

# THE DIOCESAN TIMES



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Serving the Anglican Church in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

## Teaching the world to plant



Photo: Carolyn Morrison, Bob Harris, Lisa Lane, Harvey Dominey, Hani Taylor, Robert MacMillian, Claudia Zinck and Deanna Burns with their seed Planting Kits.

BY CLAUDIA ZINCK

“Would you be willing to do this again next year?” asked Deanna Burns, as we were cleaning after the 2024 Planting Kit assembly.

“Sure,” came our immediate answer. We didn’t think twice. Here was our way to help creation and teach the world to grow their food.

It was 2012 when the first “Planting Night” was held at a Messy Church in the Parish of Blandford. With a pile of re-purposed containers, we taught how to plant with what you have to work with

The COVID-19 pandemic, shut down Planting Night, but not the idea of teaching children to plant. The egg carton planting kits were assembled and put out at the end of a driveway. A sign read, “Free Planting Kits. Take one for a friend.”

The kits disappeared by supertime. Photos appeared on the Blandford webpage showing local kids putting together their kits.

Pre-pandemic, our friends at the Hubbards Area Lions Club gave out our kits during their “Bunny Day.” In 2022 they weren’t having Bunny Day. Covid was still a fear. They did have a backpack Buddy program with a local school, Shatford Memorial Elementary in Hubbards. We asked how many kits they needed. The entire school had ninety students that year, so the Parish of Blandford made an extra ninety kits (a total of 175).

When 2023 started we again asked about planting kits for their local school. This time the Lions club suggested that the Lions help to assemble the kits. They also helped with the cost of supplies needed to

make the 200 kits produced that year.

In January 2024, Deanna asked again if we could work on the project together. Joining with the Hubbards Lions has allowed the Parish to continue a project that was beginning to be too difficult with a smaller membership. The Lion’s Club’s mission is to help their community. What better way to do that than to teach a whole school to plant vegetables?

On a rainy Friday afternoon, April 12th, our assembly line was set up at the Lion’s Club in Fox Point. Stories were told and jokes exchanged as we worked along to fill our kits.

“The first hundred kits are done!” came a call an hour later.

Each group’s events were advertised. Names were reserved for the Lion’s roast

beef supper list. Stories of that first Bunny Day together, their fish fry, the barley soup at our Christmas Bazar and their frozen chicken pot pie sale.

“We are at 150!”

Last year’s kit involved growing lettuce. Stories came back of the children making salads or adding lettuce to their sandwiches all summer. It amazed them that the lettuce regrew after being cut. This year they are learning to grow beans, even how to transplant them to a bigger container, like a milk jug.

“200!”

We went over the differences between the two years of group assembly. The different parts of the kit needed to be ready before assembly day. We talked about the size of soil bags and how many were needed. Both groups agreed, that unless another group wanted to join us, we were at our limit.

“250!”

The Lions packed up the 130 kits for Shatford Memorial School.

Back in Blandford, the local Blandford Marine hosted the first pick-up on April 19th. It is a bit early for Earth Day, but it gives the weekend to put them together. The Senior’s group received kits the same night. The following morning kits went to the community breakfast. Two hours later the boxes were empty.

About thirty kits were held back for the Canexel Recycling Day in June.

We BRAG, loud and long, that we are the biggest Planting Kit Project in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We hope someone proves

us wrong. If they do, the Diocese is all the better for it.

Remember the Parish of Blandford started with 30 KITS put out at the end of a driveway in the pandemic. Could you do even ten kits? Write us a line if you need any ideas or directions [claudiaazinck@gmail.com](mailto:claudiaazinck@gmail.com)

In 2024, 250 seed packets were printed, cut out and glued before filling them with bean seeds. Craft sticks became plant markers, all 250 labelled. An equal number of tags were prepared. Last year people were asking how to plant their seeds. This year we included our version of a planting guide.

One hundred and thirty kits will go to Shatford Memorial Elementary, so every kid goes home with a planting kit on Earth Day.

Back in Blandford we are supported again. Blandford Marine allows us to use their facility for pick up on the 19th. Any leftovers and thirty more show up at the Community Breakfast the next morning.

Thirty goes to the Seniors Seaside Club on April 19th. The last thirty and any leftovers will wait till June 8th when we have been invited to the Canexel Recycling Day in East River for the first time.

One tiny Parish with just a few people, working with a service club nearby has produced 250 Planting Kits. We BRAG (Capitol Letters, BRAG) that we are the biggest planting kit project in both provinces of our Diocese. We HOPE someone proves us wrong, for if they do, the world is only the better for it.

Happy Earth Day!

# Pray as you can

Meditation is a universal prayer practice within the world's religious traditions. Practiced by early Christians, especially the Desert Mothers and Fathers, it faded in western Christianity until it was brought back to the mainstream in the 1970s by John Main, a Benedictine monk, and the practice and its adherents have been increasing ever since.



What makes meditation "Christian" and what else connects it to our faith?

- The focus is on our personal belief in our connection with Christ.
- The tradition re-discovered by John Main in "The Conferences of John Cassian" which relay Cassian's instructions on how to correctly practice monasticism based on his experience living as a monk in Egypt. Cassian lived from about 360 – 435 AD.
- Community – "where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them" Matthew 18:20.
- Our spiritual life is enhanced; meditation and other forms of prayer nourish each other.
- It takes the focus off ourselves and puts Jesus first.

In a culture that emphasizes DOING and

ACCOMPLISHING, it is a welcome relief to allow oneself simply TO BE - to abide in Christ. Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. John 15:9. In the same chapter, verse 5, he says "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. Meditation allows our focus to become Jesus rather than our own agendas, worries or plans. We become aware of all that flows through our mind and because we are abiding in God's love, we bring all of these concerns to God without words. We allow the peace of Christ to guide us and calm our minds and hearts. We meditate to take the attention off ourselves and allow God to work in us.

Beginning a meditation practice is unnerving because we discover just how restless and distracted our minds can be. The graces of meditation might be noticed between

prayer times when we find we are becoming less reactive and more present to the world around us. An early teaching for me was that simply showing up was the main point. Over time, we may experience peace during and after our meditation, but really, it is the practice that matters, not the results. Sometimes, we feel a measure of peace and other times we are aware that we were mostly hooked by random, often repetitive" thoughts and worries.

Meditation is simple (but not easy), utilizing silence and stillness. We learn that each session is a new beginning. Because we don't become "experts" but rest in Christ, our fears and desires are transformed, and we become more willing to simply be ourselves and trust in God.

The easiest way to begin is to find a meditation group – in your parish, on-line, or through the World Community of Christian Meditation at <https://wccm.org/>. There is also an APP for your phone; search for WCCM.

The abbreviated instructions for meditation are:

- Set a timer for 20 minutes

or use the timer on the WCCM APP or website.

- Come to stillness. Sit comfortably with a straight back. Close your eyes lightly.
- Silently and interiorly, recite your word or mantra (WCCM recommends the word Maranatha said with equal emphasis on the 4 syllables Ma.ra.na.tha. This is an Aramaic word meaning Come, Lord Jesus). When your attention wanders, return to repeating your word.
- Stay with the same word during your meditation practices. Over time, it becomes deeply rooted within you.

I close with the opening prayer from the World Community of Meditation:

*"Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the silent presence of the spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call, 'Maranatha...Come, Lord Jesus.'"*

Heather Carter  
Diocesan Representative  
Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

Photo by CHIRAG K on Unsplash



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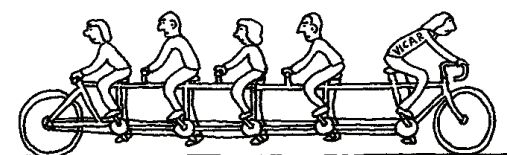
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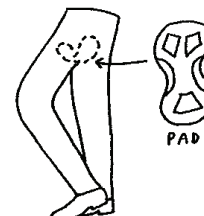
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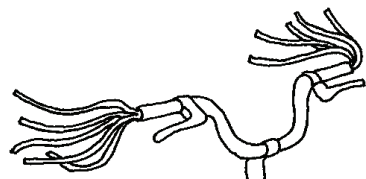
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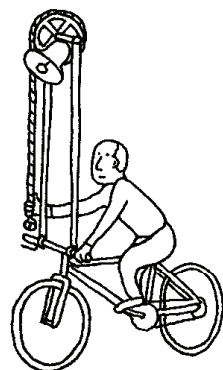
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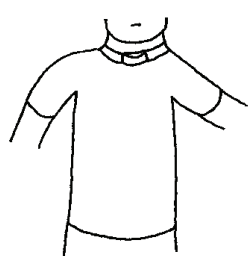
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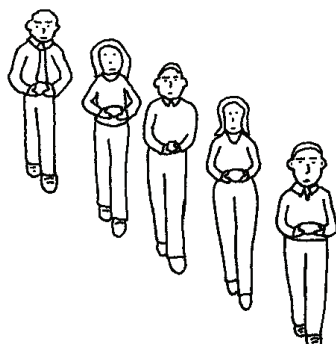
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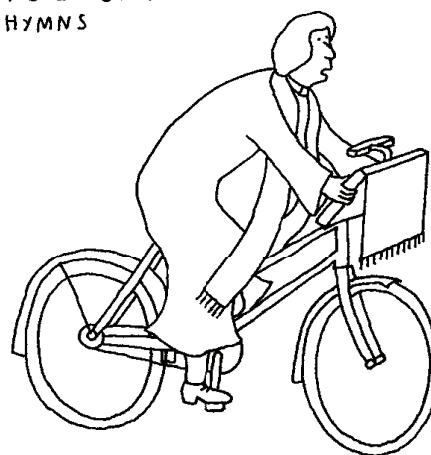
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## BISHOP'S COLUMN



Bishop Sandra Fyfe,  
Diocese of Nova Scotia and  
Prince Edward Island

# *I am with you always, even to the end of the age*



As I write this column, we are nearing Ascension Day in the Church year. This is the fortieth day after Easter, a time when we recall Christ's return "to the Father" after appearing to his disciples and followers over the forty days after his resurrection from the dead. It is also my mother's birthday, the first since her death last September. The concept of "abiding" has been on my mind.

The words of Jesus over these past weeks in our Sunday Gospel readings take us back in time to his last night of life on earth. They are words of consolation, hope, and the promise that what seems to be an ending is actually a new beginning, a new way of being in relationship with Jesus and with those we love but see no longer. Jesus tells his disciples that while he is departing this world, he is not leaving them. He will abide with them, and as he abides in the Father, and the Father in him, so he will abide in them, and they in him. The Spirit, the Comforter and Advocate, who will guide them into all truth, will come. Jesus promises presence, in spite of what appears to be absence, an abiding and enduring sense of connectedness beyond his physical death. They will not be alone.

At the time, none of this makes sense to his disciples, of course. And those of us who've experienced the death of someone dear (which I'm guessing is almost everyone, if not everyone, reading this!), can appreciate this. What we may feel most keenly following a death and for a long time after is the deep pain of separation, the loss of that person's physical presence with us. In time, however, we become attuned to their presence in other ways — as we share stories and remembrances, as something unexpected reminds us of that person, as we pass milestones and markers-in-time of their life on earth. They abide with us. They abide in us, and we abide in them. Love never ends.

While this awareness can be a solace in moments of grief, I think Jesus is suggesting something else as well. In sharing these words with his disciples - including you and me as we recall them - Jesus is not encouraging nostalgia for what was but hope for what still is and is yet to be. He is calling us to take heart, to venture forth bravely into the future even when the world as we know it has changed drastically and will never be the same. Things are still unfolding in our lives, in the life of our families and communities, in the life of our parishes, and in the life of the world. The Spirit is still at work, breathing new life and hope and possibility. There is joy and wonder yet to be revealed.

As I travel throughout our diocese, I am excited to see how our parishes and congregations are living into this time. Some of the former, familiar things have passed away, never to return. Some have been adapted. Some remain the same. In many places, clergy and lay leaders are feeling a sense of freedom to explore new ways of being Church. We are living into new ways of being Christ's disciples, new ways of sensing his presence in the Church that is emerging, and new understandings of how God is at work in our lives and communities. And yet, through all these changes the presence of Christ endures!

As we journey from Ascensiontide into the season of Pentecost, may we be ever open to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our time, trusting in the abiding love and faithfulness of Christ.

+Sandra

*Photo: Peggy's Cove at sunset. Credit Jim Fyfe.*

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# Foreboding joy

Jill had achieved success by securing an appointment to a highly influential urban rectory in her province. Previously, she had served as a priest-in-charge of three parishes in a rural area. After a decade of service there, she felt it was time for a change. Conversations with her spiritual director and bishop affirmed this idea. Jill had cherished her time working in the rural area, building affirming relationships at all levels within and beyond the three parishes and communities served. The goals she had set for herself, and the churches had been accomplished.

Thus, Jill applied to a large parish in a bustling city, marking a transition from rural to urban culture. Having grown up in an urban environment, she felt she grasped the culture and believed she could bring something valuable and meaningful to the community. She was excited about the potential of this move and how it would contribute to her professional and personal goals.

Jill felt confident about her interviews and interactions with the staff and congregation. She knew and loved the area of her new parish. Everything seemed



Bryan Hagerman

aligned for her—the perfect placement. After heartfelt goodbyes, Jill and her family relocated to the city. With her husband's support, they found a lovely home in the suburbs, an ideal environment for raising their growing family.

Settling into her office at the church, Jill unpacked her books and adorned the room to her liking. It became a serene space for prayer, study, and meetings with parishioners and staff. The beautiful worship center was conveniently nearby. Jill began to embrace her new surroundings, forming bonds with her staff, and relishing this new chapter in her life.

However, during her first week in the parish, something shifted abruptly. While preparing her first homily at her desk, Jill was overcome with a sense of fear and despair. Sitting upright, she momentarily felt emotionally paralyzed. Earlier, she had begun to feel that this new phase in her life, with her dream rectory/parish, was too good to be true. She had received the keys to the building and her office and had held her first staff meeting. Jill began to experience what is known as “foreboding joy.”

We often hear the phrase “if it's too good to be true, it probably is,” or some variation thereof. How frequently do we internalize or witness this phrase in action?

“Foreboding joy” describes the moment when joy, happiness, success, or a major victory is halted or overshadowed by either a ‘what if’ fear or a sense of unworthiness. It can manifest as a form of emotional self-sabotage. Jill suddenly felt unworthy and uncertain about her dream position. Doubt crept in, leading to a cascade of ‘what if’ scenarios: “What if the people don't like me? What if I fail in my first homily? What if I stumble over the liturgy? What

if I don't measure up to the last rector, who was a Dean? What if?”

Renowned author Brene Brown has coined the term “foreboding joy,” describing it as a feeling of joy quickly followed by worry and dread. She explains that those who experience foreboding joy often engage in catastrophic thinking cycles, feeling inadequate for the task at hand. It's a real feeling, where joy is abruptly interrupted by worry and dread, leading to an inner dialogue of impending doom or the belief that something bad will happen to counteract the felt joy.

In her book “Daring Greatly,” Brene Brown suggests that foreboding joy is a subconscious attempt to shield oneself from vulnerability.

So, how do we overcome foreboding joy?

a) Gratitude serves as a powerful antidote. Take time each day to reflect on what you're grateful for, shifting focus away from fear and negativity towards positivity and joy. Do a gratitude journal.

b) Self-awareness is

crucial. Recognize triggers for foreboding joy and counter them with a truthful narrative.

c) Challenge the inner ‘what if’ narrative through inner debate. What evidence supports these thoughts? What is the truth?

d) Acknowledge and appreciate the blessings in your life, recognizing the wonderful things happening with divine intervention.

e) Remind yourself of the markers where God brought you to this new place. Having seen this, it will help you to realize, yes, I can do this. God equips those he calls.

f) Accept and engage future vulnerability whenever it arises.

Foreboding joy can be replaced, with some work, to a new emotional theme; just joy, a gift of God.

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## NEWS FROM AWAY

Dear diocese,

I loved my rowboat. When I was a child, day after day in the hot summer sun, my cat Susie perched on the bow of our ten-foot wooden punt, I would row up and down the river behind our house. Susie and I would stop long enough for me to cast my line. I am proud to say that I caught enough bass to supply my grandparents with supper at least twice a week.

Keep on rowing! That is the line Camilo, the scientist involved in our Healthy Coastline Research Project on the Eastern Shore, a partnership between the Parish of Port Dufferin, DEN, Dalhousie, Marine Drive Academy, and the local community, ends most of his Emails with.

The critical piece, I'm sure he would say, is not only to keep on rowing, but to enthusiastically, with energized by the spirit, pull on those oars together.

Isn't that what happened on the day of Pentecost? People came together, sharing the excitement and possibilities. Pulling on those oars as one.



Somehow, over the centuries, the myth that science and religion aren't rowing the same boat evolved into the belief that those boats don't have the same destination. That their compasses were not aligned, and they took different directions.

But as religion and science come together once again, in common cause, speaking the

same language, caring for the earth, or as people of faith call it, creation, the more effective we are in caring for God's creation.

Hence the relationships that DEN has formed with others who are committed to care for the planet. We “were all together in one place,” marching in the People's Parade for Life on Earth two weeks ago. The

energy (spirit) was certainly evident that day and in that place. And we were speaking the same language. In unity. Expressing our love for God's creation.

“...they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues,

as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts 1:1-4

The spirit enabled us to express our love for each other and all our “relatives” that day. As St. Francis of Assisi said, “brother sun” and “sister moon,” “brother wind” and “sister water,” “brother fire” and “sister earth.”

When we are filled with that same spirit, listening to each other's voices, learning each other's language, faith and science row together, in the same direction, living in harmony, “your sons and your daughters shall (can) prophesy, and your young men (can) shall see visions, and your old men (can) shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2: 17), ensuring a future for generations to come.

Keep on rowing!

Pentecost blessings,  
Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies  
Coordinator, Diocesan  
Environment Network

Photo by Sergio Zhukov on  
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# For all the Saints (Summer)

Submitted by Rev. John K. Morrell

Excerpted from Stephen Reynold's "For All The Saints".

During the last number of weeks, women from St. John the Baptist in River John organized a Bible Study for women within our community. Over a dozen women from different denominations participated in BAD GIRLS OF THE BIBLE. My selection of 'Saints' for the summer will talk about GOOD women from our Biblical and Christian heritage.

## July 22 - Saint Mary Magdalene

Mary was called the Magdalene because she was a woman of Mag'dala, a village in Galilee. In the Gospels it is said that Jesus cast seven demons out of her and that she was one of a group of women who followed him and used their wealth to provide for the rest of his companions. Mary accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem, and three of the evangelists — Matthew, Mark, and John — give her first place among the women disciples who stood nearby while their Lord was crucified. All the Gospel accounts agree that, on the morning of the third day, she went to his tomb in order to anoint his corpse — and was astonished to find the tomb empty, except for mysterious strangers who told her that Christ was risen. According to John, it was just then that Mary became the first to behold and speak with the risen Lord himself; John also reports that Jesus appointed her to proclaim the news of his resurrection to

the apostles. For this reason, Mary Magdalene is regarded as their equal by the Eastern Church, for she was the apostle to the apostles.

## August 11 - Clare of Assisi D. 1253

Today we honour the memory of Clare, a thirteenth-century abbess who spent all her life in the Italian town of Assisi. At the age of eighteen, a woman of beauty and wealth, she heard Francis of Assisi preach about the poverty of Christ. She was so deeply stirred that she renounced her former life, threw away all her brocades and silks, and

put on the rough garment of a nun. Clare hoped to imitate Francis in a life of wandering, but neither Francis nor the authorities of the Church were ready to allow women such evangelical freedom. She eventually took over a small enclosure next to the church of San Damiano in Assisi and there gathered a community of women who wished to devote themselves to Christ-like poverty. Under Clare's direction they became "the Order of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano," and sought to live up to their name by refusing anything that would bind them to the economic order of thirteenth-century Italy, even when rich people tried to give them land or the proceeds of a business. They accepted only alms and small donations for immediate needs, just like the poorest people out in the world. They also did what they could to help beggars and poverty-stricken families who came to the gate of their enclosure.

Clare herself lived what she taught, claiming no privileges for herself as she devoted her days and nights to prayer and contemplation, to the spiritual needs of her sisters, and to the practical necessities of her fellow citizens. Despite increasing ill health, and though she never went outside her convent's walls in thirty years, she remained a source of strength for all sorts and conditions of people right up to her death on this date in the year 1253.

## August 15 - Saint Mary the Virgin

Mary is honoured because she was the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God — and because the Gospels testify that she was a virgin when she conceived and gave him birth. Their witness to such a wonder has generated much of the devotion that is paid to her. But it is not the only reason, for the evangelists also portray her as the archetype of all the people of God and the person who leads their praises of the Almighty.

In Luke's account of the Annunciation, Mary was perplexed by the meaning of God's word to her and yet chose to accept the wondrous service which it ordained her to accomplish. After the birth of her son, Mary continued to be puzzled whenever she met with a further sign of his divine origin or with hints of what he was meant to do. But she was always patient in her puzzlement; in Luke's words, "Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." The fruit of her pondering may be reflected in the fact that all the evangelists say that she followed her son from Galilee to Jerusalem and stood with the small company of women who witnessed his crucifixion. The Book of Acts adds that, after the resurrection, she shared in the disciples' community of prayer and watched with them for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. An ancient tradition testifies that Mary was taken up in glory as soon as she died, and Christian devotion has never begrudged her the place of highest honour in the presence of God. It has delighted in the conviction that she who responded to God's perplexing call with praise must already enjoy the reward of faith — and that she who gave the Son of God his human life has received all the fullness of the eternal life which he was born to give.

## August 16 - Holy Women of the Old Testament

When the Church honours the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is often inclined to view her in isolation and to forget that she was a Hebrew woman. The evangelists, especially Saint Luke, did not make this mistake, but saw her in the light of a long line of women mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures — Sarah, whose husband was Abraham; Miriam, the sister of Moses; Deborah, one of the Judges of Israel; Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Ruth, the legendary grandmother of King David; Bathsheba, the wife of David and the mother of Solomon; the widow of Zar'ephath, who

trusted the prophet Elijah and received mercy in the time of her grief; and the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, who encouraged them to keep faith with God and perished with them because she would not join in pagan sacrifices. These women all had one thing in common: they were people who first appear as living on the edges of their society. For instance, Sarah and Hannah suffered the reproach of being childless in a culture which counted a woman's worth by the number of children she bore; while Ruth, Bathsheba, and the widow of Zar'ephath were all foreigners in Israel, women from other nations which worshipped other gods. But all became the vessels of God's mercy and crucial symbols of the salvation that God sought to make for Israel. Indeed, the very fact that they came from the edges of society made them bearers of Israel's truth before God. For Israel itself was a society on the edges of the world, a nation easily scorned by the more powerful kingdoms round about, repeatedly invaded and oppressed. What set Israel apart was, of course, its covenant with the one true God — and its tenacity in faithfulness to this covenant. Thus, the holy women of the Old Testament symbolized Israel's faithfulness to God in a hostile world. For just as each was vindicated for her faith in the God of Israel, so they became models of Israel's vocation and living testimonies to the vindicating power of God. That is why we specially remember these holy women today.

## 27 August Mother of Augustine of Hippo, D. 387

Today we remember Monnica, a woman of fourth-century North Africa and the mother of Augustine of Hippo. She was a devout Christian, regular in her prayers and careful in raising her children to be Christians as well. However, her eldest son Augustine wandered away from the Church in his youth and came under

the spell of an outlaw sect known as the Manichees. [1]. Monnica refused to give up on her son and tried to get others to argue him out of his infatuation with false teachings. She once approached a bishop who told her that, given time, her son would certainly outgrow his false opinions. But Monnica would not be soothed and continued her entreaties. The bishop finally groaned: "Woman, go away from me now! As sure as you live, it is impossible that a son of such tears should perish!"

Augustine was embarrassed by his mother, and when he decided to leave North Africa and seek his fortune in Italy, he tricked her so that she would not come with him. He ought to have known her better, for she eventually showed up on his doorstep. By that time Augustine had at last renounced the

Manichees and was slowly moving back towards the Church.

Monnica had the supreme joy of beholding the fulfillment of her prayers at the Easter Vigil of the year 387, when Augustine was baptized at the basilica of Milan. Shortly afterwards he decided to return to North Africa with his mother, but while they were waiting for a ship to take them across the Mediterranean Monnica fell ill. It was soon clear that she was dying, and Augustine became anxious, knowing she had always wanted to be buried in North Africa. She told him not to worry, saying: "Nothing is far from God; I need not fear that he will know where to raise me up at the end of the world." A few days later she died, at peace with God, the Church, and her son.

[1] Manichees were people who belonged to an expanding new religion of Manichism which began in Persia in the 3rd C. and expanded throughout the Mediterranean as far as to China from the 3rd – 14th Centuries. It reveres their prophet s the final prophet after Zoroaster, the Gautama Buddha and Jesus Christ.



A sense of belonging—the subjective feeling of deep connection with social groups, physical places, and individual and collective experiences—is a fundamental human need that predicts numerous mental, physical, social, economic, and behavioural outcomes (

*Belonging: a review of conceptual issues, an integrative framework, and directions for future research;* (KL. Allen, ML. Kern, CS. Rozek, DM. McInerney & GM. Slavich – HHS Public Access, April 30, 2021)

# The importance of belonging

Marjorie Davis and Cynthia Pilichos for Anglicans Powering Potential

We know what it feels like to have a sense of belonging. We do not need to read academic treatises to know the wonderful feeling of having a sense of belonging, as opposed to feeling the opposite. At a conference on diversity many years ago, one of the activities

was for participants to use a metaphor or visual to describe the feeling when one has a sense of belonging. That sense was compared to wearing a comfortable slipper, sitting in front of a warm fire, reading a favourite book, listening to a beloved piece of music, eating comfort food, and other similar happy experiences that delight the senses and promote a sense of well-

being. The Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island provides a wonderful summer opportunity for kids to experience a sense of belonging and that is the Community Roots Day Camp under the umbrella of the diocese's Youth and Family Ministry banner. <https://www.nspeidiocese.ca/ministries/youth-and-family-ministry--1/pages/community-roots>

Allie Colp, our diocese's Youth and Family Ministry Coordinator's goal for the participating children in the Community Roots Day Camps that are hosted in various parishes in the diocese is for the children to gain a sense that they are loved by their community and that they belong. Knowing how important this feeling of belonging is to developing resilience, Anglicans

Powering Potential (APP) is supporting our diocese's Community Roots Day Camp through *Say Yes! to Kids 2024*. Of course, we welcome your support. Read on. APP understands that belonging is a fundamental human need that plays a crucial role in shaping overall well being and satisfaction. Belonging is shown to be a key

*Continued next page ...*

# FREE Energy Audits for Faith Buildings

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# Childcare from Kenya to Nova Scotia



Mothers' Union is an international organization whose mandate is to uphold Christ's teachings and maintain worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service. In this spirit, we celebrate our diversity and shared call to walk a path with Jesus. The stories and experiences of Mothers' Union members can reveal everyday beauty and the power of God in our midst.

great day together.

Esther is from County Kirinyaga Central Province, Kenya. Her home church is St Luke Ndakutha in the parish of Rianjuki, Kirinya diocese. She is the church secretary at St Luke and a Mothers' Union member. Esther is a retired math teacher. She had 3 children, a son and 2 daughters. She is in Halifax Nova Scotia helping her youngest daughter

Jackline and son-in-law Harry with childcare. They have 3 beautiful daughters, Tamara, Chloe and Talia.

Surviving an extremely abusive marriage, Esther has been separated from her husband for 27 years. Kenya has been experiencing drought and resulting famine for the past 4 years. The effects of climate change have been devastating. There have been long periods of drought. When it rains, it is torrential, washing out any crops growing. There is only private health care and parents must pay fees for their children's education. Esther worked hard to ensure her daughter Jackline finished her accounting degree. In spite of these hardships, Esther impresses those who know her with living by faith and love of Jesus with a quiet strength and certainty that God is good.

There are 25 Mothers' Union members at St. Luke Ndakutha. All the women in the church are Mothers' Union members and the bishop there has consecrated some. They wear special Mothers' Union uniforms in blue with the

Mothers' Union patterned logo for meetings and special events. St Luke Ndakutha has a men's group. It is the Mothers' Union who supply the most support to their local community. It is a hard-working group who must be creative in their fundraising efforts within an impoverished region. Esther mentioned the main focus of their group has been to support the elderly of the community. There is no social safety net for the vulnerable and elderly.

Esther will be returning to Kenya pending the day care placement for the youngest grandchild. We will continue to keep in touch in solidarity with Esther, her family and community both here in Nova Scotia and in Kenya.

*Update:* Since Judy submitted the article about Esther at the end of April, there have been horrendous rains and floods in Kenya. Esther contacted her parish priest, Dennis Muriuk Njagi. He reported that the recent flooding events in Kenya have caused widespread devastation, displacing communities, damaging infrastructure, and threatening lives and

livelihoods. It has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, with thousands of people in urgent need of shelter, food, clean water, and medical assistance. The most vulnerable groups are the children, elderly and people with disabilities. Ministerial organizations are at the forefront of providing critical support to affected communities and they have been seeking funding to support their ministerial efforts in providing relief and assistance.

We pray for the families affected and that they receive the support they need to recover from the devastation.

Written by Judy Dow Clark in collaboration with Esther Wanjiku.

*In the photos:*

*Top left: Esther Wanjiku, County Kirinyaga, Central Province, Kenya and her granddaughter Tamara*

*Below: Mothers' Union branch at St Luke's, Ndkautha, Kenya*

Esther Wanjiku started attending St James Armdale, Halifax in August 2023. When I first met Esther, I immediately felt the presence of a kindred spirit. Others describe Esther as a good listener, warm, friendly and compassionate. She has embraced our church community, and we feel lucky to know her.

Esther started to attend our Mothers' Union as a guest member. And in September, she and her granddaughter Tamara helped with jam making. The jam sales are the main fundraiser for our St James, Armdale branch. This was a



**Belonging** ... continued from page 6.

support for physical and mental health. It helps us to manage stress and feel more resilient, allowing us to cope more effectively during challenging times. Building resilience is one of the key desired outcomes of the Community Roots Day Camp. Children from within and beyond the parish community benefit from all that the day camp offers them. The Community Roots Day Camp allows participating

children to express their identity and feel connected to and valued by those around them. What is especially interesting is that places of belonging often encourage diversity and inclusivity. Instead of seeking sameness, places of belonging thrive on the richness of different perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. What a rich experience the Community Roots Day Camps are able to offer children in our communities.

Anglicans Powering Potential encourages you to give generously to our [Say Yes! to Kids 2024 project](https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytkdonate/): <https://www.anglicanfoundation.org/sytkdonate/> Make sure you click "View all" and you will see APP's site. As of writing in early May, it is on page 2, but your support can ensure that it is one of the leading teams on page 1! Maybe it is there by the time you are reading this. It is so easy to contribute on-line – just follow the

directions. However, if you are more comfortable giving by cheque, here's how: A cheque is payable to the Anglican Foundation of Canada, with SYTK Community Roots Day Camp in the memo line; mailed to the Anglican Foundation of Canada, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2. We all know intuitively that we crave a sense of belonging. Did you know that we literally inherit our desire to belong; it's hardwired in our brain.

Studies have shown that we crave connection in the same region of the brain that we crave food, and we experience social exclusion in the same part of the brain that we experience physical pain. So, let's feed our children physically, emotionally, and spiritually so that they have the confidence to thrive and the resiliency to manage challenges, by joining APP and supporting our diocese's Community Roots Day Camp – [Say Yes! to Kids today!](#)

# SHINE LIKE STARS: Portraits in faith

“You are God’s children  
... Shine like stars across  
the land.” – *Philippians*  
2:15 b,e



Rev. Canon Lisa G. Vaughn,  
Diocesan Parish Vitality  
Coordinator

This month we begin a series of portraits in faith of laity generously sharing their time, talents and treasures for the Kingdom. These profiles feature glimpses of how people in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia are living out their Baptismal call in a variety of ways.

Celebratory accounts of people and their ministries encourage, inspire and help each of us to embrace our own unique gifts, passions and ministries. Faith testimonials are not so much about great projects or lofty programs. They feature the often small, quiet, and ordinary Christian loving actions that make a difference in people’s lives. May they affirm and energize others, continuing to be the hands, feet and heart of Christ in our neighbourhoods.

Do you know someone in your congregation that would be a fitting Portrait in Faith? Let us know. E-mail us: [lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca](mailto:lvaughn@nspeidiocese.ca)

**NAME:** DAWN  
UPHAM

**PARISH NAME:** Parish of St. Mary and St. John Summerside/St. Eleanor’s, PE

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTIVE ANGLICAN/CHRISTIAN?**

I have been an active Anglican/Christian since my baptism as an adult in 1985. Prior to that I was a seeker and had always been aware of the presence of God in my life.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MINISTRY?**

My favourite ministry (and the one I feel most called to) is leading the Intercessions - praying on behalf of the congregation. It is a privilege and a blessing from God!

**WITH WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES ARE YOU ENGAGED?**

At the present time, I am the PEI Regional Representative to the Lay Ministers’ Association. I am also in the process of setting up a Parish Library in our Parish Hall.

**WHY DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITIES?**

I like being involved in the Lay Ministers’ Association because it gives me an opportunity to engage with other lay ministers throughout the Diocese. Right now, lay leaders are being challenged to fill gaps in ministry due to a lack of clergy. These challenges are also creating opportunities to serve God’s people in new ways. Setting up the Library gives me an opportunity to share my love of reading and books with the congregation.



DAWN UPHAM

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE STORY OR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE? WHY?**

It has always been the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15: 3-7). I first heard it when I was eight years old. I grew up in a non-religious home and only got to go to Sunday School because our next-door neighbour was the Sunday School superintendent,

and he asked my parents to send me! As soon as I heard this story, I knew Jesus was searching for me and that he would never give up until I came into the fold.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN/CHRISTIAN SONG? WHY?**

“How Great Thou Art.” It simply conveys the wonder

I feel when I contemplate God!

**IF YOU HAD THE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY YOU WANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?**

I would tackle the problems of homelessness, food security and isolation so many people in our community experience. I dream that the basic needs of food, shelter and companionship would be met for all in our community.



**NAME:** ROBERT  
MACMILLAN

**PARISH NAME:** Blandford, NS (South Shore)

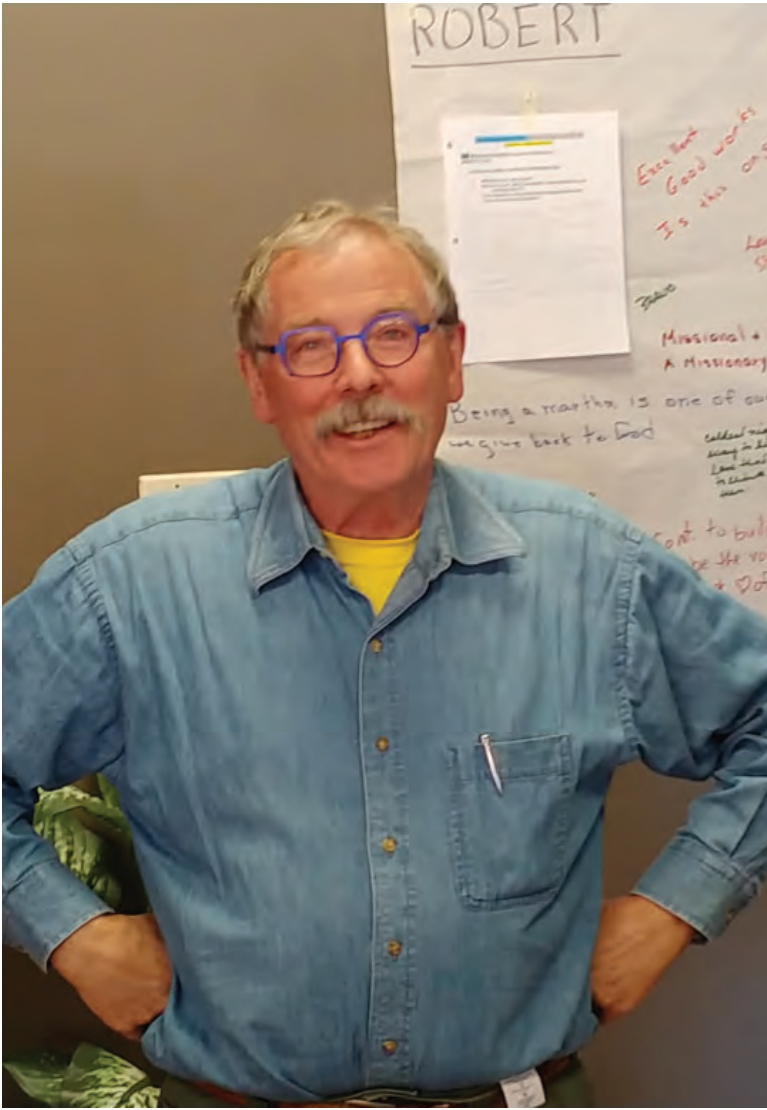
**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTIVE ANGLICAN/CHRISTIAN?**

I was baptized in the United Church, in 1950. I started attending the Anglican Church while at the University of Western Ontario in London, ON, in the 1970s, attending services at Huron College. I was confirmed in the Anglican Church in 1981 while volunteering as head server at the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary, AB. I have continued in the Anglican Church to this day.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MINISTRY?**

As a Licensed Lay Minister, I enjoy presiding at one





**ROBERT MACMILLAN**

service a month in my parish for Morning Prayer and I continue to work on my sermons.

**WITH WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES ARE YOU ENGAGED?**

Assisting with the Eucharist, conducting funerals, singing in the choir, serving on Parish Council, volunteering at the Souls Harbour Rescue Mission in Bridgewater, attending Vital Church Maritimes and other church conferences, The Connectors FOUR (missional leadership), and attending Synods.

**WHY DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITIES?**

I am actively looking to see where God is leading me and stretching me. I enjoy a servant ministry where I can use my God given gifts to good use. I have Jesus Christ as my model and try to put the needs of others in the parish and outside it before my own. It is a journey of faith.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE STORY OR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE? WHY?**

I have always liked the story of the Good Samaritan. It tells the reality of life as it is. I have frequently seen myself as the victim through my life and seen the trail of people who just passed me by without a care. My Good Samaritan was my late husband, Rev. Louis Quennelle, who healed my injuries and made me whole again. My volunteering at Souls Harbour allows me to be the Good Samaritan for those in need.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN/ CHRISTIAN SONG? WHY?**

Since I was very a very young Anglican, it is "O come, O Come, Emmanuel." It is sung at Advent and is a song of rejoicing for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. It speaks to my heart and my soul.

**IF YOU HAD THE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY YOU WANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?**

If I was younger, I would like to go to Atlantic School of Theology. To become an Anglican priest to help my parish as it reimagines itself without its three churches, and an aging congregation, and trying to remain relevant in these post-COVID times. My dream is to continue the ministry of my late husband, Rev. Louis Quennelle, in the Parish of Blandford.



**NAME: NANCY MACDONALD**

**PARISH NAME:** Parish of Three Harbours, NS (Antigonish County)

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTIVE ANGLICAN/ CHRISTIAN?**

I have been an active Anglican all my life (75 years).

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MINISTRY?**

At the present time, it is liturgy.

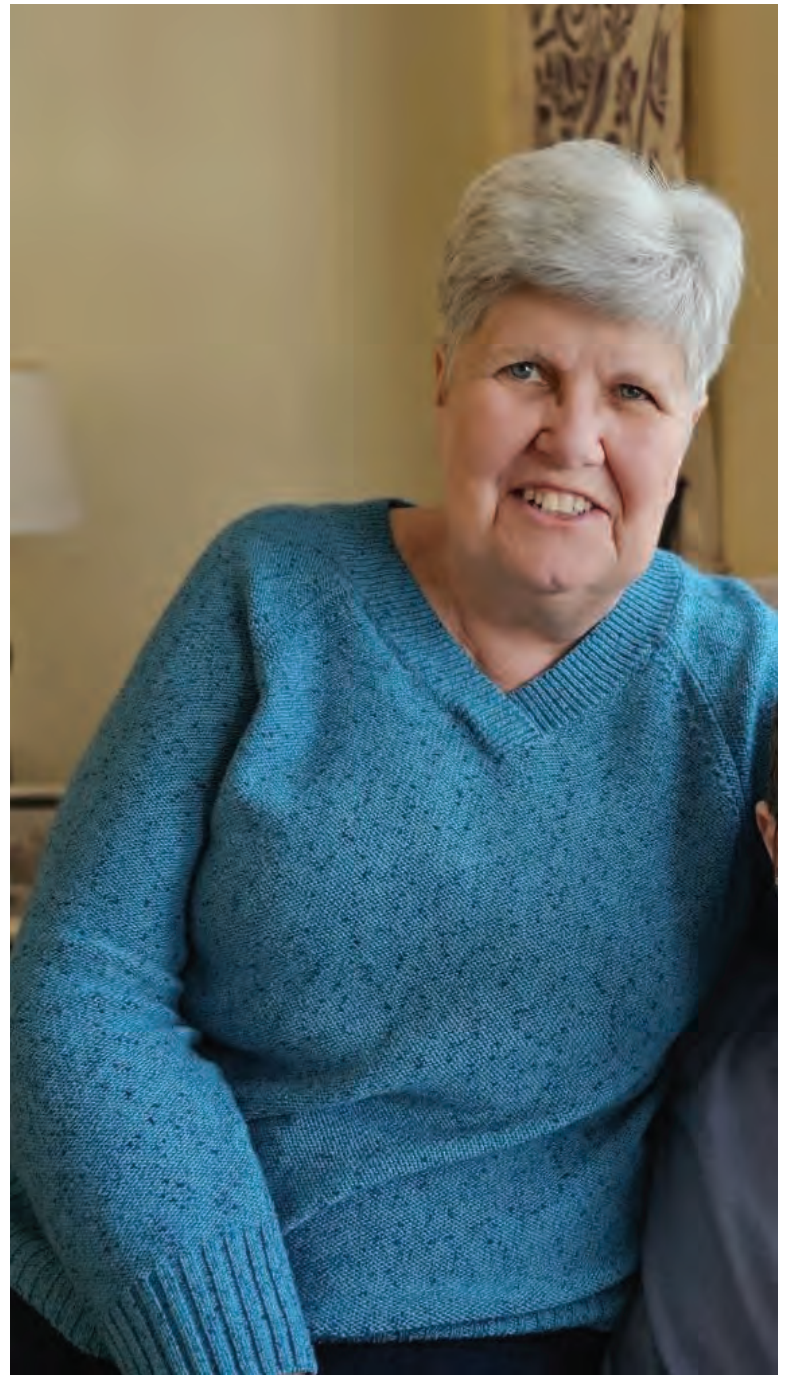
**WITH WHAT OTHER MINISTRIES ARE YOU ENGAGED?**

Over the years I have been involved in choirs, Christian Education (creating scripture/lectionary-based programs), Bible study, pastoral visitations and many other aspects of parish life.

**WHY DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN THESE ACTIVITIES?**

I feel God has given me many gifts and I want to offer them for the enrichment of the spiritual life of the church/larger community. It also deepens my own faith.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE BIBLE**



**NANCY MACDONALD**

**STORY OR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE? WHY?**

It's hard to name just one scripture story or passage. Two possibilities are:

The parable of the mustard seed, Matthew 13:31-32. In being a member of the L'Arche community in Antigonish, I have witnessed how our folk, whom many would consider small and insignificant, have welcomed and created a place of welcome and belonging to so many people around the world. I believe I am called to be that person in my family, church & community.

Isaiah 43:1b - *Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.* There is something comforting and empowering in knowing God has redeemed me and in acknowledging my name, there is a relationship that cannot be severed.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE HYMN/**

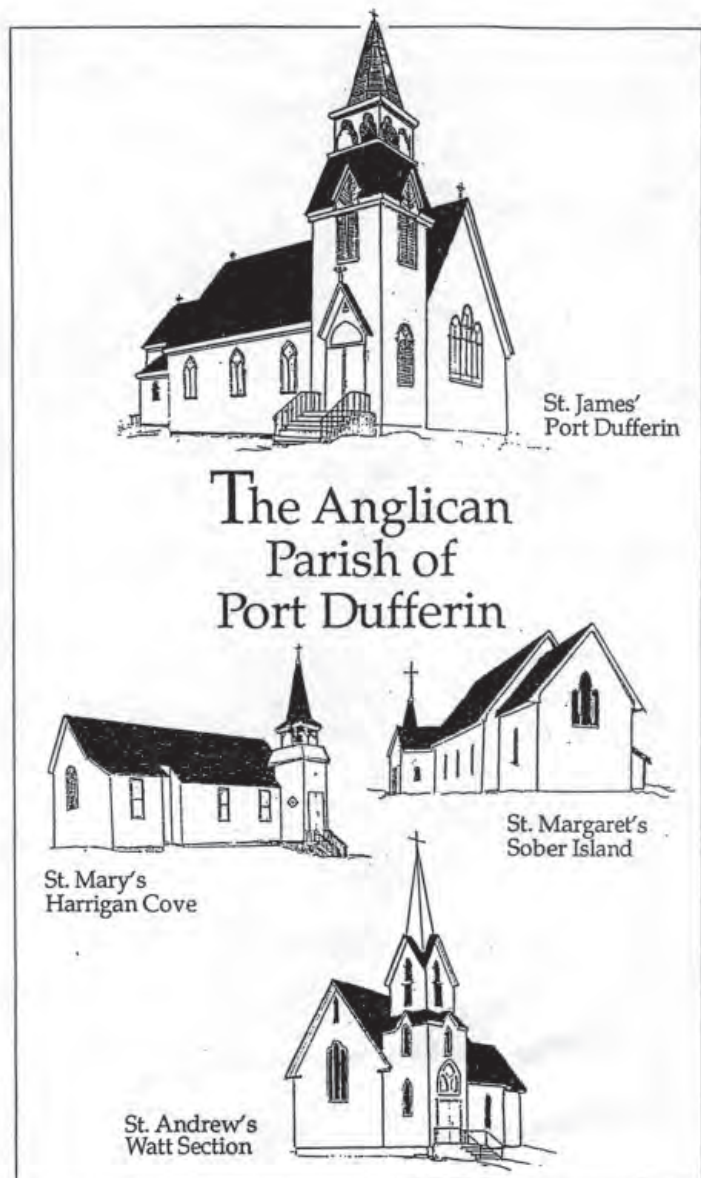
**CHRISTIAN SONG? WHY?**

Picking one in particular is not easy. "In the Bulb There is a Flower," is one that gives me hope and a sense of the mystery of God.

**IF YOU HAD THE TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY YOU WANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE? WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?**

My dream would be to create a community where people have enough food to be nourished. A shelter where they are safe and warm. A community where they are not only welcomed, but truly accepted for themselves and their gifts/abilities are recognized, encouraged and nurtured. A community where God's love, compassion and care are at the centre, and everything else comes out of that place.

# Book release on the Parish of Port Dufferin



Artist Fulton Jewers' drawing of the four churches in the Parish of Port Dufferin, 1991

spiritually-minded hearts: A history of the Anglican Parish of Port Dufferin by author Philip Hartling.

In the 1820s and 1830s, Anglicans in eastern Halifax County worshipped in private homes because church construction did not begin until the mid-1840s. Rev. John Stevenson, a Mathematics Professor at King's College, Windsor, was one of the first missionaries to visit the Eastern Shore. He left reports of his visitations in the 1830s and 1840s. In December 1835, he sailed on a small shallow from Halifax to Sheet Harbour to begin his visitation. At 3:00 p.m. Sunday, 27 December, Stevenson and others arrived at Leonard and Catherine Baker's residence on Smileys Point, Salmon River (Port Dufferin). Just as they were entering the house, Catherine, who was thought to be in perfect health, was suddenly struck speechless by apoplexy. One individual in the crowd bled her. Although it appeared to relieve her temporarily, it understandably failed to restore her paralyzed body and voice but now more composed, she indicated she wanted the service to begin. Stevenson's sermon, given in front of weeping friends and sympathizing neighbours, was based on the words "watch and pray for you know not when the time is." Mrs. Baker did

great deal; the roads are [in] some places very bad, the only way they can be got over being on foot; in other places again they can be passed over on horse back, but at a slow pace, for the numerous bridges are broken and dangerous and all the other parts full of rocks and large and loose stones."

Rev. Gelling crossed sea ice on horseback while conducting pastoral visits from house to house in February 1858. The inhabitants of one house informed him the ice was strong and one person even cut the ice with an ax to show its thickness. However, without a moment's warning, Gelling's pony broke through a section of thin ice. The cleric quickly jumped from his saddle but not before he had "a cold and unpleasant bath." Then he scrambled onto thicker ice while retaining a firm hold of the bridle but feared the pony would plunge under the hard ice. Gelling was joined by a few people who helped the pony to safety. The incident taught Gelling to be more cautious on sea ice near islands and headlands where the tide keeps spots here and there open "which is apt to get covered with snow, as was my case, while the general thickness of the ice inspires a false confidence."

In Rev. James Breading's annual report in February

1854, he noted his travel difficulties which included losing two ponies due to injuries. Thereafter he travelled on foot. After finishing services at St. James the Apostle, Salmon River (Port Dufferin), he had to walk, "or rather, get on a trot for eight to ten miles, and then immediately afterwards, to commence a second services with under clothes all saturated with perspiration, at the place appointed." Breading travelled onward over moss beds, barrens, and bogs in many a pelting rainstorm or snowstorm noting he often had to conduct service with cold and wet feet which he severely felt a day or two later.

The Eastern Shore of Halifax County was relatively prosperous in the late 1800s and early 1900s prior to World War I. People were employed in gold mines, lobster factories, lumber mills, lumbering, fishing, and farming. The late 1800s and early 1900s was also the golden age of church construction with nineteen Anglican churches erected along the Eastern Shore of Halifax County between 1880 and 1914.

During the early summer of 1914 travel writer Lacey Amy and his wife Lillian Eva Amy left Halifax to tour the Eastern Shore; they travelled by stagecoach to Musquodoboit Harbour, then on foot to Marie Joseph, and finally by stagecoach to Sherbrooke. It is no wonder Lacey Amy was impressed by the number of churches on the Eastern

Shore. He wrote, "Every few miles a white church steeple peeped above the hills. It was the most 'churchy' district in Canada, and every church a wonderful touch of quiet peace and simplicity in a rugged view. Whatever the builders may have omitted in the way of expensive windows and architecture, they more than made up by the selection of the sites. Mile after mile we would tramp, with not a sign of man's handiwork in view save the half-hidden steeple of a church."

Throughout its history, the Parish had many youth and adult organizations. St. Andrew's Junior Auxiliary, Watt Section, was so active in the 1960s that a second group was organized. The branch hosted the tenth annual Tangier Deanery JA Rally in Brookside Hall, Watt Section, on 1 May 1965. Approximately 195 girls and their leaders attended from the churches of Christ Church, Emmanuel, Church of the Holy Spirit, and Holy Trinity (all in Dartmouth), St. Peter's (Eastern Passage), St. Andrew's (Cole Harbour), St. John's (Westphal), Holy Trinity (Tangier), St. Thomas' (Moose Island), St. Michael and All Angels (Sheet Harbour), and St. Andrew's (Watt Section). Rev. Vernon Cluett (Port Dufferin), Rev. R.F. Parsons (Tangier), Rev. Kennedy Wainwright (Porters Lake), and a number of guests also attended the rally. St. Andrew's WA served lunch and ice cream. After the programme, certificates and

awards were presented. Then the girls and their leaders marched from Brookside Hall to St. Andrew's Church for a short service by Rev. Cluett, assisted by Rev. Parsons.

The Parish now has four churches - St. Andrew's (Watt Section), St. Margaret's (Sober Island), St. James' (Port Dufferin), and St. Mary's (Harrigan Cove) but in the mid-1800s, the Parish extended from Sheet Harbour to Marie Joseph. The book also has early histories of the Union Church (Beaver Harbour), St. John's Church (Necum Teuch), St. Paul's Church (Ecum Secum West), St. Barnabas' Church (Ecum Secum), and the first St. Matthew's Church (Marie Joseph). There are early descriptions of the Eastern Shore, information on early missionaries and their work, biographies of former rectors, construction of churches, activities of various organizations, church life, and significant events in the Parish of Port Dufferin.

The book is 216 pages which includes table of contents, list of images, text, 76 black & white and colour photographs, bibliography, and index. The cost is \$35.00 for the book and \$8.00 for postage and handling; the total price is \$43.00.

To order, make your cheque payable to Anglican Parish of Port Dufferin and mail to Philip Hartling, 25049 Hwy. 7, Port Dufferin, N.S., B0J 2R0.



Junior Auxiliary Rally as girls and banners leave Brookside Hall for St. Andrew's Church, Watt Section, 1 May 1965

# Is it rational to believe in God and be active in a religion?

In the Diocesan Times, and generally within most Christian denominations, there is increasing discussion of missional efforts, in the sense of sharing our beliefs with others. This is related to the context that now most people in our society do not participate in any religion.

Much of the discussion and efforts focus on trying to build positive relationships with people, via good works, visible kindness, and being friendly, welcoming and accepting. I believe this is very important, and it is the main focus of our Missional Committee at the parish of St. Margaret of Scotland. However, for some people, perhaps for many people, which does not deal with the main reason why they do not participate in any religion, which is that they do not "believe in it." To provide one personal example of this, I will mention that before I retired as a psychologist, I sometimes was helping people who among other problems were socially isolated. In discussing how they might get more socially involved, I sometimes mentioned churches amongst other examples of places that are often welcoming to strangers. Typically, the reaction was that since they didn't believe in any religion, they would never go to a church, no matter how nice the people were. There is also the phenomenon of some church members gradually discontinuing previous involvement, despite having had positive social experiences within a religion, because they have come to doubt the truth, and even the rationality, of religious beliefs.

So, I think that we need to be able and willing to address this issue, for not only missional efforts but also for ourselves. I have written the following article from a laypersons perspective, because I am not a theologian, and because that is how the issues need to be addressed. My hope is that it may be useful in preparing members to discuss the topic in their missional efforts when people bring it up. Perhaps some current members will find it helpful in dealing with their own doubts.

So, is it rational to believe in God and be active in a religion?

Many people see religious ideas as irrational. They believe there is an incompatibility between religious ideas and feelings of faith on one hand, and



rationality and science on the other. They may have heard that, in fact, scientific psychology has found that religious beliefs and participation have a positive association with many health and psychological benefits, such as more life satisfaction, healthier and longer lives, better coping with adversity, etc. They may observe some people doing kind things because of their religious beliefs. However, they do not want to, indeed might say that they can't, just give up their rationality and "on faith" engage in some religion. It is certainly understandable that hearing of some others' religious faith is not at all convincing if that is perceived as a loss of rationality and descent into a delusion.

There is the curiosity that many, in fact millions, of intelligent and otherwise sane people believe and participate in religions. Unless one is very cynical indeed about humanity, this is a hint, that perhaps the situation is not as simple as rationality vs. religion, and that you need not choose just one or the other.

This modest article is meant to provide my thoughts on how you can maintain all of your rationality while believing in a God and participating in a religion. I do not attempt to "prove" that some particular religion is correct; indeed, I will try to explain how this is not possible. However, I will try to illustrate how it can be reasonable to believe in God and participate in a religion.

First, we need to clarify the difference between reasonable choices, and certain knowledge. There are essentially two ways of knowing things, intellectually. One is using deduction reasoning, i.e. logic. "All triangles have 3 corners; this is a triangle; therefore, it has 3 corners." We can be sure of that. Mathematics works this way.  $1 + 1 = 2$ . We can be certain of that, ultimately because we define "2" as "1+1". Correct logic results in certain knowledge.

Beyond logic, there is no

absolute certainty. There can be reasonable inference, something called induction reasoning. All scientific knowledge is based on inductive reasoning. Patterns are observed, and from those patterns, the probabilities of further such events are inferred. Once a prediction can be made with a certain degree of probability, it is considered "true", although this is understood to mean "now we'll proceed as if it's true", not that it is absolutely certain. The everyday thinking of a rational person works that way as well. "I am going to the local grocery store to get my groceries." is based on my past experiences that there is a grocery store at that location where I am going. This is not certain knowledge. It is logically possible that when I get there it is now gone. However, I am willing to live my life based on this type of inference, using probabilities, not certainties.

Some people have tried to logically "prove" God exists, but have never succeeded, because the only way to do that is to begin with definitions that assume the existence of God, and so it just goes in circles. Logic can never give you any *new* knowledge that is not already implied within the definitions with which you start. It can never be used to prove with certainty that God exists, or that God does not exist. Indeed, logically, you can be certain of that.

However, we can reason rationally about the issues, using inductive reasoning. We do not have to give up, with an agnostic shrug, just because we can't be reaching logical certainty. Just as in every other endeavour in our lives, we can proceed with what we judge to be most probable or plausible, ultimately making decisions on the balance of probabilities, or in the absence of exact calculations, relative plausibility.

At each step, proceed with what seems most plausible to you, based on your experience and thinking.

**Question 1:** Does "God",

conceived as some sort of timeless intelligent creative force outside the bounds of our known physical universe, exist?

Atheists will assert that no, there is no God, the universe just happened, from nothing. They can't prove that but have faith in that idea. I look at the universe, with all its order and natural laws, all its evolving complexity, including conscious minds, and conclude that it seems quite implausible to me that it just arose from nothing. My whole life experience and reasoning tells me that within the physical universe nothing comes from nothing. So, I think it is *more likely* that an intelligent creative force created our universe.

**Question 2:** If God did create the universe, do you think God would have some purpose for doing so? Or even more specifically, some purpose for setting up a complex sequence whereby I would come to exist?

One possibility is that the universe is just God's random whim, for no reason. But to me, that just does not seem plausible, that this wonderful universe with all its evolving complexity was intelligently created *for no reason*. I find it is more reasonable to think the universe, and its parts, including me, probably has some purpose to God.

**Question 3:** Can we understand that purpose? One possibility is to not even try. That is unlikely to achieve success. To paraphrase Wayne Gretsky, you miss 100% of the shots you don't take. Trying to understand it seems more likely to lead to at least some degree of understanding. So, I try.

**Question 4:** Am I more likely to improve my understanding just on my own, or more likely to benefit from the thinking and accumulated wisdom of other people as well?

In my life experience and observation, I have benefitted from learning from others, in many small and large ways. So, I could just amble in a forest and try to be spiritually inspired by myself; but it seems more likely to me that I will improve my understanding by learning about the thoughts and teachings of others. This is especially so because other intelligent people have been thinking and writing about such issues for millennia. They almost always have organized themselves into groups,

which we call "religions." It is logically possible that I can think through and understand the issues just on my own, better than all those groups and generations of other people, and I have nothing to learn from them; but that seems unlikely to me. That has not been my experience with any other important endeavour.

**Question 5:** Which religion do I try to learn from? There are a multitude, so "all of them" is not really a practical possibility. I could try to find "the best" one, but if that means "the true" one, it's not clear how to judge that from the outside. It does seem more likely that I will learn better from a group or religion that is more readily comprehensible to me, one where the language, metaphors, and traditions are easier for me to understand. So, the best one *for me* is one which is familiar and compatible with my culture and prior experience.

This latter way of making a choice may not be appropriate for you. Some people have had some negative impression of their most familiar religion, often the one their parents followed, such that they feel a conditioned aversion to it; and so, prefer something different. That probably entails greater effort but could be a better choice for some people. However, going from some bad impression of one religion, to discounting all religion, would seem to be an unreasonable overgeneralization.

Christianity, and the Anglican denomination in particular, are most compatible with my life experience and preferences.

So, you may ask, what does that religion say about understanding our meaning and purpose? Why don't I just simply state that, and save you the trouble of learning it from some religion?

It turns out that religious and spiritual insight can't be neatly summarized in a few words. Some highlights can be stated but will not be convincing in the absence of knowing the context. Also, spiritual insight sometimes develops more with experiential learning. If you want an example, then here is one: "Love your neighbour and love God." However, simply hearing that statement will not be convincing, unless you understand the context and the full story, of which that is a reasonable conclusion.

Victor Day, Ph.D.

# The sacred work of church changing: (parish and diocesan) life is a team sport



By Cathy Lee Cunningham  
(she/her)  
Rector, Church of the Good Shepherd, Beaver Bank

*“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is about thinking about yourself less.”*

- Often attributed to C.S. Lewis, but actually from Rick Warren’s *A Purpose Driven Life*



Rev. Cathy Lee Cunningham

At the AST Convocation on May 4th (Congratulations, AST Class of 2024!) I had the good pleasure of seeing many beloved colleagues and friends whom I don’t often get to see, and of having inspired conversations about the latest cutting edge resources in the theological world (one of the most wonderful benefits of being a Senator!) One of the conversations was with one of my most favourite colleagues. We were talking about the gifts of working in team ministry, with excitement for new models of ministry that are evolving across the broader Church, and that are being explored and lived out here in our Diocese.

The conversation quickly led us to the work of Patrick Lencioni, author of the bestselling book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. He’s also the author of several other books, including *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars: A Leadership Fable About Destroying the Barriers That Turn Colleagues Into Competitors*, and his most recent *The 6 Types of Working Genius: A Better Way to Understand Your Gifts, Your Frustrations and Your Team*. While it is not a cutting edge theological resource per se, in *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Lencioni offers a model that has the potential to guide us to cutting edge

breakthroughs in our teamwork across the Diocese: Dysfunction #1, Absence of Trust: “This occurs when team members are reluctant to be vulnerable with one another and are unwilling to admit their mistakes, weaknesses or needs for help. Without a certain comfort level among team members, a foundation of trust is impossible.”

Dysfunction #2, Fear of Conflict: “Teams that are lacking on trust are incapable of engaging in unfiltered, passionate debate about key issues, causing situations where team conflict can easily turn into veiled discussions and back channel comments. In a work setting where team members do not openly air their opinions, inferior decisions are the result.”

Dysfunction #3, Lack of Commitment: “Without conflict, it is difficult for team members to commit to decisions, creating an environment where ambiguity prevails. Lack of direction and commitment can make employees, particularly star employees, disgruntled.”

Dysfunction #4, Avoidance of Accountability: “When teams don’t commit to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven individuals hesitate to call their peers on actions and behaviors that may seem counterproductive to the overall good of the team.” Dysfunction #5, Inattention to Results: “Team members naturally tend to put their own needs (ego, career development, recognition, etc.) ahead of the collective goals of the team when individuals aren’t held accountable. If a team has lost sight of the need for achievement, the organization ultimately suffers.”

In the Five Dysfunctions of a Team downloadable (free) resource from his website (see link below), Lencioni offers five questions we can ask of any team — whether diocesan, regional, parish, community — to begin laying a foundation of knowledge to address the dysfunctions in a productive way:

- Do team members openly and readily disclose their opinions?
- Are team meetings compelling and productive?
- Does the team come to decisions quickly and avoid getting bogged down by consensus?
- Do team members confront one another about their shortcomings?
- Do team members sacrifice their own interests for the good of the team?

Some of the signs that a team is dysfunctional in each or any of the five areas include:

## WHERE TRUST IS

## LACKING

- Team members try to hide mistakes;
- Make assumptions about what other members are thinking or feeling or meaning, without directly checking those assumptions in compassionate conversation;
- Hold grudges.

## WHERE CONFLICT IS AVOIDED

- Team members avoid one another;
- Avoid addressing problems as they arise, allowing them to fester and amplify;
- Don’t compassionately address issues or behaviors.

## WHERE COMMITMENT IS LACKING

- Team members keep discussing the same thing over and over, without forward motion or resolution;
- Won’t commit to do the work;
- Objectives and priorities are unclear, causing confusion.

## WHERE ACCOUNTABILITY IS ABSENT

- Poor performance is tolerated;
- Lack of ownership of the work from members of the team;
- Objectives are missed.

## WHERE DESIRED RESULTS AREN’T PRODUCED

- High turnover in team membership;
- Poor performance;
- Team members focus on their own agendas and results, not the team as a whole.

In contrast, here are the marks of highly functional teams in each of the five areas:

## WHERE TRUST IS PRESENT

- Team members freely ask for help when they need it;
- Share weaknesses, suspend judgement and help each other;
- Believe everyone is trying their very best.

## WHERE CONFLICT IS EMBRACED

- Team members have healthy team debates when there is a difference of opinion;
- Work out solutions to

issues, together;

- Challenge bad behavior and poor performance quickly, and with compassion.

## WHERE THERE IS COMMITMENT

- The team shares collective, clear objectives and priorities;
- All team members take ownership of team goals and priorities;
- Team members are fully engaged with each other and the work.

## WHERE THERE IS ACCOUNTABILITY

- Poor performance is dealt with compassionately;
- The starts of behavior and performance are the same for all;
- Team members understand their work, the expectations, and they own their work.

## WHEN RESULTS ARE ACCOMPLISHED

- The team is highly motivated and stable;
- Consistently reaches objectives;
- Team cohesiveness and spirit is palpable amplified.
- Trust grows.

As followers of Jesus, we always add to any vision and practice of team work — whether in our families, workplaces, parishes, regions, diocesan work, and beyond — the foundation that He laid for the success of all our endeavors for Him:

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

With His commandment as the motivation for everything we do, we cannot fail.

## READ

Leoncini’s book, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*

## EXPLORE

Lencioni’s website: <https://www.tablegroup.com>  
Downloadable Resource for *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* <https://www.tablegroup.com/topics-and-resources/teamwork-5-dysfunctions/>

Have a beautiful, blessed and renewing summer! I’ll see you back here in the September Issue.

Photo Credit: Nick Fewings, Unsplash



# Celebrating Earth Day

In celebration of Earth Day 2024, the Diocesan Environment Network (DEN), Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island marched in the 2nd annual People's Parade for Life on Earth. It happened on the Halifax Waterfront with approximately

50 other environmental groups and organizations. A "delegation" from the Communion Forest rode in a wagon pulled by Rev. Tory Byrne.  
 Photos: The DEN banner was carried by Bishop Sandra Fyfe (left) and Rev. Marian Lucas-Jefferies (right).



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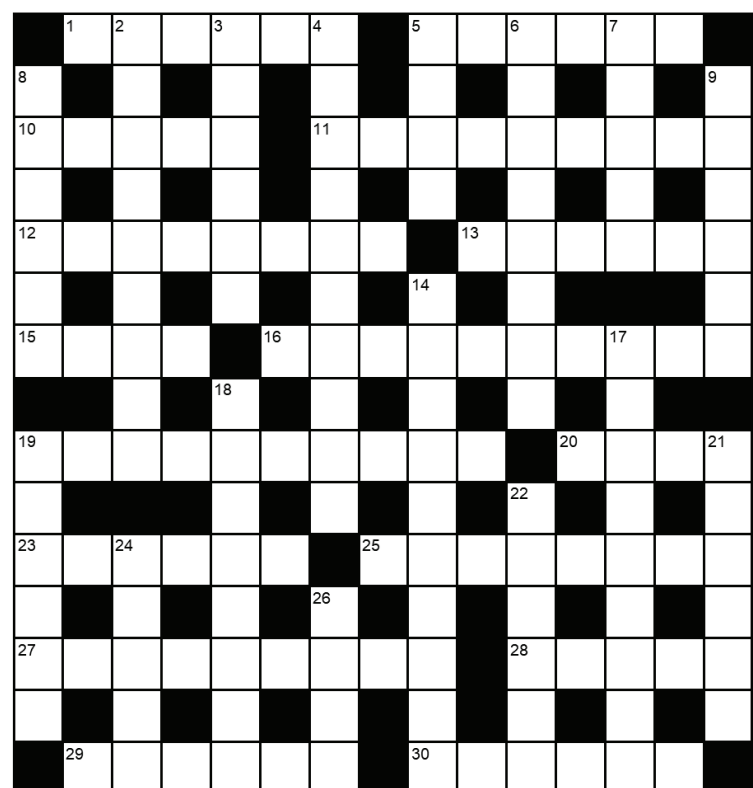
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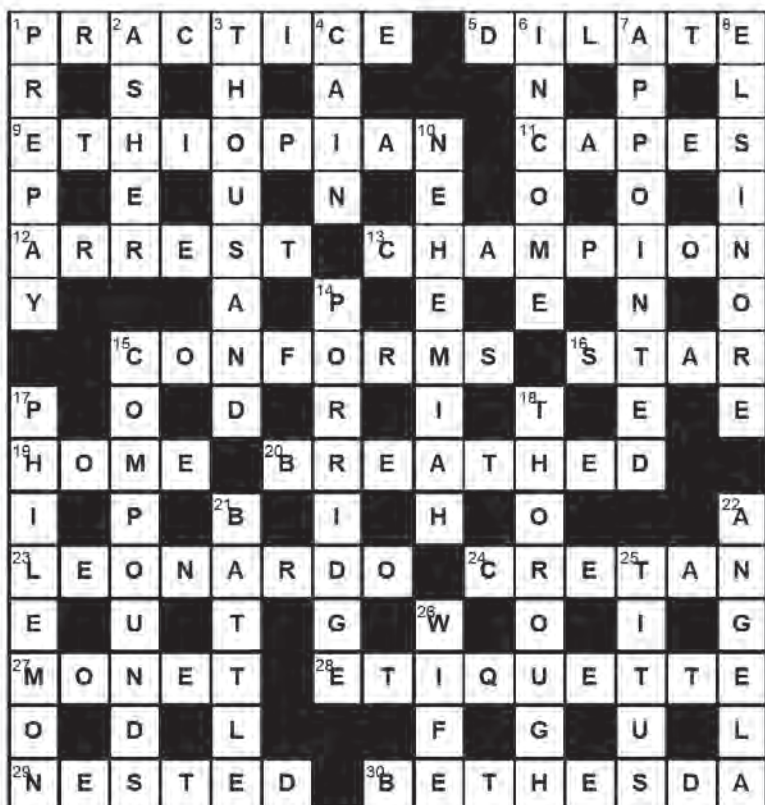
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# June Bible Crossword

by Maureen Yeats

## MAY Puzzle Answers



# JUNE 2024 Clues

### ACROSS:

- 1- "...the leeks, the onions, and the \_\_\_\_\_" (Num. 11:5) plant related to onions (6)
- 5- Land in Egypt where Jacob's family settled (Gen. 46:28) (6)
- 10- Young friend of Job (Job 32-37) (5)
- 11- Mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1) (9)
- 12- Place Jonah tried to flee to (Jonah 1) (8)
- 13- Variegated minerals (6)
- 15- Table with drawers used in an office (4)
- 16- "What is your \_\_\_\_\_?" (Gen. 46:33) line of work (10)
- 19- Filling shelves, as in a grocery store (10)
- 20- Pointy canine tooth (6)
- 23- Consecrated (6)
- 25- Dante's guide in the "Divine Comedy" (8)
- 27- Soaking up, like a sponge (9)
- 28- Organ that circulates blood (5)
- 29- Scold (6)
- 30- Emits a fine mist (6)

### DOWN:

- 2- Beekeeper (9)
- 3- "It \_\_\_\_\_ at the rattle of javelins." (Job 41:29) makes fun of (6)
- 4- Dessert made of sweetened cream cheese in a crumb crust (10)
- 5- "... in order that I may \_\_\_\_\_ Christ and be found in him." (Phil. 3:8-9) obtain (4)
- 6- Chinese port (8)
- 7- Occurrence (5)
- 8- "(God) \_\_\_\_\_ on the seventh day." (Gen. 2:2) relaxed (6)
- 9- Selected (6)
- 14- Groups of five performers (10)
- 17- Not real (9)
- 18- Maori name for New Zealand (8)
- 19- Mischievous person (6)
- 21- Visitors (6)
- 22- One who engraves, especially glass (6)
- 24- Hereditary social group of India (5)
- 26- The Venerable \_\_\_\_\_, English monk of 7<sup>th</sup> and early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries (4)

## Anglicans Powering Potential

Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island

Anglicans Powering Potential (APP) of the Diocese of NS and PEI, under the overarching 4th Mark of Mission for Anglicans: *to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation*, encourage and remind us that no matter the size of the nail, or our ability, even in a small way, we can help to disable the Wheel(s) of Injustice.



*"We are not simply to bandage the wounds of the victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spike in the wheel itself"*  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

In enhancing capacity for creative ministry, Anglicans Powering Potential are re-imagining Bonhoeffer's spike as a series of nails of varying sizes and shapes . . . to remind us that we can make a difference, that small things can have a big impact!  
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# New ministry horizons for Deacons

Traditionally, vocational deacons, also known as permanent deacons, earn their living in the private and public sectors of the secular world. But they offer their time and energies to their diaconal ministries without stipend. This makes sense, as they are called to a special ministry of serving the poor, the sick, and the marginalized; those within society who may not have the financial resources to pay them. Deacons are called by God to faithfully function in the world while taking care to not be of the world. Therefore, much of their ministry takes place beyond the church walls.

Deacons also serve as the bridge between the Church and the world, bringing the concerns of the world to the Church and drawing those in need to the light of Christ through acts of service and charity. Primate Linda Nicholls noted at the 2024 Diaconal Preaching Conference that it is as though deacons are standing at the threshold of the Church, holding “binoculars of care and concern” as they look out onto the world and beckon others in.

Due to their employment in the secular world, vocational deacons may well have skills and charisms in the areas of management and administration.

As such, they may well



be equipped to take on the non-sacramental work of overseeing the administrative functioning of a parish in the absence of a rector or priest-in-charge. Such tasks might include scheduling related to liturgy, convening council meetings, monitoring finances, coordinating a pastoral care team, and ensuring adherence to the canons. But it could also include championing stewardship, encouraging and celebrating missional activity, nurturing stability, supporting the work of developing and living out a parish vision, and acting as a kind of connective tissue between the parish, region, and diocese.

As the Church continues to move through an era of tightening finances coupled with a shortage of priests, it may well be that God is calling

some vocational deacons to embark upon a new ministry adventure as stipendiary deacon administrators. This is not to suggest that other non-stipendiary diaconal works of service are abandoned. Rather, there is a need for delicate balance. In areas of the diocese without human resources to fulfill the ministries of rector or priest-in-charge, this is an opportunity for a different genre of team ministry to be fashioned. Recognizing that the Holy Spirit is at work and at play in our diocese and recognizing that God as Creator is the source of all innovation, this appears to be the time to explore such an option.

Such is the case with the Anglican Churches of Pictou County (ACPC) as they

embrace not-so-unique circumstances to pilot a fresh-to-us team ministry that draws from the charisms of licensed lay ministers, council members, parishioners, retired local priests, and a deacon administrator. ACPC represents a coalition of three congregations from Pictou (St. James), Westville (St. Bee's), and Stellarton (Christ Church) who share human resources and pool financial resources in order to uphold Anglican ministry within the area. While each church has its own council, there is also an overarching ACPC council that is comprised of members from all three churches. With the support and prayers of Bishop Sandra and Executive Director, the Reverend Ann Turner, the deacon administrator is responsible to parishioners but, like all deacons, falls under the direct authority of the Bishop. The deacon administrator also requires a covenant with council in order that expectations for ministry can be faithfully fulfilled by all parties.

It is important to note that, while the deacon administrator role includes nurturing stability in the absence of a rector or priest-in-charge, this does not connote a holding pattern.

All parishes, including those without a resident priest, need to continue to grow in

spirituality, in faith, and in missional work. Key here is the notion that all baptized Christians are called by God to some form of ministry, and intentionally fostering that ethos is fundamental to the success of the deacon administrator role. Rather than being a time of dormancy for the parish, the tenure of the deacon administrator is to be one of continually tilling the soil alongside congregations. In this sense, the diaconal energies that are typically utilized in the community beyond the church walls are shared with the parish. This is where the balancing act between the traditional diaconal work of charity and service within the community and active care and concern for the effective functioning of the parish becomes so vital.

The idea of deacon administrators is not new to the Anglican Church of Canada. However, it is new to the Anglican Churches of Pictou County and to our diocese at this time. Therefore, ACPC asks for your prayers as they work to blaze some new trails in team ministry over the coming year. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Joanne Neal,  
Vocational Deacon for  
Anglican Churches of Pictou  
County

## WANTED: PARISH NEWS!



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