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# SEEDS OF WISDOM

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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.

Cover: [HisArt Photos](#)

# Seeds of Wisdom



Photo: [Robson Hatsukami Morgan](#)

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” (James 1:17 NKJV)

Seeds of wisdom are planted in us all the time, and from a variety of sources. Whether it be knowledge from our elders, a mistake we recognize and correct, or a good book we read, there are opportunities all around us from which we can learn. All wisdom is a gift from God, and those who seek it are precious in His sight.

Though wisdom comes to us in many forms, our engagement with it is what allows the seeds to take root; this is what separates the seeds sown on the path, in rocky ground, and among thorns from those sown in good soil (Matthew 13:19-23). If we truly desire to grow in wisdom, we must put in time and effort to understand the lessons which present themselves to us.

When we pray, when we seek knowledge, when we actively listen, we are opening ourselves up to growing in wisdom and we are allowing ourselves to be changed for the better. Complacency will not allow us to grow. All that we learn from Holy Scripture and from math, from art and science, from history and literature, is God revealing Himself to us.

And we cannot do these things alone; it is necessary that we learn with and from other people. Only then will we gain a better understanding of our multifaceted world.

Doing these things is not always an easy task. It takes energy, time, and devotion to grow in wisdom. But when we learn from all these sources and more, we honour God and we honour one another. In doing so, we love our God, and we love our neighbour (Matthew 22:34-40).

This issue begins in celebration with photos from a successful 119th session of Diocesan Synod. Thanks be to God for this community! We learned, collaborated, worshipped, and oriented ourselves towards our future. I hope you enjoy some photos of the event.

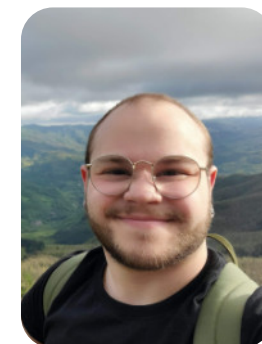
In the Apostles Creed, we affirm that we believe in the “Communion of Saints”. But what exactly does this mean? The Rev. Andrew Rampton explores this topic and tells us that these saints, our Christian family, help guide us, inspire us, and teach us by the examples of their lives.

Then, Dr. Heather Barkman demonstrates this in the story of Perpetua, an early 3rd century North African martyr. Though Perpetua must make grave sacrifices, it is all worth it for her faith in Christ. Her story, like so many of the saints, serves as a reminder of the power and hope we hold in our identities as Christians.

Following this, Dr. Ebele Felix provides insights as to how the Church can be more welcoming to diverse communities. Calling upon knowledge from her African roots, she directs us towards many different ways in which the Church can be more inclusive to those of different backgrounds and cultures.

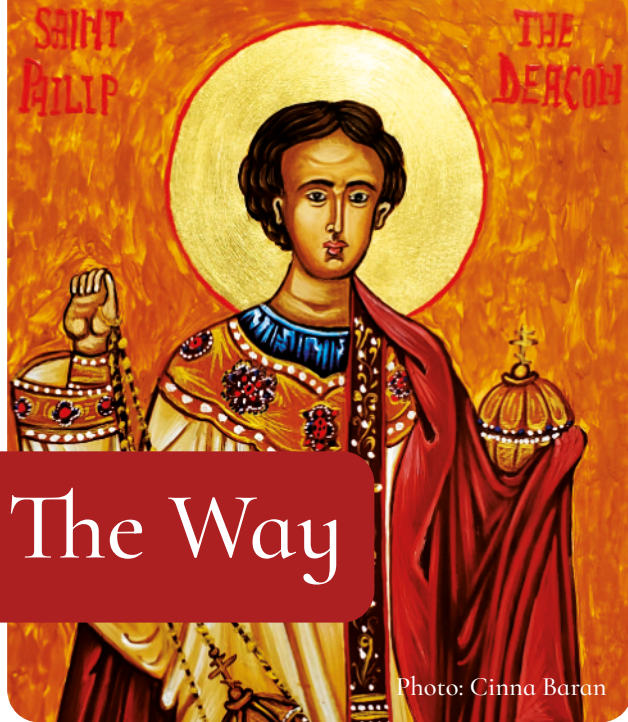
Lastly, a parish profile with Grace-St. John's Anglican/Lutheran Church in Carman, MB, demonstrates a unique and blended worship style with a united and friendly community.

Peace be with you; I hope you enjoy.



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert's Land News



# The Way

Photo: Cinna Baran

Note: This piece was written prior to Bishop Geoff's leave.

Greetings in the One continually forming and shaping us for His Body, life, and ministry.

I wrote to the Church about Ignatius Theophorus of Antioch recently; I trust you will do a little research now so I might continue this short message.

Ignatius led at a time where the Way, later known as the Church, blossomed and flourished in spite of persecution and hatred. It did so because leaders were convinced of Christ's unity and membership in the Trinity as taught by the apostles and disciples before them. Their ability to present a compelling case for Christ along the thoroughfares and marketplaces of life clearly aided the flourishing Way.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, after the murder of Deacon Stephen, apostles and disciples dispersed into the world knowing that temporal and religious authorities wished to inflict harm upon the Way. In the midst of dispersion, Deacon Philip taught and baptized new disciples, though according to standards of this new movement, he required apostles to convey the Spirit upon the new baptized. Two apostles did so, but not after admonishing Philip for not following the Book of Common Prayer properly (he writes with great sarcasm).

An angel directed Philip to wander in the wilderness and away from the apostles. As he headed away from Jerusalem to the south, the Spirit directed him to speak with an Ethiopian eunuch. Philip approached the man and listened

to him speak of his great interest in the suffering servant. The eunuch asked Philip, "does the prophet say this about himself, or someone else?" (Acts 8:34)

Philip spoke about what he had been taught and what he had experienced. He directed the eunuch to Jesus the Christ, the Good News, and the love God pours out for all creation. It is the eunuch, in a profoundly safe and new relationship, who asks, "What is to prevent me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36) We have always known the answer, correct?

Philip did baptize him and was immediately taken from the eunuch's presence. But the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." This rejoicing, this is the Spirit's labour and love. This is what it means to be baptized with fire. This is proof of the Spirit conveying itself.

God calls upon the Way to walk again by faith on wilderness roads. That is to say, God calls us to temporarily or permanently walk away from the safety of physical and administrative structures in order to walk with people — God's people. The Spirit guides disciples of the Way to discover God's relationships and Word already present in the minds, hearts, and lips of the people. We are called to listen, and only after that listening, we are called to affirm the Good News already at home — already the glue of the new relationship.

You, dear Church, have shown me that Deacon Philip's ministry survives in and about you. I am so grateful to have this opportunity to journey fully with you in Jesus' Body, His life, and His ministry. My heart overflows with gratitude for the myriad of stories you have trusted me to hear — and in many cases retell. May the story of the eunuch's teaching and ministry be told out-loud by you and me today; it is far less of a stretch than you might think.

I love you in the deep bonds of Christ's affection.

+ Geoffrey



**GEOFFREY WOODCROFT**

Bishop of Rupert's Land

# Photos from the 119th Session of Synod



Photo: Cinna Baran



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji



Photo: Davies Adebiji

## The Communion of Saints: The Chosen Family of God

ANDREW RAMPTON

Christians are the family of God. We are described as being adopted through Christ in scripture (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5) and we often refer to one another as siblings in Christ. Jesus, in his last hours on the cross, demonstrates the depth of this familial connection when he gives his mother, Mary, and the disciple John to one another as mother and son (John 19:26-27). This relationship shared by Christians means that every baptism is not only the making of a new Christian, but the birth of a new sibling in Christ for all of us. The family gets a little bigger.

By now, God's family is quite large. It's not just the Christians we see walking among us who make up this family. We are people who believe that death is not the end. You and I may be siblings in Christ, but John and Mary, Paul, and every other person ever joined to the life of Christ are also our relations. When we are baptized, all of those great saints of God — the ones whose names we know and the ones known only to God — are given to us as aunts and uncles, grandparents, siblings, relations and ancestors in our faith. We join the ranks of those holy people, all of us alive and dripping wet with living water. As Maxwell Johnson says in his book *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, "Baptism places into the world a community of displaced people, people on a pilgrimage who really belong nowhere except where they are led, a people sure of their identity as the Body of Christ, as those who always walk wet in the baptismal waters of their origin."

Baptism changes us profoundly. We leave behind our old identities, our old lives, and we take on a new life in Christ.



"The Trinity Adored by All Saints"  
by a Spanish Painter (c. 1400)

When we are baptized, we join the saints. "We are all members of God's holy people in the first sense, members of God's holy people through baptism. We are also invited to become saints in the second sense, people whose lives witness courageously to God's friendship. The saints are those who 'live as if the truth were true.' Their lives point to God as the secret of their being" (Timothy Radcliffe, *Take the Plunge: Living Baptism and Confirmation*).

Becoming a Christian, being baptized into this new family, was understood by early Christians as a true rebirth. It not only promised a new life in Christ, but it did away with many aspects of the old life. We can see Christian names spread across regions from the baptisteries that hold the saint whose name is being shared. In cultures with a belief that the position of stars at the time of one's birth determined a personality, baptism was understood to rewrite this fate. Baptism gave the new Christian a protecting spirit, one powerful enough to undo the "conflicting influence of the planets" (Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*).



Photo: Cinna Baran

Of course, such a profound change required a degree of vulnerability. The Communion of Saints, that great cloud of witnesses by whom we are surrounded (Hebrews 12:1) is a family into which all have been reborn. None of us start there, we all enter through the sacrament of rebirth. One of the most famous depictions of baptism, the mosaic of the Baptism of Our Lord in the Arian Baptistry in Ravenna, Italy, shows Jesus being baptized by John. Jesus is

entirely naked as his cousin and the Holy Spirit douse him physically and spiritually in the River Jordan. A ritual washing for the forgiveness of sins sounds like something that should involve a degree of vulnerability. And it's probably the spiritual equivalent of getting naked in public. In fact, as Aidan Kavanagh explains in his book *A Rite of Passage*, a fourth-century direction for baptism says that the bishop enters the baptistry and commands the

baptizands to take off their clothes. Men and women were usually separated at this point with (female) deacons attending to the women. Baptisms were customarily conducted at vigil liturgies, so late at night, which would minimize the opportunity for ogling, but just the same, a new Christian's entry to the family of God was made the same way they came into this world the first time: naked, wet, and vulnerable.

We have traditions that emphasize the truth of this new life. We clothe the newly baptized in white garments as reminders of their membership in the eternal life of Christ. They will be numbered among the great multitude around God's throne (Revelation 7:9-17). Sometimes the baptized are given representations of the saints who they feel close to or whose lives theirs resemble: St. Mary Magdalene for pharmacists and hair stylists, St. Sebastian for athletes, St. Clare for an avid cyclist, St. Luke for those who work in healing, and so on. In some communities those being confirmed take on a saint's name as one of their own, representing the depth of this relationship and family resemblance.

In many communities, there is a profound reminder of the presence of the Communion of Saints at the baptism itself. After the presentation and examination of candidates, the Litany of the Saints is sung as everyone processes to the baptismal font. The practice of addressing the saints in a litany is ancient, going back to the fourth century. It is at once a reminder of the examples of Christlike people who have gone before us in the faith, and an invitation to our extended family to be present for this arrival of a new relation.

We benefit from these many examples of what a holy Christian life can look like. "A saint is someone who is becoming the person whom God created them to be. This is why no saint is like any other. We are each unique, but in the saint this individuality becomes visible" (Radcliffe, *Take the Plunge*). We can only be our full selves, the people that God made us to be, when we live fully in Christ. Our adoption into the life of Christ through baptism, our adoption into the extended family of God with all of the other saints, is an incredible gift. This gift includes not only this most intimate relationship with God, but also means that our fullest life is one that we also share with every other baptized person. The fullness of the communion of saints, the chosen family of God, is what makes us full and whole. The fullness of that communion stretches across geography, cultures, languages,

time, and even the barriers that we erect between ourselves. As Kelley Nikondeha says in her 2017 book *Adopted: The Sacrament of Belonging in a Fractured World*:

God's family stretches beyond our smaller notions of biological or ethnic connection. The other is always much closer to being our kin than we imagine. It's the continual work of the prophets and the Spirit to open our eyes to this simple yet astounding truth: Anyone can be our family if we let them. With eyes opened, we realize that we are a family so wide with welcome that enemy love is inevitable. Eventually, contrary to the current world order, even our enemy can become our flesh.

In this season, when harvest is ended and winter is not quite arrived, when we look from the Feast of All Saints toward the Reign of Christ on the Last Day, we remember the depth and breadth of God's creation. The same God who knows every person, every creature, every grain of sand intimately also made all things seen and unseen. We consider the wisdom of those who have gone before us in the faith, learning from their experiences of living in Christ, and seeking to find our own way toward living as reflections of Christ in the world.

With this promise and commitment before us, we give thanks to God for the many saints who joined us at our baptisms and have accompanied us on the journey ever since. A chosen family of diverse and amazing people who know what it is to live as a Christian. They remember the joys and struggles, they cheer us on, celebrate our victories, reassure us when we fall, and grieve our losses. In all things, our sibling saints point us on our way, seeking an ever-deeper life in Christ, and offering us a glimpse of the places we will one day stand.



ANDREW RAMPTON

The Rev. Andrew Rampton is the rector of St John the Evangelist, Hamilton. He has a long-standing interest in the communion of saints and great love for these unseen siblings in Christ. He regularly writes and speaks on saints, music, and liturgical theology and practice. He is bookishpriest on many social media platforms and maintains a writing archive at [bookishpriest.com](http://bookishpriest.com).

## On Family and Identity: The Passion of Perpetua

HEATHER BARKMAN

In the first few centuries of the Common Era, Christians were the targets of sporadic persecutions by the Roman authorities. The imperial persecutions of Decius, Valerian, and Diocletian were interspersed with more localized outbreaks of violence, as Christians' refusal to pay homage to the traditional Roman gods made them convenient scapegoats whenever things went wrong.

Those Christians who were killed became central figures in the communal memory of Christians. Beginning at least in the late second century, Christians kept records of these martyrs' deaths. Some of the earliest martyr accounts are little more than court transcripts. Others, particularly into the third and fourth centuries, take the shape of narratives that are increasingly complex. The martyrs are often depicted within the texts as athletes or gladiators, waging battle not with the Roman authorities but against the devil himself. The tortures they endured are described in sometimes uncomfortable detail, and the martyrs are praised for being able to endure such pain. In this context, death is treated not as a defeat but as a victory.



One of the most extraordinary early Christian martyr texts is the Passion of Perpetua. The Passion of Perpetua contains a diary written by a woman named Perpetua, a 22-year-old wife and mother who, along with several Christian companions, is imprisoned and executed in 203 CE. Not only does this provide a rare glimpse into the mindset of a martyr-to-be, but it is also one of only a handful of early Christian texts written by a woman. Although the text certainly underwent some editing—it is given a narrative framework by an anonymous redactor and also includes descriptions of the experiences of some of the other martyrs with her—we can be reasonably sure that some of the sentiments and experiences expressed are authentic to Perpetua.

One of the unique aspects of Perpetua's narrative is the focus on her family, in particular her son and father. She is shown as struggling to emotionally and physically separate herself from both of them, as they are hinderances to her ultimate goal of becoming a martyr. She is given multiple opportunities to recant her position and save herself from

execution, but in all cases, she resists and insists that the only identity that matters to her is "Christian".

Perpetua's motherhood is intimately connected with breastfeeding. In a time when baby formula didn't exist, breastfeeding was literally a matter of life and death. Perpetua's separation from her infant son then was not just emotionally fraught, but potentially dangerous. For example, Perpetua's main concern when she is transferred from house arrest to the prison is for her son, who is described as weak from hunger. When she is reunited with him (as a result of bribery from the deacons), the first thing she does is nurse him. She reports that both she and her son are comforted immediately, saying, "my prison had suddenly become a palace!" (*Passion of Perpetua* 3).

However, a few days later, Perpetua's father confronts her at a hearing and uses her son to try to convince her to change her mind and renounce her Christianity. He begs Perpetua to "think of your child, who will not be able to live once you are gone" (*Passion of Perpetua* 5).

Later, as Perpetua continues to refuse to recant, her father tries one last desperate attempt to convince her by refusing to allow her to continue to have her son with her in prison. However, God steps in and ensures that neither Perpetua nor her son will suffer further; she says, "But as God willed, the baby had no further desire for the breast, nor did I suffer any inflammation; and so I was relieved of any anxiety for my child and of any discomfort in my breasts" (*Passion of Perpetua* 6). This divine gift made it possible for Perpetua to complete her transformation into a martyr by stopping her maternal concerns. She no longer needs to worry for her son; this connection to her family broken, she is able to focus only on God.

At the same time, by rejecting her son, Perpetua also rejects her father and her identity as daughter. Throughout her narrative, Perpetua's father tries to convince her to renounce her Christianity. He appeals to her identity as a daughter, speaking of his love for her and of the anguish her arrest causes him. Perpetua grieves her father's pain, but she does not waver in her commitment: "I cannot be called anything other than what I am, a Christian" (*Passion of Perpetua* 1). Eventually, Perpetua's father recognizes that Perpetua's insistence on claiming the identity of Christian means that she cannot also be a daughter: "With tears in his eyes he no longer addressed me as his daughter but as 'Lady'" (*Passion of Perpetua* 5).

In antiquity, Perpetua was celebrated as an ideal martyr. Before her arrest, she had achieved the ultimate goals of a Roman woman: marriage (though her husband doesn't appear in the narrative) and motherhood (especially as the mother of a son). Until this point, she had also been the ideal daughter. Ancient theologians like Augustine of Hippo preferred to focus on these aspects of Perpetua's identity, noting that only the extraordinary circumstances of martyrdom permitted the equally extraordinary rejection of the typical expectations of obedience and family loyalty. In a sermon given on Perpetua's feast day, he notes, "What she hated in [her father] was his folly, not his nature; his unbelief, not her roots. Thus she earned all the greater glory by resolutely rejecting the bad advice of such a beloved father, considering that she could not see him thrashed without feeling the pain herself" (*Sermon* 281.2).

Perpetua's story is a powerful reminder of the complicated nature of family dynamics. Perpetua's father acts out of love for her, but she must still reject him because he is standing between her and her devotion to God. She must also reject her motherhood identity in favour of martyrdom, but is only able to do so fully once God intervenes to ensure that her infant is taken care of. Though we will hopefully never face something as extreme as the Roman persecutions, Perpetua's confidence in herself and her refusal to compromise her values in the face of intense pressure (even from those she loves) can still provide inspiration to us nearly 2000 years later.



HEATHER BARKMAN

Dr. Heather Barkman received her PhD in Religion in 2016. She currently teaches in the Religion Department and the Classics Department at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. Additionally, she

frequently offers public courses through the McNally Robinson Community Classroom and Creative Retirement Manitoba. Her main research and teaching interests are on women in early Christianity, martyrdom, and life in the Roman Empire.

# Exploring Seeds of Wisdom: Perspectives from a Rich African Christian Tapestry.

EBELE FELIX



In the heart of Africa, vibrant cultures intertwine with deep spiritual traditions. From the oral traditions that echo through generations to the innovative educational initiatives that empower the youth, the African perspective on “Seeds of Wisdom” within the Anglican Church reveals a dynamic interplay between heritage and modernity. As we delve into this theme, we uncover how shared experiences and collective growth strengthen the bonds of community and illuminate the path toward spiritual enrichment and social transformation.

The theme “Seeds of Wisdom” can refer to the idea that the concepts of knowledge, understanding, goodness, and love are foundational elements which can be cultivated and nurtured within us like planting seeds in soil, often through the influence of those who have come before us. This concept emphasizes the importance of heritage, tradition, and the guidance we receive from past generations, particularly from saints, who, as you may have already read, can be viewed as spiritual mentors, extended family figures, and ancestors. From this standpoint, saints can be seen as part of our extended family and much like family members, provide a sense of belonging and support figures who guide us through life’s challenges, offering insights that resonate through time.

“Seeds of Wisdom” beautifully captures the essence of intergenerational knowledge and the shared experiences of

people of African descent. This concept emphasizes the importance of storytelling, cultural heritage, and the wisdom passed down through generations. It reflects how our collective journey shapes our identity and fosters a sense of belonging. By celebrating our shared history, we can inspire future generations to embrace their roots and continue the legacy of resilience, creativity, and strength. This theme can be explored through various mediums such as literature, art, music, and community gatherings.

Exploring the theme of “Seeds of Wisdom” in the Anglican Church of Canada from the perspective of a person of African descent can highlight the unique experiences and contributions of Black Anglicans within the broader Canadian context through cultural integration in Worship. In order to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity within the church community, I have outlined thirteen ways in which the Church can become more inclusive in their services and can enrich and strengthen the community of the faithful.

1. **Music and Singing:** Incorporate traditional music styles, instruments, and songs from the culture being represented. This could involve using gospel, hymns, or folk music that resonates with the community’s heritage.
2. **Recognizing Historical Contributions:** Create initiatives to educate the congregation about the histories and contributions of Black Anglicans in Canada. This could involve producing resources, hosting lectures, or organizing exhibitions that showcase the lives of prominent figures and historical struggles faced by Black communities.
3. **Community Outreach and Advocacy:** Encourage the church to engage in social justice initiatives that address issues affecting Black communities in Canada, such as racism, poverty, and access to education to show the Church’s commitment to love and justice.
4. **Language:** Use indigenous or community languages in readings, prayers, and hymns (where feasible) to help



congregants connect more deeply with the service and foster inclusivity.

5. **Storytelling:** Integrate storytelling traditions that reflect the cultural heritage of the congregation. Sharing stories from the community’s history or personal testimonies can create a powerful connection among members.
6. **Visual Arts:** Utilize culturally relevant artwork, banners, or decorations that reflect the community’s identity. This can include images, symbols, or colors that hold significance within the culture.
7. **Dance and Movement:** Incorporate traditional dances or movement during worship as a powerful way to engage congregants physically and emotionally in their worship.
8. **Cultural Celebrations:** Organize special services or events that celebrate cultural festivals, holidays, or significant historical events. This not only honours the culture but also educates the wider congregation.
9. **Food and Fellowship** through communal meals or potlucks where traditional dishes from other cultures can be shared.
10. **Community Involvement** where community members can be involved in planning and leading services, ensuring that their voices and perspectives are heard and valued in the worship process.
11. **Educational Components:** Educate through sermons, discussions, or workshops that explore the intersection of faith and culture. Spiritual retreats and reflections focused on the spiritual journeys of Black Anglicans can provide a space for personal reflection, communal worship, and discussions on faith, identity, and the importance of wisdom from previous generations.
12. **Intergenerational Dialogue:** Fostering spaces for dialogue

between older and younger members of the congregation. Also, having Youth Leadership Development programs to empower young Black Anglicans for leadership roles within the Church via mentorship opportunities, leadership training workshops, and support for youth-led initiatives .

13. **Building Alliances** to encourage collaboration with other cultural communities within the Anglican Church of Canada, and to promote understanding and solidarity which help build relationships, share stories, and foster a greater sense of unity within the church.

Using these methods will make religious services become more inclusive and reflective of the diverse backgrounds of congregants, enriching the overall worship experience and fostering a deeper sense of connection and identity.

In conclusion, by emphasizing the theme of “Seeds of Wisdom,” the Anglican Church of Canada can create a nurturing environment for Black Anglicans to share their stories, celebrate their heritage, and strengthen their faith community. This approach not only honours the past but also empowers future generations to carry forward the wisdom and resilience of their ancestors.



EBELE FELIX

Dr. Ebele Felix is a seasoned educator with a career in Nigeria and Canada. She is a public speaker who has worked as a facilitator, teacher, counselor, and administrator. Additionally, she is a licensed insurance agent with health sector experience, and advocates for human dignity and equity through leadership roles with Black Anglicans of Canada and the Ebeano Newcomers Network.

# Parish Profile:

## Grace-St. John's Anglican/Lutheran Church

Interview with Pastor Trudy Thorarinson and parishioners David Kaminski, John Heard, and Lisa Salazar.

**RLN:** Can you tell me more about the name of your church?

**Trudy:** The churches that came together were Grace Lutheran and St. John's Anglican. So, the full name is Grace-St. John's Lutheran/Anglican Church. They intersect with one another.

**John:** We should also mention that we chose not to put Anglican/Lutheran on our new sign. It's on the building, but not on the sign.

**Trudy:** Yes, we felt it was more important to put "all are welcome" on the sign than it was to put "Anglican/Lutheran".

**David:** The sign is even an outreach because people notice it and they ask us about it!

**RLN:** Tell me more about the process of this "coming together"?

**Trudy:** There were a lot of meetings. Worship services alternated between Anglican and Lutheran. Then, when my predecessor was here, she blended the services into one. A learning process has been around the governance.



**David:** We are Anglicans and Lutherans, but we've kind of forgotten about the dividing lines. And there are many people who came from other backgrounds. It's like a compromise.

**Lisa:** I couldn't even tell you who was who. Everyone's definitely blended.

**RLN:** What does it mean to you to be a joint Anglican/Lutheran community?

**John:** We get the best of both words. It's kind of neat when we get both Jason and Geoff together. Sometimes they hang out together at Luther Village, the camp. We have had them here on several occasions. So, we get twice the visits.

**David:** There's also the expectation of both apportionment and benevolence, on the other hand.

**Trudy:** There are double the meetings. But it's neat; it's unique.

**David:** I often travel, and when I run into other Christians, we talk about denominations. I'll often say I'm a Christian first, denomination second. I don't care so much about the denominational lines. I think there are enough common things that we shouldn't feel the need to be chest thumpers for our denominations.

**RLN:** Can you tell me more about what worship looks like on your average Sunday here?

**Trudy:** On a Communion Sunday for the Eucharistic Prayer, sometimes I mix it up. So, the preface might be Anglican and the Eucharistic prayer might be Lutheran, it might all be Anglican, it might all be Lutheran.

**David:** You can't tell from what's on the screen. In our bulletin you can see where the hymns come from if you want to look it up.

**Trudy:** Yes, often we'll try to keep all the hymns from one hymnal, so one Sunday it might be Anglican, the next Sunday it might be Lutheran. It's pretty straightforward.

**RLN:** What are some of the ways that your church reaches out to and involves the broader community?

**Trudy:** Carman has a food pantry that we collect food for. There's also the Boyne Lodge here, which is a personal care home. Once a month we hold a worship service with communion. Individual members of our congregation are involved in wider aspects of the community such as community boards. For example, John's been trained for the palliative care group here.

**Lisa:** We also help prepare some meals for those in need in the community.

**John:** And my wife, Mary, is on the board for Luther Village, the Lutheran camp in Kenora.

**David:** We go carolling around Christmas time as well. We go to some of our shut-in parishioners and to the hospital.

**Lisa:** And the prayer shawls. We have a group of ladies that knit beautiful shawls, and they have a lovely little poem on them. They're blessed and given out to whoever needs them – whoever needs a hug.



**John:** And Covid caused us to do a few things differently. We like to eat a lot. So, we had to adapt a lot of our fellowship activities like a stewardship supper and a Shrove Tuesday pancake meal, things like that. For a full year, we

did take-out only. People were able pick up food from us, then they'd take it home and eat it, and some people would chat over Zoom. Some people still only participate through the take-out meals.

**Trudy:** We have held a "mystery supper." There might have been forty people or so here, and a lot of those who attended were people from the community who enjoyed it. A whole table was people who worked for the Post Office!

**RLN:** What are some challenges that your parish is currently facing?

**David:** There used to be a lot of youth groups in all the major churches. We had a youth group shared with the United



Can you  
be-leaf it?

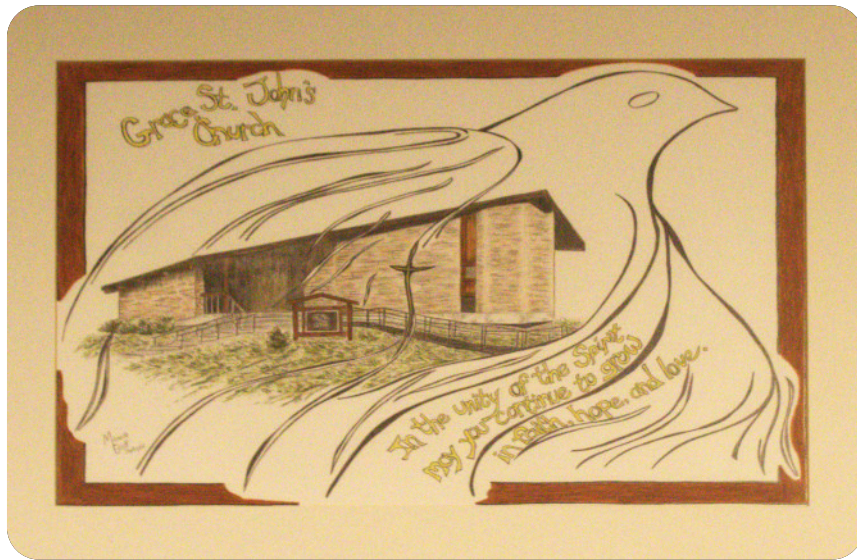


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Church and one of the Mennonite churches. But I visited there and none of our churches still have a lot of young people to warrant either a Sunday school or a youth group. That's something that probably bothers all of us a little bit.

**John:** It is an aging population with not a lot of people joining. So, you try to do what you can. Some of us ended up here from friends inviting friends. I think when people come here, they often appreciate the small-town friendliness here. Lisa calls it our "church family". You wish you could cast a net and get a lot more in, but I think it's still a word of mouth and invitation that works to get people.

**David:** We do run a deficit budget, but I don't think we're at the stage where we're considering the building to be an albatross around our necks yet.

**RLN:** Is there any art or architecture in this place that resonates with you or that you particularly enjoy?

**Lisa:** There is a beautiful piece of artwork upstairs that we have in our bulletins. It's a dove that was done by the wife of one of our former priests.

**Trudy:** One thing that some people have pointed out is that at the back of the altar you have the cross and there's a brick wall. And the brick stands out, and they connect making many tiny crosses.

**Lisa:** It's really nice on a Sunday morning because the sun comes through nice and bright, and you can see the shadow of the brick.

**RLN:** Is there anything that you would like people to know about your parish that they might not otherwise know?

**David:** Carman is not that far from Winnipeg. We are a rural congregation, yes, but if you want to drive in the country some day, come and see what we're about.

**Trudy:** We like to have fun.

**Lisa:** For me, we're like a family. We like to eat, we like to celebrate together, and we're optimistic. When I brought my children here, it was for the reason of opening doors for them. Will they be welcome here for whatever life throws at them? Would they like to have baptisms for their children, or would they like to be married, or, heaven forbid, a funeral? Those kinds of things. I just wanted them to find a welcoming place that they can be a part of if they choose to as they get older. Hopefully that's what I did.

**John:** We're welcoming and friendly. And if people are looking for an opportunity to come out, they can come out on the last Sunday of the month; we do a potluck! That would be a special day to come out and experience the fellowship.

