



# Contributors

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# WORD AND WONDER

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](#)

We also deliver timely news and information via a weekly email. [Sign up here.](#)

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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: "Christmas" by Gen Tsuboi. [Click here](#) to view more of his work.



Photo: [Jason Leung](#)

## Word and Wonder

What does poetry give us that prose cannot? It's a unique medium that many people have difficulty describing, analyzing, and understanding. In many cases, this is with good reason, as that's part of the point. Poetry forces us to be attentive. It moves at a slower pace in our minds, and when read aloud, it hits our ear differently than prose. It's almost always more condensed, giving more weight to each word and phrase. When one reads a remarkable poem, this added gravity of each word and careful placement may seem almost effortless, as though this were the way the words should have fit together all along.

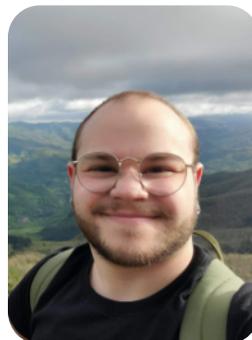
Poetry is often likened to music—and with good reason. However, as we can see in the Psalms, another thing poetry is akin to is prayer. When we pray, we should adopt a similar 'posture' as we do with poetry—intentional, slow, and meaningful. Many places in Scripture remind us to pause and think about the world that God has made, what God wants from us, and how we are to act in this world. Slow down. Be attentive. What is God saying to you? How does your relationship with God inform your view of the world?

Poetry and prayer intersect in this revelatory manner, whether that be seeing something ordinary in a different light or giving new language to something upsetting, exhilarating, or familiar. Like prayer, poetry can have many different forms or structures. Sometimes our poetry and prayer need to be short and to the point—we need to convey something specific. Sometimes they need to be longer and more involved to delve deeper into what needs to be understood. Both have their time and place; both serve a purpose.

We see this reflected throughout Scripture, but especially in Jesus' teachings. Sometimes He has lengthy parables or speeches; sometimes His words are direct and concise. The beauty of the Gospels is that they show that the Word who became flesh knew exactly how to speak to us at any given moment. But sometimes, even often, we may struggle with how to speak to God (or each other). This is where the beauty of poetry shines. Poetry gives our words the shape of patience, honesty, and humility. In sincerity, we learn to attend more carefully to our thoughts, to one another, and to God. Poetry does not replace prayer, but it can tutor it and accompany it; they can intertwine.

This issue contains an Advent message from Bishop Naboth, reflections on a year of the Anglican Poetics Project by Ryan Turnbull, and reader-submitted poetry. Some poets who submitted have been writing for years, spending a great deal of time and energy on honing their craft. Others have just started—maybe in no small part due to the Anglican Poetics Project. Regardless of time and experience, these poems invite us to walk with the poet for a moment in time. We catch a glimpse of their thoughts in content and form. We learn about things that moved or inspired them, and we learn about things which weigh on their hearts. May the Incarnate Word shape our language, our minds, and our hearts.

God is with us. Merry Christmas.



CINNA BARAN

Editor of Rupert's Land News

Photo: [Iswanto Arif](#)

## Advent Greetings

Dear friends,

Advent greets us with its quiet invitation: *wait, watch, prepare*. In the lengthening nights and the snow, we are reminded of our need for light, hope, and warmth. And into this waiting world comes the promise of Emmanuel, God with us.

At the heart of our faith is this astonishing truth: God has come close. Not in power and splendour, but in the vulnerability of a child. Jesus entered the world in humility, to walk among us, to share our joys and sorrows, to show us the fullness of God's love. This is what we mean when we speak of the Incarnation, God taking flesh in Christ and dwelling with us.

Advent teaches us that the way God leads is also the way we are called to live. Leadership in the kingdom of God is not about titles or control, but about presence, compassion, and hope. Each of us, whether bishop, priest, deacon, or lay disciple is invited to practice what we might call *incarnational leadership*:

To be truly present to others, as Christ is present to us.

To live with humility, remembering that God's power is made perfect in weakness.

To nurture hope, even in difficult days, pointing to the light that no darkness can overcome.

To love with patience and sacrifice, walking alongside our neighbours with open hands and hearts.

This is not a task for some distant future; it is our Advent work today. As the candles of the Advent wreath grow brighter each week (hope, peace, joy, and love) may our lives also shine with the light of Christ, for our families, our parishes, and our communities. My prayer is that this holy season draws us closer to Jesus, who is both our Saviour and our Shepherd. May we find comfort in his nearness, strength in his love, and courage to reflect his presence wherever we are called.

In the sure hope of Christ's coming,

+Naboth Rupert's Land



NABOTH MANZONGO

Bishop of Rupert's Land



Photo: Ryan Turnbull

## A Year of Anglican Poetics

RYAN TURNBULL

The 20th-century poet T.S. Eliot first gained popular attention with the publication of his poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” Often cited as one of the key touchstones in the creation of the modernist style, Eliot began to develop a paradox of articulate inarticulacy that would pervade his poetry for the rest of his career. Much could, and has, been said about this, but I think these few lines get at how many of us might feel about poetry:

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—  
Almost, at times, the Fool.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, poetry can be ridiculous and obtuse (at least when I try my hand at it), but this year across our Diocese, I think some of us have discovered that poetry, even if it at times makes us now feel the Fool, can help us navigate the inarticulacy of our lives.

Here in Rupert’s Land, we have come to the end of a year exploring the Anglican poetic tradition. Thanks to funding from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, the Diocese of Rupert’s Land received \$25,000 USD this year to explore this theme through a variety of workshops, classes, lectures, retreats, and conferences.

<sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” in *Collected Poems 1909-1962*, 7.

We had three goals with this project. First, we wanted to reintroduce disciples to the resources of the Anglican poetic tradition. To this end, we hosted a class on John Donne and the Bible through St John’s College, launched a lecture series on Anglican poetics that toured around the Diocese in a pilgrimage of poetics, and crafted a conference at St. George’s featuring the one and only Malcolm Guite! We met a diverse cast of poets and scholars through these events, and it was so encouraging to see the willingness of folks to travel around the diocese to take part in these events.

Our second goal was to help people enter more deeply into Anglican poetics by encouraging them to engage with language in a more hands-on way. To this end, we held a series of poetry writing workshops and lay worship training events, both in parishes and at Faith Horizons, where our skilled facilitators introduced participants to poetry about work, ecology, Indigenous identity, food, lament, and God. Some of the poetry created in these workshops is featured in this special issue of the Rupert’s Land News, and it is a testimony to the creativity and courage of those in our midst who wrestle with the inadequacies of our language to help us see something true and beautiful about our world.

Our final goal was to use the generous spaciousness that a poetic faith offers to create connections with people who don’t have much relationship with Anglicanism to discover something about our shared humanity. In February, I co-hosted an inter-religious poetry and ritual exchange with Maryam Rezaei, a graduate Fellow at St John’s College who studies Sufi theology. Together, we created an event called “Receiving Roses Across Traditions” wherein we received



Photo: Ryan Turnbull



Photo: Ryan Turnbull

gifts of poetry, practices, and food, back and forth over an afternoon outside the chapel. In the spring, Kirsten Pinto-Gfroerer hosted a women's retreat for us up at Camp Arnes that welcomed women from across the Diocese and beyond to a time of silence, reflection and mindfulness. In the fall, I teamed up with Manitoba Pioneer Camp to host a retreat out at Shoal Lake, where we read the ancient poet-philosopher Boethius with a group of about 20 young adults from a number of different faith backgrounds to ask big questions about fate, suffering, and the purpose of life. Finally, we also had the pleasure of collaborating with the Winnipeg Poetry Slam team, along with the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture at the University of Manitoba, to host a series of poetry slam workshops, which we capped off with a very well-attended open mic night at the Daily Bread Cafe.

Different folks will have connected with different parts of the Anglican Poetics Project throughout the year, but as somebody who had the unique opportunity to attend almost everything, I think it was this last goal, connecting with those beyond our tradition, that was the most fruitful. For better or worse, Canadians have largely made up their minds about the Anglican Church. But being able to work with the broader community through poetry opened up opportunities

for connection and collaboration that aren't usually possible.

Throughout this project, I've worked with the artist Seika Dyck to create a logo and a series of stamps to visually represent what we've been up to. The Anglican Poetics Project logo that has been on all our event posters visually sums up the experience that this project has sought to cultivate. While what we have been doing has been "held" to some extent under the overarching roof of the church, the actual work has been done in the wide-open and indeterminate space below. I think this tension between being held by our institutions and traditions, and having the latitude to creatively work out our faith, is exactly what makes the Anglican way of being Christian so compelling to so many of us. We may be "full of high sentence, and a bit obtuse," but as Eliot also reminds us, this journey that we are on still provides us time and opportunities to go on.



Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you to all those who came along for this journey this year, and thanks especially to the numerous people who gave of their time and talents to make these events a success. Thanks especially to Nate Wall-Bowering, Paul Dyck, and Seika Dyck for consistently taking my garbled ideas and returning with beautiful gifts for the Church. And finally, once again, thanks to the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and the Lilly Foundation for the generous Vital Worship, Vital Preaching grant that made all of this possible.

**RYAN TURNBULL**

Ryan is a farm-kid turned theologian living in Winnipeg, MB. He is currently serving as the Discipleship Developer for the Diocese of Rupert's Land and is a Fellow at St John's College. When not obsessing over theological minutiae, you can find him biking around town looking for a coffee or a little treat.

<sup>2</sup> Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 4.

# Anything here to eat?

By Angeline Schellenberg

Jesus, I don't know how  
to invite you here: my rooms  
are not like yours. What do you make  
of my whining fridge, its bag of thawing fish?

But a beach is still a beach  
and the sun is setting. You invite me  
to join you here. I feel the fire.  
Ghostly smoke tingles my arms.

Kindling snaps. *See my wounds*  
you say, or are you asking, and I reach out  
to stroke your baby-soft palms,  
your lifelines that seem to stretch on forever.



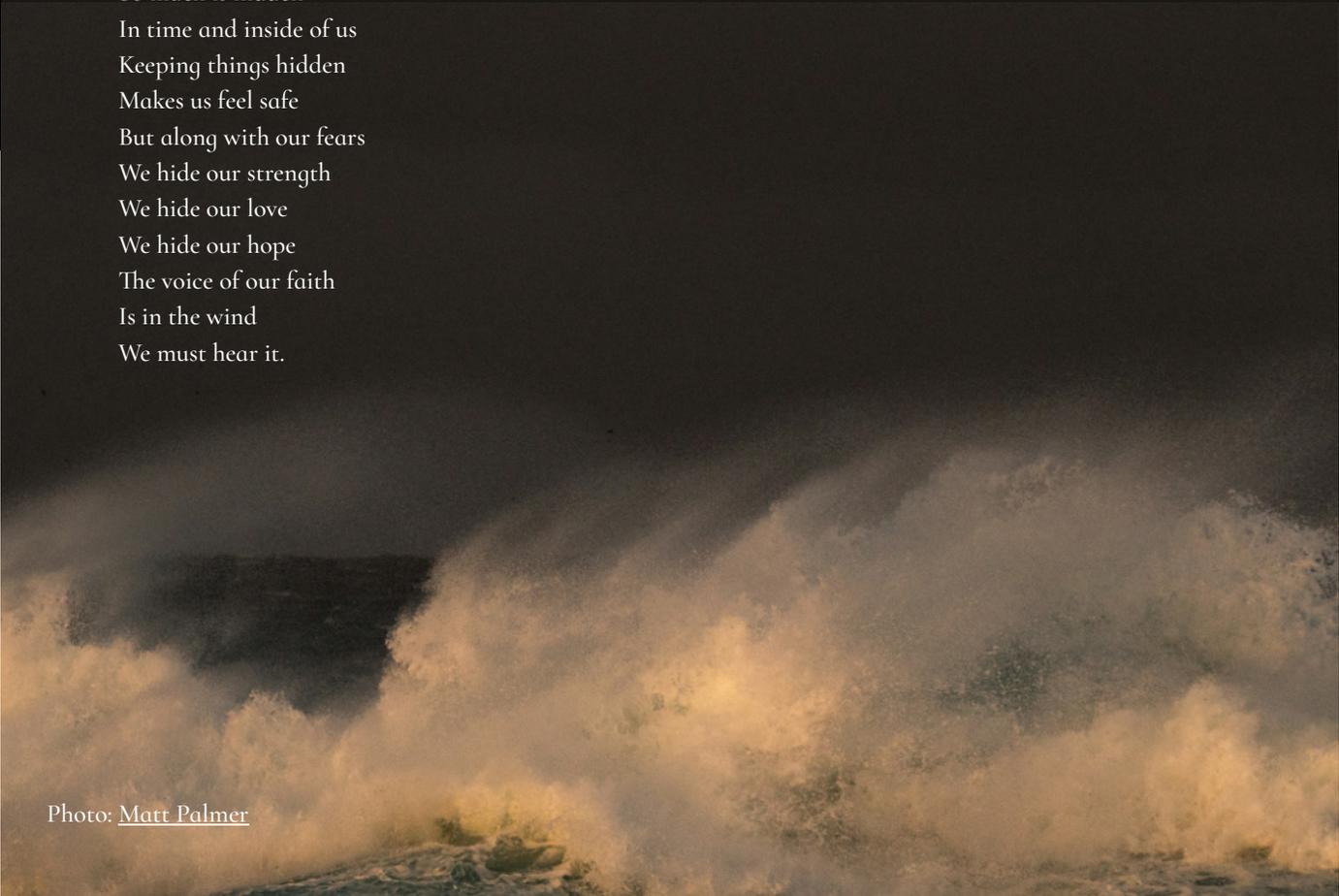
# The Wind

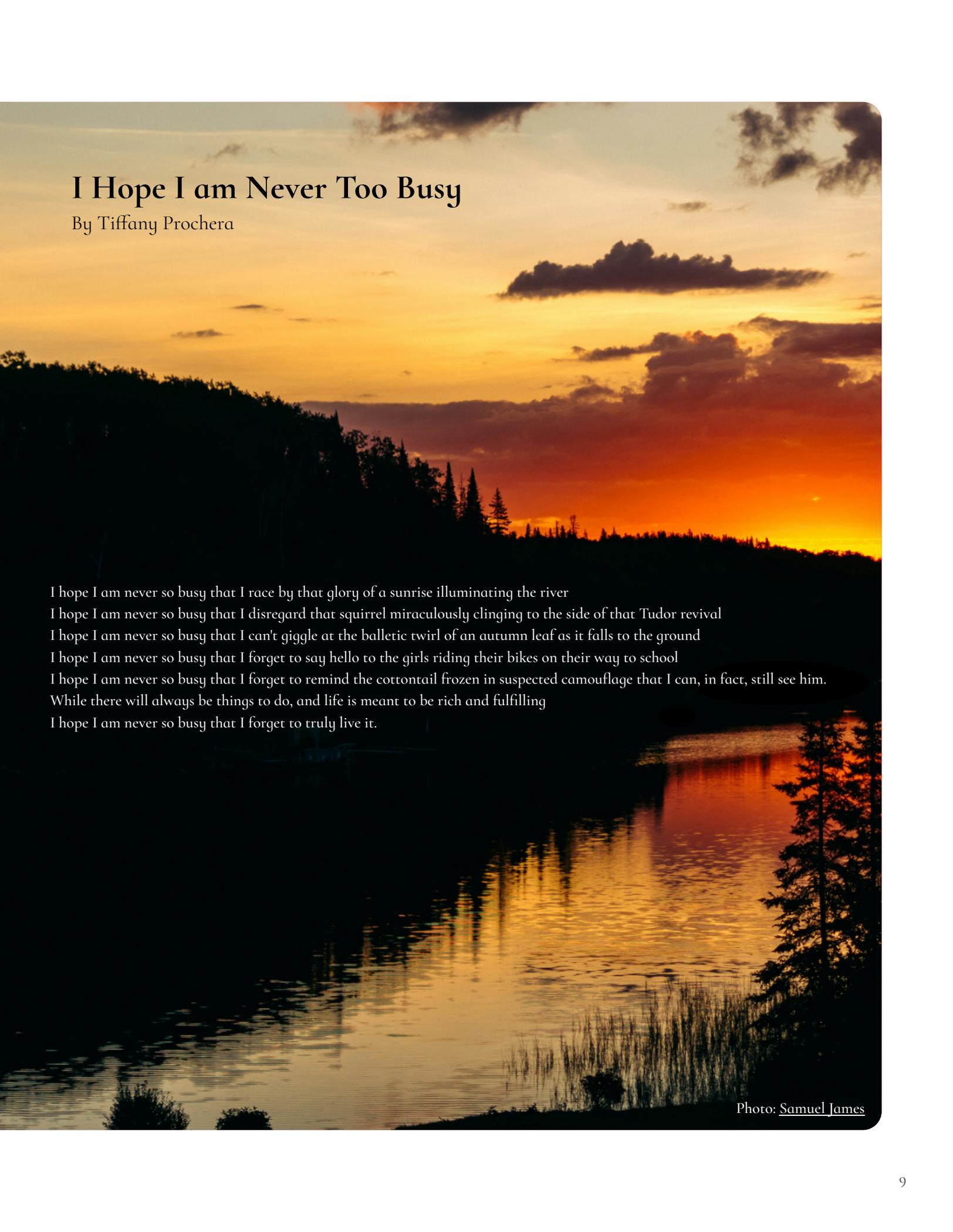
By Jeffrey Mackie-Deernsted

The wind that shakes the boats  
Out beyond the harbour  
Is the same wind that shakes the faith  
Of those praying for them  
In a waterside chapel  
Though it begins to hurt after a while  
The faithful feel firmer on their knees  
Than upon their feet.

To walk on water is not a human trait  
Just the call to walk out  
And to trust him.  
Before doubt overwhelms  
And you begin to sink  
The water like wintertime  
Is beautiful and dangerous  
The world like wintertime  
Is beautiful and dangerous

So much is hidden  
In time and inside of us  
Keeping things hidden  
Makes us feel safe  
But along with our fears  
We hide our strength  
We hide our love  
We hide our hope  
The voice of our faith  
Is in the wind  
We must hear it.





# I Hope I am Never Too Busy

By Tiffany Prochera

I hope I am never so busy that I race by that glory of a sunrise illuminating the river  
I hope I am never so busy that I disregard that squirrel miraculously clinging to the side of that Tudor revival  
I hope I am never so busy that I can't giggle at the balletic twirl of an autumn leaf as it falls to the ground  
I hope I am never so busy that I forget to say hello to the girls riding their bikes on their way to school  
I hope I am never so busy that I forget to remind the cottontail frozen in suspected camouflage that I can, in fact, still see him.  
While there will always be things to do, and life is meant to be rich and fulfilling  
I hope I am never so busy that I forget to truly live it.

Photo: [Samuel James](#)

# Water Above and Below

By Angeline Schellenberg

in the cloud  
that took Jesus from our sight  
the same moisture suspended in air  
since God's first *let there be*  
recycling Adam's sweat  
Hagar's tears  
Exodus spray  
the towel in God's hand  
dripping

in the wilderness a veiled  
promise of rain

Photo: [Fabrizio Conti](#)

# The Sermon

By Ken Tarte

I went to church just the other day  
The preacher preached in the same old way  
He came to the pulpit raised The Book on high  
"You sinners, He yelled, You cheat, You lie!"  
He slammed that book with all his might  
The church trembled in a terrible fright.  
"God will cleanse this earth, of all who sin"  
Then slammed that book back down again.  
He raised back that book yelling "It's God's Word"  
We winced, but only crying was heard.  
It stopped that preacher and his spirit drained.  
He lowered The Book back down again  
Slower, gentler and quieter too  
Then looked to the sound of the crying pew

He looked to see who was crying there  
A little girl with golden hair  
He then stepped down from his lofty tower  
And left behind that ominous power  
He crouched down low, quite low for him  
The crying girl looked quite grim  
"What's wrong?" he asked bending lower still  
The child then spoke, with strength and will  
"I loved my God but now I'm scared  
He hates me now and I thought he cared  
I lied today about a cookie I ate  
I had taken the last one off the plate  
I shared it with my little bird  
I hate God, I hate God, and his Word  
If I love something then I set it free  
And if it comes back then it did love me  
That little bird I wanted to keep  
To hold it, cage it and hear it cheep  
But I let it go and it came back to me  
We now share cookies and a saucer of tea  
I loved my God and I thought he loved me  
I came to God because he set me free  
If I have to be frightened to love him so  
Then I would rather God leave and I'll just go"

The preacher fell back and shook his head  
And was struck by what the girl had said  
The preacher went back to the pulpit again  
He raised his hands and said Amen  
I think we have heard our sermon today  
Let's get on our knees and start to pray  
"Like little Children Come to Me  
And the Kingdom of God will come to thee"





## Rest To-Do List

By Nicholas Bergen

Cut off the hands that keep score  
with tally marks in the sand.  
Snip off the fingers like dead flower heads  
the dormant arms of a stone hand  
get turned over like topsoil.  
Fingertips hold rest like hyssop pedals.

Spit up the sour wine from those winters.  
Choke up the dark words like they're cherry pits from a long summer.  
Pull the blood back behind the teeth with a deep breath.  
The pretty bones get exposed.  
Gravestones in the spring rain.  
You whisper words back into the concave  
with a pale light that despises prophecy.

A mind that digs up the horse  
just to paint skin on the bone  
hopes for something new from a different past.  
A broken mare won't hold the weight.  
An earthen mutt dies with a dame's tears  
and sweet grass grows from their soft remains.

Photo: [Robert Bottman](#)



## October

By R.A. Denton

As skies turn from blue to grey,  
Mother Nature turns an ear.  
The squirrels quickly hide away  
their last acorns of the year.

Blustery days are crisp and cool,  
winter coming nigh.  
The days grow short and darken  
the mornings slipping by.

The leaves turn and change their face  
falling to the forest floor.  
The trees tremble and shiver,  
the warmth of summer is no more.

The northern birds fly south,  
away from the chill of night.  
The evergreens are here to stay  
'til traditional midwinter delight.

Six months will come to pass  
before spring again has sprung  
My bones ache for warmth  
though the storm has just begun.

An aerial photograph of several large, irregular icebergs floating in dark, deep blue water. The icebergs are white and light blue, with some showing signs of melting and cracking. The water is a deep, dark blue, creating a high contrast with the white ice.

# Arctic Warming

By Durell Desmond

The Arctic warms  
Sea ice melts  
Glaciers shrink  
Arctic bears wait

Economies boom  
Oil spills impend  
Communities hope  
Deceivers pretend

Sea ice melts  
Narwhals flee  
Arctic bears wait  
Foxes separate

Oil spills impend  
Oil companies lie  
Deceivers pretend  
Politicians ignore

Narwhals flee  
Species migrate  
Foxes separate  
Algae blooms

Oil companies lie  
Nations war  
Politicians ignore  
Societies implore

Species migrate  
CO2 is released  
Algae blooms  
Ship traffic's increased

Nations war  
Protestors endure  
Societies implore  
Scientists explore

CO2 is released  
Economies boom  
Ship traffic's increased  
Communities hope

Protestors endure  
Glaciers shrink  
Scientists explore  
The Arctic warms



## Advent vigil

By Joanne Epp

Ten days before Christmas: footsteps  
entering the church, a settling into pews.  
Creak of wood, rustle of paper.  
Bare vines outside the windows hang  
still, without a wind to shake them.

The organist releases the chorale  
prelude's final chord, rests hands  
in her lap. Tucks her feet under  
the bench. Waits a full five minutes  
before sounding the first notes  
of "Drop down, ye heavens."

From organ to harp to cello and bass,  
music alternates with stillness.  
The first silent interval is light: blue  
light from windows, high-ceilinged  
roominess of this space. Then the outside blue  
deepens and darkens, and the quiet  
fills up with things too heavy to hold.

And suddenly there are sparrows  
in the vines, high-pitched, atonal.  
Sharp dotted rhythms against  
the low, woody echoes of the strings.  
Both these things are true: we know  
what we're waiting for, and  
we don't. Faith is a well-known path,  
and it's an unscripted song that  
sometimes we can't sing.

Photo: [Marie Bellando Mitjans](#)

## Christmas Services

Photo: [Kenny Eliason](#)

### All Saints

(521 Broadway Ave)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

11:00 am: Choral Service of Lessons & Carols.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

4:00 pm: All Ages Family Service.

11:00 pm: Candlelit Choral Midnight Mass.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**

10:00 am: Christmas Eucharist.

### St. George's (Crescentwood)

(168 Wilton St.)

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17**

7:00 pm: "Blue Christmas Service" in St. George's Chapel.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

7:00 pm: Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols with traditional carols and readings as well as choral music.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

5:00 pm: Christmas Eve Family Eucharist.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**

10:30 am: Eucharist for Christmas Day.

### St. Michael and All Angels

(300 Hugo St. N.)

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

11:00 pm: Christmas Eve Mass.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**

10:30 am: Christmas Day Mass.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 6**

7:30 pm: Epiphany Mass.

### St. John's Cathedral

(135 Anderson Ave)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14**

10:30 am: Sunday School Christmas Pageant.

3:00 pm: Blue Christmas Service.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

3:00 pm: Service of Lessons and Carols.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

7:00 pm: Christmas Eve - Holy Eucharist with Carols.

11:00 pm: Christmas Eve - Choral Eucharist.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**

10:30 am: Christmas Day - Holy Eucharist with Carols.

### St. Luke's

(130 Nassau St. N)

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21**

4:00 pm: A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24**

11:00 pm: Midnight Mass with Blessing of the Creche.

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25**

10:00 am: Holy Communion with Carols.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28**

10:30 am: Holy Communion with Carols (no 8:15 am service).

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 4**

8:15 and 10:30 am: The Epiphany of Our Lord with Blessing of Chalk.