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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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Basements and Beyond!

Photo: [Hermes Rivera](#)

On May 7, I found myself in the basement of Holy Trinity Anglican Church attending the Grand Opening of the Emmanuel Mission Learning Centre. When I arrived at the church, the basement was bustling. Nothing “official” was happening yet but there were chairs and a projector set up and plenty of people sitting, standing, laughing, chatting away, and greeting each other. I noticed groups of kids hanging out in various corners of a room full of couches and computers, the white painted cinderblock walls decorated with colourful posters— “Emmanuel Mission” hand drawn on them. A handful of people were busy preparing food in the kitchen. I would later learn that the basement of Holy Trinity had been newly renovated with a grant from the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and that this funding enabled the learning centre to be run as a year-round program at the church. There’s an article on page eight that delves further into this exciting new chapter for the Emmanuel Mission Learning Centre. But my experience at the Grand Opening reminded me of the importance of usable spaces in our diocese and their potential to encourage education and creativity in our communities. Spaces create opportunities—opportunities for learning, for meeting new people and building relationships, for making art and feeling seen and heard—for experiencing community.

June’s issue is about initiatives in our diocese that support the creation of spaces—like Holy Trinity’s renovated basement—where we can support each other in educational and creative endeavors. Hannah Foulger sheds light on the artists-in-residence program at saint benedict’s table, and Al Thorleifson writes about a building at the heart of Manitou’s arts

community: the Manitou Opera House.

I’ll also be transporting my life to a new creative space in the imminent future. In September, I’m moving to Saskatoon to begin a two-year writing program at the University of Saskatchewan, and as much as I’ve cherished my work as editor of RLN, I sadly cannot take it with me. It’s been such a privilege, though, to serve readers of this publication over the last couple of years. To the writers and artists whose work has graced these pages, thank you for your insights and perspectives. To the diocesan staff, thank you for being such a welcoming team. To my talented designer, Mike Berg, thank you for bringing every issue to life. And finally, to my advisory board, Pam Bann, Bonnie Dowling, Chris Trott, and Geoff Woodcroft, thank you for your wise council, your banter, and your unwavering support. I couldn’t have done this work without you.

Maybe this is a bit cheesy, but I’m going to close my final editorial with this encouraging quote from Makoto Fujimura’s book *Art + Faith: A Theology of Making*:

“It is hard work to live into this generative love, and it is what we are made for: to paint light into darkness, to sing in co-creation, to take flight in abundance.”

I look forward to seeing where the *Rupert’s Land News* flies off to next!



Sara Krahn is the editor of *Rupert’s Land News*.

The Art of Being a Disciple

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Photo: [Kelli Tungay](#)

The body of Christ is a work of God's artistry. It is the Creator's presence gifted within Christ's disciples, whose free-wielding brushes, pens, and textiles apply form, structure, context, and colour to each new generation. Every brush stroke is necessary, yet no one stroke maintains the image alone. Where old paint has flaked, a new brush applies new imagery. Where the story is losing edge, new storytellers revitalize its telling. Where resurrection is needed, the elaborate preparation for dying is administered by those who are skilled in the art of commending the faith that is within them.

Although I think the imagery of God's artistry is lovely, it would be pointless without purpose—art for art's sake. Our worship, prayers, celebrations of the seasons, and love of Hebrew and Christian testaments illustrate the degree to which the Christian Church embraces art forms to tell of God's grace and love for the world. The splendor of verse and song, architecture, and window reveal that which God through Christ does in the world. Beautiful art is never for us to simply hold and admire; it teaches us how to be Christ in the world. In our story, prayers, blessing and action we live the body of the risen Jesus, which is no small task in

a world of numerous attractions and distractions; it is an art to live as one in Christ.

Each disciple is continually forming, a life-long learner at the feet of Christ. Daily, we recommit ourselves to continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers. Christ disciplines us to seek God in all aspects of living, to learn to communicate as one body, and to listen in our own unique way.

The art of being a disciple is to reflect daily on scripture, to be woven intricately into God's story, whereby our words, confidence, and actions clearly demonstrate the love of God. The art of discipleship ultimately shows the disciple how the ancient words of the Bible are the excited and living stories of God's children everywhere today, and just how disciples see Christ in all.

The Church is always in need of revival, renewal, and regeneration. But this is what makes it a splendid house for the artists' imagination, and we have an impressive array of artists and artistry from every age to help us tell God's story. I look forward to your telling of the story.

A Goodbye Letter

Dear Disciples,

This is the last issue of the magazine that our editor Sara Krahn will share with us. She is called to further her education out of province beginning this fall.

On behalf of the Diocese, we thank Sara for her excellence in journalism, editorship, and Christian presence. She has been an excellent leader with whom to work. Sara is a blessing, a competent editor and writer, and a disciple of Jesus. We shall certainly miss her, but we wish her all our best. May God continue to bless her in her career, family and faith.

*Your Rupert's Land News Advisory Committee,
Pam Bann, Bonnie Dowling, Chris Trott and Geoff Woodcroft*



Geoffrey Woodcroft,
Bishop of Rupert's Land

In the fabric of who we are: saint benedict's table supports their community through the artist-in-residence program

HANNAH FOULGER

Photo: Brian Wangerheim

For twelve years, saint benedict's table has supported its community of artists through an artist-in-residence program. st. ben's is a downtown Winnipeg parish, sharing space with All Saints Anglican Church at the corner of Memorial and Broadway. They meet for their regular Eucharist service on Sunday evenings, and as such have an eclectic collection of members, including several artists from different disciplines. They have supported different artists from the congregation through their artist-in-residence program over the past twelve years.

In that time, they have supported fifteen artists (both career artists and hobbyists) from different disciplines like musicians, writers, potters, photographers, and visual artists, including Carolyn Mount (fabric arts), [Kalyn Falk](#) (creative prayer), Anas Quinten (visual art and calligraphy) and myself (creative writing and theatre).

"We knew right from the beginning that music was going to be a really important part in our life," st. ben's rector [Jamie Howison](#) says, adding that over time they discovered they had multiple artists from other disciplines in the church. "By virtue of who was there, we said let's incorporate the things that people bring into the life of the church as best we can."

The artist-in-residence program began "by happy accident" in 2010, Howison says, when the church supported musician [Gord Johnson](#) over several months with a small stipend each month.

After Johnson's residency wrapped up in 2013, st. ben's, having already made space in the budget for the program, made the residency an annual program. The plan was to support an artist from the community over one year (in line with the liturgical calendar) with a stipend. Each year, the artist (or artists) is selected by a group of applicants by the Arts Fund committee.

Most of these artists included community interaction in their residency. Falk offered workshops in body prayer, which formed the research for her book. Carolyn Mount founded the artist network, a group where st. ben's artists can meet and share in each others' artistic journeys. I presented several readings of my work, with the help of local actors, over my terms.

In 2018, the residency became more flexible. Applicants could request a term of several months for a specific project. That year the church supported [Kevin Grummett](#), a photographer, Anas Quinten, a calligrapher and



**Work by Anas Quinten,
a calligrapher and visual artist**

visual artist, Kyla Neufeld, poet and former editor of Rupert's Land News who wrote liturgically inspired poems, and [Trish Vrolijk](#), who often serves as a musician but used the time to make a new quilt for the St. Ben's family service. As well, [Karen Cornelius](#) was supported in her climate-based work. Karen Cornelius offered one community workshop, and another artist-in-residence from that year, [Andrea Shalay](#), centred her residency on offering several workshops on making [pysanka](#), a traditional folk-art practice of decorating Easter eggs.



An icon created by visual artist Anas Quinten.

In my own case, the monetary support was hugely important for me that year.

"For some of the people who receive these residencies it's not an income stream that they are all dependent on. It's been gravy. On the other hand, there have been other people for whom it has made an enormous difference, month to month. For somebody who's trying to be a working artist and use that as their primary vocation, as you well know, it can be a bit of a hand to mouth existence," Howison says.

One of 2022's artists-in-residence is [Mark Holmes á Court](#), a composer with a background in classical music, who was able to use his residency to write a new song for the liturgy.

"I just finished a master's program in composition and this counts, for me, as a kind of commission," he says. "It's not that I wouldn't write work for churches without being paid, but without payment it is hard to justify prioritizing it and getting the work done."

In 2018-19, St. Ben's was working off of a grant from the [Collegeville Institute](#) as a part of their [Communities of Calling](#) with a focus on vocation of the church. That year, the artist-in-residence was replaced by a "weaver's apprentice" to lead the work on a community art project: a large woven art piece. Under the tutelage of Carolyn Mount, [Samantha Klassen](#) was picked to use a large loom during the regular services, to weave for herself and to teach and work with members of the church to participate in the process as well.



A loom housed at saint benedict's table as part of the artists-in-residence program.

Moving into 2020, the Arts Fund decided to begin the residency in January, splitting the year between two artists: [Lois Gillespie](#), a musician (nine months) and myself (three months). 2020, as you may recall, was a year of grief and pivoting. Gillespie intended to lead some songwriting workshops in person, as well as a few concerts, and to write a number of songs. I intended to work on research for a new play about historical abuse in disability institutions. Due to the lockdown, Lois had to postpone her songwriting workshop and the ongoing condition of the world made reading about

abuse difficult. With the permission of the Arts Fund, I was able to use the time to work on other projects, while also hosting a virtual reading of one of my plays.

This year, the church is supporting four artists over three-month terms. The residency will support returning artists, Kevin Grummett, to work on a photography exhibit, and Trish Vrolijk to professionally record the original song "Still," based on Psalms 27, 116, and 139. [Sharon Jones-Ryan](#) will be working in pottery to create a series of single serving communion bowls to be gifted to members of the online worship community of st. ben's. The residency will also support writer [Jennifer Wiens](#) to focus on writing, including a writing retreat. Another clay artist, [Anna Goertzen Loepky](#), will be leading the community in making communion cups.



Pottery for communion created by Sharon Jones-Ryan

Mark Holmes á Court debuted his composition at the 2022 Good Friday service. The composition, split into four parts, was played by clarinet, viola, and piano and is split into four parts.

"The first piece is a reflection on 'Father,

forgive them, they know not what they do.' The music is more meditative and slow, maybe a little hesitant," Holmes á Court says. "The second is an emphatic cry, which is much more rhythmically driven. The clarinet goes high, as is the viola, and they bounce off each other."

While the residency has funded a number of art projects and workshops for the liturgy or community of st. ben's, the development of an artist's personal practice outside of a faith context has always been supported by the Arts Fund committee. Over my terms in 2017 and 2021, I worked on a number of writing projects, including novels and plays, which were not faith-based. The Arts Fund was also very understanding of my need to pivot the focus of my residency last year when it became too difficult to pursue under the emotional strain of the pandemic. The Arts Fund board emphasizes that successful residency isn't about output as much as supporting the artist's time and development.

Howison says that the artists-in-residence don't need to "paste in a footnote" in order to make their art acceptable by the fund or the church at large.

"I think that it's important in the life of the church to include artists. Just in the fabric of who and what we are, I think that as a writer or visual artist or musician, you as a person bring something to the community that matters,"

Howison says. "The flip side, we also know that while some people like Gord are steadily writing music for the liturgy, other people like Lois (Gillespie) are not. But that's okay. That's okay because what you do matters and it's part of who you are, and we want to be authentic."



Hannah Foulger is the Reporter/Writer at Large for *Rupert's Land News*. She is a disabled British Canadian writer and theatre artist. She is currently an MFA candidate in Creative Writing at the University of Guelph in Toronto.



Supporting Newcomer Children & Families: Say Yes! to Kids grant expands Emmanuel Mission Youth Learning Program

MICHELLE HAUSER

Photo: Submitted by Michelle Hauser

“As we begin to move into pandemic recovery, learning enrichment programs like ours are more important than ever,” says Khamisa Maciek, Administrator for the [Emmanuel Mission Youth Learning Program](#), Winnipeg, in the Diocese of Rupert’s Land.

What began as a summer school outreach ten years ago—serving students from kindergarten to grade nine who are newcomers to Canada—will soon provide year-round learning enrichment that will benefit students and their parents.

Emmanuel Mission received a category B grant of \$15,000 through the Anglican Foundation of Canada’s 2021 Say Yes! to Kids program. It was one of eleven category B grants awarded, for a total of \$134,000, or nearly 30 percent of the total funding request. “Grants of up to \$15,000 were considered on the basis of impact, project scope, and how they supported the overall mission and service to children and

youth in a city, diocese, or region,” says Dr. Scott Brubacher, Executive Director, AFC.



Emmanuel Mission Learning Centre Board members, from left to right: Cathy Campbell, Abraham Chuol, Gail Schnabl

The expansion grant for Emmanuel Mission is scheduled to roll out this spring as the program moves to three days per week. It will allow children and their parents to experience learning and working together with others. Maciek explains that the parent component was

identified as a priority because of what staff and volunteers had learned from the summer program.

“Many of the parents of our summer students have not attended school in Canada, and some may not have attended school at all.” The result is that parents are not always aware of the expectations schools have for their children, “Nor are they always aware of the kind of home-based support their children need to be successful within the Canadian school system,” says Maciek.

Currently, the program includes tutoring, math and language supplements, sports, singing, field trips, and more. Underlining these studies is the understanding of the importance of teamwork and camaraderie. Many of the students have come to Canada from South Sudan, Rwanda, Kenya, Congo, Uganda, Nepal, and Somalia.

A year-round focus, with programming offered on weekday evenings and weekends, will give students’ parents an opportunity to meet with the program leaders and other volunteers to learn more about how to support their children’s education. The expansion effort will also include an emphasis on mentoring younger children by involving the growing numbers of young adult university students who are part of the Emmanuel Mission community. “These mentors, some of whom have been involved with this program for a decade, are aware of the challenges the younger students face, because they have faced similar challenges themselves,” says Maciek.

One of the great rewards of Emmanuel Mission’s learning outreach remains the impact on language development. “Students come to us and are so eager to learn, and they pick up vocabulary so quickly,” says Maciek. “I remember one student, in particular: I was working with her on a craft activity. When we started, she couldn’t speak a word of English. Just a few weeks later, she came to me and was speaking English, saying, ‘Khamisa I did it!’”

Testimonials

“Emmanuel Mission Learning programs have given our children a sense of belonging and enabled them to be part of a larger community. They have set the stage to allow them to begin discussing, sharing, and envisioning their society in years to come. Such a discussion is critical to our children as second-generation immigrants.”

—David Mabior, Grateful Parent



“As a spiritual leader my greatest desire is to see these children grow into competent next c o m m u n i t y leaders. As a community, we face numerous challenges in our process of settlement and integration, which is why this program is needed. I am confident that God will provide opportunities for continued success and am grateful for the support and goodwill of the people of the Diocese of Rupert’s Land.”

—Fr. Abraham (Monybuny) Chuol, Executive Director, Emmanuel Mission

For more information about Say Yes! to Kids 2022 and how your parish, or a youth-focused cause that you care about, can benefit from this nationwide peer-to-peer fundraising campaign visit [Say Yes! to Kids – Anglican Foundation of Canada](#) or email Michelle Hauser, AFC’s Development and Communications Consultant at mhauser@anglicanfoundation.org.

The Grand Opening Celebration of the Emmanuel Mission Learning Centre on May 7, 2022 at Holy Trinity Anglican Church (256 Smith Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba)



Photos: Sara Krahn

Ecumenical Faith in an Artistic Community

AL THORLEIFSON



Photo: Al Thorleifson

When I first came to the Manitou area a half century ago, I was immediately aware that this was an ecumenical community, a community where people of different faith traditions worked together for the betterment of the whole community. There was no specific event which led to this interfaith perspective that I have been aware of, but it is seen in many aspects of community life. Much of the evidence of this partnership can be seen in the Manitou Opera House, a 1930 proscenium theatre built in the style of the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris. This is where the faith communities come together.

Every year, the community's Ministerial Committee hosts a community Christmas Concert where choirs and readers from all six of the community's congregations, along with school and community choirs, perform and tell the Christmas story.

The community gathers annually on November 11 to recognize the sacrifice of the young men and women who have served in the armed forces since the community was founded in the 1880s. Again, representatives of the community's congregations serve as readers along with the Legion Chaplain.

Every summer, the Manitou Agricultural Fair includes a Sunday service focused on the land,

the crops and the sense of community associated with the agricultural way of life. Again, the churches are all involved.

Over the past thirty years, The Manitou Coffee House Musicians have hosted bi-weekly coffee houses where the musicians provide the music gratis and community organizations provide snacks and coffee. All donations received at these coffee houses go toward projects as varied as the Nursery School, the United Church Rock Lake Camp, and the Canadian Food Grains Bank. Music at these coffee houses is wide ranging, from folk to rock, from country to blues, and with a good measure of gospel and contemporary Christian influence. Everyone is welcome and their gift of music is respected by their fellow musicians and audience.

The Borderline Singers presented concerts of sacred and secular music for over 30 years. Candlewick, a local theatre company, has written scripts with biblical themes and performed them in two-week mid-summer productions. Performers in these productions come from the wider region of Southern Manitoba and again represent many faith communities. These are produced from and performed in the Manitou Opera House.

All these productions and performances with their sacred elements are interwoven

among many other more secular performances and productions. The Opera House has a much broader scope than this, however. Several teachers – piano, voice, violin, and dance teachers – host lessons out of the Opera House. A Youth Drop-in is hosted in the Opera House every week and provides a safe gathering place where young folk can talk, celebrate, do homework, and play together. Several church related groups have also occasionally held training sessions and workshops which are open to the community.

The Opera House is in use for at least 225 days of the year. And, of course, all of this was before COVID came along. The Opera House has been empty and silent since March of 2020, except for the occasional socially distanced meeting or a walk through to ensure the building is secure and the heat is still on. In February of 2022, as things have begun to open again, the junior drama troupe began rehearsing for a production of Lion King Junior. The teen crowd also began rehearsing for a production of Little Women. The elementary school choir videotaped their festival performances in the Opera House in mid-March, and because many of the young choristers have never been in the Opera House before, we took them on a tour of the building.

Here is another thing to note. The original Opera House was built without consideration of

those with mobility issues. For years, wheelchairs were carried into and out of the building, up the flight of stairs to the front door. In 2015, The Manitou Opera House Foundation decided to add an accessible wing to the building, with access to washrooms, the stage, and meeting rooms for all. The committee also decided to make the addition look and feel as much like the original as possible, so wide fir baseboards, hardwood floors, and a drop siding exterior was incorporated to invite everyone into this community space.

Many of our community's churches are small enough that funerals are now held in the newly accessible Opera House. One of our Opera House supporters even hosted his own 100th birthday party there.

Manitou is a musical community, a community where the arts are respected and promoted, where the young are encouraged to develop their artistic skills. It is also a faith community, where everyone is welcome, and everyone is encouraged to share their story. The church communities of Manitou, and the Opera House would welcome everyone to come join in celebrating faith and the arts, even at the same time.



Al Thorleifson taught senior high Math, Literature, Calculus and Choral Music for almost four decades at Nellie McClung Collegiate in Manitou. He became a lay reader in the Pembina Hills Parishes in the early 1990s and was ordained in 2015. He is also the archivist for the Pembina Manitou Archive, a digital archive which serves South Central Manitoba. Al and Loretta have sung together with friends, Bill and Mariette Howatt, in On the Edge at concerts throughout Southern Manitoba for over 30 years.

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Scholarship Assistance in Ndoddo, Diocese of Central Buganda

RICK MORGAN

St. George's (Crescentwood) has an active relationship with our partner parish, All Martyr's, Ndoddo, which started back in 2000 when we supported a potable water project near the community. In more recent years we have supported purchases of shoes for children walking to school, school supplies, COVID thermometers, and other things. Some parishioners also support the Rupert's Land Diocesan Orphans Program. Most recently we have supported a portion of costs in the parish related to a large confirmation as well as some costs related to the ordination of their new priest, Rev. John Ssemanda. The economy in rural Uganda is doing particularly badly these days and parishioners have very few extra funds to support these important church activities.



Irene Nangendo is a parishioner at All Martyr's in Ndoddo, Central Buganda, which is a partner parish of St. George's (Crescentwood) in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Nangendo has just completed her studies in education at Namasuba College of Commerce in Kampala.

A key current support is for two young All Martyr's parishioners who are pursuing their education. Irene Nangendo completed high school and wanted to study to be a schoolteacher. In mid 2019, we committed about \$2900 CAD to support her studies at Namasuba College of Commerce in Kampala, over a maximum of 3 years. Irene has just

completed her studies (more or less on schedule – but there were some COVID delays) and is now looking for work. We hope she can find teaching work in the Bulo/Ndoddo area, but that may not be possible. Irene was born in Katende in the Mpigi District and is now 21 years old. She was raised by her aunties, Robina Nanteza, Joyce Kizza, and Girades Nalubwama, as her parents separated when she was young, and she never properly knew them. Irene has done very well to reach this point in her life, supported by her strong belief in God, her church, and her aunties.



A group of young students from Irene Nangendo's practice teaching classroom.

St. George's is also supporting David SSegawa in his studies at Kyambogo University in Kampala. This support, amounting to about \$5100 over 3 years, began in March 2021. There have been some COVID related delays, but David has now successfully completed year one of his studies. Year two will start at the end of May, and we are following his progress carefully.

Most parishes in Rupert's Land are linked with a parish in Central Buganda. The prayers and support we provide are much appreciated in that Diocese. The Orphans Program is a particularly important initiative as was the Kasaka Water Project. Smaller initiatives, on a parish-by-parish basis, are also beneficial in a rural area where financial resources are very limited.

Rick Morgan is the organist and music director at parish of St. George's (Crescentwood). He currently serves as chair of the Mission & Ministry Committee.

RLN interviews former Synod Delegates

With Diocesan Synod coming up in October 2022, the Nominations Committee is looking for clergy and lay Synod 2022 delegates who are willing to let their names stand for election at the upcoming Diocesan Synod gathering. Rupert's Land News in partnership with the Nominations Committee decided to connect with some lay delegates from previous years and interview them about their Diocesan leadership experiences and stories including serving on, for example, Diocesan Council and serving as representatives from the Diocese of Rupert's Land to General Synod and Provincial Synod. We hope you will be inspired to serve the Diocese and look forward to your nomination.

Interview with Richard Pilbeam, St. Paul's Fort Garry

RLN: What motivated you to let your name stand to attend the Provincial and General Synod?

RP: I had been very active in my parish, as a Sunday School Teacher, Peoples Warden, Rectors Warden, and Lay Ministry. As Rectors Warden, I chaired the Vestry meetings for the parish, but I wanted to know how other parishes conducted their meetings. During the process of our AGM, I was approached by several members to let my name stand for Provincial Synod. Seeing this as an opportunity to meet fellow Anglicans from throughout the Diocese, I agreed and was elected.

Provincial Synod was a good learning experience and opportunity to learn about our Diocese. By being interactive in our breakout groups, I was asked to let my name stand for General Synod. I saw this as an opportunity to meet Anglicans from all across Canada and learn about their practices and procedures. I agreed and was elected.

RLN: What experiences impacted you the most at either Provincial or General Synod? Where did you see God at work?

RP: At General Synod, I got to observe how other Dioceses from across Canada interacted at Synod, and how some Eastern Dioceses tried to dominate the Synod. I viewed this as very political and undemocratic. After all, we were all there for the same purpose and all should have equal input in the daily meetings.

I got to meet numerous people and had the opportunity to have a chat with Ted Scott. I got to meet and listen to Desmond TuTu give a presentation. I saw God at work by listening to Desmond describe the situation in Africa and the role he played in that country. My interaction with Desmond was a major factor in my initiative to get Desmond to be a visitor and speaker at St. Pauls Fort Garry on May 9, 2004. My wife Dorothy and I were privileged to have lunch with Desmond the same day. A day I will never forget.

I also saw God at work by observing how Michael Peers conducted himself at General Synod. He was gentle and spoke from the heart.



I knew at that time that he would be the next Primate, and in 1986 he was elected Primate.

Experiences like those above have had a significant effect on my life and my focus more on God's world.

RLN: What factors might hold you back from letting your name stand in the future?

RP: Factors that might hold me back from letting my name stand in the future are age, we need to have more younger people involved. Also, there is a commitment to these positions that requires a certain amount of time from you to which you must be willing to commit. At this point in my life, I would only want to be involved in short-term projects.

If the opportunity comes along for you to be nominated as a synod delegate, I would strongly recommend you step forward and enjoy the experience. The opportunity you will get to meet different people, and their cultures, and learn from their experiences are enlightening. Do not be afraid to get involved as God sits at all meetings. You never know what paths or doors or experiences await you.

Interview with Tannis Webster, St Mary Magdalene Church

RLN: Where have you seen God at work within the Synod committees you have participated in?

TW: I have attended Diocesan Synod and from that was elected to Diocesan Council. I was also elected to attend Provincial Synod and General Synod and served on the Council of General Synod (CoGS) but, I want to specifically focus on Rupert's Land Diocesan Council.

The Council consists of approximately 30 members, both lay and clergy, and the commitment, dedication, and willingness to serve were evident from the first meeting. It is in this service that one could witness God at work. Most clergy on Council have a full-time job, whether as an incumbent in a parish or a hospital chaplain, a teacher, a youth worker, etc. and the majority of the laity also have full-time work. Yet, they all find time to come together to further the work of the Diocese.

RLN: What memories of sitting on these committees stand out for you?

TW: Some of the things that stood out for me at the Council meetings were humour, support for one another, willingness to accept and put forward new ideas, genuine love, and concern for one another and those with whom they came in contact, a love of their church and love of God. As well, meeting in different churches throughout the Diocese, I was aware of the many church members who came to the meetings early in the morning to provide coffee and snacks and remained to serve lunch and clean up afterwards.

RLN: What advice might you have for others who are asked to serve in these committee positions?

TW: While it may appear that I am a "meeting junkie" given the number of committees on which I've served, I felt encouraged and supported by several synod delegates to let my name stand for election.

Having been elected, I attended my first Diocesan Council meeting (with some trepidation) and felt welcomed, appreciated, listened to and part of a committed group. I was impressed that the meetings ran on time and were carried out in a respectful and caring manner. I felt confident in expressing my views and supported in presenting my thoughts and ideas.

My time on Diocesan Council gave me the courage to allow my name to stand for Provincial and General Synod and CoGS. These opportunities gave me a whole new understanding of the work being carried out by my church, my Diocese, the church across Canada and the church in the wider world. A humbling position in which I found myself, in the midst of so many committed Christians, working quietly, following in Christ's footsteps.