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RLN welcomes story ideas, news items and other input. If you want to be involved in this media ministry, please be in touch with the editor.

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Cover: Agape Table volunteers Angela Strong and James "Coffee Man" McPhee are cheerful despite the icy -20 degrees outside All Saints' Church.

Corrections: Oh dear! In our attempt to make the December magazine dark and expectation-like for Advent, there was a printing error that made it almost too dark to see! We hope January is much lighter and springier (the days are getting longer now, after all).



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Suggested donation is \$50
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In Memorium

HAPPY NEW YEAR *Allison Chubb*



The beginning of January has our community moving through the twelve days of Christmas and into the celebration of Epiphany. The revelation of God in the form of a poor baby is news for all the world that God deeply values our human needs and experiences. The mystery of the incarnation is that God meets us just where we are, whether that be in a back country stable or a grinding 9-5 job in downtown Winnipeg.

The celebration of Epiphany, combined with the cold Rupert's Land weather, brings to mind those vulnerable among us: folks struggling with housing and other daily needs. Across the diocese, Anglicans and their neighbours are engaged with some of the most vulnerable members of our society through friendship, food banks, policy development, and community organisations. Many of those who struggle to find adequate housing, in fact, are Anglicans themselves.

For many, living among the financially poor is an intentional vocation. Some

feel called to assist with direct needs, while others are involved at the level of structural change. In this issue, you will find a few of these stories and the circumstances that the inadequately housed encounter. On page 13, you will meet John, a volunteer at Agape Table, who shares with us his own story of housing.

If you're interested in getting to know people like John and in serving alongside them, please connect with Agape Table, House Blend, Hospitality House, St. Matthew's Maryland Community Ministry, or West Broadway Community Ministry. To find a church in your area with a food bank in need of volunteers, please be in touch with Winnipeg Harvest. Above all, please pray for these vital ministries in our diocese.


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rachel@houseblendministries.com

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comymin@shaw.ca

West Broadway Community Ministry:
(204) 774-2773
wbcm@mymts.net

Winnipeg Harvest:
(204) 982-3663
info@winnipegharvest.org 



**St. Matthew's
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soup	canned fish
baked beans	cheeze whiz
kraft dinner	razors
canned veggies	shampoo
canned fruit	tooth brushes
cereal	tooth paste
rice	canadian tire \$
juice	plastic bags
canned pasta	pet food
canned meat	

Most items may be dropped off at Maryland & St. Matthew's Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri, 12-4pm.
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THE WORD MADE FLESH

James Dugan


The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Have you ever looked in the mirror and said, "Wow, I am God's gift to the world?" Probably not, but why not? The Christmas season is coming to an end. The Christmas tree has been taken down by most of us. Sunday School pageants have been enjoyed. Gifts have been opened. The angel voices are but a faint, distant echo. The feasts have left us stuffed. The hectic pace is slowing. Maybe now is the time to reflect, quietly and soberly, on what it meant. Obviously, its focus is God's gift to the world.

Epiphany participates in, and is the culmination of, the

season of Christmas. Christmas celebrates God's gift of Jesus Christ to the world. Epiphany, with the arrival of the Magi from the East, is the celebration of Jesus' manifestation to the Gentiles, and underlines that Jesus Christ is a gift to the whole world. You, who have been baptized into the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, are now God's gift to the world. Each of us has been given gifts to be used to share God's love and compassion for all creation. That is our mission. As the offertory sentence for Epiphany states in the Book of Common Prayer, "Let your light so shine... that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father..." So how do we allow the light of Christ to shine through our lives?

- be generous with words
- engage in practical acts of kindness
- give a random gift to someone from whom you
- don't expect anything
- provide hospitality (to a stranger, if you are courageous)
- listen to what the Spirit is prompting you to do — and then act on it
- in all you do, act as Christ for others

You are God's missionary. You have been endowed with God's gracious blessing. Hear the words: "You

are my Beloved, with you I am well pleased." Epiphany reminds us to look in the mirror and to see ourselves, through God's eyes, as one of God's gifts to the world. 

**To read more about the celebration of Epiphany, visit rupertslandnews.ca/epiphany for a devotional piece about God's revelation to us in Christ*

James Dugan is the Rector at St. Alban's Cathedral, Kenora, and Archdeacon of Kenora-St. Alban, the newest archdeaconry in Rupert's Land.

DID YOU KNOW?

In early Anglican days, the night before Epiphany was called the twelfth night," a big party marking the end of the Christmas season. The Monday after Epiphany was called "plough Monday." It was the start of the agricultural year, accompanied by town festivities. If only we could start ploughing on January 12 in Rupert's Land!



BEYOND THE MANGER *Donald Phillips*

The Boxing Day sales are over. The jingles that have been playing relentlessly since the day after Hallowe'en are silent. Out of respect for the many Eastern Rite Christians living in Winnipeg, whose calendar celebrates Christmas almost two weeks after December 25, the streets of downtown Winnipeg remain lit with coloured lights for a few more weeks. It seems as though, like the angels who suddenly

visited the shepherds around Bethlehem in the middle of the night and just as suddenly went back into heaven, the recollection of this forever-world-changing event has come — and gone.


But in spite of the overwhelming evidence around us that supports this narrative, this is not what happened. This Light of the World did not streak across our earthly sky for a few weeks or even for a few years. Rather, a hu-

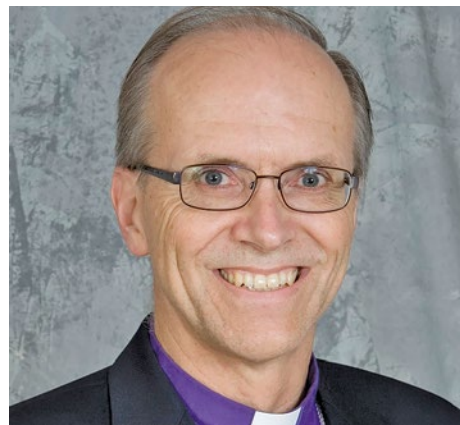
man infant was born into a violence-ravaged world and had to be taken away secretly, like a refugee, to escape a government-ordered infanticide. He assembled a band of disciples and reinterpreted the essence of living for God. He was arrested as a threat to national security and executed, came back from the dead, and has, ever since, been empowering women, men and children to live life in such a way that it enables God to transform the world. Indeed, it is only the celebration of his birth that has faded away. The risen Christ is still very much here — calling us beyond the manger.

Like the three ghostly visitors who entertained Ebenezer Scrooge on that fateful Christmas Eve in Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, the risen Christ invites us to look at life — our lives, the lives of our family and friends, our co-workers and school mates, as well those less well-known to us who have been marginalized, mistreated or 'discarded' by society. But the Spirit who shows us these things is very different from the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future. This Spirit opens the 'eyes of our hearts' to see each of these persons as a brother or sister of Jesus and a brother or sister of ours. This Spirit doesn't convert us

by fear, but transforms us by love.

When this Spirit calls us to move beyond the manger of Jesus, it is not to rob us of our lives, but rather to help us embrace the real essence of human living and to invite us to experience so much more of God's grace at work in our world. Will there be pain and disappointment? Yes. Will there be times of discouragement and apparent failure? Most certainly. Will the God of the manger ever abandon us, even when we shrink back and turn away? Never. Because even though the manger that held our humanity is empty, so too is the cross that murdered our humanity and the tomb that encased it in death.

Do not be discouraged by the fading of the empty manger (or the retiring of festive lights). The one whose birth we celebrated is right beside us, calling us to be born anew in him every day, and to join with him in the love that is transforming the world. 



△ *Donald Phillips,
Bishop of Rupert's Land*

WEST END COMMONS: A PLACE TO CALL “HOME” *Katie Daman*

‘Homelessness’, not ‘Houselessness’

When does a roof over your head become a home? Some people say a home is a safe, secure, private, and good quality accommodation. Others go further, expressing that a home is a place where they can achieve dreams, build relationships, and get the support they need. One youth worker in Winnipeg says: “Some of these kids... have an address, but it’s not a home for them... we had some kids sleeping in vans here, 40 below... slept in there for three days. They just didn’t want to go home, because all there is is alcohol and violence there.” (Jim Silver, “North End Winnipeg’s Lord Selkirk Park Housing Development”)

Facts on homelessness:

There are an estimated 1,500 – 2,000 homeless people living in Winnipeg. However, this data is a rough estimate that does not consider those living in extreme core housing need.

Extreme core housing need refers to a household paying more than 50% of their income on housing.

Data shows that almost 30,000 Winnipeggers are living in core housing need. This need disproportionately affects renters, who make up approximately 30% of Canadians.

18% of these renters are experiencing extreme affordability problems (almost 750,000 Canadian households).

Approximately 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night.

Despite the growing number of homeless people, Canada still has “the smallest social housing sector of any Western nation except for the United States”. Throughout Canada we’ve seen that “the private for-profit rental market does not come close to meeting the needs of low-income people, whose numbers... have grown over the past forty years” (Silver, Good

Places to Live). Most inner-city renewal strategies, implemented in the name of neighbourhood ‘revitalization,’ have dislocated many poor people from “good neighbourhoods to be poor in.” This type of development simply increases the need for affordable housing in Winnipeg.

WestEnd Commons

After operating a Neighbourhood Resource Centre (NRC) in the lower level of St. Matthew’s Anglican Church for forty years, church leaders knew more needed to be done. Located in the heart of West Central Winnipeg, an area with limited affordable housing, St. Matthew’s was in a prime position to explore social housing options. In 2009, St. Matthew’s and Grain of Wheat Community Church incorporated St. Matthews Non Profit Housing Inc. These two churches then became tenants in the building, and The WestEnd Commons was created.

The NRC is an important feature of WestEnd Commons, providing supports for both the community and tenants. Research shows that without support systems located in close proximity to social housing, projects such as this are less likely to succeed.

Participatory decision-making is also crucial to any community economic

**HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF CANADIANS
REMAIN ON WAITLISTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

CHRA ASKS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO:

PROTECT SOCIAL HOUSING
ENCOURAGE MORE RENTAL HOUSING
PRESERVE & ENHANCE EXISTING FUNDING

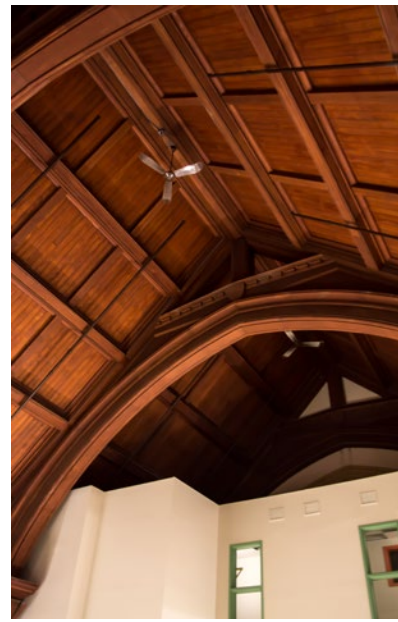


development process. To make decisions and recommendations, WestEnd Commons had assistance from a Community Life Committee during the development. The Community Life Committee was designed to include community members who represented: newcomers, indigenous peoples, the local school, West Central Women's Resource Centre, and local residents.

The WestEnd Commons has now transformed St. Matthew's upper floors into 26 homes for families: single parent families, newcomers to Canada, First Nations families, people with mental health challenges, and others. The space has a 1,000 sq. foot atrium, 4 one-bedroom, 15 two-bedroom, 5 three-bedroom, and 2 four-bedroom apartments. On November 1, 2014 WestEnd Commons began welcoming families to their new homes.

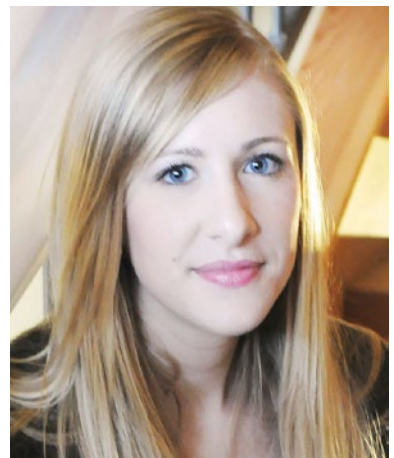
Is it Worth it?

Despite the stigma, homelessness is often influenced most by physical factors such as lack of affordable housing, lack of necessary income, and discrimination in obtaining housing. Research confirms that even those considered 'most entrenched' in homelessness, even those with severe addiction and mental health issues, will generally stay housed and show improve-



△ The new suites at WestEnd Commons.

ments in overall well-being when offered proper supports. At WestEnd Commons, we believe that all humans deserve the dignity of safe, affordable, and good quality housing; we are doing our best to provide this. 



Katie Daman is a business student at Canadian Mennonite University interested in social enterprise. She is a volunteer and consultant with WestEnd Commons. ▷

MEET ME AT THE CENTRE *Nancy Phillips*

For some years now, I have been practicing a form of contemplative prayer called centring prayer. Centring prayer involves sitting in silence for a period of time each day, using a sacred word as a symbol of consenting to God's presence.

There have been times when I've stumbled in my resolve and begun asking myself what I hope to achieve or what the point might be of engaging in this discipline. But this is not a helpful question, because meditative forms of prayer are not something we do to achieve a certain outcome. Rather, centring prayer is an exercise in letting go. It is not a discipline that we try harder at, or even necessarily get better at over time. It is simply an act of surrendering ourselves more completely to God and God's work.


When we engage in centring prayer, we bring our false self — all of the notions we've collected about

enables one to rest and act at the same time, being rooted in the source of both rest and action.

*Gradually...
we become
transformed.*

Thomas Merton described contemplative prayer well in *A Book of Hours*, where he connects the inner life to outward action: "a certain depth of disciplined experience is a necessary ground for fruitful action."

Recently, I've become aware that I'm called upon to become something of a prophet in the workplace, addressing mental health issues. I wouldn't say that I'm an expert, and yet I find myself as a singular voice speaking on behalf of a group of employees that I believe have been treated unfairly. My determination to journey alongside those who have suffered, and to insist on fair treatment, has at times put me into hot water with management. It is not a comfortable ministry that I've been called to, but my heart continues to be prepared through my centering prayer practice.

At this time in our church year of celebrating the gift of the Christ child, we are reminded of God's message to us in that most vulnerable gift of divine love. The Christ child calls each of us to engage in a vulnerable love as we learn to practice unconditional acceptance of others. 

ourselves and the defences we've developed over time to cushion our ego from the harsh realities of life. What happens during centring prayer is that we start to recognize the systems of our own false selves trying to move in and mess up our desire to consent fully to God's action. Gradually we learn to let go, again and again, and so we become transformed. That transformation is entirely God's work.

This might sound like a wonderful way to become more holy. But holier people aren't necessarily the most useful tool in bringing about the Kingdom of God. What then, might you ask, is the purpose of engaging in centring prayer?

There is no doubt that my practice has helped me to feel more centred and less likely to be overwhelmed by events going on around me. The contemplative state



△ Nancy Phillips is a Spiritual Director and Public Health Nurse

PARISH NEWS **ROUND UP**

▷ St. John's Cathedral

The Cathedral is hosting a satellite site for the Trinity conference again this year, happening live at Trinity, Wall Street, in New York City. This year's theme is Creating Common Good: a practical conference for economic equality. Featured speakers include the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, Cornel West, Barbara Ehrenreich, and Rachel Held Evans, among others. Early bird registration closes January 8. For more information, visit rupertslandnews.ca/trinity_conference_2015.

▷ St. George's, Crescentwood

After much searching, St. George's has found a new incumbent. Simon Blaikie will begin his new post on February 2, 2015.

▷ Anglican Lutheran Centre

The diocesan team welcomes Judy McIvor as their new Administrative Assistant. Judy comes to us after 25 years of experience with a travel agency, followed by six years of service to the Salvation Army. She and her husband, Robert, raised their two children at St. Bartholomew's, Winnipeg. Judy has assumed the responsibilities of Cathy Mondor, who retired at the end of November. You can see photos from Cathy's retirement party at rupertslandnews.ca/cathy-mondor-retirement.

▷ Week of Prayer

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-24, 2015. Read about the events happening here in Rupert's Land, including the opening service at St. John's Cathedral, at rupertslandnews.ca/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity.

▷ St. John's College

Bible & Breakfast returns to the College again this semester, with John Stafford speaking in January and Jane Barter Moulaison in March. For more details, visit rupertslandnews.ca/bible-and-breakfast-winter-2015.

▷ St. Margaret's

Under the banner of the Ecclesial University project and in partnership with St. John's College and Wycliffe College (University of Toronto), St. Margaret's is offering a chance to study Masters-level "Theological Exegesis for Preaching" this term. The course is co-taught by the Rev'd Dr. David Widdicombe and the Rev'd Fleming Rutledge and is open to anyone in the Diocese of Rupert's Land to audit.

From Thursday, Feb. 19 to Sunday, Feb. 22, Rev'd Rutledge will visit St. Margaret's for four days of intensive preaching and teaching as part of the course. To register for this weekend of teaching, contact Julianne Isaacs, Ecclesial University Administrator, at julienneisaacs@saintmargarets.ca or 204-774-9533. The cost to attend the weekend with Fleming Rutledge, including catered breakfast and lunch on the Saturday, is \$75/person.



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Christopher Semmes,
Greenwich, CT U.S.A

▷ Fall Ordinations

2014 was a fall for ordinations! Missed the photos online? You can still see pictures of Diane Panting's ordination to the diaconate at rupertslandnews.ca/diane-panting. Photos of the Pembina Hills ministry team, Martin Allen, Chris Lea, and Al Thorleifson, are at rupertslandnews.ca/pembina-hills-ordination/. Please remember to keep our new ordinands in prayer as they begin this new phase of their ministry among us.

Do you have an event of interest to the wider diocese? Send us the details six weeks in advance of the next paper (for example, a notice to be published in the March paper is due January 20).

MISSION

LOUIS RIEL DAY *Rachel Twigg*

It began, as most good things do, with coffee and conversation.

On a cold Thursday in 2008 when I was volunteering at Agape Table, I sat down to have coffee and a conversation with one of the guests, who I'll call Paul. Paul began the conversation by asking me what I thought of the new holiday, Louis Riel Day.

Paul is Aboriginal, so I assumed he was asking me what I thought of naming a day in Louis Riel's honour, and so I answered truthfully that if we were going to have a new holiday, then it was fitting to honour a man like Riel.

Well, Paul said, "I hate it. In fact I hate all holidays."

I was completely taken aback and asked Paul, "Why?"

"Holidays are no help to the homeless," he said. "Everything is closed. The libraries are closed, the stores are closed, and there is no where to go to keep warm. And it was really cold on Monday."

In that one conversation Paul completely changed my thinking about Riel Day. It hadn't occurred to me that the holiday had further complicated the already complicated lives of homeless people like Paul.

I chose to start volunteering at Agape Table as

a part of my commitment to House Blend Ministries, an intentional Christian community in West Broadway that I helped to found in 2007. We love our neighbourhood, and as part of our commitment to help build up its strengths, we all volunteer with local organizations.

by living together. People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are our favourite tenants, and we've learned a lot by sharing our daily lives with them.

This extends beyond the people living in our community house to include others living in the neighbourhood



House Blend exists because we are passionate about creating caring communities through whole life discipleship, with and among people who are poor. We do this through three key areas of focus: our in-house community, our broader community, and education.

Our community owns a home in West Broadway where we can invite people into a unique experience of becoming community

who join us weekly for a potluck meal and time of prayer, as well as a variety of other celebrations and activities throughout the year.


We are learning so much through these experiences that we want to share them with our broader church family. We love to meet with people for coffee, speak with groups, or have individuals intern with us or participate in special projects. Members of House Blend don't view themselves

as better than the institutional church or separate from it – we all belong to local congregations. We do, however, believe that our small size and community focus allow us to do some things that larger, more traditional parishes can't do, while at the same time realising that if the larger Church wasn't supporting us, we wouldn't exist. It's a mutually beneficial relationship.

For almost a year after we met, I could not get that conversation with Paul out of my mind. Gradually, a plan began to form. Through conversations with the staff at Agape Table (which meets in All Saints Anglican Church) and leaders of local congregations (including St Benedict's table) we were able to invite our homeless friends to

celebrate Riel Day in safety and style in 2009. We had food, board games, and live music throughout the day. Over 800 guests and 80 volunteers came together that first year and we have been holding this event every year since.

In 2015, Louis Riel Day will be Monday, February 16th and House Blend will once again be partnering with local churches and Agape Table to provide a safe, warm space where people can go to enjoy the day. You can help with this event by organizing a team to sign up for a shift and volunteer, by collecting socks or warm weather gear, by praying for those involved, or by making a financial donation. It's a great cause, but it's also a lot of fun, so I hope you'll

consider getting involved. Contact us for more information, to volunteer, or to just meet for coffee. 



△ *Rachel Twigg Boyce is Director of House Blend Ministries and a Spiritual Director. To get in touch with her, email rachel@houseblendministries.com.*



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EVERYTHING I NEED: IN SEARCH OF HOUSING

John Thompson arrives for his daily volunteer shift at Agape Table with a broad smile across his face, sporting a sweater and hat with a team logo. Nearly three years ago, John got word that his apartment block in Winnipeg's north end would be renovated, resulting in a monthly rent increase from \$350 to \$800. With their monthly housing allowance on social assistance being a maximum of \$420 between them, an amount that has stayed the same for 22 years, John and his longtime girlfriend knew they'd need to move.

"We got lucky," John explains, because it can be extremely difficult to find subsidized housing in the city. As their eviction deadline loomed closer, the only place available was in the West Broadway neighbourhood, so he made the trek on foot to sign the papers and make the deal final. Afraid they would soon find themselves on the street if they didn't make the move, the couple agreed to the new home even though it would require spending and

extra \$80 of their food budget each month. "But," John brightens, "I got everything I need right now. I don't have money but I can come here if I need food."

John wandered into Agape Table shortly after making the move to West Broadway and has been returning nearly every day since, working as a faithful volunteer. He loves the people, the community, and giving back to others. "I don't get paid for it," he explains, "but I get paid for it in other ways."

Throughout his sixty years, John has learned a great deal about the importance of caring for others. The oldest of 12 children, even today he finds himself regularly helping his mother and siblings, scattered around the city and across the country. "I'm the only one who knows how to put in an air conditioner!" he laughs.

Yet life hasn't always been so stable for John. When he turned fifty, he believes God gave him the strength to turn his life around and, after years of alcohol-



△ *John Thompson,
Agape Table volunteer*

ism, he hasn't touched a drink in a decade. He glows with pride thinking about the accomplishment. Life is difficult for John these days, but it is good. Prior to fifty, he spent many years homeless, travelling between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Looking toward the snow falling outside the window at Agape Table, he explains the need to "be really inventive" when looking for a place to sleep in wintertime. Even in January, he's slept in abandoned silos, barns, and warehouses. In the city, you have to sleep in inter-



AGAPE TABLE

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vals. "You find a good warm place, sleep for a few hours, and then some guy tells you to move on. At night, you just wander around."


John looks sad when he thinks about the times people have misunderstood his desire to find a place to sleep. "You walk into an open door and right away they tell you to get out. Because you're homeless, all of a sudden you're a thief. [A homeless person] could have some mental problems." It's important not to put others down who live differently than you do, he explains. "If you're not like them, you don't exist. But I'm just like them."

While some people look down on his volunteer work, John insists that he is not ashamed of the life he leads.

He is committed to building up himself and others. Although he never finished grade eight, he went on to attend university in B.C. and to receive a certificate in cabinet making. He has four grandchildren, of which he is very proud, and a great-grandchild on the way.

Thinking about the issue of affordable housing, John says that shelters and soup kitchens across the country are "so much more crowded than they used to be." Throughout his years of travel, he has seen the public's approach to the homeless and insufficiently housed become less favourable. There were days when small towns welcomed him to spend the night in a public building while he was pass-

ing through, but that's not the case any longer. "They're all full by 7:00 [p.m.] now."

John doesn't look for sympathy for those days when he wandered homelessly from town to town, because he believes that was his own choice. Today, however, when he's working hard to make a positive contribution to his community, he has no time for those who look down on his lifestyle. Some people have a harder time than others getting a job, he explains, but many of those people still have a great deal to offer. He smiles as he thinks about "the next fifty years" of his life after his miracle turn-around at 50. "It's all about the people," he says, "And building yourself up." 

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SAINTS' STORIES

Lindor Reynolds

Remembered by Donald Benham

Born: June 20, 1958, Winnipeg **Died:** October 17, 2014.

Lindor Reynolds stuck out her hand. "Welcome to the Winnipeg Sun," she cheerily greeted me.

Lindor and her friend Maureen Scurfield were the self-appointed social committee of the Winnipeg Sun newsroom the day I started in 1983. Lindor had just returned to Winnipeg from attending Carleton University's School of Journalism. She had dreams of being a columnist at the Globe and Mail, but had to settle for her hometown tabloid, the scrappy Sun.

The minute Lindor got an assignment, she was racing against the clock to finish it. Lindor never failed to meet the particularly demanding deadlines of the Sun's entertainment and lifestyle section.

She and Maureen would go out for lunch, kvetch about their jobs, as journalists do, and then return to the newsroom, where Lindor would routinely threaten to quit if changes weren't made. The usual response was to placate her by giving her a new and longer title. Sometimes her byline was longer than the story!

Lindor left the Sun to take a job in government public relations. Her boss arrived one day with what he called

a "rush" assignment. As Lindor turned towards her computer to start typing, she asked: "Rush? You mean this afternoon?" "No," came the reply. "February."

Finally, Lindor landed what she proudly told everyone was her dream job. As a Winnipeg Free Press columnist, in addition to the honours and achievements listed in her official bio, she supported building a school for girls in Kenya, continuing to raise money even while being treated for cancer. She raised enough money for three schools.

When she was first diagnosed, Lindor shared the news immediately with her readers. She was painfully honest about the extent of the disease, even posting MRIs on her blog, Good Days and Great Days, offering hope to other cancer patients, wherever they might be.


Lindor campaigned for better treatment of low-income Manitobans on issues of food security, housing, and social inclusion. She used her reporter's tools to interview people in Dauphin who took part in Mincome, the guaranteed annual income experiment in the 1970s. They were working poor — the janitor at the high school, the woman who ran a beauty shop out of her basement — and they told Lindor they remembered those

Photo: Winnipeg Free Press

△ **Lindor Reynolds**

years because they could buy shoes and books for their kids. Lindor concluded her article by saying: "Mincome did more than top up the income of the poor. It gave them dignity. Surely that's an idea worth investing in."

Lindor was serious about being Anglican. She served on a special public relations committee, advising then-bishop Walter Jones in the 1980s and later on the advisory committee of the Rupert's Land News for Bishop Don Phillips. Her faith infused her work as a columnist, providing moral grounding, but not partisan preaching.

Her funeral service in October at Holy Trinity was a tasteful bon voyage, except for the surprise ending: An appearance by Elvis Presley, on video, singing Battle Hymn of the Republic. That was Lindor's touch...still shaking things up. 

Donald Benham was a friend and colleague of Reynolds at the Winnipeg Sun.

THE RADICAL GATHER TO WORSHIP

Kara Mandryk

At first glance, the act of gathering together for worship might not seem to be all that radical. Some of us have done it for all of our lives! But people coming together for worship is actually an incredibly subversive act. As we gather together in our places of worship, we are engaging in an act that challenges the outer world, our inner world, and the spiritual world. First, as we gather together for worship, we are subverting the views of the culture around us that says that the Church is antiquated and obsolete, the oppressive version of the freer 'spirituality.' We are challenging the assumption that no rational person in the 21st century would engage in something as quaint and parochial as a worship service in a faith community. Instead, we are saying that faith communities have a foundational place in our society, and the act of gathering together in our diverse communities has something to say to society. Worshipping with others who might not look like us, speak with our accent, or who disagree with us politically, socially, or even theologically, can strengthen our so-

ciety. By worshipping with those who differ from us, we affirm that diversity does not equal division and that faith in God can unite us despite our differences.

Secondly, as we gather together for worship, we are subverting our own self-centered tendencies that say if something isn't exactly how we want it, it can be abandoned. Let's be honest, we don't always feel like going to church. Sometimes it's tedious or exasperating and we often believe that we have better ways to spend our time. But every time we get out of our house, get out of ourselves, and get into church, we are challenging

our self-centredness. At times, we might not like the style of music, the preaching, or even the people! But we gather together anyway, reminding ourselves that

Church is not simply about our likes, our preferences, and our choices. By gathering together we are saying "no" to our egocentric tendencies, and we are allowing our self-interest to take a back seat to the interest of the community of believers.

Thirdly, and perhaps most mysteriously, as we gather together for worship, we are subverting the status

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quo in the spiritual realm. The act of gathering, this choice to get out of our homes and out of ourselves to worship together sabotages the work of the enemy – the work of dividing, isolating, separating, and creating apathy. When we glorify the name of God together, when we come together to hear God’s Word and to be heard by God, when we sing and celebrate and eat and drink and baptise and anoint in the name of Christ, when we are empowered and sent out by the Holy Spirit, the enemy of God is pushed back.

As we are reminded in Scripture, the

name of Jesus is powerful (Philippians 2:10) and threatens the enemy (Luke 10:17). Christ came to destroy the work of the enemy (1 John 3:8), and Christ is present when we gather together (Matthew 18:20). By gathering together and worshipping in the name of Jesus, we resist the isolating and divisive nature of the enemy of God.

As Christians, we must find ways to practice radical faith which involve pursuing justice, fighting poverty and homelessness, and addressing the needs in our society. That essential work needs to be rooted in the equally essential practice of gath-


ering together for worship. As we gather for worship, we challenge the belief that the Church and Christian community is obsolete, we subvert our own tendencies of self-centredness, and we sabotage the work of the enemy. Sounds pretty radical! 

Photo: Tim Plett



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