic.



Kwllii Gibaygum Nisga'a Dancers provide opening music and drumming for the opening worship of General Synod 2019 on July 11, 2019 at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, British Columbia.

So Where is God in all of This?

In July, lay, clerical, and episcopal members from across our entire Canadian Anglican Church gathered in downtown Vancouver, B.C., for seven days to worship, share in Christian community, listen and learn about our common ministry and mission, and make decisions about the future work and priorities of our Church. Much has been spoken, written, tweeted and

put on Facebook about the experience since then. And while the hugely important steps taken to support our self-determining Indigenous Church have received accolades from all corners, the outcomes (yes – plural – the debates, vote, and various follow up statements all factor in) of the proposed change to Canon 21 on Marriage seem to have generated the greatest interest and analysis.

Much has been reported (and needed to be) about the pain, disappointment, and finger-pointing that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the vote that failed to pass. There have been many sensitively-balanced pastoral statements by bishops and others interpreting what took place, attempting to place this outcome in the larger context of church and society over the last couple of decades. And there have been numerous conjectural anecdotes trying to speculate the “what-ifs” that might have brought about a different outcome.

But the deeper and more important question that we need to grapple with is, “Where is God in all of this?” It’s too easy to imagine God looking upon the discussion, debate, outcome and response of a Synod from a “50,000 foot vantage point” – only to step back into the “picture” afterwards and help us pick up the pieces.

But for weeks, if not months in advance of this General Synod, many of us have been praying this prayer:

“Almighty and ever living God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be *present* with those who take counsel in the General Synod for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord.” [emphasis mine]

Do we believe God was indeed acting in and through this Synod? And if this is the case, can we also believe that God is now acting in and through us as we work through the ramifications of the result and the diverse ways that different parts of our Church are responding? I am not suggesting that what took place represents God’s perfect will. But I am affirming that God knows us – and knows what God has “to work with” in the people and processes of our Synod.

Of this much we can be sure. God called us together in this Synod – particular people from

particular places to do particular work. And God knew that we were imperfect people who would use imperfect processes that would result in imperfect outcomes. There is something that sounds vaguely familiar about this. Jesus called together imperfect disciples, who would try to implement imperfect actions (including outright denial) and the result would be imperfect outcomes – especially as measured on Good Friday! But what those broken, disappointed, and disillusioned disciples soon discovered was that God was not watching from a distance in those final days of Jesus’ life – God couldn’t have been any more embedded in their midst!

I don’t know if those disciples ever asked, “Where is God in all of this?”, but they were at least open enough to receive the revelations of the Risen Christ and the indwelling Spirit in the days that followed. The most important work that lies ahead for all of us – the most hopeful and encouraging path we must follow – is to be faithful to our call *together* as the ecclesia of God and to continue to seek the God who will indeed reveal in God’s own way the answer to “where is God in all of this?”

– Don Phillips, former Bishop of Rupert’s Land



What If I Got Hit By A Bus?

(or not able to communicate with my family?)

Presented by Margaret Meush
and sponsored by the
Diocese of Rupert’s Land
and Richard Rosin





Bookings are being taken for seminars available beginning in March

To book a seminar for your group or register as an individual for an upcoming seminar please contact the Diocese of Rupert’s Land: 204-992-4200

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