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Publisher | [Bishop Geoffrey Woodcroft](#)  
 Editor | [Sara Krahn](#)  
 Accounting | [Joy Valencerina](#)  
 Advertising | [Angela Rush](#)  
 Layout & design | [cityfolkcreative.ca](#)

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[Editorial offices:](#)

Anglican Lutheran Centre  
 935 Nesbitt Bay  
 Winnipeg Manitoba, R3T 1W6

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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## Thorvaldson Care Center

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# Lateral Praise

Photo: [Nikaela Peters](#)

Paying attention is a way of being in the world. It is a way of looking, thinking, feeling, speaking, touching. When we pay full attention to something we experience a kindredness with the nature of that thing (or person)—a closeness of being that can feel like respite, maybe even like freedom.

In thinking about how to introduce this issue, I keep coming back to the idea of attentiveness, and how we encounter moments of it in our daily lives—moments that draw us closer to ourselves, and closer to God. I stole the title for the issue— “Bread in the Wilderness” — from Thomas Merton’s book, because, honestly, I couldn’t think of a better phrase to describe what I wanted this issue to be; that is, meditations on forms of attentiveness and praise. These forms “are bread, miraculously provided by Christ, to feed those who have followed Him into the wilderness.” Merton is talking here about the biblical psalms, and this issue certainly touches on them. But it also touches on other less formal litanies of praise that are encountered in the everyday—the religious language we find bathed in the world outside of Sunday worship. And by religious language I mean ways of being that bake attentiveness into daily life, and open up possibilities for praise.

Full disclosure: this issue is steeped in poetry, lyricism, and imagery.

In our first feature, Donald Phillips speaks through the voice of Psalm 62, as he invites reflection on the solitary nature of suffering. Then, we are treated to the luminous poetry of a few lay wordsmiths, who offer lyrical balms on such subjects as the beauty of domestic labour, encounters on an overgrown path, and the grace of God found in a single moment.

Photography, too, has a way of stopping us in our tracks, as we observe someone else’s perspective on light and shadow and welcome

it in conversation with our own. This issue features two photographers: Kevin Grummett’s photography is featured on pages nine and ten, and Nikaela Peters’ work is featured as scattered shots throughout the magazine. Grummett’s series is an ode to elegance caught in the urban wilderness; Peters’ photographic eye captures what might just be a kind of domestic heaven.

Later on, my fellow pianist, Theo Robinson, writes about the joys of music-making in the midst of stress and loss. “Sometimes music is the only thing that takes your mind off everything else.” This line rings true to my ears! And so do the words and wisdom of contemplative singer-songwriter Alana Levandoski. In ‘The Language of Praise,’ she calls us to be more attentive in our worship practices, and meditates on the idea of lateral praise. “We find it in the Psalms,” writes Levandoski, “where the whole of enjoined creation praises the Maker. It is found in the healings of Jesus. Spittle, soil, mud, praying to Abba, healing.” This idea of lateral praise relates to my initial thoughts around attentiveness. To find a language for praise in our daily lives we have to pay attention to those unassuming moments encountered in our everyday. We might find ourselves pausing over a messy breakfast table, or taking time to lie with a sleeping child; we might observe a ray of sun as it plays on an overgrown path, or sit down at the piano to play our favourite show-tune. We might take a minute to give thanks for a piece of fresh-baked bread. In these moments, in the pause, we find the living God.



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

# Bread in the Wilderness

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT



How much bread of heaven, manna—the food of angels—rested on my plate this week? Did I even notice? Indeed, I am like those who receive manna, yet crave for more while the food is still in my mouth (Psalm 78.30). As I confuse the bread of angels with the bread of my toiling, let me do my best to rehearse again the story of the Hebrew people’s wilderness wandering.

Jewish and Christian Testament writers frequently remind us of our duty to rehearse the great Exodus story in our communal prayers and proclamation, especially for the sake of our younger members; the story must remain an important part of who we are becoming as a living expression of humanity. The Exodus story exposes much about human behavior, our profound hope in reaching a promised land, and also those darker things hidden so deeply within our core. As I rehearse the story, I pay attention to my body and surroundings. What I observe of myself is shocking, for I am a stubborn and stiff-necked person. I took a long time to understand that wilderness wandering is a fact of my life—a paramount one—and I have been doing it since birth.

I find myself thinking about the bread of angels in literal terms, deeply desiring the aroma, taste and soft, warm texture of fresh baked bread, so extraordinarily delicious that I will eat a whole loaf in one sitting. I also wonder about my tendency to look toward science to tell me what constitutes good food. Is a scientific understanding of food, or my own understanding of food as a consumer, the same thing as bread in the wilderness? Indeed, as I explore scripture more thoroughly and in the context of both testaments, I find both of my previous thoughts selfish, consumerist, and

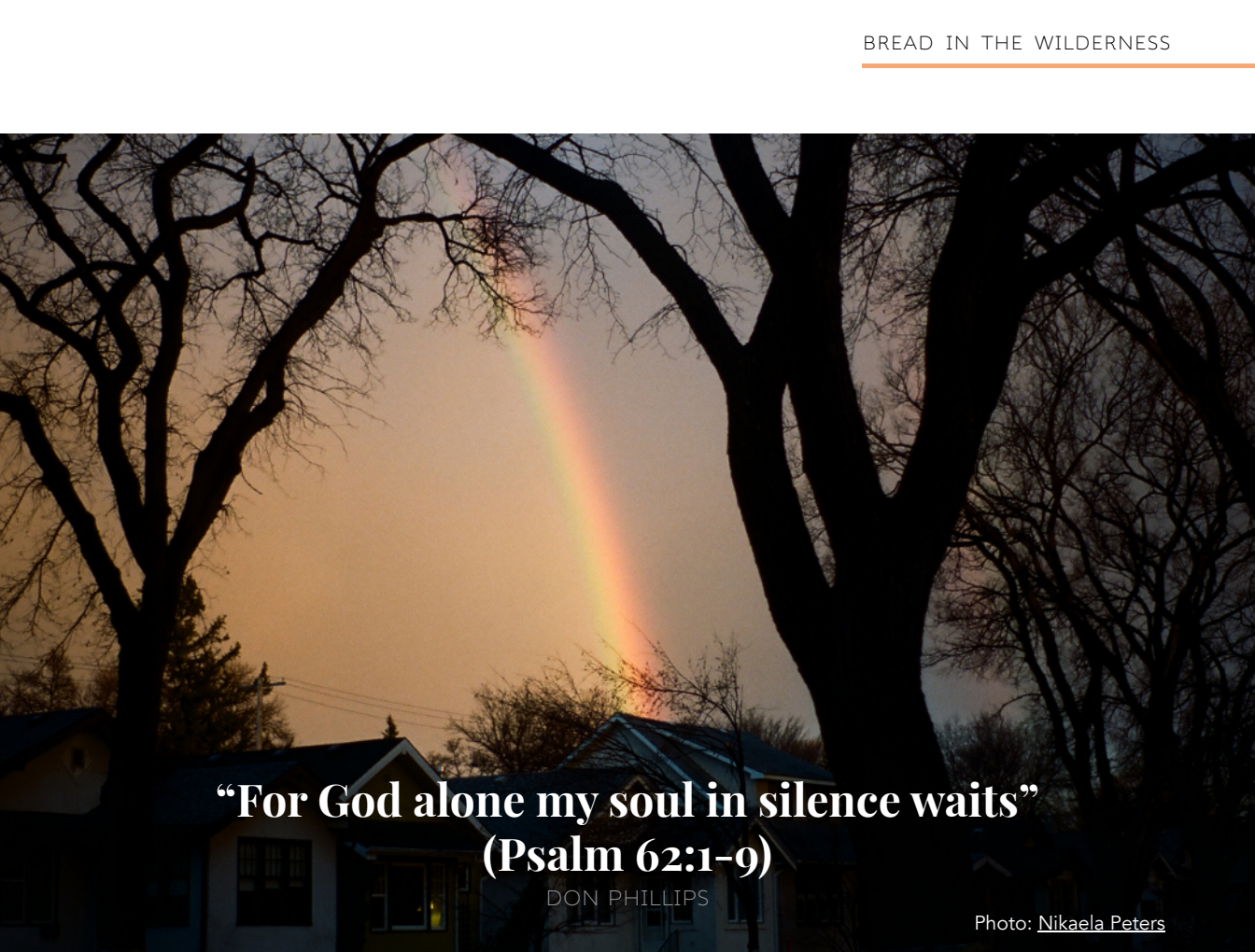
irrelevant to God’s story within humanity.

Here I am, almost 60 years old, still engaged in wilderness wandering, and wondering just what food God is putting before me today. In every wilderness I have travelled before, there has always been enough food for my physical well-being: people of the land and sea have taught that wisdom for thousands of years. Baring natural disaster, stupidity, and fear, there has always been enough. Today, as I notice my years start to gather speed, I see a different kind of food, something I begin to devour with my eyes and soul. At first it appears in remembered words: I am the bread of life . . . Taste and see that the Lord is good, happy are they who are trusting in God. As I digest these morsels—this food for the soul—I hear the Apostle Paul reminding me that I am becoming what I consume.

It is here and now, that I reckon with the saints as they gather as one family of God from countless generations, timelessly sharing manna. We huddle in the kitchen of the widow of Zarephath, and in the eyes of the psalmists and of Nehemiah, we continually regroup within God’s journey. It is exactly here that Jesus takes the bread and says it’s me! You are in me, and I am in God, and God is feeding the children with manna, the food of angels, Jesus’ body broken for all.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,  
Bishop of Rupert’s Land



## “For God alone my soul in silence waits” (Psalm 62:1–9)

DON PHILLIPS

Photo: [Nikaela Peters](#)

We all have periods in our lives when we feel trapped and powerless—certain that anything we might try to say or do to redeem ourselves, or to correct a misunderstanding, will only worsen the situation. This could be a strained relationship with a friend or family member. It could be a serious misunderstanding with a co-worker who consequently has suspended or removed their trust. Or, as a manager or supervisor, it might be a situation where our leadership has come into question and those around us begin to doubt our ability to lead them in the work.

Whatever the cause, the result is the same. We find ourselves suffering an inner pain and anguish that refuses to be resolved by an external word or action, no matter how kind or well-intended. The words we hear, or the generous gesture offered to us by another, act like a temporary analgesic. Eventually, after it’s “credit has been deposited into our account,”

our “self-worth balance sheet” is still left in arrears. We are left feeling alone in an arid kind of personal wilderness—feeling impotent, and threatened by external or internal hostile “voices”—or both.

When I am in this kind of space, I have erected a kind of wall—like a plexiglass wall—through which I can see and hear the world around me but behind which I cannot touch or be touched by others. I have retreated emotionally and spiritually into a kind of silent resignation.

*For God alone my soul in silence...waits.* It is not that I’m feeling hopeful for an encounter with God; but rather, after frantically turning over all of my other options, my mind has collapsed and accepted the futility of trying to find fresh nourishment on my own to solve this dilemma. I accept that I do not have the necessary resources within me to redeem myself or the situation.



*From God comes my salvation.* This starts more as a desperate mental conclusion than a faithful statement of belief. I begin to wait, even if indifferently, for something or Someone from outside myself to begin to supply what I need in order to regain my hope and strength.

*God alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, so that I shall not be greatly shaken.* I begin to remember—to recall times in the past when I have felt like this—when I have been threatened or disempowered to this degree. And I recall how God did provide sustenance; gave me strength; and caused me to see, to understand, and to move through the challenge in a different and life-restoring way.

But as soon as this recollection of hope begins to form, I immediately recall the depths of my current wilderness. *How long will you assail me to crush me, all of you together, as if you were a leaning fence, a toppling wall? They seek only to bring me down from my place of honour; lies are their chief delight. They bless with their lips, but in their hearts they curse.*

Even though I rehearse again the pain of the place I am in, something has changed. I have touched, or been touched by, a deeper and stronger Reality. It is not that I suddenly

have the solution to everything that is troubling me. Rather, I begin to realize that these present threats, failures, or fears are not able to eliminate or even shake the truth of what is emerging within me. *For God alone my soul in silence waits; truly, my hope is in God. God alone is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.*

Gradually, what initially felt to me like a bottomless pit from which I could not rise, starts to provide me with a solid foundation from which to begin again. It enables me to gain distance—to detach my very existence from the situation that was consuming me, and to connect me to the real Source of my life. *In God is my safety and my honour; God is my strong rock and my refuge.*

From this restored position, I have become strengthened to re-engage. Indeed, the challenge, threat, or difficult situation has not changed, and it remains something to be worked through. But I have changed—or been changed! I have been freshly nourished by the Source of my life and been given fresh hope and faith. And from that place of restoration and refreshment I can even affirm for others the truth that has saved me—*Put your trust in God*

*always, O people, pour out your hearts before God, for God is our refuge.*



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Don Phillips is the former Bishop of the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

*The following poems are written by members of a Lenten poetry group from the parish of St. Margaret.*

### Path to the cabin on Bunny Point, MacKinnon Island

Austere, this path,

where webs break across my face,  
bare arms and legs  
tenuous threads

as the body sifts particulates —

bits of twigs,  
snippets of grass,  
dandelion tufts and moth-wing dust,  
middens, feathers drift

then settle  
on the shelf by the window like  
light filters through  
trees, leaves  
paroxysms of mirth in erratic  
pulsing patterns

God as near as the sun  
on my neck,  
naked warmth

as the spirit shifts propensities —

concentric ripples quiver on the  
surface  
as something like a spear  
strikes, joy  
clear to the bottom

- Kelly Milne

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### Oneing (a brief encounter with union)

I am pregnant with pause  
my hands, palms up, palms down  
I wane and unfurl  
and wait for the in pour

Or  
for the very quiet unfolding of things  
for a God who works  
secretly and humbly  
in the wholly mundane

and what's left when I ask  
of the history of Us

are the shimmering remnants  
of hot light illuminating  
morning rooms  
and your soft body, small  
settled into my soft body  
and my hands under water  
and my knees in the kitchen  
and the flat stone in the shadow  
that the darkness has not overcome

and everything is a grace  
where You wait saying  
come back to me  
and I wait saying  
come back to me

The bush burns but is not consumed  
The sleeping grass shifts from its winter  
death

- Carla Worthington



Photo: [Nikaela Peters](#)



## Daywork 1962

You could tell mother had been a cleaning lady  
just by the way she dusted.

In *Plautdietsch*, the Low German parlance of  
our Mennonite heritage we call it

*Dachwiesschauffe*

daywork.

Domestic labour

begun as a young Mennonite immigrant  
in her teens,

continued after marriage

cleaning

for wealthy *Engländer* and Jews

in River Heights, Crescentwood,

Riverview

or on avenues McAdam, Cathedral, Rupertsland  
the fancy streets of the North End.

Mother rarely took charge of anything,

but when she reached for that rag,

she was in control.

With fingers wrapped round this humble tool

gently

firmly

pressuring

from finger tip to shoulder

swiping

at stove-top caked on solids and liquids or

flying,

gliding

*glissando*

along the piano keyboard

her *etude symphonique*.

Lifting gingerly

the delicate porcelain sculpture from the curio  
cabinet

digging

into the folds of

specs of dust now

settled

returning that icon of elegance to the spotlight

to shine once more

in that menagerie of wealth.

Then

slapping her way down Venetian slats

ensuring no remnant of powdery

embarrassment leap out

at the motion of opening or closing.

Lamp shades and bases, sentinels of light

atop end-tables require

special attention

lest bridge club

ladies

roosting on the settee

mid post-game flawless English, martinis and

cigarettes, judge

her work.

Lest she be found wanting.

And when vacuuming

that awkward, clacking, whirring, wheezing

tangled tangoed dance

with canister, hose and attachment

the last chore before leaving

ends

mother, proud of her work

casts one last inspecting glance round the

house,

reaches for

the two dollars and eighty cents plus bus

tickets

left on the kitchen table,

locks the backdoor behind her,

and walks

slowly

to the bus stop

alone

in the late afternoon,

on a Thursday.

Another

day's work

done

for her children.

- Leona Hiebert Rew,

*Tribute to my mother, Tina Hiebert*



Photo: [Nikaela Peters](#)



### Artist's Statement:

My work explores the relationship between light and darkness with influences such as Ansel Adams and M.C. Escher. The exploration of images helps me engage more deeply with my interest in ideas about beauty, simplicity and emotional connections. I use photography as a means of self-expression. My goal is to use my camera to open an unexplored world, a world of new relationships, and new chances for new beginnings. I take pictures for myself to better understand my reality, and to express my interpretation of the world around me and to explore fragments of life as abstract forms. As well, I use photography as a means to not just document the world around me but enhance it.



In this picture, I was trying to capture the stark beauty of a single red rose. This is an iconic flower which, symbolically, has many meanings and interpretations.



Winnipeg experienced the coldest ever February 13 on record this year, setting a new record of  $-38.8$  Celsius, with its old record of  $-37.8$  C. set in 1879. I was looking out my window from my new apartment in the West Broadway Commons apartments (located on the former dining hall area of All Saints Church). I was struck by the stillness of West Broadway building tops. In that quiet moment, I took pictures of the chimney stacks with their plume of smoke. All the while thinking of how lucky, and blessed, I am to be in a warm place on such a cold day.

**This picture was captured on a chance encounter walking down a street I walk down regularly. On this one particular day, a ray of sun caught my eye. I looked up and the sun was shining through a hole in the tree. It was a perfect moment for the sun to peek through and I don't think I would be able to duplicate it if I tried.**



**Taken from the downtown area of Winnipeg. This sunrise was breathtaking. I didn't use any filters or software enhancements for this picture. This was as it looked that morning in the summer of 2020.**



**Kevin Grummett is a father, and in retirement is an amateur photographer. He takes pride in providing the best quality pictures possible. A graduate of the University of Manitoba Psychology program, Kevin spent a number of years in the social services and then slowly migrated to computer technology and library/archive studies. His goals include voluntary simplicity and becoming a professional photographer. Kevin has been recognized by Artbeat Inc., a Winnipeg non-profit charity, for his volunteer commitment to teaching photography and helping artists with mental health issues.**



# Music Revives My Soul

THEO ROBINSON



Photo: [Wesley Tingey](#)

It can be difficult to find peace amidst the busyness of life. For me, one of the guaranteed times that I have found peace is in Sunday worship. The joining of souls in common worship, the saying in unison of prayers and creeds, the singing of thought-provoking hymns, and the communion around the table have been a weekly resetting of my life for over a decade now. While each one's experience is unique, the peacefulness found in worship is no doubt a common experience for many of us.

For the last twelve months, we have been engaged in worship using such tools as Zoom, Facebook Live, and YouTube, which have allowed us to continue liturgical services and have, perhaps, joined us in new community. That said, there is now a very different feel to that time of worship. And, during these difficult times, we have all had to find new ways to revive our spirits and feed our souls outside of our weekly worship and the standard litanies of praise.

Even outside of COVID-times, there are many ways that we can find peace and praise outside of Sunday worship. For me, it has always been through music; especially, playing the piano.

I first started learning how to play the piano when I was three years old. Granted, it wasn't more than banging on a few keys while learning rhythms and sounds; but I have never been far from a keyboard since. I was taught through the Royal Conservatory of Music and progressed almost to the end of grade 9. There was talk of going on to be a concert pianist, but my teachers were too serious and my memory was terrible. They wanted me to memorize ten-page pieces and all I wanted to do was play and sing along to my favorite Disney theme song.

For years, I would spend hours playing everything from Bach to Bryan Adams, Scott Joplin to church hymns. As a geeky introvert, playing the piano was how I would beat away the stresses of the day.

Of course, at the time, I didn't realize that I was experiencing this kind of catharsis—I just loved to play. But when I would have a rough day at school, I would close the doors to the living room and play song after song after song. A couple of hours would pass and I would feel better.

I learned to play other instruments as well, such as the flute and various percussion instruments (the timpani were my favorite). But my true skill lay with the piano, and so it was to the keyboard I that always returned.

It never really occurred to me that playing the piano was a way of reviving my spirit until a few years ago. During my clinical pastoral education training (CPE), I was doing my placement at St Boniface Hospital. This was at a time when I was juggling a full-time job, part time school, and my first church placement as a postulant with hopes to be a priest in the Diocese. Not only that but I had a partner and two school-aged children at home who also needed my love and time. To say it was a stressful period would be an understatement, and even Sunday morning worship could not guarantee the peace for which I sought.

In a conversation with my CPE instructor, we talked about stress management and she asked what I did for self-care with regards to daily stress. I thought that I wasn't doing much for self-care but upon further discernment, I realized that playing the piano brought me peace and calmed my spirit.

The chapel at the hospital had a piano, and so, I decided that before my class I would play one song to reduce my stress and calm my nerves. I was amazed at the change in my soul before heading off to do visits or go to class.

But I shouldn't have been surprised. When I think back on my teenage years of playing, I can now recall the peacefulness that would come into my soul as I played.

Now, I enjoy playing for my family and, especially, my partner. Whenever everyone is feeling stressed, all I have to do is play their favorite hymns or songs and a feeling of calm washes over the entire household. Sometimes, listening to me play even helps my children to fall asleep.

Music is a very powerful force of nature and it is a universal language of the soul. Sometimes music is the only thing that takes your mind off everything else. Losing yourself in the words or the notes is just as much a litany of praise as is being pulled into a well-delivered sermon. Even as I write this reflection, I have the beautiful sounds of an orchestra playing in my ears. As I begin my liturgical preparation, I listen to Steve Bell. As I write my sermons, I listen to classical piano. Music has that way of bringing peace to the soul and, as it turns out, getting the creative juices flowing. As the popular saying goes, "Music is life. That's why our hearts have beats."

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Theo Robinson is the incumbent at St. Michael's Anglican Church in Victoria Beach, a pastor in the Interlake Regional Shared Ministry with the Lutheran Church of the MNO Synod, and a spiritual care practitioner in health care. Follow him on Facebook and Instagram and check out his blog at [tjrobinson.blogspot.com](http://tjrobinson.blogspot.com).



## “Kreative” Ministry at St. Thomas, Weston

At St. Thomas, Weston, creativity is spelled with a “K.” Last February, as COVID-19 was still a faraway rumour, an idea was born at St. Thomas, “Why don’t we invite our neighbourhood in for a meal together?” Having had some success with an after-school program for neighbourhood children called, “Kreative Kids,” the folks at St. Thomas found themselves drafting plans for a community meal that would give youth a chance to get some work experience, give food-insecure neighbours a free meal, and provide a chance for the church-folk of St. Thomas and the people of Weston and Brooklyn neighbourhoods, to get to know each other. “Kreative Kitchens” was born.

With the onset of COVID-19, Kreative Kitchens and Kreative Kids were combined under the umbrella, “Kreative” and the meal program quickly grew to regularly serve over 60 families. Now, St. Thomas regularly feeds over 200 people per week. As the need increased and word of St. Thomas’ work spread, funding and help came from all over. Community grants came in, a former resident of the neighbourhood started delivering a weekly shipment of Maple Leaf hams, Peak-of-the-Market shared vegetables, and members of the community who do not regularly attend St. Thomas started to show up to volunteer. By the time I joined the parish in the fall, the Wednesday night meal-program was a thriving operation and, in a time when this pandemic has taken away so much of what used to characterize church-life, had become a hub of parish energy and Spirit work.

The Kreative meal-program did not set out to be what it is today. Yet an attention to the needs of the community and an honest assessment of the resources of St. Thomas, created an opportunity for this parish to be able to respond to the extreme changes that this past year has brought to the world. But God is at work in this world, and we often only find out the plan in retrospect.

Over this past year, an idea for a meal program morphed into an emergency response for a food-insecure neighbourhood wracked by COVID-19. As the year progressed, the parish has discovered that while table fellowship has been largely impossible in the sanctuary, it has spilled out in the parish hall in all sorts of life-giving ways. Several families who found St. Thomas through a free meal, have found a home here in our community, contributing regularly to our worshipping life together online. On Ash Wednesday, 29 households from the meal-program took home ashes and liturgies and tuned in to the online service we streamed. Prior to the pandemic, St. Thomas was lucky if it got 29 people on a Sunday morning at all!

A year into the ministry of Kreative has emphasized the hunger present in the parish of St. Thomas. While people are hungry for food, they are also hungry for community and for encounters with the living God. When this program was dreamed up in early 2019, there was faith that since Jesus liked to meet people through meals, he might just meet folks through these meals too, and that’s exactly what has happened. For in the work of feeding, fundraising, and meeting our neighbours, we have all met Jesus, once again inviting us to the table saying “Come.”

If you would like to learn more about getting involved with the Kreative meal program, or would like to support this ministry, request a meal, or get involved, you can check us out [online](#).

**Is there something exciting  
in your congregation others  
should know about?**



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## The Language of Praise: how we sing is how we see

ALANA LEVANDOSKI

Photo: [Nikaela Peters](#)

In the old Newtonian paradigm, we perceived a billiard ball universe. A closed system machine that was predictable. That paradigm was so set, that we didn't even bother to ask which billiard cues were hitting which balls.

Now that we live in a post-Einsteinian world, we know that energy is more complex, more openly interconnected, and less blunt.

As children of the Christian household, many of us have begun to see through this cosmic lens, but in doing so, our sense of devotion can be thrown off kilter. A shift must take place, if we are to recapitulate into deeper love, and a lived experience of the presence of the Lover.

This shift must include our worship practices.

To begin, I acknowledge the beauty shining through our Christian tradition. This suffering beauty that I find in Jesus is what keeps me on this path.

However, it must be said, that through the influence of Augustine's personal shame, and astute theological capacity, which mixed the cocktail of Manichaeism, Platonism, and one version of Christianity, we've landed up in a spiral of homogenization that has had dire effects at the level of culture, language, species, and ecosystems.

It could be argued that scientific materialism is the result of two things. One, the understandably desperate need to be rid of the "church and state." And two, Christianity's influence on language itself. Baked into our very words is the notion that we are separated from God, and that the flesh is rubbish.

This notion has had a hidden influence on the view that we live in a mechanical universe, and that we ourselves are machines.

I remember once hearing a Christian lecturer warning of an uprising of "neopaganism." And it wasn't until I experienced deep healing in nature



that I realized this may have been what he was worried about.

Part of my journey has been to not only step back, but also journey through, my Christian tradition. To reconcile areas that hurt me. To notice the rich beauty when I see it. To confess the Church's many sins. To heal in my body, and my broken heart.

This has not stopped me from going beyond my Christian roots into my pre-Christian heritage. To see the beauty and the hardships and colonization of my Celtic and Slavic ancestors. To begin seeing through their eyes.

Today, the hubris of technocracy and geoengineering pose a grave threat to our planet. But any design that divides the field does. Even the design of worship.

How we sing, is how we see.

Worship is how we tell the story of our relationship to God. But behind the shape of that story, is the story of our relationship to everyone, and everything else.

By our fruits we are known.

One of the most devastating results of "Augustine's cocktail" being at the root of our orthodoxy, (quite possibly more than Jesus himself), is the ensuing centuries of persecution toward the indigenous perception of animism. That this view is "idolatrous."

I do not think the early Christians saw it this way.

Let's draw attention to the ways in which Christian worship has historically overlooked its own idolatrous behaviour.

Studying the roots of Christianity's arrival in my own ancestral heritage, (Scottish, Polish, English), I began to research the 43AD Roman invasion of Britain.

First, I was struck by how likely it was that the very first introduction of Jesus to the British Isles might have been in whispers, from foreign slave to local slave, in the shadows of a Roman occupied mine.

Next, I was struck by how long it took Rome to conquer the Britannic tribes, and that the siege on the Temple of Claudius, among many long-fought battles, was led by the matriarch warrior Boudica.

The foundations of the Temple of Claudius are found under Colchester Castle today, and in the 4th century, it was renovated for Christian use.

There has been a misunderstanding of the intent of the gospel writers, who wrote in the agonizing aftermath of war that resulted in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. If the gospel writers were bringing Caesar down by raising up the Kenotic One, by raising up the poverty of God in Jesus, this was quickly inverted when worship spaces were erected.

When Caesar dies, he becomes a god. You erect a temple in his name. You worship his perfection. You declare him victorious. And you praise him "for" things. Not "with" things.

Imagine if praise was with all else, instead of for all else. We might not have even had the "doctrine of discovery" if we had been praising *with*, instead of *for*.

It fascinates me to no end that the Temple of Claudius, the very location where British tribespeople were crucified, became the foundation for one of the first buildings in Britain to be converted to Christian use.

*Here is the hidden idolatry of our tradition.*

We have been on the journey of Truth and Reconciliation, awakening out of a paradigm whose roots lie in the unhealed wounds of our own heritage. When Roman uniformity first stepped onto British soil and saw my ancestors, they called them "savages." And they saw acquisition. Then, when the closed system orthodoxy of our Christian tradition set in, the Celtic Christians and Druids were labeled "nature worshippers".

If nature is sacred, you can't own it. Better to theologize justifications for our plundering.

But notice wherever there is the most stunning beauty within the Catholic tradition—the Rhineland Mystics, Julian of Norwich, Thomas Merton, Bede Griffiths, etc. What they have in common is this mystical understanding of the connectedness of all things. The incarnation.

Thomas Merton said "for the world and time are the dance of the Lord in emptiness."

To see the fruits of anti-matter theology, just sink beneath the surface of your day, and let our living planet show you her fissures. Sit in silence with God-who-would-be-whole, and hear the agonizing, impossible stretch of unfathomable love.

Aside from the underlying need to justify objectification, these fruits come from a genuine fear of conflating Creator with Creation. But that fear is rooted in binary seeing.

Wisdom teacher and Episcopal priest Cynthia Bourgeault says that Christianity is “a ternary swan in a binary duck pond.”

From a ternary perspective, the self-emptying of Creator into Creation is not difficult to perceive. We can have both Walter Brueggemann’s “scandal of the particular,” and the scandal of the web of the incarnate universe.

**How about *lateral praise*? We find it in the Psalms, where the whole of enjoined creation praises the Maker. It is found in the healings of Jesus. Spittle, soil, mud, praying to Abba, healing.**

**Our early ancestors, and indigenous healers today, would never attempt a healing with their own small egoic self. Neither did Jesus. They were situated as part of a great complex whole, that joined in with whole-making.**

Poet farmer Wendell Berry says, “there are no unsacred places, there are only sacred and desecrated places.”

If our worship could reflect that deeper truth, and move beyond the idolatry of triumphant Caesar Jesus, it might shape us into a second naiveté of union with God-who-is-in-all-things.

Nothing less than a seismic shift in how we perceive the Sacred in all else, even in the stones, will evolve Christians out of this growth economy death spiral of domination, objectification, and triumphalism.

We have to be willing to see the inert idolatry inside our own worship, and get vulnerable enough to sense our tender, beautiful, inner longings for fruit, that would bring a cacophony of life.



Alana Levandoski is a song and chant writer, recording artist and music producer, in the Christian tradition, who lives with her family on a regenerative farm on the Canadian prairies.

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