



BETHLEHEM MOMENTS



DECEMBER 2024

CONNECTING CHURCH &
COMMUNITY

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BETHLEHEM MOMENTS

Rupert's Land News is published 10 times per year (September - June) by the Diocese of Rupert's Land, in the Anglican Church in Canada. It connects churches and communities from Portage la Prairie, MB, to Atikokan, ON, by offering news, events, opinions, and ideas to 4,000 readers per month. RLN is available in a variety of formats: [Website](#) • [Facebook](#) • [Twitter](#)

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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: [Casey Horner](#)

The Bible is an abundance of knowledge in various forms, including history, allegory, poetry, and, of course, stories. As we enter the season of Advent and await the coming of Christ, we once again listen to and learn from the story of the Nativity — the first of many times the world encountered Jesus and was forever changed by His presence. Hearing the story of the Nativity again gives us the opportunity to reflect on the moments when we recognized the presence of God in our own lives — our Bethlehem Moments.

For some, when they think of a Bethlehem Moment, they think of the grandly miraculous — a moment which defies our expectations of what “should” happen. It could be a saved life, a healing, or an unexpected feast. For others, when they think of a Bethlehem Moment, they think of the subtleties that, for some inexplicable reason, stand out. It could be a seemingly random visit to a church, a flower in a garden, or a moment of silence. God's presence is palpable in these moments, too. All of these are our encounters with God, our Bethlehem Moments.

This is a special edition of Rupert's Land News. In this issue, people from across the Diocese have submitted their Bethlehem Moments. In sharing their stories, three beautiful things happen. First, each person recognized and gave thanks for a moment when God's presence was evident in their lives. Second, they did not just experience this moment, but they remembered it, and then took the care to write it down. Third, they have allowed us to share in their joy and their faith. In reading these Bethlehem Moments, we come to know more about one another in this community. And through all of this, we are bearing witness to God's presence in our lives.

If we already know the person who shares their story, we get to know them even better. But one of the truly remarkable things about storytelling is that we can suddenly know and care about someone we have never met. In our stories, we get to learn about one another. Better still, when our stories are heard, we feel comforted in knowing that another has taken the time to listen.

As you read through any of these stories, I encourage you to think about the multitude of ways in which God touches our lives. Take a little while to reflect on the moments in your life that stick out to you. Sit with your stories, remember them, and cherish them. These moments were made by our perfect creator just for you. If you are willing, I invite you to share them with others. To truly connect, we must allow ourselves

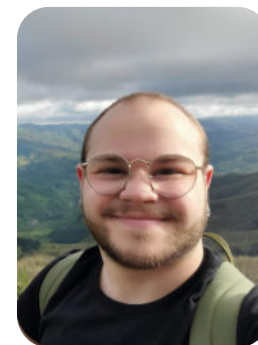
Bethlehem Moments

Photo: [Ravi Sharma](#)

to know and be known. Sometimes, this can be a difficult task, but the reward is worth it.

While opening ourselves up to others can be daunting, we must remember and take comfort in the fact that it is impossible to hide from God. We are known, completely and wholly, by God. In every moment of our lives, through thick and thin, God is with us and He loves us. This is why He is our Emmanuel. With the arrival of Christmas Day, we celebrate Christ's body — His coming into the world as fully divine, and now, fully human. Together, we live our stories. Together, we welcome our Saviour. Together, we celebrate the Body of Christ as the Body of Christ.

Peace be with you, and Merry Christmas.



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert's Land News

Note: God is at work in each of us regardless of title or office. To honour this in the stories that follow, participants have been identified by first and last name only.

As I came into my third decade of life I had a life-changing moment, a spiritual conversion of sorts. It came at a Maundy Thursday service in 2010 when I was asked to read the passage from the 1st Letter from Paul to the Corinthians, *“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”*

I spent almost my entire life swinging from all-out believer to apparent atheist and back again. As a kid, I only went to church to be with my grandma but always loved the stories and the music. In my teens years I was too busy for church and no one I hung out with seemed to believe in God, so I decided I didn’t either. However, there were still times when I went to church – usually during occasions of sorrow or confusion. I never could explain my need to go to church, and it certainly didn’t make me go on a regular basis. But for brief, inexplicable moments, I found peace in those buildings.

Everything changed when I had my eldest child. Suddenly, it was very important to me that they be baptized and raised in a church. During the Baptismal interview, my newly-found minister asked me one very important question – why do I want my child to be baptized? I couldn’t answer that question right away – I just knew it was something I had to do, something my heart was telling me to do.

Subsequently, we started coming to church. Only on Mondays at first, as it was a more laid-back, contemplative service where you could choose how much you participated. I was very hesitant in the beginning, unsure of my beliefs and my reasons for being there. I didn’t even take part in communion the first few times we came.

I did, however, decide to attend services during Holy Week, beginning with Maundy Thursday. Why I thought it was important to attend those services when I had been diligently avoiding Sunday mornings, I still can’t explain to this day. But attend I did, and I was asked at the last minute to read the Epistle on that fateful Maundy Thursday. Having not read a bible in many years, I had no idea what



Photo: Mitchell Leach

I was about to read. I think I hesitated somewhere around “this is my body”. The realization of the words I was about to speak struck me speechless. The Eucharistic Prayer is such an important part of Jesus’ story; I was humbled and honoured to be speaking these words aloud. Silly as it seems, in my head, these words should have only been spoken by priests.

Suddenly, I felt the weight of something on my right shoulder, like a hand lending comfort and strength. I looked over, but of course, there was no one there. Just the priest, sitting in her chair, head down in prayer and listening to the reading. It was a very powerful moment. I knew in my heart that God touched my shoulder that night, telling me it was okay to go on, to finish reading the prayer. I felt a presence in those words, a presence that I felt physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As my lips sounded out the words of the Eucharistic prayer, I knew my life had changed forever. That night, I became a disciple of Jesus.

That’s when I really started listening to the readings, to the songs, to the prayers. I learned the Lord’s Prayer as a child, but I never really listened to the words. Same with all the music. Most of it was the same as when I was younger, but only after that Maundy Thursday service did I really start to understand the meaning of the words behind the music.

As I began hearing the words, not just listening to them, I finally understood what God had been trying to say to me all these years – that God is here, that God wants to be a part of my life, and that God loves me. God’s words are beautiful and have changed my life.

I have received so many lessons throughout my life that I finally stopped to listen to and let God’s hands guide me in the right direction. As easy as clay in a potter’s hands, a person can be reshaped by turning their mind and heart to God. By reading the word of God, praying to God, and listening to God, we can all be the clay in the hands of the Divine Potter.

- Theo Robinson

A couple of years ago, I was driving my car in Winnipeg, heading home after a hair appointment. I was stopped at a red light on Britannia and St Mary’s Rd. The light turned green for me, but I saw a large gravel-type truck coming up on my left side. Something in my gut told me that the truck wasn’t going to stop. I thought to myself, “wait, count to 3, look in both directions.” At that moment, the truck sped into the intersection right in front of me and ran through the red light. Had I started immediately when the light turned green, the truck would have hit me hard on the driver’s side door. I have had a couple similar experiences since, and by listening to the voice in my head that says “wait, count to 3,” I have avoided injuries or worse. I feel blessed and give thanks for God’s presence and my “guardian angel’s” protection.

- Lorraine Powell

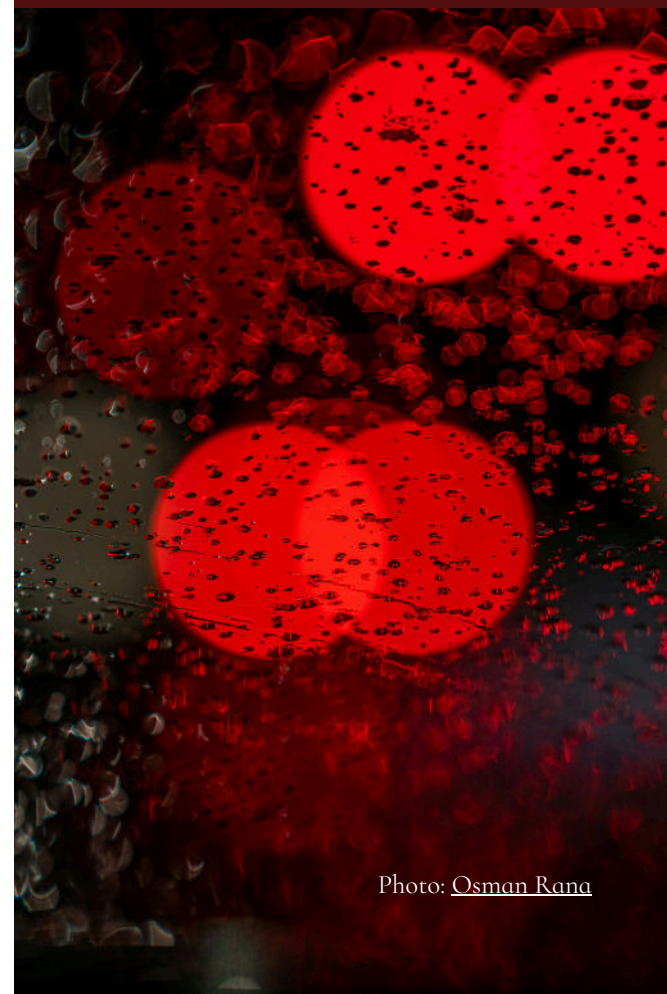
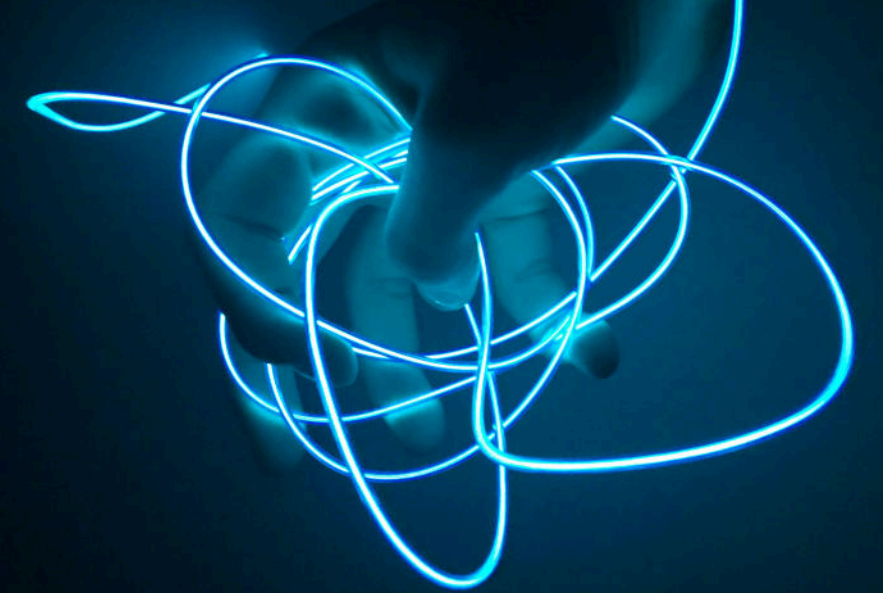


Photo: Osman Rana



One of my Bethlehem Moments was at a very low time in my life. I had been battling chronic illness my entire life, but this was a new situation altogether. I had become significantly disabled. I was unable to walk without gait aids, unable to speak without slurring, and unable to care for my daily needs. I had been placed on disability from a job I cared deeply about. I chose to lay about at home for two months wondering what my purpose in life could possibly be now.

I have lived with a God-consciousness all my life, and felt strongly called to ministry since I was a child. The question that I couldn’t answer now was, who was I without a body? How could I possibly be of use to anyone now? I couldn’t even cook my meals or do my own laundry. I felt I wasn’t of any use to myself!

I prayed angry prayers. I prayed desperate ones even more often. I tried to coerce God into doing my will. God wasn’t fooled, but God was compassionate. I pleaded for God to be “great and wonderful and offer me a diagnosis.” You see I was being magnanimous and not even asking for a cure! It was during one of these moments when God stopped me mid-prayer and a voice in my head as large as my home said, “Chris, you’re praying for the wrong things. What you should be praying for is the strength, the courage, the tools, and the support that you need every day.” I started praying that prayer immediately and all desperation left me. It has never returned.

I didn’t get the two diagnoses for which I had been so desperate for another five and fifteen years. Neither condition is curable; only one is treatable. But I was healed the moment I said that prayer. I have never lost my desire or my purpose to serve God again. When I am feeling lost or distressed in any way, I pray that prayer once more (the shortened version): “God, change me, not my situation.” When I pray these words, I find my way, my purpose, and my meaning every time. God never fails me.

- Chris Salstrom

Photo: Emma Pasewald

I was at my breaking point. It was early December of 2022, and I knew something had to change. My family was comprised of atheists, and I considered myself agnostic at best. However, because of my Jewish roots, the idea of one God hovered in my mind. Yet, I still did not know what, exactly, a belief in God meant. I learned about the Abrahamic religions and found that, for a whole host of reasons, Christianity spoke to me the most. Despite this, I was still unsure if I should call myself a Christian. And if I was to call myself a Christian, which denomination should I choose? I loved the history of the Catholic Church, the chants and incense of the Orthodox Church, the values of the Anglican Church – the list went on.

These thoughts had begun, changed, repeated, and hounded me for four years. Though I had begun to feel a strong belief in one God, I only really started praying in March of 2022. I was so tired of the onslaught of thoughts. Who are you, Cinna? What do you believe in? How much do you believe in it? I didn't know how much more I could take.

Kneeling on the ground at Eucharistic Adoration, I gazed up at the monstrance which encompassed the Blessed Sacrament. "God, I have never asked you this before, and I don't know if it's even right for me to do so. But I don't know what to do. Can you please give me a sign?" I paused. I sounded ridiculous. "No, no, what am I thinking? I wouldn't even know what to look for. Forget I said anything." But as God promised time and time again to the Hebrews: He remembers.

Christmas morning rolled around a couple of weeks later. I recalled hearing that St. Michael and All Angels might be using incense during their Christmas Day service. While I had only attended there once before, the hope of smelling the sweet scent of incense drew me back on that momentous Christmas morning. It's strange how these seemingly trivial pieces can play such an important role in forming the most crucial experiences of our lives.

The service began with a procession during which we sang "While Shepherds Watch their Flocks by Night", a tune that, until that day, I had no particularly strong feelings towards whatsoever. Hymnbook in hand, I sang along to the tune. As the parishioners and I followed the clergy, altar servers, and choir, we proceeded up the centre aisle and made a right turn, now facing the sacristy door.

For some reason, I looked up. And there, meeting my gaze, was one of the most beautiful, but oddly placed crucifixes I had ever seen. In that brief moment, eyes fixed quizzically on this crucifix, I said to myself, "why on earth is there a Russian Orthodox cross in an Anglican church?" And there, mesmerized by this crucifix, the people and I sang in unison, "and this shall be the sign."



Photo: Cinna Baran

My eyes widened. My body went cold. There was a catch in my throat. I forced myself to keep walking. I stopped singing. I told God that I wanted a sign, but that I would have no idea what to look for. So, God presented me with a sign so noticeable that I could no longer doubt Him.

Our chorus of voices was God's angels – His messengers – to share with me the fact by which I now live my life: I am the Lord's. I always have been, I just didn't know it yet. Five months later, on the Feast of Pentecost, this truth was proclaimed officially – I was baptized and confirmed in the Church. I asked, and my Lord and God answered. The Light of the world has illumined my life; I live in darkness no more.

- Cinna Baran



Photo: Dawn McDonald

December is coming – the month of parties. What happens when the host has more guests than expected? That's what happened in December of 2014 at the Royal Military Institute of Manitoba's Christmas Dinner.

Our president announced, "good news, bad news. The good news is that there are 150 of you here. The bad news is that only 100 of you responded to the R.S.V.P. There's a food shortage. What's going to happen is the mess staff is going to serve those with tickets."

When I heard that I thought, "oh no! For sure someone or some people are going to ask if I can do a miracle. I know the mentality of the military. I can't do a miracle."

It's been rare for me to hear a direct word from God, and what I heard him say was, "don't get flustered, you can't do a miracle." That clarified things for me. No, I can't do a miracle, but I know who can. If I need to multiply food I have to go through the Creator.

Then I remember the medical officer coming up to me and asking, "Padre, didn't Jesus do something with bread and fish?" My reply was, "yes he did Sir." A woman, I don't know who she was, asked, "can't you work something into your grace?" I said, "yes I can."

I introduced my prayer by clarifying my expertise. "I can't do a miracle, only God can do that. What I can do is to lead you in praying for a miracle." The meal was served, and when I heard the call for seconds, I knew that the miracle was unfolding. At the end of the meal, when I went to the washroom, I saw that there were leftovers on the serving table. Our prayer had been granted.

Also, at the end of the dinner, ever so many people came up to thank me for what I had done. My reply was, "don't thank me, thank God. He has worked a miracle."

When I got home, I looked up the feeding of the 5000 in the Bible. I noticed that even when Jesus said his prayer, he had to go through the Creator. "He lifted up his eyes to heaven..." (Mt. 14:19)

- Richard Kunzelman

What this magazine calls a “Bethlehem Moment,” I call my “Road to Damascus Experience.”

I have been an Anglican all my life (starting out in the High end of the Church of England). My family was devoutly Tractarian, and the Church was a part of my whole life. On Sundays, I attended church in the morning, Sunday School in the afternoon, and Evensong in the evening. I went to church schools (up to and including a convent school run by Anglican nuns), church youth groups, and the Brownies and Girl Guides run by the parish. By the time I was 18, I was church-ed out. Moreover, I started university in the same year that the God-Is-Dead movement erupted in North America, and I became a pall bearer! Church-going ceased to be part of my life. And yet...

When I moved to Winnipeg, I felt the need to re-connect with the Church and started attending All Saints on an on-again-off-again basis. When I married later that year, we had our service at the Law Courts (my husband was not a Christian). But when our sons were born, they were both baptized (perhaps I was hedging my bets?).

In 1967 I met a young priest who was, in effect, my evangelist. He – and later his wife – became a very close friend. He and my husband (the Christian and the Taoist) enjoyed many lively spiritual discussions. My churchgoing became less sporadic, but it was still pretty much “High-and-Holy Days and when the Spirit moved me.”

When our sons reached school-age we enrolled them in Ecole Langevin, a school in St. Boniface run by the Oblate Sisters. We wanted them to be bi-lingual and at that time there was no French-streaming in Winnipeg public schools. When our

older son entered middle school, he was attending public school for the first time and missed his daily chapel attendance. He asked if he could be confirmed. I approached our friend, the Anglican priest (who was by now rector of a recently amalgamated parish) and asked him when Confirmation classes started at his church. He agreed to prepare my son for Confirmation with two provisos: 1) My son had to be a member of his parish, and 2) I would have to attend church with my son, since our friend the priest did not approve of children being sent to church by themselves. Someone had to bring them! Confirmation classes started on the First Sunday of Advent and Confirmation would be on the second Sunday of Easter in the following March. I figured I could hack attending church every Sunday for roughly 18 weeks, so I agreed to the provisos.

And that’s when my Road to Damascus Experience (Bethlehem Moment) came about.

On the First Sunday of Advent, I walked into the little church with my son, slid into the pew beside the Rector’s family, and I heard the voice of God. You want to know what God said? God said, “Gorcha! I’ve been waiting 37 years for you to come to your senses” (Proving to me that God does not speak in the language of the Book of Common Prayer, but in language we understand! It also proved that God has a good sense of humour).

That happened 50 years ago. The First Sunday of Advent is the New Year’s Day of the Church. It is also the day that changed me and kick-started my life in Christ. Thanks be to God.

- Rene Jamieson



Photo: Stephen Ellis

A bright light bursting around me; the earth shaking beneath my feet; a faint to the floor — are these the moments when God has spoken and a life has been changed?

I often thought that moments like these would be wonderful. It would leave a lasting impression when I would know with certainty that Jesus had touched me.

I cannot relate to moments like these. I do know, for certainty, that Jesus has touched me. I know because I could not have meandered through life without Him.

I will share an experience – an experience where Jesus not only spoke to me, but where His gentle touch was felt and his eyes looked deeply into my soul. Tears flowed. I knew I was loved through all things. I knew Jesus was with me through all things, forever and ever.

There was a little country church in the Rossman Lake area. The doors remained open. Sunday services were no longer. The Holy Spirit hovered. I sat in prayer — alone — in total silence, with Jesus.

Jesus was at the front, His image captured in a painted mural. His eyes found mine and never looked away. Intense but gentle waves of Holy Spirit wrapped around me, holding me in warmth and love. Time passed.

I walked to the front and put my hand against the hand of Jesus, palm to palm, my eyes never leaving His gaze. His love flowed through me as His touch was felt. His eyes spoke. It was my Bethlehem Moment.

No bursting light. No shaking ground. No fainting.

Jesus came softly and gently, holding my gaze through my tears, holding me close and never letting go. My Bethlehem Moment - forever engraved in my heart.

- Lois Graham

In my front garden, around November, the plants would normally have gone to seed. This year, however, there has been a blend of cold and mild weather and frankly, the plants got confused. One of the beautiful plants which transitioned to seedheads was my 'blanket flower', which in November was covered with tiny fluffy spheres of seed – with the exception of one stem.

One singular stem started to bud. In a bold counter seasonal move, this brilliant orange and yellow flower began to burst forth. In the midst of the confusion, challenges and changing temperatures of the world around it, one stem began to bloom with vibrancy and life. Not only did this bloom bring me hope and joy each time I passed it by, but I actually began to feel like I was cheering

it on and completely anthropomorphized it! Not only the bloom, but the late feasting bees that sought food and shelter in its warm colours and the audacity that stem was showing in showing up the rest of the seed covered garden. That one determined and out of sync flower was bringing joy, inspiration, beauty, and health to the world it lived in – albeit temporarily.

Now that the snow has fallen and the bloom has gone to seed with its fellows, I remember its fiery radiance and know that together we have entered an advent time. A time of hope, anticipation and rest, so that in spring, when the soil warms and the bees emerge, there will be a whole bed of orange and yellow blossoms ready to feed, inspire, and boldly give glory to God.

- Liz Richens



Photo: Liz Richens



Photo: Loren Biser

I was baptized in St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Hamilton. At the age of three I moved to Sutton, West Ontario with my family. We were forever part of St. James Anglican Church there.

When I was 14, a new minister, The Rev. John Speers, came to be our rector. He had been raised a Baptist but graduated from Trinity Theological College in Toronto. I don't know why, but in the fall of 1955, he ordered up a bus and took whoever wanted to go to Toronto to hear Billy Graham at his first Canadian rally.

My two best friends and I went along. We listened to music, then the sermon. After, Billy gave the invitation to invite Jesus into our lives. The song "Just as I Am" is always played at this time. I felt moved to go forward but really hesitated as there were thousands of people present, and I was afraid I would not find my bus to go back home. But... I could not resist the call. I went forward and gave my life to Christ. What always comes to mind is the song and the line that says, "He drew me with the cords of love, and home rejoicing brought me."

From that time on I wanted to be a missionary, but God had other plans. I went to Huron College in 1960 knowing I would never be ordained. There I met my husband who had already been a teacher/missionary in a remote First Nation village. We fell in love. He was later ordained, and we have been missionaries all over Northwestern Ontario for 63 1/2 years.

During our years in Kenora we attended many Holy Spirit conferences in Brandon and organized many in the former Diocese of Keewatin. Our parish in Kingston was a joy also where we led many Alpha programs. I mention this because my life has been enriched by so many other Christians and the Holy Spirit has always been guiding and leading me. I am so grateful to have led such a vibrant life and always experiencing the Peace that passes all understanding when I allow myself to.

We are back in Kenora for our final retirement. I say "our," because being a clergy wife is also a calling. At 83 1/2 I am now looking forward to being in God's presence forever in the next 20 years or so. And I am grateful for our four lovely children who were patient with all of our moves and who all came to love the Lord.

- Betsey McNear

Have you ever made a New Year's Resolution that lasted more than a week? A month? How about 38 years? In late 1985, my (then) husband and I made a resolution for 1986 to start attending church. We had 2 young boys at the time and wanted them to have the experience of Sunday School and a Christian community. This was an endeavour that required negotiation; I had been raised in the tradition of the United Church while my husband had been an active member of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Dauphin. He proved to be the more persuasive one and in early January 1986, we entered the Church of the Ascension in Stonewall. I clearly remember walking into the church that day and thinking "I've found my Christian home!" What was it that triggered that thought? The lovely little church, the people, the warmth of the banners and the seasonal adornments? Whatever it was, I knew I was home.

Through the guidance of Canon Colin Chapman during adult confirmation classes, I learned a lot about the Anglican Church in my first few years. I began to appreciate the seasons of the church, the rich liturgy we use, the value of the common lectionary, the music that we enjoy. I taught Sunday School, I served on the vestry and contributed to the community in other ways such as serving on a call committee. I made life long and best friends through my involvement in that wonderful little parish in Stonewall (shout out to Madelon, Jeanette, and Judie).

After many parishes along the way and a second marriage to an Anglican Priest (I really took my commitment to the church seriously!) my journey continues to this day where I find myself as a member of saint benedict's table and still serving on the vestry (at saint ben's we call it the 'Kitchen Table'). May your next New Year's Resolution bear such fruit.

- Katharine Langille



Photo: [Paul Morley](#)



Photo: Cinna Baran

On August 2, 1904, I took my first train ride. At a very young age, I had made the decision to leave most of my family in Austria and go live with my sister in Neche, North Dakota. I knew I would miss them dearly, but I wanted to see this wonderful land where milk and honey flowed; I would live a new life. My parents had already paid for my ticket, and though my mother assured me many times before I left that they could always get a refund, I would not let that money go to waste – I would be too embarrassed if I didn't go.

After many choked-up goodbyes from family, friends, and neighbours, it was time for me to go. As my train departed, my mother stood on the railway track watching. This was the last time I saw her.

After a series of train changes at all hours of the night and day, I took a boat from Hamburg to New York. It took a week to cross the Atlantic Ocean in those days. Then, after a few more trains in America, I had arrived in North Dakota on August 23.

Things went smoothly for the first few months, but eventually the pain of leaving my family behind became unbearable. At times I wished that I had never seen America,

and at other times I wished myself dead. I told no one about my homesickness. I would often daydream about going home, and spent many nights weeping until my pillow was soaking wet. I would lie awake for hours thinking about my family and the joy we would have in reuniting with one another.

One day, the homesickness was choking me, so I went behind my sister's barn where there was a large bush. I crouched underneath it and sobbed my heart out without anybody seeing me. I cried and prayed to Christ, and He answered me. Christ stood beside me, clothed in white, and soothed me. I did not see his face, but He lifted my heart. I never forgot this moment.

I often wondered how I ever endured all that I did. Later in life, I realized it much better. No matter what you do, do not give up your faith. You are not the only one that has been tried, or who has had to pay a price for each lesson learned. But you must not give up because Christ is always present. While my homesickness and grief never fully left me, the consolation that Jesus gave me on that day comforted me for the rest of my life.

- Sophia Reichert (submitted by her grandson, Richard, who treasures his first wisdom teacher's story)

Bethlehem Moments are every moment we make ourselves available to be, to live, to love, and to serve. I continue to believe that God is not finished with me yet and that there is much more to do and become in His service on my journey to eternal life. In 2022, I had a life changing cancer scare. I did not know if I would live or die. Throughout this time of waiting, when I was very scared, I heard God say “I’ve got this” to me over and over again. By God’s grace, the love of my family, the skill and compassion of wonderful healthcare professionals, and the prayers of beloved family, friends, my priest, and faith community, I got through this time. The joy I felt after many weeks when I was finally told “no cancer” took my breath away. It was very humbling and emotional. I felt and heard God’s presence and grace profoundly saying to me that I was “to get on with it”, focusing on call in His service. My joy at this precious opportunity of continuing life changed my sense of direction for the rest of my life, to seek to love and follow God’s call always. I am grateful for God’s assurance that He is in control and that by His grace I am alive. My precious Jesus was and continues to be with me and for that I am grateful.

- Di Panting

Photo: [Laura Vinck](#)



My Bethlehem Moment is one where I believe God guided me through a dangerous situation and my realization of this has been profound. A few years ago, I avoided a serious car accident. I was driving our small car out to Headingly on number one highway and turned south over the bridge. I approached a stop sign to turn left onto Roblin Boulevard. I heard a loud voice inside me say “go through, do not stop” on approaching the stop sign. So, I listened to that voice and did not stop and turned left onto Roblin. A very large four by four truck that had been behind me slid through the stop sign. He appeared to be going far too fast, and it was slippery. He slid right through and across Roblin and went straight into the ditch on the other side. I saw this all happen in a split second in my rear-view mirror. I felt so relieved that I did not stop. He would have hit me full on, pushed me into the ditch, rolled me over, and crushed the car. I know I would have been killed if I had stopped at the stop sign. Since then, I have asked: why did He save me? I think he has things for me to do. I listened to God at the moment, and I believed He saved my life. I am very grateful He called to me, and I listened. If I had followed man’s law and not God’s call, I would not be here today. Thanks be to God for His mercy and grace.

- Garth Panting

Photo: [Madalyn Cox](#)

The Mirror

Durell Desmond

Now I see only a reflection,
An echo, a reverberation,
Of myself
And others since times of creation.

Pieces,
Fragments of different
Lenses,
Together creating
A cascading mirror

And as we brothers
And sisters draw nearer
With each dimension fitting
Into and developing
One another:
Interconnected

Goodness, love and kindness
Be mirrored and their
light be reflected.

Photo: [Evie S.](#)

Christmas Services

Photo: [Wesley Tingey](#)



St. Aidan's (274 Campbell St.)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5:00 pm

An all-ages service with Holy Communion.

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 8:00 pm

A traditional service with Holy Communion.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:30 am

A service of Holy Communion with Christmas carols.

St. Michael and All Angels (300 Hugo St. N.)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 11:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:30 a.m.

St. Paul's Fort Garry (830 North Dr.)

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4:00 p.m.

Family service with a pageant
7:00 p.m.

Holy Eucharist

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:00 a.m.

Holy Eucharist

CHRISTMAS I

Sunday, Dec. 29 at 10:00 am

Carols and Communion

St. Peter's (755 Elm St.)

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS SERVICE —

"WHEN CHRISTMAS HURTS"

Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 7:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4:30 p.m.

St. George's (Crescentwood) (168 Wilton St.)

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 7:00 p.m.

A non-eucharistic service of remembrance and hope for those experiencing grief, sorrow, or any difficulty at this time of year.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

Sunday, Dec. 22 at 7:00 p.m.

The traditional carol service with readings, congregational carols and choral music by composers such as Wood, Darke, Hassler, and Pearsall.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 5:00 p.m.

Family Eucharist. This service will include a children's story and lots of Christmas music.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wednesday, Dec. 25 at 10:30 a.m.

A quiet celebration of the Eucharist with carols.

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