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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.

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# A Case for Rest



Lately, my “at-home” existence seems to be overrun by a dizzying amount of screen time. I’m either keeping up with emails, Zoom, and the dreaded news cycle, or I’m escaping into my favourite social or streaming platforms looking for some kind of comic relief. Whether it’s the former or the latter that occupies my time, I wind up with little sense of relief. Where is the reprieve in the midst of this tango between idleness and busyness?

It’s difficult to talk about rest and its implication in our lives without first contemplating the Christian understanding of time. Most of us wrestle with the profound sense that we should always be doing more, reinforced by the culture of productivity that we move in. Our will to always do more with our time tends to skew us towards a superficial agenda, as we seek wealth and merit to determine our self-worth. But what about the more vulnerable among us—those who do not conform to our society’s markers of success? As is no surprise, our culture favours the privileged and makes privilege in itself the highest ideal.

The Christian understanding, conversely, is that time does not belong to the individual. Just as we are urged to live a countercultural life, we must also seek a countercultural perspective of time.

Our [Bishop’s latest Charge](#) brings resounding awareness to the Christian sense of time, and the urgent need to rehabilitate it in the midst of “these Extraordinary Days of COVID-19.”

“And the grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, to prepare the new life. The disciples of past generations, and particularly through Indigenous cultures around the globe knew this stuff: they understood life cycles, seasonal changes, birth pains and deliveries. (Pg. 4)”

The Bishop’s words speak to the importance of time as it serves our communion with the life that surrounds us. Seasonal

changes, the celebration of birth and the commemoration of the dead are events that bring us back to our presence with God. And what does rest have to do with any of this? As David Labdon asserts in ‘The Riches of Rest,’ rest is, for Christians, the exercise of trust and hope in God. It is the state of being that feeds our vitality; or as Helena Bonham Carter’s Princess Margaret points out to Gillian Anderson’s Margaret Thatcher in season four of *The Crown*, “it gives [us] perspective.”

To seek rest is to nurture our will to pray, to go for a walk in the park, to listen to a record from start to finish, to encounter poetry or an excellent novel, to laugh with a friend. This kind of respite seems counter-productive because it is. It is, rather, the expression of trust that “we are exactly what God expects and needs right now (Pg. 5).”

The voices in this issue make a strong case for rest as we move into the Advent season. Mary Holmen encourages us to cultivate a spirit of restfulness and, perhaps, take up a devotional practice; David Labdon reminds us that true rest is found when we put our trust in God. Later on, Sandi Mielitz offers an exciting update on the [West Broadway Commons Project](#); and in via media, Ryan Turnbull graces us with a follow-up essay to ‘The Silent Witness of Evergreens’ from June’s issue.

Before all that, Rachel Twigg Boyce kicks off the issue with an expression of her love for Advent, in all its countercultural splendor, and ultimately makes a plea for peace and compassion over obsessive productivity. Indeed, “it’s going to take more than sourdough bread to heal ourselves in this world.”



Sara Krahn is the editor of Rupert's Land News.

# Virtual? I think not

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Photo: [Tim Mossholder](#)

I have been typing the word *virtual* a lot lately, and I have made a decision: I will no longer use it when describing worship; that is, worship in our Anglican Christian context. For me the word *virtual* makes a distinction between that which is real, and that which is a poor imitation of that which is real. Electronic communication has been with us in our culture for decades (telephones, teletype, TV, radio, etc.). We have used technology to make and break economic deals that have had a very real impact, both positive and devastating on the planet. Telephone systems, airplanes, swimming pools, and toasters, we have said improved our life conditions, but never have we thought of them as *virtual*.

We believe and understand that God is present with us in all we do; in worship this applies at this precise moment. We attend to worship with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength—our whole self. We expect the same level of participation with those participating with us, the same as we know God participates with us. If nothing else, the last eight months of 2020 have given me more real and genuine conversations than any other eight-month period of my life, and all the while utilizing electronic and mobile technology, Zoom, email, and texts.

Technology is a reality; it is a real gift for furthering genuine relationships, practicing our faith, and fulfilling our need to be faithful in offering worship to God. Although we may have initially struggled to use modern technological advancements, I think you and I have done extremely well with it, and God has used us through the pandemic to evangelize, connect, teach, and celebrate with new folk in real and genuine relationship. For me, this COVID time has been a physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally raw reality. It has highlighted pain and suffering, along with great joy and

excitement as I have engaged a myriad of relationships in Christ's name—it has been real, and in no way a virtual trip of unidirectional information gathering, but of finding new places where we reaffirm that God joins us in holy ministry.

We celebrate a live Spiritual Communion through regular online worship, a communion that is different from our time before COVID 19, yet nonetheless real. We believe that the presence of God has not changed, that it is faithfully sustained; but we have changed our perspective on how we receive God's presence, and how we live out God's call faithfully and effectively. In my opinion, there is nothing cheapened, nothing less real in our online presence with one another. With God, we have indeed been participating in something so very real, so very necessary and something so beautiful, and I applaud and celebrate the faithfulness and ingenuity of all members of the Diocese.

COVID 19 is with us for some time to come, and you are wonderfully adaptive, resilient, creative and curious. We need to keep on keeping on, and continue to be the Church that God has called us to be. Let us Feast on the Word of God in daily prayer, online worship, study, and conversations among disciples. May our curiosity inform our creativity so that we may continue to connect and build one another up for discipleship, and better commune with each other through innovative technological means in order to serve God in our mission.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,  
Bishop of Rupert's Land

# Rest in Advent

RACHEL TWIGG BOYCE

Photo: [Annie Spratt](#)

"If you don't exit this lockdown with rock hard abs, the world's best sour dough bread, and a bestselling novel, what is wrong with you?" A popular meme on social media.

"Now that everyone has all this extra time we should schedule lots of extra meetings and really knuckle down on getting lots of extra work done." A well-meaning parishioner.

"People say self-care is important but I have so many demands on my time that all I can do is simply work harder and harder. Self-care is not an option." A close friend.

Each time I hear one of these messages a voice inside me says, "Can't we all just stop? Please? Because if not now, when?"

We live in a world where overconsumption, overperforming, and busyness are the norm. Our churches are not immune, and neither are most individuals. Imagine a spectrum that ranges from "not doing nearly enough" to "doing way too much," where would you put yourself?

Now adjust that slightly, because based on my experience talking to people about this subject for almost 20 years, you've most likely misdiagnosed yourself. Odds are you are doing a lot more than you think. Odds are you are doing a lot more than you should be doing.

Odds are you were tired before the pandemic began and it hasn't gotten better, it's gotten worse.

As a result of our addiction to more, we are making our world sick, our systems sick, and ourselves sick. The pandemic didn't cause this, but it is exposing it. It is exposing our casual attitude towards human life when people argue that COVID is not a big deal because they falsely believe it only impacts senior citizens. When did it become OK to view seniors as disposable?

The pandemic is exposing our preference for consumption over compassion as decisions are made both by governments and individuals that prioritize the right to shop and spend and do whatever we want, whenever we want, over people's health.

It's like we have lifted up a rock and are suddenly seeing all the things that have always been there but that many of us have been privileged enough to simply ignore—systemic racism, poverty, inadequate supports for health care and education.

**It's going to take more than sour dough bread to heal ourselves and our world.**

And, I'm worried that we won't be able to stop long enough to realize this, let alone do anything about it.

Advent has long been my favourite season in the liturgical year because I view it as the most countercultural time of the year. Some folks who love their lights and carols and peppermint mochas in November will sometimes accuse me of being a grinch or the Advent police, but I hope that I never actually live up to those titles. You don't have to practice Advent the way I typically do, especially not this year. This year, whatever you need to do to get you through—as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else—go for it.

I'm actually delighted by the sense of defiant hope I see in friends who chose to decorate for Christmas early this year and I almost joined them. But then, I decided to wait because Advent has always been a gift and I don't want to miss what it has to teach me this year.

Here is my favourite thing about Advent: it puts me out of sync with the practices of the dominant culture. When everyone else is playing Christmas carols, watching Hallmark films, and decking the halls, I mark the time with candles and readings to help me deepen into a posture of waiting. When everyone else is rushing to the mall only to wait in long lines with other stressed out shoppers, I am not and more importantly, I don't miss it. Not one bit.

**Celebrating Advent doesn't require me to give up a single thing I love about Christmas. In fact, by shifting the timing of the celebration it helps me enjoy them even more.**

By the time most people are sick of Christmas music and movies and even the decorations are getting a little tired, I move into full on Christmas mode. While other people are packing things up for next year, I deck the halls, listen to nonstop Christmas music and watch, not Hallmark films, but my own list of holiday favourites, and most years I see half a dozen more in a movie theater filled with people.

This year is going to be different. In some ways, we've all been put into a forced Advent since last March. We are waiting for a vaccine, we are waiting to be able to be in the same space as our friends and family, we are waiting to gather together at the table to share bread and wine and to sing at the top of our lungs.

So, in this year when it seems we've shifted from the longest Lent to a never-ending Advent, I did wonder about putting up the decorations early as an act of defiance. But I want to continue to lean into Advent this year as a way of pushing back against my own tendency to buy into the lies of overconsumption and overperformance; and, I want to encourage others to join me. This Advent could we just stop? Could we take some time to reflect on our choices? Do we really need to do so many things or are we, perhaps, choosing to be busy as proof that we are worthy of love? Can the same be said about the way we spend our money? As churches, could we share resources and links to online services instead of feeling the need to compete with each other?

Could we start to realize that one of the key reasons that people in health care are literally unable to stop right now is because so many of us are refusing to?

I'm taking time in Advent to slow down, to wait, to re-evaluate my choices and my priorities because it's time, in fact it's long overdue. I hope you'll join me.

And, I also have some special plans for this truly unusual Christmas season. I'm keeping hope alive by ordering something fairly extravagant and bubbly to have on hand for the day they announce a vaccine is available; and, the tree is not coming down on Epiphany—it's staying up until Candlemas.



Rachel Twigg Boyce is a vicar at saint benedict's table. You can find her there, [at her website](#), or on social media as "Rev Rachel."



## A Sabbath rest still remains

MARY HOLMEN

Photo: Fra Angelico

Periodically, as I look up from answering emails to find the morning has vanished or as I finish yet another Zoom meeting, I wonder, “How did I get so busy when I’m supposed to be retired?” It seems as though it’s either feast or famine – days of busyness followed by stretches where nothing much seems to happen, and time hangs heavily. As I write, I am aware of a profound sense of inner disquiet. Figuring out how to maintain relationships and routines in a global pandemic, observing the goings-on south of the border with dismay, and recognizing that we in Canada have our own issues of racism, injustice, and climate change urgency, leave me feeling, as Anne of Green Gables would say, “well in body although considerably rumbled up in spirit.” And now we are facing a further lockdown that will probably last into the middle of December, if not longer. It is hard to cultivate a restful spirit in the middle of an ongoing crisis.

Western culture does not “do” rest very

well. It shows up in sayings like “idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” “A change is as good as a rest,” my mother would cheerfully announce as she divided up the list of spring-cleaning chores during our school Easter break. When I began working as the Interfaith Chaplain at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, I discovered there was a policy requiring staff to take their earned vacation time. Apparently, some staff preferred to take their vacation pay and keep working. Certainly, there were financial implications in having to pay out vacations, but management also recognized that it is not healthy for people to be working all the time. The only exceptions were for staff on long-term disability or within five years of retirement, who could bank a portion – but not all – of their vacation.

By contrast, the place and concept of “rest” in both Judaism and Christianity is deeply counter-cultural. It is rooted, of course, in the first biblical account of creation. Having completed the work of creation, having

surveyed it, and pronounced it not just good, but very good, God rested and declared holy the time of resting. "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation" (Genesis 2:3). Humankind, created in the divine image, is therefore to rest as God rested. This sabbath rest is codified in the Ten Commandments and

explicitly connected to God's resting. "The seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it" (Exodus 20:10-11). Rest is not just a break from work; it is both a gift and a sacred duty and practice.

The place and concept of "rest" is also firmly connected to God's work of liberation. The Ten Commandments begin with the proclamation, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exodus 20:2). This connection is made clear in the second rendering of the commandments: "Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you...Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Having experienced both oppression and liberation, God's people are to extend the sabbath rest beyond their families to their servants, their livestock, and any foreigners living among them, "so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you" (Deut. 5:14). Rest is a matter, not only of recovery from labour, but of justice.

At St. Peter's we have been using a hymn written specifically to address the spiritual

questions and crises of pandemic. Sung to the music of "O Sacred Head," the final verse reads:

**"When undesired sabbaths bring restlessness and gloom;  
When loneliness imposes and isolation looms;  
The One who never slumbers is presence without end;  
The One who watches o'er us will ever be our friend."  
(© Orin Johnson, used with permission.)**

Idleness mandated by public health rules is not the same as rest. How may we cultivate a spirit of restfulness in this year when we are required to step back from our usual patterns of relationships and activity? How may we cultivate rest in this time of "undesired sabbaths" and isolation? First, we must acknowledge and lament our losses, those we experience just by living but which are made worse by the pandemic and those unique to this time. We need to affirm that our losses are real and valid, and that grief is a normal response to loss. Lament is necessary for healing to begin. Going deeper, N.T. Wright lays the theological foundation for lament in his slim volume *God and the Pandemic* (Zondervan, 2020). The God we meet in Jesus weeps at the tomb of his friend Lazarus, weeps over the fate of Jerusalem, begs his disciples to watch with him in Gethsemane, and cries out in the agony of abandonment on the cross. Lament is God's response to the pain of a world in the throes of suffering, sin, and death. Lament is the appropriate response of God's people to this pandemic. And lament will propel us into action.

There is plenty of good advice about how to cope and even thrive during the pandemic. Eat a healthy diet. Get adequate sleep. Remain physically active. Breathe, especially when feeling anxious and tense. To this I would add rest, which is different than sleeping. Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have included the regular praying of Compline in my devotional practice. Orders for Compline may be found in



the *Book of Common Prayer* at page 722 and [online](#), beginning on page 42. The online preface to the Office observes,

**“Night is not always peaceful...for when we are sleeping, we are vulnerable. We are vulnerable both to external forces and to the hidden darkness of our own hearts and minds...Night Prayer offers us a daily discipline that enables us to negotiate the ‘dark’ segments of our life journeys.”**

Compline commends us to God’s protection through the coming night and asks God to grant us rest both as we sleep and at the last in death. Several of the Compline prayers make explicit this connection, not to cause fear but as a promise of new life from “the One who never slumbers.”

The citation that forms the title of this column is from the Letter to the Hebrews: “So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God’s rest also cease from their labours as God did...Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest” (Hebrews 4:9-11). This last sentence suggests to me that rest is both a gift for which we pray and a state we must actively seek. Rest must be cultivated and nourished. The spiritual practice of Advent is watchful waiting for God’s promises to be completely fulfilled. We wait in hope for this life and the world to come.

“Gracious God, support us all the day long of this earthly life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, O God, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last; through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Night Prayer, ABC Publishing, 2001).



The Rev. Canon Mary Holmen is the former Chaplain at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. She is an Honorary Assistant and a member of the Pastoral Team at St. Peter’s, Winnipeg, where she serves as Pastor of Parish Caring Ministries.

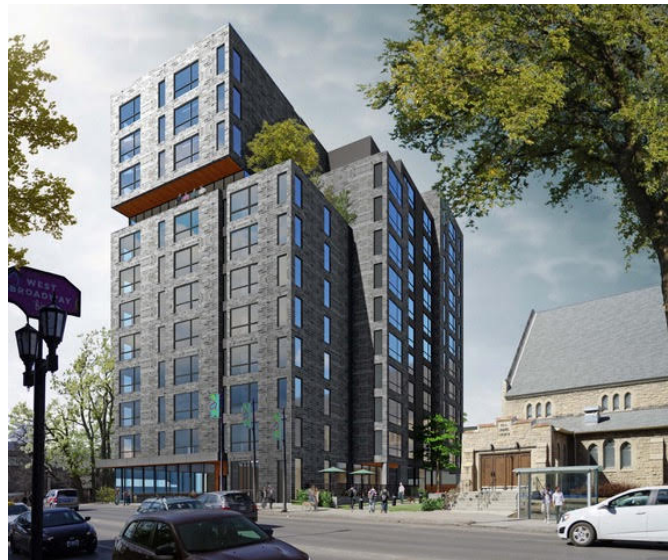
# West Broadway Commons: Community in a Box!

If you have driven by All Saints Church on the corner of Osborne and Broadway in Winnipeg in the past year, you may have noticed the significant new building going up right beside it. On December 23, 2020, the first tenants will be moving into West Broadway Commons, a 12-storey, 110-unit housing complex built by a Joint Venture of All Saints Church and the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation 2.0.

To get a better idea of what these first tenants will be living in, the [West Broadway Commons website](#) offers an excellent description of the building's floor plan and amenities (to list them all would take up a large portion of this article!).

The idea for West Broadway Commons started back in 2015. All Saints was facing problems with its Parish Hall which would have required \$2-3 million to fix. A small group of parishioners decided to explore the possibility of re-purposing the land. Initial research determined that the best use of the land was for rental housing. They secured a small grant to create a professional Request for Proposals to find a developer. In consultation with the congregation, the key objectives were clear: first, to contribute to the social betterment of the West Broadway community; and second, to create a modest income that would help to support All Saints Church for the long term.

The first major breakthrough in the project was finding University of Winnipeg Community Development Corporation 2.0 as our developer. A not-for-profit corporation, UWCRC 2.0 is guided by a four-pillar concept for sustainability (social, environmental, economic and cultural). As a separate subsidiary of the development group at the University, it had significant development expertise, experience in obtaining government grant funding and a vision of creating new forms of community



housing. UWCRC 2.0 became our developer in the summer of 2016. Shortly after, we created a Joint Venture to develop and own the building.

In the fall of 2016, we also chose Number Ten as our architect and Bockstael as our construction manager. Both provided highly competitive proposals, plus they satisfied our criteria of being local, socially committed firms with enough financial depth to be able to do the initial work we required, understanding that there could be payment delays as we worked with various donors and governments to obtain funding.

Our second major breakthrough was obtaining the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation funding that we required. Previous projects done by UWCRC had secured significant grant funding from the province. This time, that wasn't an option. Fortunately, in the spring of 2017, CMHC launched the National Housing Co-Investment Fund which was perfectly suited to our project. West Broadway Commons will cost \$30.2 million. Of that CMHC is providing a 50-year guaranteed mortgage of \$17.8 million and a capital grant of \$7.9 million. With this strong base, we worked



hard to assemble the remaining \$4.5 million – not easy for two small non-profits, but doable. We are grateful to the individuals in the City with no affiliation to the Anglican church or the University who contributed because they believed that the project was good for the West Broadway and Winnipeg. We are also very proud that the congregation of All Saints by itself raised more than \$500,000 – a huge achievement!

Despite COVID-19, the project is on time and within budget. The building should be fully complete by the end of January 2021. We have two major challenges remaining. First, we need to rent out all the suites in the middle of COVID-19 – not easy and there are several other new downtown rental projects coming on stream at the same time. It is clear that our affordable units will go quickly, but we need those “at market” rents to make this go. Even tougher, there is little demand for our modest commercial space on the ground floor. Restaurants and small shops are just trying to stay alive - expansion seems like a pipe dream. We have a high-quality, handsome building, so we will get there, but it will take time.

Our second challenge is less straightforward and more fun. How do we truly create “community in a box”? UWCRC 2.0 has taken some major steps in this direction. We are in the process of signing Memorandums of Understanding with approximately six social agencies in the West Broadway or surrounding area. The agencies are working with new immigrants, refugees, young mothers, youth aging out of care or adults with mental or physical disabilities. In each case, the agency will provide us with recommended tenants to whom they commit to provide on-going support. This links us with the neighbourhood in a completely new and rich way.

UWCRC 2.0 is an experienced, professional property manager. More than that, they are committed to managing the building in a manner to foster community. Pets are allowed so that lonely people have company, special attention will be taken to resolve problems and help is provided with applications and

paperwork.

We have also deliberately placed the common area in a highly desirable part of the building where people can leave their suites and study or socialize, use the warming kitchen or enjoy the view of Memorial Park, the Legislative Building and the Assiniboine River through floor-to-ceiling windows or on the large terrace. Once we are open, we will have the opportunity to further animate the building by creating social events or information evenings. This will become an opportunity for our All Saints and/or St Benedict's table congregations.

That's the basics of the story. It sounds a bit cut and dried, even easy. It wasn't. It was lengthy, messy, risky – even scary at times! We could not have done it without consistent support from the All Saints' Corporation, our committed/visionary partners at University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation 2.0, the top-quality professionals at Number Ten and Bockstael who bent over backward to support us through difficult times and, of course, our funders, especially CMHC and the federal National Housing Strategy.

Beyond all this, our humble and heartfelt thanks are due to a higher power. Many times, our opening prayers at meetings were anything but perfunctory. The Lord provided us with hope to dare to do this, with inspiration to keep slogging, with love to solve problems and work together, with courage to ask for money and with comfort when we were way out on a limb. All good things come from you, gracious God!

- Sandi Mielitz, *Rector's Warden, All Saints Church.*

**Anyone who is interested in renting at West Broadway Commons or who would like more information should contact our Property Manager, Crystal Wels, at [c.wels@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:c.wels@uwinnipeg.ca).**

**More information is also available on the West Broadway Commons [website](#).**



# The Riches of Rest

DAVID LABDON

Photo: Sara Krahn

*"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says:*

*'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.'*" Isaiah 30: 15

*"What to be, what not to be, that is the question."* In adapting the famous quote from Shakespeare's Hamlet, I am echoing a question that is surely on the hearts of many as we face a global pandemic which is changing our lives and history. Some of us have found ourselves more and more busy and some of us have found ourselves with time to spare; both situations seemingly controlled by circumstances outside of ourselves. As God's Church and Children, what are we to be and what are we not to be? Church, Worship, and life are different. There are harsh realities to deal with and our foundations have been rocked; much of what we have placed our trust and confidence in has been found fragile and even false.

This, though, is also an incredible time of opportunity, and hope; it is a time to wallow in the depths of God's amazing love and return and rest in the presence of our Lord.

The Church is entering the Season of Advent, a time of expectation and preparation as we look to celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, both in Christ's incarnation and as we look forward to Christ's return. As we celebrate Advent this year, how might the Church be a blessing to our communities, friends, families and ourselves; how might God be glorified? In the relevant section of Hamlet, amongst other even more serious matters, Shakespeare is comparing the harshness of life with the fear and uncertainty of death; even if life is painful what would death bring? Not a pleasant musing, but then, the Advent liturgy and readings challenge us to look to such matters, specifically: death; judgement; heaven; and hell. How can this be helpful in our current climate; how can we celebrate Advent and discover the riches of God's rest? The answer is found in returning to God and believing in God's Sovereignty. In our Lord's presence we can find rest and blessing that, in turn, will bring glory to God and bless others. Permit me to elaborate and explain.

The beautiful Scripture quoted above is found in a section of Isaiah (Chapters 28-37)

which connects to the themes of Advent and where God is shown to be sovereign over history. It follows the previous section (Chapters 13-17) which teaches that there will be a time when the world will be one people worshipping God alone. In the relevant section God is shown to be the real power behind world events, despite how it may seem to God's people. In these chapters six 'woes' are highlighted. In the chapter where our verse is located, the '*Woe of an Obstinate People*,' is covered; it can also be called the '*Woe of Faithlessness and Faithfulness*.'

This striking verse opens with these words, '*In repentance and rest is your salvation*.' The word 'repentance' is also sometimes translated as 'returning.' Have you ever found yourself on a highway, travelling for some time, before realizing that you have been going in completely the wrong direction? When in that situation something has to occur to make you realize your dilemma, equally you have to be open to hearing that you have been going in the wrong direction. Then embarrassment has to be overcome to turn back. In Isaiah, God's people were being called back to find rest in God. In this rest was their salvation; they had to repent, though, to complete a U-turn on the highway of life.

This Advent Season could be a time for us as a Church and individuals to listen to God and hear God's voice calling us to walk in God's way (Isaiah 30: 16).

**As we face a very serious situation, the focus of Advent can remind us of God's Sovereignty, Providence, Love and purposes. It can be a time for us to hear God's voice and return to God where we are given rest knowing that we are 'taken care of' and that our 'salvation' is in God's Hands.**

As we read on in this verse, we see that 'resting' means trusting which in turn is displayed in an attitude of quietness and confidence. These attributes become our strength because they are founded on God as

we face life's challenges. It takes belief in God through Christ to enter this rest (Hebrews 4: 3 and the whole chapter).

So, the call this Advent Season could be for us to return to God to see God for who God is; our Sovereign Lord. To make any necessary U-turn as we hear God's voice and 'rest' in the provision of our Lord's salvation. And as we face huge difficulties to have a strength that comes from a quiet confidence in God's providential nature remembering that, '*the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore He will rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for Him!*' (vs. 18). Practically, we could devote ourselves to the season of Advent, the liturgy, Bible readings, prayer, and devotionals accessing the resources made available at this time. We could commit to our Daily Office and as the Body of Christ in this Diocese have the same vision.

As we are in the year 2020, the comparison with 2020 vision is often made. As God's Children, if we are to have clear vision our eyes need to be on the Lord. As we focus on God, God indeed transforms us into God's likeness. I began by asking 'What are we to be?' Through faith we are to be God's children (John 1: 13, 1 John 3: 1). As our 'being' is renewed by the Lord our 'doing' changes. In this way the riches of resting in God can result in the transformation of our 'being' so that our 'doing' reflects God's love, blesses our communities, and so glorifies God. Amen.



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# Haunting

RYAN TURNBULL



Earlier this year I wrote a reflection for this publication on the evergreens on my family's farm and what they might mean for remembering the land through land acknowledgement statements. This summer, I bought a new house hundreds of kilometres away from that farm here in the City, and as I settled in, I felt excited about the possibility of establishing some roots somewhere for the first time as an adult, but also a bit nostalgic for that farm life that seems to keep getting further and further away. As I unpacked boxes, I discovered a book of poetry that my great-grandfather Norman had written. Reading through it I found the following poem:

## Gifts

**Give me the western prairies before the white man came  
Rolling into the sunset, God's immense domain.  
Give me the poplar wildwood, the plains astrew with flowers  
The crocus and the lilies, God's balm in leisure hours.  
Give me the creeks and rivers, winding to lake or the sea  
The darting fish and the drinking deer, God's wildlife to pleasure me.  
Give me the sunrise and sunset, the hues and colors rare,  
The lengthening shadows spreading, God's restful night from care.  
Give me the gift of vision, that is the best of all;  
That I may ever upward look, God's strength for a growing soul.  
These are the gifts I'd ask had I to live here over again;  
Now I pass them on to the children: God, thanks for each wonderful thing.**

What this poem reminds me is that, despite our best intentions, remembering can be tricky business. For as we see in Norman's poem, an act of re-mem-bering that gives a future to his children can also simultaneously be an act of dis-membering insofar as it erases indigeneity in the image of the pre-settler prairie wilderness as God's abode.

## Haunting the Membership

Insofar as this settler memory can fail, allow me to turn to a brief discussion of hauntology

and the promises and limits of haunting as component piece of a more radical remembering. 'Hauntology,' as a term, was coined by Jacques Derrida in his book *Spectres of Marx*. 'Hauntology' is a portmanteau combining 'haunt' and 'ontology' to indicate the absent presence of a time out of joint. Derrida's concept has proven to be especially prescient of our contemporary cultural moment, as pop-culture continues to serve up nostalgic reinterpretations of late 20th century pop-culture. One of the best live performances I have ever attended was by Canadian electric-powwow group, A Tribe Called Red, at the 2018 Winnipeg Folk Festival. A major theme of their

performance was the idea of the "Halluci Nation." In one of their songs, they repeat the line, "We are the Halluci Nation" over and over as the back screen is flooded with images lifted from settler media of caricatured depictions of Indigeneity. In front of this

screen, hip-hop and traditional dancers blend their dress and steps as if to say, 'we are here, we are not a hallucination, and we definitely do not fit inside your stereotypes.' Through this performance, A Tribe Called Red asserts the creative genius of Indigenous artists, and, situated as they are within EDM, make use of the hauntological edge of the genre, not merely by repeating the sounds of settler pop-music, but by resurrecting the powwow drum and the traditional singing that has long echoed across these lands. Ultimately, A Tribe Called Red's



performance works to resurrect the presence of a time 'out of joint,' and leaves me asking these questions: Is radical remembering possible? And what would be required to actually perform this kind of remembering?

### **Reconciling the Membership – Remembering All Hallows**

Here I turn to the agrarian memory of Wendell Berry in hopes that it can be conceived as a radical remembering that can overcome the limitations of my great-grandfather's agrarian remembering. Perhaps the agrarian nostalgia that characterizes both Berry's imagination, and in a rather cruder way, my great-grandfather's, can be reconceived as a true re-mem-bering and not just another instantiation of settler attempts at erasure. However, in using Berry in this way, I must admit limits to his usefulness as a guide. Berry's deployment of 'radical remembering' has been most explicitly turned in the direction of race and racism in his book *The Hidden Wound* and in his short story "Not a Tear." In *The Hidden Wound*, Berry is responding to the civil rights movement by reflecting on his heritage as a White Southerner and one who is shaped by the reality of segregation. Berry is highly cognizant of the damage that racism has wrought, in differing degrees and modes to both oppressed and oppressor, and illustrates this through an intimate reflection on his relationship with two Black people from his childhood, 'Uncle' Nick and 'Aunt' Georgie. This appeal to friends of colour can be a problematic move by White folks to move to innocence via their friendships. Yet, I find myself in agreement with bell hooks who argues in her book, *Belonging, A Culture of Place*, that one of the most



Photo: Ryan Turnbull

powerful ideas presented in *The Hidden Wound*, is the acknowledgement that inter-racial living, even in flawed structures of racial hierarchy, produces a concrete reality base of knowing and potential community that will simply be there when all that white and black folks know of one another is what they find in the media. What they find is usually a set of stereotypical representations of both races.

Berry acknowledges that, in some of his earlier fiction, his depiction of Georgie ran the risk of imposing upon her an “an imaginative stability at the cost of oversimplifying them.” So, in *The Hidden Wound*, Berry foregoes fiction, attempting to tell the truth about his memory of these irreducible people from his past while acknowledging that this is “to resign oneself to enacting a small fragment of an endless process. Their truth is inexhaustible both in their lives as they were, and in my life as I think they were.” Yet, in a more recent collection of stories, Berry again tries his hand at fictionalizing these relations, recounting the fictionalized story of Nick’s funeral in the short story “Not a Tear.” Berry, speaking through the voice of Andy Catlett, recalls the funeral of ‘Dick Watson,’ not as he had experienced, but as it had been experienced by his father and grandpa who had attended. It was odd, Berry notes, for his White ancestors to have attended a Black funeral in the time of Jim Crow segregation, for

**...everybody there belonged to the old division of the races we came to call “segregation.” They had been born in it, had lived in it, partly at least had been made as they were by it. And yet that formal and legal division, applied after all to people who were neighbors, made within itself exceptions to itself.**

It’s this ‘exception’ to segregation that occurs within the lived, on the ground realities of community, that hooks thinks is so important to Berry’s practice of ‘radical remembering.’ What Berry accomplishes, from within the ‘hidden wounds’ of settler agrarianism, is a training of his imagination and memory to see the hope-filled possibilities exercised through fidelity to a place and all the members of that place.

Berry’s deployment of memory has limits, and they are characteristic of the patterns of the settler agrarianism that are seen, in varying degrees, in the poetry of my family and in settler society more broadly. Nevertheless, there is an impulse of love in Berry’s ‘radical remembering’ that leaves open the possibility of being haunted by the presence of those bodies who have been refused membership.

Berry’s own vision may be limited, as is the vision of all those who bear the hidden wounds of settler colonialism. But perhaps, through a renewed fidelity to place and the bodies and languages in discrete places, there is a way, even for settler agrarians, to begin re-remembering all the presences that make up the membership, and to be reminded that it is not the hallucinatory memories of settlers that ever determined who belonged to begin with.

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Having grown up on a cattle ranch in western Manitoba, Ryan Turnbull has a deep interest in the intersection of theology, ecology, place, and friendship. He is currently pursuing a PhD in theology at the University of Birmingham in Birmingham, U.K., focusing on Christian theologies of place.