



**5** **Community Catechesis:  
Resurrection**

**7** **Ours to Tell: A Celebration  
of Black History**

**9** **"With All Your People": On ACC's  
Treatment of BIPOC People**

**12** **At St. Thomas, Giving Means  
Getting Creative!**



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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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# God Bless the Grass

Photo: [Alfred Stieglitz, Grass and Frost, 1934](#)

*God bless the grass that grows thru the crack  
They roll the concrete over it to try and keep it back  
The concrete gets tired of what it has to do  
It breaks and it buckles and the grass grows thru  
And God bless the grass ...*

*God bless the truth that fights toward the sun  
They roll the lies over it and think that it is done  
It moves through the ground and reaches for the air  
And after a while it is growing everywhere  
And God bless the grass...*

*God bless the grass that's gentle and low  
Its roots they are deep and its will is to grow  
And God bless the truth, the friend of the poor  
And the wild grass growing at the poor man's door  
And God bless the grass*

-lyrics from [God Bless the Grass](#) by Malvina Reynolds

I am thinking about these lyrics as we approach Easter.

Christ created conflict amongst his community with his outspoken message and denouncement of what he saw as the neglect of the “weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith” (Matt 23:23). As this social conflict became an irritant to the Roman occupants of Israel they ultimately quieted it through Christ’s crucifixion.

It’s striking that the events we find so significant as Christians—Christ’s death and resurrection—did not phase the empire which had murdered him, and which continued to dominate as indifferently as concrete rolled atop grass.

This reality is continuous though with Christ’s words throughout his life, that there are a minority who have eyes to see and ears to

hear who recognize his gospel. Like the truth which *fights toward the sun*, it is those without consolation from the orders of the world in the gospel text who experience Christ’s justice and mercy and faith as healing—tasting of the resurrection—while idolatrous powers miss the abundant, free and common banquet of his life and resurrection (Matt 22:1-14).

Whether recognized or not, the resurrection affirms that death and sin, which determine the values of the powers and principalities of this world, are not in fact foundational. It affirms that divine love, which may be as tender as grass, is also primary, pervasive, and unconstrainable. Christ suffered and died with all creation, and in resurrection lifted up the lowly of creation, affirming his dominion over death, and over all earthly powers. The concrete in all its strength and apparent indifference, we learn, is beholden to the life at its source, its dependency exposed as it breaks and buckles to the living truth which undergirds it.

Regenerative forces can be felt throughout this month’s issue. In our Community Catechesis section Tapji Garba writes on resurrection and “the good life.” Then March’s “Ours to Tell: Celebrating Black History” event, which marked the inauguration of Black Anglicans of Canada, Diocese of Rupert’s Land chapter, is featured. Included is a note from Zilla Jones and Wilson Akinwale on the history of Black Anglican organizing in the Anglican Church of Canada and within the Diocese of Rupert’s Land. This is followed by a reworking from Edmund Laldin of his powerful homily given at the event which speaks on the treatment of BIPOC persons in the Anglican Church of Canada. Finally, Meredith Robinson reflects on St. Thomas Weston’s “Kreative” programs which offer “inclusive, safe, reliable” support to the Weston community’s members.



Jude Claude is the editor of Rupert's Land News.





## A True Communion of Loving Acceptance

GEOFFREY WOODCROFT

Photo: [Daniel McCullough](#)

I look at the church right now and I see so much pain. I want to write today to express my own sadness, and my own regret.

As I'm sure many readers will be aware, in the last month a great deal of change has come upon the Anglican communion. On February 20th several provinces in the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches declared its conviction that its communion with the Church of England as its mother church has been broken, as a result of the decision by the Church of England's bishops to allow the blessing of same-sex unions. Clearly, there is pain in the global church.

I have felt some of the repercussions of this situation firsthand. In the week following the decision by the English Bishops we also learned

that the leadership of our companion diocese of Central Buganda had cancelled the planned trip of a delegation from Rupert's Land. I know that the cancellation was directly related to my own commitment to celebrate, uphold and honour the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people. It has been a sad realization that I will not make this visit; I had been looking forward to meeting the folks who are our companion diocese. I was looking forward to learning about who they are, about what their lives are like, what their hopes and dreams are, what discipleship looks like for them, and why they are committed to the Anglican tradition.

But I have been especially saddened by the pain this situation has caused in our own diocese. While some 2SLGBTQIA+ Anglicans,

with their allies, have found reason to celebrate the shift in the Church of England, for many others the news, subsequent statements by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and from myself, and ensuing dispute have meant not joy but sorrow. The controversies, equivocations and qualifications that followed the bishops' decision were each a reminder of how far we are from true communion and total inclusion of every person who calls themselves a follower of Jesus in the Church. This sorrow and frustration has made me more deeply aware than ever of my own sadness and my own regret.

I regret that I have not done all in my power to ensure the safety of 2SLGBTQIA+ people in our Church. I need and want to work harder at that, and I will. I will endeavour to continue to educate myself in 2SLGBTQIA+ issues. I will make it a priority to ensure that diversity awareness training is made available for the diocese, and be required of all licensed clergy

and lay leaders. More than anything, I am deeply sorry that members of our Church have knowingly and willingly discriminated against the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. I will do all in my power to ensure that the Diocese of Rupert's Land is a place where all are welcomed into a true communion of loving acceptance. I will renew my efforts to create this communion by continuing to fight against the fear that creates hate and fuels discrimination. What I know is that the Church cannot be itself without the 2SLGBTQIA+ disciples. In them, we have been given great gifts; gifts of grace for the whole Church. Those gifts need as much celebrating as they do defending, and I commit myself to both.

In all of the sadness, all of the sorrow and frustration, I think on Psalm 22: *For God did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; God did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.*

## A Message from the Bishop's Office

We celebrate with the Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Committee and all Black Anglicans in the Diocese of Rupert's Land the formal establishment of the [Black Anglicans of Canada](#) Diocese of Rupert's Land chapter.

We thank the organizers of March 19th's "Ours to Tell: A Celebration of Black History," and all those who contributed to the event and who have engaged in the longstanding work of promoting racial justice in the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

We pray, in line with [resolutions](#) passed at Synod 2022, to be humble allies in supporting the [goals](#) of Black Anglicans of Canada of Belonging, Empowerment, Participation, and Representation for Black Anglicans.



Geoffrey Woodcroft,  
Bishop of Rupert's Land



## Resurrection and the Good Life

TAPIJI GARBA

Photo: [Jake Weirick](#)

The New Testament speaks of resurrection from two distinct angles: 1) the resurrection of Jesus and 2) the resurrection of the *dead*. The resurrection of Jesus—his departure from the grave—was the vindication of his mission, his elevation beyond all worldly authorities and dominion (Col 1:15-20). In rising from the dead, Jesus was declared to be Son of God with “power according to the spirit of holiness” (Romans 1:4). His resurrection was not a zombie-like return to life as we know it, but the transformation of life itself. It is why Paul describes Jesus’ resurrected body as a “life-giving spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). Unlike the first Adam who *received* the breath of life, the second Adam, Jesus, *gives* life to mortal flesh. The nature of the resurrection body brings us to the resurrection of the dead in general. In the time when the New Testament was written, the resurrection of the dead was thought to be a general event which would involve the resurrection of all who are deceased. This is why the resurrection of Jesus is often framed as the beginning of a more general phenomenon where the risen Christ is “the first fruits of those

who have died” (1 Cor 15:20). Just as trees are the fully developed form of the seeds from which they emerged, so the risen body is the full flower of the physical body: “What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable.” (1 Cor 15:42) As such, the Risen Christ is the living image of the good life—life clothed in God’s glory.

The good life is our conception of what it means to flourish. It is an important political concept because our conception of flourishing provides standards by which we assess our current way of living. Right now, the dominant conception of flourishing says that to live the good life you must market yourself, so as to acquire wealth and success through hard work. This kind of thinking has led to the elimination of all kinds of social support with the thought being: “If you did not earn it, then you do not deserve it.” Many people are left without a place to live, or food to eat, and this is supposed to be okay because they could, apparently, solve this by just trying harder. But if the Risen Christ is both ruler above all worldly authorities and dominions *and* the first fruits of our collective glorification, then we don’t have to accept this dominant conception of flourishing as ultimately authoritative, especially not when it has proven harmful to ourselves and others. Our desire to live dignified and happy lives is not something that we need to bottle up as we slog through a brutal and death-dealing society. In fact, when Paul says that Creation groans and longs for its redemption (Romans 8: 19-24) he suggests that our desire for more livable lives is itself a longing for the kind of life of which the risen Jesus is the living image. In short, we do not have to accept the standards of living that are presented to us for we have another account of what it means to live and live well.



Tapji Garba is a Master’s student at York University, Toronto, in Social and Political Thought. They are also a member of St Matthew’s Anglican Church, Winnipeg.



# Ours to Tell: A Celebration of Black History

ZILLA JONES STRACHAN, WILSON AKINWALE

Photo: [Praewhida K](#)

On Sunday, March 19, Black Anglicans of the Diocese of Rupert's Land hosted "Ours to Tell: A Celebration of Black History" at Holy Trinity Church. The historic event marked the official inauguration of the Black Anglicans of Canada chapter for the Diocese of Rupert's Land.

Special guests included **Uzoma Asagwara** (MLA, Union Station) and **Jamie Moses** (MLA, St. Vital) who both spoke at the event, as well as **Nadia Thompson** (chairperson for Black History Month, Manitoba), **Segun Olude** (Designer, Educator, Storycrafter, and Photography Enthusiast; Professor and Graphic Design Artist, University of Manitoba), and **Dr. Zita Somakoko** (President/CEO, Black-Manitobans Chamber of Commerce).



## From event organizers:

In recent years, the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) has made some effort to address systemic racism, and to live out the baptismal commitment, "To strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being." At General Synod in 2007, the ACC proclaimed a Charter for Racial Justice which states: "We are called to be a church where people have the assurance that they will

be treated with dignity and respect where they will find a community free of racism." Black History is also about celebrating and honoring the resilience, innovation, and determination to work towards an even more inclusive and diverse Canada. In December 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada, following a motion introduced by the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament. Around the same time, there was an impetus to recognize and to celebrate Black Heritage within the Anglican Church of Canada. Since then, the Anglican Church of Canada committed to a Charter for Racial Justice in 2007, and in late 2020 the Diocese of Rupert's Land established an Anti-Black Racism Committee.

Through prayerful, extensive discussion, this Committee identified recommendations for consideration by the Bishop, including a recommendation to institute written policies, practices, and procedures (e.g., through Diocesan Council, Executive Council, Synod, etc.) which account for and promote diversity within the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Specifically, the Committee noted that systemic racism and other forms of discrimination in the Diocese of Rupert's Land may limit representation of, participation of, and leadership by marginalized persons within Diocesan-level governance and decision making bodies. As such, the Committee agreed that a resolution be raised at Synod in 2022 to call upon the Diocese to dedicate time and resources to increasing diversity and improving inclusion and equity in its governance and decision making bodies. At 2022 Synod, four resolutions were passed to address these areas highlighted and since then

Black Anglicans Committee in the Diocese of Rupert's Land has commenced working with National Black Anglicans of Canada body and evolve our existing committee to establish a Chapter of Black Anglicans of Canada in the

Diocese of Rupert's Land. The *Ours to Tell* celebration marked the official kick-off of the formal establishment of Black Anglicans of Canada, Diocese of Rupert's Land Chapter.



Photo: [Jamie Moses](#). Used with permission.

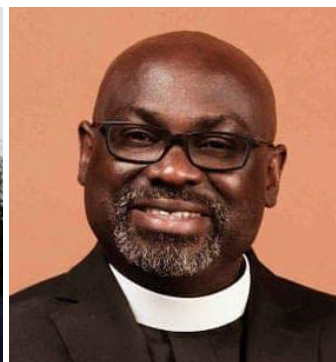
Left to right, Uzoma Asagwara, Nadia Thompson, Wilson Akinwale, Jamie Moses, Zilla Jones.

Black Anglicans of Canada's mission is to "increase the participation, representation, empowerment and belongingness of Black People in lay and ordained leadership roles in the full life of the Anglican Church of Canada, and to develop partnerships with Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) and other oppressed peoples." Learn more about Black Anglicans of Canada by visiting their [website](#).

Watch a recording of the Ours to Tell celebration [here](#).



Lawyer Zilla Jones is a member of Black Anglicans of Canada Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Committee, Diocese of Rupert's Land. She is a criminal defence and human rights/poverty law attorney at Jones Law Office.



Rev. Wilson Akinwale is the Chair of Black Anglicans of Canada Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Committee, Diocese of Rupert's Land. He is also the Incumbent at St. Thomas Anglican Church Weston, Winnipeg, MB.



## “With All Your People”: On ACC’s Treatment of BIPOC People

EDMUND LALDIN

Life-giving and transformative conversations and dialogues are difficult for both listener and speaker. They are difficult because they mandate honesty, vulnerability, trust and the willingness to listen to one another. For example, talking about white privilege, white fragility, and racism in the Anglican Church of Canada is arduous. The speaker in these situations can either gloss over reality and say pleasant yet misleading statements, or speak the truth. Speaking the truth, as mentioned earlier, is transformative and life-giving to both parties. This conversation has chosen the latter to enunciate racialized communities’ feelings, disappointments, remorse and angst.

Many years ago, in a course I was in on Inter-cultural ministry, the facilitator asked the participants to step onto a place which represented them. The indicated spots on the floor showed education, age, experience, and profession. Two of us, an Indigenous man and a visible minority, were standing in the most supposedly privileged and respected spot. We were above every white participant. The facilitator told us that despite our place on the grid, we are not privileged in the Anglican Church of Canada and in society. His proclamation burst the proverbial bubble and demanded further reflection from both of us.

Religious sociologists advise us that new Canadians, despite their ethnicity, are flocking to Roman Catholic churches and Evangelical churches because of the universal primacy of

the Pope (Roman Catholic Church), and freedom to express one’s faith (Evangelical churches). Incidentally, new Canadians from the Anglican Communion provinces visit neighbourhood Anglican churches and most leave after a short time.

The main reason to leave is the colonization of their homelands. Christian missionaries, as we know, closely followed their empires to various parts of the world to preach the gospel. The basic premise was to convert heathens and to make them in the likeness of the state and dominant religion. It was the way to eternal life. Local cultural and religious practices were deemed witchcraft and were condemned. Those who converted followed the biblical moral code, as understood by colonial Christianity and presented as the wishes of and from God. As a result, polygamous, polyamorous, and homosexual societies and cultures morphed into the likeness of missionaries and their interpretation of the bible. Whether this was good or bad is a conversation for another day. Local communities of the day gave up their ways of living, their religion, and moral and ethical codes to believe in God and the moral code of the bible. Incidentally, any other expression of sexuality except heterosexual, monogamous marriages as valued by colonial Christian nations was understood to be against God’s will and thus understood to be purely evil.

New Canadians from the former colonies are traumatised because of doctrinal, dogmatic and theological discrimination in the Anglican Church of Canada’s churches. This trauma has shown up in the Anglican Church’s rejection of their own missionaries’ (colonisers) biblical moral code. Their Church neither acknowledges nor appreciates the objection and discomfort of many BIPOC persons. The irony is that the dominant culture’s interpretation should replace BIPOC persons’ faithfulness to the colonial biblical moral code.

Furthermore, dominant cultures ridicule BIPOC peoples’ accents, clothing, food, and mannerisms. There is no BIPOC bishop, dean or executive archdeacon in the Anglican Church of

Canada. No BIPOC person was on the episcopal election ballot. Leadership, several times, has silenced BIPOC persons' forthright and free-thinking clerics' voices and opinions and have called them arrogant and disruptive influences. In conclusion, one can say that the Anglican Church of Canada is a neo-colonial church where roles are predefined, with white persons enjoying the privilege, believing they can speak for BIPOC persons.

The stories of Joseph and Moses are classic examples of shared privilege, authority and leadership between the captors and the captive. The salient features of Joseph's story are as follows:

His father is Jacob; he had eleven brothers; he was his father's favourite son; he could interpret dreams; his brothers were jealous of him; the brothers sold him to the Egyptians; his master's wife accused him of sexual advances; while in prison, Pharaoh heard Joseph correctly interpret Pharaoh's dreams; Joseph was appointed to a higher office and navigated the Egyptians through a severe famine; his family joined him in Egypt.

Whereas highlights of Moses' life are:

The Pharaoh, before Moses' birth, had decided to kill every Hebrew baby boy; his mother hid him from the murderers; when she could not hide him, his mother placed him in a basket and committed it to the river Nile; Egyptian princess found him and hired Moses' mother as a nanny; Moses grew up in the house of Pharaoh; he knew of his heritage; he led his people out of Egypt to the promised land.

The success of Moses and Joseph is due to the Pharaohs' acceptance and acknowledgement of their abilities. The Pharaoh did not convert but allowed Joseph and Moses to live according to their values. They were confidantes, advisors and leaders of their kings.

Both stories unequivocally present the partnership model between different cultures regardless of religion, creed, gender identification, theological positions and status. In our context, the dominant culture should share authority and decision-making with BIPOC people. The Church needs to be

liberated from a few privileged, all-knowing and believing white persons. The leadership must walk the talk instead of passing resolutions and issuing charters to pacify BIPOC persons. The 2007 General Synod authorised the Charter for Racial Justice in the Church. Sixteen years later, the Church has not implemented a single recommendation. They have, however, established another commission to discuss the issue again and make changes.

Nevertheless, they have failed to hire BIPOC persons in senior management positions. In 2020, the General Synod announced that a BIPOC person should be the next General Secretary. In the end, the new General Secretary is a white cleric. When confronted, the leadership would present the desire for a BIPOC General Secretary as a significant step forward for racial justice. In reality, the message to the broader constituency is that leadership believes that no BIPOC person is qualified for the position. It is another iteration of the neo-colonial attitude and subjugation of BIPOC people.

The Book of Alternative Services' fourth Eucharistic Prayer concludes with the following vision of God's kingdom:

*"Pour out your Spirit upon the whole earth and make it your new creation. Gather your Church together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom, where peace and justice are revealed, that we, with all your people, of every language, race, and nation, may share the banquet you have promised."*

The above vision's realisation depends on the multi-racial leadership and community in the Anglican Church of Canada. Otherwise, the privileged class will adopt another charter and eighteen years later, a BIPOC preacher will stand and say, "How long will neo-colonial and discriminatory reign last?"



Edmund Laldin is a parish priest, hobby chef, social critic, and cricket fan. Inculturation of the Gospel and liturgy and comparative religious study are his personal, pastoral and academic interests.

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# At St. Thomas, Giving Means Getting Kreative!

MEREDITH ROBINSON

Photo: [Kseniya Lapteva](#)



## 3 years. Over 20927 meals served!

What can I express about the Wednesday night Take-out meal dinner service at St. Thomas Anglican, in Weston?

With table fellowships as the goal, Kreative Kitchens was born. The program has evolved since its beginning, but we began by extending an invitation to our surrounding community to come join us for what we hoped would grow into a regular monthly meal. We were trying to have more stomachs feel fed, enabling spirits to have the chance to grow. Kreative Kitchens also provided valuable work experience for those within child/adult family service systems. This one platform of giving was able to address multiple needs.



## Volunteers help prepare meals

We served one meal to our neighbours within our walls and then found we had to take a different approach. St. Thomas Anglican church in Weston already supports Kreative Kids, a program established within our neighbourhood for the last 10 years which helps to address the needs of youth by being a safe space for play, activities, and, most importantly, art. It is a place to be silly, feel inspired, and to get Kreative.

A global pandemic changed all our thoughts, hopes, and plans...

Not being able to open left a lingering need and a sense of emptiness throughout the community; how would the people/children be served? The two programs decided on a merger of sorts, establishing Kreative as our outreach umbrella. Our Kitchens avenue would work to feed our bodies every week, while the Kids half of our program began assembling craft bags, and sending activities to keep participants creating while we stayed home and kept safe. We shared space and commitment to service, as our Take-out Meal Program was formed.



### Donation box

From our meager beginnings—serving only 11 families at that first meal—our Wednesday night Take-out meal has grown into a weekly community event. 70 families consisting of 200-300 souls line-up around our parish to receive the meal we have lovingly prepared. There are stories shared and life traumas expressed. There is joy resonating and laughter abounding. Some of our families have formed tighter knit groups, often sharing the load of picking up our dinner service, rotating responsibilities because each other's rest is valued, acknowledged, and celebrated. Though feeding people is the focus of our Wednesday neighbourhood line up, it has created different avenues for connection as well. It is an honour to be thought of as an inclusive, safe, reliable place to look to and ask for help, where results and/or relevant information can be obtained.

**...our Wednesday night Take-out meal has grown into a weekly community event. 70 families consisting of 200-300 souls line-up around our parish to receive the meal we have lovingly prepared. There are stories shared and life traumas expressed. There is joy resonating and laughter abounding.**

We have established supportive giving relationships with many other agencies and programs. Maple Leaf has helped us provide for

this community. On a weekly basis they share with us delicious carver hams. Every family that waits in our dinner line receives 2 hams to take home with them. Peak of the Market often helps by providing vegetables with which to prepare meals. They also occasionally share surplus goods to hand out to our community members. Our Breadman (and associates), Cobb Bakery, Hildegard Bakery, Winnipeg Harvest, as well as Second Harvest have partnered with us. Our volunteers spend the days before Wednesday evening gathering the supplies and organizing wares into bags or boxes for foot travel.



### Prepared meals

Our community is growing friendships and support systems. There are many different agencies and outreaches with whom we share the resources gathered; this ensures little waste. For three years Kreative has extended gifts to these places: Nor West (Blake Gardens chapter), Serve the People organization, Lighthouse Mission, Siloam Mission, Weston School Breakfast Program, Macdonald Youth Services, and Tina's Safe Haven on Selkirk. This kind of continued resource and idea sharing has also led to St. Pierre Bible Fellowship Church establishing their own take home meal program, serving 20+ families in southern Manitoba every week.

It has been over three years since our first Take-Out meal and we are proud to say we have served more than 20,000 meals. The talented team of wonderful people that band together



each week to better serve this community is humbling. It is a blessing that I get to spend time in our kitchen, sharing talents/gifts, planning meals, and creating recipes to make the best use of the resources each week. We plan to keep giving as long as our hearts and finances allow.

Financial struggle is a reality most people can identify with. Not having enough to go around is a familiar feeling for households and public spaces alike. So, I ask you now to be generous, to send us your financial contributions, to help us spread the feeling of being fed.

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Thank you for reading and thank you for your support! Every dollar counts.



**Outdoor service at St. Thomas**



**Food prep at our  
Community  
BBQ event**



Kreative Kids recently reopened on Friday evenings, inviting youth in for games, crafting and snacks. Registration is encouraged, please contact us for information.

Kreative Kitchens will continue to serve Take-Out on Wednesdays, our goal of inviting our neighbours in is still on our horizon. We have begun this venture with an outdoor community BBQ, which brought over 300 people to our yard to share food and community. But the size of the response from our surrounding peoples may take some Kreative planning to accommodate everyone, inside our building, I feel the need for rounds of community dinners coming on.



Our Community BBQ event

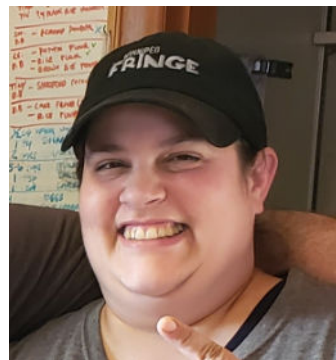


At St. Thomas Anglican in Weston, Giving means getting Kreative!



9965  
Total meals provided  
this year

9965 total meals provided this year!



Meredith Robinson is the Hospitality specialist and Music Director at St. Thomas Church, Weston. Which means she feeds our soul with her music, as well as our bellies with her food. In her day-to-day life she is a support worker for families in Manitoba. She grew up attending St. Thomas like many generations before her—a faith tradition started all the way back when her family was a part of founding St Thomas.

  
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