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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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Cover: Sara Krahn



Food as Love Language

Photo: Lee Myungseong

During this past year when I (along with everyone else) was feeling lonely and isolated from many people I loved, my friend and I decided to arrange a meal swap.

There wasn't much to organize aside from what to cook and when to make the exchange—it was just the two of us—but there was an exciting sense of purpose in our little arrangement. After months of preparing meals for only those inside my small household (comprised of my partner and our two cats), it felt like therapy to cook a meal for someone else. I fretted about what to make. I weighed the pros and cons of different recipes. I sifted through Pinterest for anything “hearty and pescatarian.” It felt good, like a limb was finally growing back.

My friend was newly married and currently living in a house with her husband's family, so there was a good chance that multiple eaters would be tasting my cuisine. I decided on black bean and sweet potato enchiladas—a comfort casserole for the middle of winter. I drove over to her place with the hot casserole and stood triumphant and shivering on her front porch. When she came to the door, and we made our exchange, it felt like a homecoming. We told each other everything that was in our dishes, along with instructions about how to eat it. We couldn't physically hug, but the warm food in our hands felt like love. And, later, tasted like it too. My friend had made a Malaysian-style seafood curry laksa Raman, complete with fish balls, shrimp, and squid. She had packaged it up like a takeout order and added a little note “Thank you for ordering!” If that isn't love, I honestly don't know what is.

Food is a love language. It has the incredible power to bring us comfort and

healing. It is a way we can reach out to others and give back.

This issue examines the different relationships we have with food. From farming and harvesting, to preparation, to mealtime. We eat food to survive, but also to experience pleasure and comfort. Food has the power to make us feel whole and alive in ourselves and, when we share it, whole and alive with each other.

For our first feature, Elder Amanda Wallin invites us into her home. She graciously shares her knowledge of traditional medicines and how to harvest them.

In “All Are Welcome at the Banquet Table,” retired Rev. Cathy Campbell reminds us of the important role food plays in social justice. Cathy is the PWRDF board liaison on the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and she offers us an update on this year's Anglican Grow Hope project.

Shelagh Balfour, in “Food, Power, and Personhood,” draws awareness around the uses and abuses of food structures. She explores how food, in our care and attention to it and to those we share it with, has the power to create healing relationships.

On the final page of October's issue, Native studies scholar Dr. Chris Trott shares some thoughts on Northern Foodways. He reminds us that communion may happen anywhere, with “whatever fundamental foodstuffs we may have,” so long as it is shared.



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

A Case of Missing Tomatoes

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

My dog, Steve, has been eating my tomatoes. I did not find out until recently when I caught him sitting in the garden—he's quite the jumper! I am saddened that my perfectly ripened, vine hanging fruit, was stolen. I am also upset that my fence was not fortified enough to prevent this folly and that Steve, my trusted and loyal friend, was the perpetrator of this heinous crime.

I have been immersed in the Book of 1 Kings these last weeks. In 1 Kings we encounter the dynasty of Solomon's folly and also an invitation for God's people to spiritually see and embrace what our creator is doing in the world.

As I read this book, I am reminded of my missing tomatoes. The first book of Kings is like a slow-motion-train-wreck of leadership, the squandering of God's gifts, and breaking the bonds of affection and holiness between the twelve tribes. But despite the *train-wreck*, God continues to speak through anyone who yearns to hear the word of God. We are told that "a holy one" approached Solomon: *look buddy, you've converted God's gifts to idol worship, you're not listening to me, and you are harming those whom you were charged to keep. You shall lose everything except the stem of the vine.*

I see a parallel between myself and

Solomon. My ignorance and laziness caused my perfect tomatoes to disappear, while Solomon's pride and ego made a whole Kingdom vanish. No matter how much I blame the dog, it is my fault, my own making that brought disaster into the garden one late August day.

It is Christ who plants the seed and our ancestors who tend the vine, who dig, prune, feed, and water, and rely upon wisdom of the ages to do so. As the Church, we may be at the perfect harvest time as we know it. Many of us have thought we are shrinking and dying, and we have reacted in fear, neglecting the vine. The harvest season, however, must be a time of thoughtful tenderness, where the hands of wisdom carefully pluck the ripe grain, seed, and fruit, so to avoid spoilage. To labour at this time is to feed many, and a new crop will come in its time, a crop nourished by the wisdom of the timeless Body of Christ.

We, as the Church, become the story of Jesus Christ, not only as we gather to share the Lord's supper, but as we become that very sacrament to the world. The discipleship of each parish is the harvest of what God has grown. We must take what we harvested to God's market for distribution, we adhere to how much seed we must plant for the new crop as we make our plans for next year's harvest. I believe God calls us to make decisions and plans using the gifts stewarded to us through the ages. How God calls us to ensure new crops is also a matter of how we listen in the marketplace.

Coming back to my dog Steve. I decided to take him along with me for my annual horseradish harvest. We are good companions when we are attentive to one another. He never left my side. He is not a fan of horseradish, and I don't really blame him. But I gave him a few tiny tomatoes when we got home—he earned them.

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Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land



Healing Harvest: Amanda Wallin Shares Bounty of Knowledge

Photo: Sara Krahn

Amanda Wallin has two names. The first is her birth name. The second is Black Cloud Woman, given to her when she was 25 at a sweat lodge ceremony in a place called Spirit Island.

"I was told I was part of the Bear Clan and that my name was Black Cloud Woman, which I thought was ridiculous at first! I felt like Charlie Brown with a big dark cloud over my head! The Elders started laughing and they told me that my name was actually very powerful. They said that a black cloud symbolizes the washing and nourishing of Mother Earth."

Amanda is an Anglican Cree woman and keeper of medicinal plant knowledge. From her home in Fannystelle, Manitoba, she shares some of her knowledge of various local plants, including sage, sweetgrass, Seneca root, and cedar.

"I learned everything that I know about honouring and respecting plants and earth from my birth mother. Her name was Thunder Bird Woman. I began harvesting medicines with her in my early 20's. We would pick medicines for the Elders that would then get transported to various reserves. What the reserves did with the

medicines was up to them, but we don't sell our medicines to just anyone — we must first know their intended purpose."

Proper protocol is integral to Indigenous harvesting practices.

"The number one thing you learn is proper protocol, to ask yourself before you smudge or pick medicine: what does it mean to do this? We must be in a good, balanced frame of mind to connect with the Creator."

Emotional balance is key. One cannot be angry because the anger will "poison" the harvest and the negative energy will infect the earth. Sometimes, an Indigenous person will not accept a harvest from another Indigenous person because they do not know the full method of how the plants were harvested.

"We use our medicines to take away any negativity. To right our wrongs. I almost never buy my medicines. One time, I harvested hawk feathers — there was a hawk on the road. My husband Richard and I were driving along the highway and I saw the hawk and I exclaimed: "Stop, stop! Get the axe, I need to harvest

these feathers! Get the tobacco!" And he was like "Are you crazy?!" I was like "Richard we have to do this. We must honour this bird because it has just died, and we are now here to witness it. I can't just leave the bird there. This is not what I was taught in the traditional teachings." So, I chopped off some of the hawk's feathers, and now they're on that walking stick behind you."

Amanda offers another example of protocol, this time for picking sweetgrass.

"When you go to pick sweetgrass, you must be wearing your medicine skirt. Because it's the medicine skirt that fuels all the medicines of Mother Earth. When I go out and find some sweetgrass, I will also make sure to bring tobacco with me. I will then talk to God the Creator and ask him to bless this sweetgrass with joy and healing. But only after you lay your tobacco down are you ready to pick."

Tobacco laying is essential. It is the gift offered to the earth in honour of what was taken.

Another protocol in picking sweetgrass is that it must be picked one blade at a time. Amanda recalls the first time she and her mother took her daughter sweetgrass picking.

"She just ran up and excitedly grabbed a handful of grass, and said: "Look what I got, granny!" My mother and I were both mortified. We told her, "Sweetie that is Mother Earth's hair – you don't just rip out Mother Earth's hair. We pick them one at a time, and we put them in our medicine skirt."

Once the picking is finished, the sweetgrass is spread out and dried for up to six hours. Then, it is braided with three "ropes" each comprising seven strands of grass. Why seven? The number seven represents the [seven sacred teachings](#).

Sweetgrass may also be used for smudging ceremonies, alongside cedar, sage, and tobacco. Sage is most used in smudging.

An eagle feather is almost always used to fan the smoke. Using an eagle feather is significant because "the eagle flies closest to the Creator." It flies over 10,000 feet and has over 7,000 feathers to keep it warm.

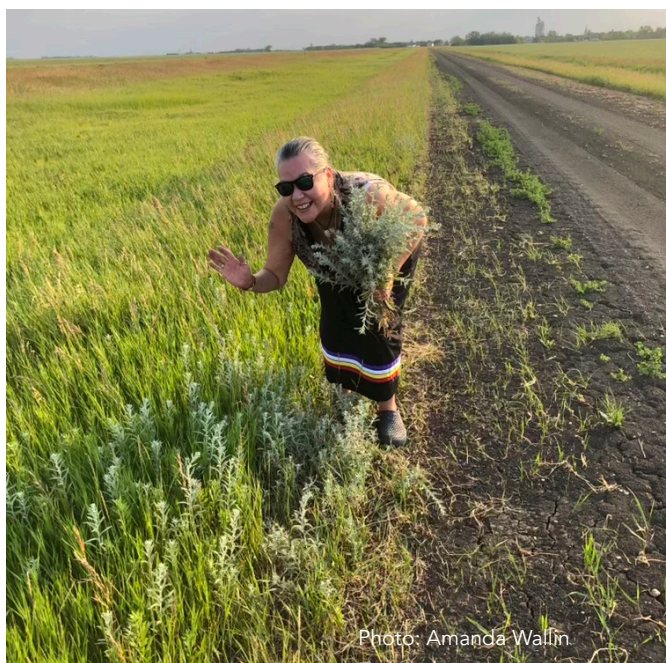


Photo: Amanda Wallin

Amanda Wallin (Black Cloud Woman) picking white and buffalo sage along Highway 248 in rural Manitoba.

"And why is it necessary to fan the smoke?" says Amanda. "If you blow on the coals, you will blow your medicine away."

Amanda performs a smudging ceremony with cedar. Once the cedar is lit, she begins smudging, removing all jewelry as is the protocol. She washes with the smoke, bathing hands, head, eyes, ears, mouth, heart, and finally, feet. Only the bottom of the feet are smudged as the idea is to walk on Mother Earth with love and respect (opposed to anger and resentment).

"You can actually drink cedar," says Amanda. "Say you've just come from a funeral and you are feeling full of negative energy. Here's a ritual: First, connect with the Creator and lay your tobacco down. Then, take about two handfuls of the boughs of cedar, put them in a large pot and boil them for about 20-25 minutes. Set a cup of it aside. Then take the rest of that water and put it in a bath. Now you have a cedar bath! It eliminates all that negative energy so that it's just you and God. Then, when you get out of your bath, you drink that cup of cedar tea. You will feel like a new person."

It's not difficult to imagine the world as a better place if only more people took cedar baths. Or were full of the same generosity as Amanda and her partner, Richard, who live by a code of hospitality.

"How can you be blessed if you don't give? I'm inspired every time I make that first connection with the Creator. When we face the sun, when the sun rises at the beginning of the day, that's our promise that our sins have been forgiven. The Creator loves us so much that he has allowed us to see yet another sunrise. I think of it this way: there are 6 billion people on earth. Out of that 6 billion, 1 million didn't wake up this morning. But I did. And for this we should always give thanks. Remind yourself that you are mortal. We always imagine ourselves as old and grey, but we have no idea if we will reach this stage of life. I don't say this to scare people. I say this to remind people of how precious life is when you're given a day to walk and talk and move, when there are so many people that can't, who are lonesome and lost."

Another way to interpret Amanda's musings is to think of forgiveness and restoration in our relationships as written into paying proper attention to the natural world around us. To the seasons, where the sun rises, when it's right to pick sage or sweetgrass, harvest cedar or hawk feathers.

Amanda identifies as an Indigenous Anglican and has been attending the parish of [St. Mary Magdalene](#) for 24 years. She doesn't see a fundamental difference between Indigenous spiritual teachings and those of the Anglican Church.

"We have our tobacco ties; they have the rosary. We have the smudge; they have the holy water. We have seven teachings; they have ten commandments. It's all the same. At the end of the day, it's about us and our relationship with the land and the Creator who is allowing you to walk freely on this earth."

- Sara Krahn

Smudge bowl and eagle feather



Photo: Sara Krahn

All Are Welcome at the Banquet Table

CATHY CAMPBELL



Image: The Dinner Table by Henri Matisse, 1896-1897

The following article is a revised version of a sermon given by Cathy Campbell in July 2021.

This summer, the Revised Common Lectionary focused five Sunday gospel readings on John Chapter Six. The readings invited us to reflect on both physical and spiritual matters surrounding food.

We started with attention to the hungry and our ideas of scarcity and abundance. The centre of the circle of reflection was the kingdom table, Jesus' table, the banquet table. There, as John writes, folks have "as much as they want [and] when they were satisfied," there were leftovers. This story appears in every gospel and sometimes more than once. In fact, it appears throughout our scriptures. It's clearly important. What are we to make of it right now, in our time and place?

For the last 45 years I have focused on food, food justice and alleviating hunger in the world. The good news is I've learned a lot, met some truly fabulous and committed people, and witnessed real improvements. The bad news is that, after a decade of falling numbers, over 750 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020. Conflict, ecological degradation and

climate change, economic disparities and now the pandemic have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable. Jesus' question to his disciples "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" still generates the same response today: "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." From the disciples' point of view, there are too few resources for the hungry to get even a little. But Jesus takes the resources available—five barley loaves and two fish—and 5,000 people that day took "as they wanted [and] when they were satisfied," there were leftovers. But you say, that was then and now is now?

Here's a story from now. In the 1970's, there were a couple of high-profile famines in the global community. One in Ethiopia and one in Bangladesh. In 1974, there was a UN World Food Conference. And in the late 70's a group of farmers here in the Canadian prairies began to "conceive of a mechanism for Canadian farmers to share their harvests with the poor... and act as a food bank that could respond with food in times of emergency." This core idea evolved and morphed over the years into the Canadian Foodgrains Bank—one of Canada's

top 10 charities with its head office right here in Winnipeg. In 2020 alone it distributed over \$40 million in international programming to end global hunger. And that's not the only miracle. The Foodgrains Bank is now a collective effort of 15 different church international development agencies.

Gathered around the board table are an array of Christians: Anglicans, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Catholics, Baptists, Salvationists (Salvation Army), and United Church representatives. All are so different theologically (and may find it difficult to worship together), and yet all are followers of Jesus and committed to working together to end global hunger. You might say what are five barley loaves and two fish in the face of 5,000 people? Or you might wonder what difference a few prairie farmers can make when faced with 100's of millions of hungry people around the globe. In response, I would say that so many *have* been fed...so many *have* improved livelihoods... so many *have* improved the sustainability of their communities... and so many have glimpsed of the unity of the body of Christ.

This is but one story of the miracles created by churches every day through the power of the Spirit, compelled by Christ's love. The economy of the banquet table continues today.

What is the economy of God's banquet table? The fruit of it are healthy relationships—with one another, with the land, with creation, with our Maker. If communities of life are the fruit, the roots of this economy are found deep in the soil of the Spirit. For it is the Spirit that shapes and cultivates healthy relationships.

The Spirit is the generative power of the gift economy of the banquet table. Tending the spirit happens everywhere, everyday: at board tables, family tables, and picnic tables; at school desks, hospital bedsides, altars, everywhere. This is the path of life that Jesus shows us—the path of abundant life for all. Not abundant life for me and mine and then with what's left we'll think about the needs of the whole. But abundant life for all and in faith that there will be more than enough for me and mine in God's economy.

Witness all the hope that has grown from Nancy Howatt's sense of abundance in this year when so many farmers and cattle producers are experiencing drought. Nancy Howatt raises cattle in the Pembina Valley here in Manitoba. She is part of the [Anglican Grow Hope project](#) in Rupert's Land. Instead of offering a heifer for auction this year because prices are so depressed, she and her brother, Chris Lea, decided to donate bales of hay. Their imagination and generosity encouraged 12 others and the auction house in Killarney to participate as well. The \$15,000 of proceeds from this sale will go to Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The Government of Canada will match these funds and they will go through a partner agency to relieve the suffering of the people in Haiti and assist in improvements to their livelihoods. Through the spirit, generosity, and work of people like Nancy and Chris—matched by parishes in our Diocese and by our government—hungry people are fed, vulnerable are supported and hope continues to grow and flourish. Yes, miracles happen in our time and place. Thanks be to God.

Anglican Grow Hope is a project in support of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). The mission of the Anglican Grow Hope is to build relationships between rural and urban folk, different parishes; and with people in the global south in need of life's necessities and livelihoods to create lives of dignity.

Nancy Howat and Chris Lea have been a part of the Grow Hope project in Manitoba since 2018.

For more information, including how to donate, contact the Diocese of Rupert's Land at 204-992-4200 or visit the website:

rupertsland.ca



The Rev. Canon Cathy Campbell is a retired academic and retired Anglican priest with a strong commitment to social justice, sustainable development, and food security.

Parish News Roundup

Double-benefit feed auction held at Killarney



Photo: Chris Lea

Nancy Howatt stands in front of donated straw, set to hit the Killarney Auction Mart Aug. 30

In another year, Nancy Howatt of Manitou would have been picking out a steer to donate and bring to the ring at the Killarney Auction Mart.

It's become something of an annual tradition for the producer, with the proceeds going to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

This year, however, is different. This year, there was crisis close to home. Beef producers, Howatt included, watched anxiety ratchet up through the growing season as drought gripped the province. One dire story after another flowed out of Manitoba's northern cattle country: producers with no pasture, little water, hayfields that weren't worth the fuel to harvest them, productive breeding animals hitting the market by July, or herds dispersed entirely.

At the same time, Howatt's normal charitable destination, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, put out a plea for funds to help Haiti, which, on top of political instability, had suffered a 7.2 magnitude earthquake Aug. 14, killing thousands and causing widespread infrastructure damage—just in time for the

nation to be hit by Tropical Storm Grace days later.

Howatt saw a chance to help both.

Why it matters: A handful of farmers in central and southwestern Manitoba hope feed donations will both add some buffer for producers whose feed is stretched, as well as raise money for disaster relief in Haiti.

Unlike many northern producers, Howatt did have oat straw to spare this year. Instead of her normal steer, she thought, why not donate and auction off the feed? Proceeds would still go to the foodgrains bank—dedicated to Haiti—and the donation might also help keep some cows in province that might otherwise hit the market.

"I thought this year, with the drought situation and the shortage of feed, this just kind of seemed like a double-dipper," she said.

Howatt pitched the idea to her brother, Chris Lea, who added his support.

The idea quickly gained momentum.

Allan Munroe, owner of the Killarney Auction Mart, agreed to auction the feed Aug. 30. The auction later put out a social media post promoting the event.

From there, participation snowballed—including grain producers who do not own livestock. Howatt said she was "overwhelmed" by the family, friends and neighbours who also pledged straw, while other producers contacted the auction mart to add their own contribution.

"The one morning, I got four phone calls," she said.

Munroe, likewise, said he was contacted by one of his customers the day after the social media post went out, interested in donating.

"It's certainly grown beyond what I was expecting," Munroe said.

"It's a win for everyone," he added. "It's making a little bit of feed available to people and it's raising some money to a good cause."

As of Aug. 25, the donation list included 10

producers, and the auction had grown to 11 loads of cereal straw, as well as 100 tonnes of donated corn silage, courtesy of Peter Gilbraith of Gilbraith Farm Services, estimated at a value of \$6,000, assuming a price of \$6 a tonne.

This year, with feed shortages expected, that value was expected to be considerably higher.

Aid need

Gordon Janzen, Manitoba representative for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, said the organization is working through the Humanitarian Coalition—an umbrella group of aid agencies—to provide food support for Haiti.

Details of that aid is still being hammered out, as the coalition works with local partners to respond to the crisis, he said.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank has not laid out a fundraising goal for its campaign, although Janzen noted the Humanitarian Coalition has put out a nationwide appeal for funds.

“We are expecting significant donations,” he said.

For Howatt, the event, and the response to it, was a “good news story,” in a year when so much of the news in the industry has been bad.

“It’s kind of like a community effort in the ag circle, is kind of how I look at it,” Howatt said, “and this way, we get to also help our bigger world community by doing the Haiti disaster relief overseas.”

By Alexis Stockford, Reporter

Reprinted with permission from [The Manitoba Co-operator](#).

1 JustCity Faith Certificate Program

The Program

Those who enrol in the 1 JustCity Faith Community Certificate program will have the opportunity to learn in community with other adults who are seeking to grow in their faith and understanding of the realities faced by those living in poverty. Participants will have the opportunity to volunteer at all of 1 JustCity’s sites, meet people from different walks of life, hear engaging speakers. They will be expected to complete a project that will strengthen the connection between 1JustCity and their congregation.

The program will use an adult education model that is participatory, where we learn from each other and from reflecting on our experience as well as from speakers and readings. Sessions will include theological reflection and Bible study.

Details

Cost: \$250

The hope is that 1 JustCity will be able to reimburse sponsoring congregations \$250 to fund a 1 JustCity project in their church.

Schedule

Session One: Saturday, November 13, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the West End site. Lunch will be provided.

Remaining sessions will be on the following Tuesdays from 6:00 -8:30 p.m. at Young United Church. Supper will be included.

As an applicant, you are encouraged to approach your congregation for funding to enroll in this program. You will be in negotiation with them about what your project will be.

For further scheduling details and information about how to apply, [click here](#).

Ordination Photos from September 2021



The following photos were taken on Saturday, September 11, 2021, at the parish of St. George's Crescentwood.



Dear God: What a Year! What Do I Do Now?

Retreat Series Beginning October 12, 2021

Join a group of companions on four Tuesday nights to reflect on our experiences of the recent past and hopes for the near future using the Awareness Examen as our guide. The Examen is a deceptively simple prayer that invites you to reflect on your life by identifying the highs and lows of a specific period of time (a day, an event, a pandemic, etc.). People who are new to the practice often say, "That's it? That's so easy!" and then express amazement at what is revealed through consistent practice."

Find out more about the retreat, including registration details, [here](#).

St. John's College Chaplaincy Presents: Food For the Journey: "Grief Buddy Workshop"

October 16, 2021; 9:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Where: Room #108 & the Chapel at St John's College

Cost: \$40.00 Includes a light breakfast & lunch

This is a one-day workshop facilitated by Rev. Helen Holbrook and is for those interested in supporting a bereaved member of your Parish.

If you are interested in attending, please let Rev. Holbrook know by contacting her by October 8 at sjcchaplain@umanitoba.ca.

All in accordance with provincial health guidelines regarding Covid-19.

Proof of vaccination will be required.

Kate Bowler Book Launch

Friday, October 22, 2021, 7:00 p.m.; Virtual,
Online via Zoom & YouTube

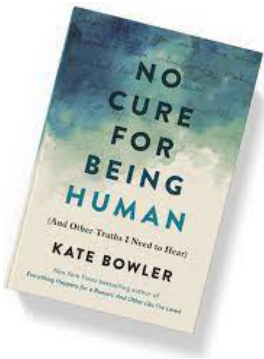
Join bestselling author Kate Bowler for the virtual Winnipeg launch of [No Cure for Being Human: \(And Other Truths I Need to Hear\)](#) (Random House) featuring a conversation hosted by Jen Zoratti of the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

[Registration](#) is required to directly participate in the Zoom webinar. It will be simultaneously streamed on [YouTube](#) and available for viewing thereafter.

About Kate:

Kate Bowler believed that life was a series of unlimited choices, until she discovered, at age 35, that her body was wracked with cancer. In *No Cure for Being Human*, she searches for a way forward as she mines the wisdom (and absurdity) of today’s “best life now” advice industry.

With dry wit and unflinching honesty, Kate Bowler grapples with her diagnosis, her ambition, and her faith as she tries to come to terms with her limitations in a culture that says anything is possible. She finds that we need one another if we’re going to tell the truth: Life is beautiful and terrible, full of hope and despair and everything in between—and there’s no cure for being human.



Born and raised in Winnipeg, Kate Bowler is an associate professor of the history of Christianity in North America at Duke Divinity School. She completed her undergraduate degree at Macalester College, received a Master of Religion from Yale Divinity School, and a PhD at Duke University. She is the author of *Blessed: A History of the American Prosperity Gospel*, the New York Times bestselling memoir *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I’ve Loved*, and *The Preacher’s Wife: The Precarious Power of Evangelical Women Celebrities*. She has appeared on the TED stage, NPR, and Today, and her writing has been featured in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Time. She is the host of the popular podcast *Everything Happens*. Bowler lives in Durham, North Carolina, with her husband, Toban, and son, Zach.

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Food, Power, and Personhood

SHELAGH BALFOUR

Photo: [Elaine Casap](#)

There is a scene in the book of Acts where certain members of the community complain because their widows are neglected in the distribution of food. To ensure fairness, the Apostles appoint seven men to oversee the distribution. This passage, often interpreted as the first appointing of deacons, connects the ministry of service, *diakonia*, with food.

For more than 25 years, I worked among men and women with intellectual disabilities. This was my *diakonia*, the primary way I lived out my faith in a loving God. Because I worked in people's homes, cooking, and sharing meals was a routine occurrence. Within this context, I learned a great deal about the relationship between food and power.

If you search the words "food" and "power," you will find two types of articles. One type will discuss topics like food sovereignty or food politics—who controls the growth and distribution of food and the effect it has on populations. The other will be about "power foods" and the power of food in general to transform one's physical health.

You are less likely to find articles about food and how it relates to power inequalities between people. For instance, how a person can seek power over another person by controlling their food. This is a more direct and personal relationship between food and power. People who are marginalized are most likely to experience this—people like those I knew with intellectual disabilities. (It is possible for those who are marginalized to assert power in return, but they may require a supporting environment to do so.)

I remember Karen from early in my time working for a Winnipeg agency. Karen had heard that David, a co-worker, was going to the institution she had lived in for years, so she offered him a piece of advice: "When they serve liver, make sure you eat it or else they'll tie you to your chair." While everyone in the office agreed that tying people to chairs was inappropriate, the agency had its own way of participating in food-based control. The philosophy that prevailed in the field at the time assumed a right to control vulnerable people's

lives for their own good. At its core, this philosophy ascribed a lack of value to people with intellectual disabilities, by virtue of those disabilities, such that they required intervention of people who were already valued in order to be acceptable to society. By doing so, it declared a fundamental difference between people with disabilities and those without, which justified the latter group's use of power.

In Karen and David's story, Karen had not realized this key difference in their situations. She was a person with a disability who had been a resident of the institution. He was starting a new job in the institution's psychology department. No one was going to be tying David to a chair.

Food in the agency was a tool in making people more acceptable and therefore more valued. By controlling diets to ensure people stayed slim, they would be more acceptable (valued) in appearance. By strict observance of rules—for example, using a knife and fork to eat pizza—people would not draw negative (devaluing) attention when they ate in public. By turning each meal into a training session, a person's bad eating habits could be corrected.

Most of these methods, if not all, failed in their intended results. In fact, some were harmful rather than beneficial. In the case of the dinner time training sessions, one participant became so anxious he began to flip over the fully laden table.

What lies underneath these attempts to control people with intellectual disabilities is a failure to see a fellow human being who is beloved by God and worthy of love and respect. In his article *Again: Who is a Person?*, theologian Oliver O'Donovan wrote "we can recognize someone as a person only from a stance of *prior moral commitment* to treat him or her as a person... and... we know someone as a person as that person disclosed in his or her personal relations to us, that is, we know ourselves to be not simply the subject of our own attention to others, but to be the object of other's attention to us."

Oliver O'Donovan uses the Good Samaritan

story as a starting point in his article. Just as Jesus did not answer the question "who is my neighbour?" we cannot answer the question "who is a person?" by defining characteristics of personhood. It is our *prior moral commitment* to see a person in the other that allows us to recognize someone who is beloved by God and to seek a relationship of mutual care. It is much more difficult to justify controlling a person with whom we have a relationship born out of our shared humanity.

This recognition turns food into an element of relationship instead of an element of control. I saw this in practice as well in those 25 years. In the woman who visibly withdrew into herself when I kept making suggestions about the meal she was cooking, and whose confidence was restored when I acknowledged my mistake and stepped back. In the man who had flipped tables who, tired of the stress of being observed, chose to eat alone in another room, and his choice was honoured. And, in the story of Edith.

Edith was from a small town in Manitoba. It had been her home all her life. After some conflicts occurred, she was removed from her small town and placed in an apartment in downtown Winnipeg. When I met her, all Edith wanted was to go home. I had no power to help her with that. What I could do, though, was show up faithfully on the day she expected me and sit down to share the meal she prepared for us to eat together.

These small moments, among others, were times for healing. They turned preparing and eating meals together into ways of strengthening relationships, celebrating community, and restoring power to people from whom it had been removed. That is the true power of food.



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Some Thoughts on Northern Foodways

CHRISTOPHER TROTT

Whenever I tell people that I have worked among Inuit for sustained periods, I am inevitably asked, "Do Inuit really eat their meat raw?" The answer is a qualified yes.

First, eating raw meat (*mikigiaq*) is part of a much broader system of cuisine. Unlike most peoples in the world, there is very little vegetable food in the Inuit diet. Inuit can only collect berries and available plants in the summer (late July and August) and they are not preserved for the most part. The only vegetable available in winter is the partly digested lichens in the contents of caribou stomachs. Humans are unable to digest lichens on their own but can eat them if they come predigested. So, about 98% of the Inuit diet is meat.

Meat can be prepared in several different ways. There are different terms in Inuktitut for each of these modes of preparation. I have, generally, given the words used for preparing caribou meat (*tuktuviniaq*). First, it can be eaten frozen (*quaq*). Not frozen solid; rather, a state where the meat is firm, but one can still slice through it. One only eats rock-hard meat while traveling on the trail, and then it is like eating chips. Second, meat can be dried (*nikku*) in the summer and kept over the winter. Third, meat can be boiled (*uujuq*) to make delicious blood soup (*qajuq*) as well as the meat itself. In the past, the women would put a pot of meat on to boil at the beginning of the day. It would heat slowly over the seal oil lamp and be ready for the evening meal. Today, of course, meat can be boiled quickly on a stove with carrots, onions, and potatoes. Finally, meat can be aged (*igunaq*) to achieve a certain flavour, very much like sharp cheese. In some areas, meat could also be "fried" on flat stones over a fire in

the summer. So, yes, Inuit eat raw meat. But they eat it in many other ways as well.

When eating with the Elders, one will note that they carefully select small pieces of meat from different carcass parts and combine them with a small amount of fat or blubber. They seek out different flavours and textures in the meat and combine these in delicious ways to make up a meal.

In 1921, a middle-aged shaman named Umik from Igloodik heard about Christianity from another Inuk Akumalik, originally from Pangnirtung in Cumberland Sound. Umik gathered the Igloodik community together in the spring in a snow windbreak open to the sky. Umik took some seal heart and other organ pieces and chopped them up into small pieces. He handed them around, and as each person took a bit of meat, they said, "This is my body." After everyone had eaten, he took a ptarmigan heart sac, filled it with caribou blood, and passed it around. As each person sipped, they said, "This is my blood." The Igloodik community had now *siqqiqtiqtut* "crossed over" (as in a caribou walking down from the land and crossing over the sea ice) and become Christians.

Our sacraments arise out of whatever fundamental foodstuffs we may have, always shared and eaten in the context of community.

The first Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in the area in 1929.



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