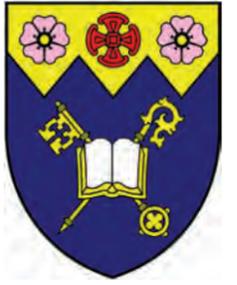


THE MESSENGER

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56th Athabasca Synod: harvest ripe for re-missioning

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

The 56th Synod of the Diocese of Athabasca took place October 12-15, 2017, in Peace River. Synod's theme of "Renewal in Mission" was inspired by Ephesians 4:7, 11-16. For the first time, the conference-style synod offered a number of workshops open to everyone in the diocese.

The elected synod delegates dealt with a relatively small amount of business compared to other years, and all attendees were invited to participate in discussion around Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) and the ensuing time of reflection.

The opening eucharist, held at St. James' Cathedral, began with the Gospel of

Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" This scripture presaged what this synod hoped to accomplish.

In his Bishop's Charge, the Rt. Rev. Fraser Lawton spoke of the need for a complete re-missioning in the diocese; to truly enable the "why" of what we do, to shape all that we do and who we are.

On August 20th, Veronica and I took the opportunity to attend

the Edmonton Air Show. One of the features at this year's event was a visit of a group of WWII "warbirds," made up of a P57D Mustang, an F4U Corsair, a P38 Lightning, a P40 Airacobra and a P47D Thunderbolt. The amazing thing was that they all flew there and presented a flying display. It was incredible. We talked about the rarity of such an event, given the age of the aircraft. We should

own discipleship and learning. We had a sense that we needed to spend a bit of time and energy on ourselves. The spiritual truth is that we have to give, though, in order to receive and to grow. It is time to turn outward...

This sharing of the gospel and living the kingdom are the reason we exist, and everything else must

serve that. We cannot afford to be so wrapped up in what we're doing that we lose track of the good news of the gospel and the sharing of that good news. This isn't an option, or something we get to when we have the energy or time. It is the purpose of the Church...

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Bishop Fraser Lawton in a moment of contemplation.

anticipate fewer and fewer of these opportunities, not only due to the age of the aircraft, but especially because of the declining number of people able to maintain and fly them. They are different animals than current aircraft (never mind the lack of availability of parts). While it was incredible to see, it was also obvious how out of date they are according to their purpose. They are now, though beautiful, anachronistic. They also serve as a warning of an analogous danger to the church: that we might try and maintain some frozen version of a past time. We cannot continue with what was or how we wish things were.

The last two synods have focused on helping us with our

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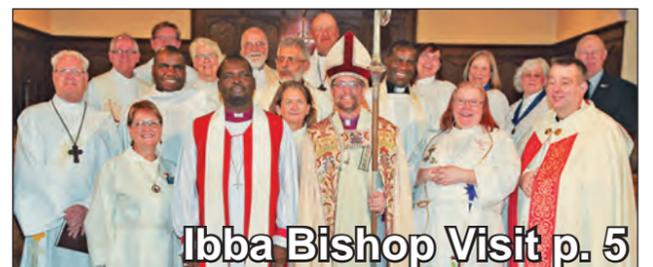
Christmas starts with Christ



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Pioneer cemetery tranquil space for 21st century burials

MARGARET GLIDDEN
Edmonton Editor

At the busy junction of 82 Street and 195 (Valour) Avenue on an afternoon in late August, John Matthews and Glen Gogol, members of the Anglican parish of Good Shepherd, could be seen working hard to install a new sign directing passing motorists to one and a half acres of peace and tranquility.

"I remember when this was all bush," said Darrel Sawchuk pulling over to the side of the road to ask Matthews how the transformation of the long abandoned Christ Church Cemetery Poplar Lake, established 1894, came about. "About 50 years ago this area used to be overgrown with poplars. My friend and I used to play here while our dads helped with the harvest."

Matthews, who is chair of the Christ Church Poplar Lake Cemetery Committee, affirmed Sawchuk's recollection. Although a log church once stood on this land, in the north-west corner of a quarter-section homestead, the parish was closed in 1926 and the church burnt down around the time of the Second World War.

Christ Church, Poplar Lake was the second Anglican parish to be established on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River by the Rev. Canon William Newton, an Anglican missionary who also founded the parish of All Saints' at 119 Street and Jasper Avenue in 1876.

The church had a tiny cemetery which was consecrated by the Bishop of Calgary Cyprian Pinkham in 1904. The first known burial, that of Elisha Rowswell, had taken place six years earlier in 1898. After the church closed, the cemetery fell into a state of neglect until the early 1990s when the parish of St. Michael and All Angels took on the challenge of clearing out the overgrown brush. About 10 years later, in 2003, the parish of Good Shepherd in the north Edmonton neighbourhood of Castle Downs, was approached by the Edmonton diocese to consider taking over care of the cemetery - one of about two dozen cemeteries owned by the diocese. The parish agreed and made the restoration of the rural pioneer cemetery its Centennial Project in 2010.

Good Shepherd decided the only way to keep the cemetery in proper condition was to make it operational again, said Matthews. "Sort of like the classic car you bring out in the summer," he said. "If it doesn't run it doesn't matter, because it's not

the family car. So you make sure it runs."

One of the first tasks for Matthews' committee was to order a ground penetrating radar survey to try to identify burial sites, as the original grave markers had all been moved during the brush clean-up. The survey revealed 18 probable burial sites, and a chart near the entrance of the cemetery indicates who is thought to be buried where.

Fortunately, a 1959 RCAF blueprint of the cemetery plotted all the monuments at that time. That information, when pieced together with the survey, provided a fairly accurate picture of the memorial area.

Members of the cemetery committee have planted rose bushes and hedges around the circumference of what was once the churchyard and cemetery. Matthews walks to a large, pink granite column at the head of the row of five surviving grave markers. The most prominent gravestone in the cemetery, it stands as a monument to four members of the Fielders family - a mother, father, their two adult sons and infant twins who died at nine days old. Descendants of the Fielders lobbied long and hard to get the cemetery restored. Helen Japp of Kindersley, SK, granddaughter of John and Elizabeth Fielders, heard about restoration efforts through her parish priest, and donated her royalties from mineral rights. She also shared details about the family. Until 1880, the area had been inhabited primarily by indigenous and Metis people, as well as some fur traders. Around 1881 the Fielders family came out to Alberta from New Brunswick and, in 1882, John Fielders married Elizabeth, the daughter of Methodist missionary John McDougall. The Fielders, who were Anglican, and the Hutchings, who were Methodist/Presbyterian, settled on either side of Poplar Lake. Son John died in a farming accident in



Above: John Matthews, left, and Glen Gogol, members of the Christ Church Cemetery Poplar Lake Committee, install new signs in August; Matthews with the five original grave markers. The Fielders' family monument is on the right.



January, 1911, and his father John died in June the same year. Son Norman died in late October, 1918 as a result of the rigours of service in the WWI Battle of the Somme in France. According to the All Saints' registries in the Provincial Archives, he was buried on October 30 by the Bishop of Edmonton. Elizabeth died in May, 1919, likely from the Spanish Flu. Their names are memorialized on the monument, engraved in a panel funded by the Last Post Fund.

Eleanor Rose Swan, the first wife of Canon Richard Swan, is also buried in the cemetery. Canon Swan seems to have the longest association to Christ Church, Poplar Lake. He emigrated from Canterbury in 1913 through the Archbishops' (Canterbury and York) Western Canada Fund. He is listed in the 1920 Henderson Guide as Priest-in-Charge of Edmonton Mission House, from which priests travelled to service outlying areas. Eleanor was listed as Lady-in-Charge of the mission house. She died in 1921. Canon Swan remarried and became rector of St. Michael and All Angels and St. Mary, Edmonton. He also served Christ Church and carried out the last recorded burial in the cemetery of Sarah Sweetnam in 1925. While the parish was active under the leadership of Canon Swan, with an average attendance of 40-50 people every second Sunday afternoon, it closed in 1926, the same year Swan retired. His family moved to the Lac Ste. Anne area, where he later died and is buried.



Christ Church, Poplar Lake on Easter Sunday, 1914. Photo by Canon Richard Swan, courtesy of the Anglican Archives, Provincial Archives of Alberta, PR1973.0518.4.

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Time enough: for friends, for reflection, for action



BISHOP FRASER LAWTON
Diocese of Athabasca

Time, as always, seems to be flying by. It is nearly overwhelming to look back over the last number of weeks and review all that's happened, and also how quickly winter and advent seem to have arrived.

Many of the things that happened are deeply significant. We had a visit from the Rt. Rev. Wilson Kamani to the Diocese of Athabasca. He very generously left his home and diocese to spend several weeks in Canada, most of which was with us, exploring our geography, visiting parishes and sharing in our lives while talking about his. It was so significant for so many people to finally be able to meet, in person, this bishop they have been praying for for so long. It was deeply moving to hear about South Sudan and the Diocese of Ibba from the bishop.

It was another piece of being better knit together with brothers and sisters a third of the way around the world from us. We are prayerfully looking forward to the next piece of that when a few of us will join the people of Ibba to celebrate the opening of their new cathedral. It was important for us to hear about Ibba, too, in the context of our synod. Their experience of the Lord and living out their faith is an encouragement for us, but also a challenge.

Our time together at synod included other tremendous guests, too. We heard from Christians from Nassau, as they shared with us about how they were living out their faith in the neighbourhood around their parish. There was also encouragement and challenge for us in how they came to the LEAD program and are living it out. The Rev. Gene Packwood gave us encouragement and challenge in living as Christians and in being the church together. These, along with the Rev. David Greenwood and the Ven. Canon Terry Leer brought us both tools and a deeper sense of calling to be the church God has made us to be.

I am so very grateful to all of these people, as well as those who worked so hard to plan, host, and conduct synod. I have heard a number of

very positive reflections about the speakers and workshops that we had, with the main complaint being the impossibility of taking in all the workshops.

While it is good to hear positive feedback, there is something far more important, and that is closely connected with the sense of time. What will we do with what we heard and experienced? We need to make use of the time that God gives to us. It is tempting to put off things that don't match our preferences, or that seem difficult, or that require (gasp) change. There is also the greater reality that time is precious and many things compete for the time that we do have. It may be helpful to remember that time is a gift given to us by God, and that when we give Him our first share of time, we will never run out. Of course, that requires some choices that aren't always understood by all those around us. What we have heard is that God has so much for us, and that there are incredible possibilities and promises. Let us make good account of the time God has given, so that we may know His presence and grace.

*The Lord be with you,
+Fraser*

Edmonton diocese aids drought/famine relief in Burundi

The Diocese of Edmonton recently donated \$15,000 to its companion Diocese of Buyé to assist with drought and famine relief in Burundi. This generous gift was in response to an appeal to members of the Edmonton diocese.

The Buyé diocese used part of the money to help people in the northeast corner of the country, which is most susceptible to drought. Bishop Jane Alexander was in Burundi in March when some of that aid was delivered.

The Rev. Dominique Ciza, Buyé, Diocesan Secretary, described in an email how the rest of the funds were distributed:

"I am so pleased to let you know that with the additional funds of \$6,527.70 CAD, we were able to assist 180 of the poorest families affected by the famine with beans. Almost all of them are Batwa people, recognized as indigenous people, and others are elderly and widows. Actually, Batwa people are very poor because they don't have enough land to grow crops, and they used to survive by pottery, but nowadays the pottery products do not have a market. They are being replaced by industrial products. With the assistance, and as we are



Pictured left, the Rev. Canon Bibiane and above, Bishop Sixbert deliver aid packages.

entering the farming season, they have seeds of beans to sow, and food to sustain them for a while.

The activity was honoured by Bishop Sixbert (Macumi); Mrs. Clotilde, Mother's Union President; the Rev. Canon Bibiane, Mother's Union Secretary and the Rev. Dominique Ciza, Diocesan Secretary.

The recipients were very excited and happy with the assistance package, and appreciated so much Buyé and Edmonton dioceses for having thought about them and assisting them with the much needed food items. They continued saying that a part of

the package will be sown and another part will be eaten with the hope that they shall reach the harvesting period without any food shortage.

The parish priests also thanked the Buyé

and Edmonton dioceses for the support; they said that it was their priority to assist those Batwa people and other needy people. This support will bear fruits, as far as discipleship is concerned, among the Batwa community and hope will be restored to the starving people."



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ID: a framework to follow Jesus' plan for discipleship



The Ven. RICHARD KING
Archdeacon for
Mission and Discipleship
Diocese of Edmonton

Well, that was exciting, wasn't it?! The diocesan synod I mean. I realise it was a while ago now, but its impact is still being felt, certainly in regards to "ID," the framework for missional discipleship I spoke about

on the Saturday morning of synod. I'd like to tell you more about it here. It means postponing what I had intended to write about Fresh Expressions, but we can come back to that next month.

We have been working on the ID framework all summer under the leadership and oversight of Bishop Jane. At the heart of it is the discipling model that we see Jesus use in Luke 7-10, which I have written of in previous articles in *The Messenger*. Jesus uses mission to catalyse discipleship in those chapters. ID seeks to apply that in our parishes, combining it with all we know about church growth and our missional context. It

also focuses on the five-fold ministry functions found in Ephesians 4:11-16 and the wonderful portrait of a church family being made up of different people who have been given distinct gifts by the Holy Spirit for the 'common good' and the building up of everyone together.

The ID framework includes the following elements:

1. A covenant liturgy. This is being written by Bishop Jane and invites us all to journey together into a deeper, more fruitful missional discipleship.

2. A "Get to know you Saturday." Many of us do not even believe we are gifted by God, much less know how. This event will

help us all get to know ourselves and the gifts that God has given within our parishes. It promises to be very exciting.

3. An invitation to have a one-to-one mentoring session with a member of the diocesan ID team, to reflect on your gifting as revealed on the "Get to know you Saturday."

4. An invitation to find or arrange a particular opportunity where you can put your gift to work.

5. An invitation to reflect on that opportunity with a member of the diocesan ID team to see what you have learned.

6. Repeat... and thus we enter the pattern of Luke 7-10 in which we *engage*, *are nurtured*, *encounter* God

at work and *grow* as we use the gifts God has given us.

I emphasize this is a *framework* and not a program. The difference is that it will work out differently for each church family, for each one is unique. We call it a framework then, for it is clearly defined but flexible as a tool for each parish to develop according to its needs.

The introduction of the ID framework is underway at four "prototype" parishes, which will help us test it and learn any necessary lessons. It's very exciting and I'll keep you posted!

*God bless you richly,
Richard*

Missional discipleship starts with action, not information

The Ven. TERRY LEER
Archdeacon for
Mission Development
Diocese of Athabasca

So, thinking of discipleship development in terms of mission, incarnation and sacrificial love, we have to shift our educational focus. No longer can we afford to focus solely on information and intellectual content. Our focus has to be on spiritual formation.

You see, effective learning does not arise out of mastery of content. Remember the title of Robert Fulghum's famous

book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten?* There's a lot of truth in that title—and very little of what we really need to know we learn by mastering content.

We learn the fundamental truths not by focusing on content but by practice, practice, practice. The artist rehearses the skills of her craft uncounted times. The surgeon practices by removing the skins of grapes with a scalpel. How many times did we have to tell our children, "You have to apologize even if you don't feel like it"?

Christian discipleship is never about the mastery of content. Parishes shouldn't feel guilty about not having more Bible studies or more archdiaconal presentations, if the intent of all that is to pour more information into people's already full heads. Effective learning by disciples is not about information: it is about formation.

Since our goal as disciples is to be re-formed in the image of Jesus, who is God incarnate, then we have to learn to:

* behave like Jesus so that we might

* belong to the community of Jesus which supports us as we

* believe like Jesus.

So, when those extraordinary newcomers show up on our doorstep we teach them how to behave in a community of faith (worship and service), so that they might be firmly included in the family of God (disciples amongst disciple-makers), so that they have a secure place in which to develop their beliefs.

Our focus, then, is not on mastery of content but on the classical spiritual

disciplines of prayer, worship and ministry to the world. We train disciples in the practice of faith so that they might carry the renewing and reforming presence of the Spirit out into the world which God loves and for which He sacrifices Himself. Which brings us back to where we started: living missionally, incarnationally and lovingly with which. After all, Christian faith is not about what we know—it is about who we know.

Contact Archdeacon Terry Leer by email: amdath@telus.net.

Bishop Jane inducts the Rev. Renée Desjardins at St. David

SHELLY KING
Messenger Staff

St. David's, Edmonton and clergy of the diocese celebrated a new ministry on October 12, 2017, as Bishop Jane Alexander inducted the Rev. Dr. Renée Desjardins as rector of the parish. Church wardens and members welcomed their new priest with the keys to the church and various symbols of ministry, including: diocesan canons, a Bible, a prayer book, water, oil, bread and wine.



Pictured above left: Bishop Jane welcomes the Rev. Renée Desjardins to St. David's; above right: church members gather around as Desjardins prepares to slice the celebratory welcome cake.



Photos: Shelly King

Desjardins was born and raised in Vancouver, but spent more than 20 years in southern Ontario. She was ordained almost 12 years

ago, on the 2nd Sunday of Advent, 2005, in the Diocese of Niagara. She says she is delighted to be back in the west. "It is a great joy

to finally be settled in at St. David's, where there is such warmth, energy and strong faith in Christ. I am beginning to feel at home in

Edmonton and am very much appreciating new relationships in the parish and with clergy colleagues. I look forward to participating in what God is doing among us at St. David's and in the community. I'm always open to invitations for coffee and chat, so please be in touch."

High Prairie parish welcomes Bishop Kamani, South Sudan

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

For a number of years the Diocese of Athabasca has enjoyed a partnership with the Diocese of Ibbra, South Sudan. This relationship began when the bishops of both dioceses met at a gathering in Canterbury, United Kingdom. Ever since, parishes in the Diocese of Athabasca have prayed for Bishop Wilson Kamani and the people of the Ibbra diocese in their worship.

After much joy and expectation, Bishop Kamani was finally able to visit our diocese this fall to meet people from many parishes and to attend the diocesan synod.

When governments and visas are involved there is never any certainty about when things will happen but, fortunately, all went according to plan. On Sunday, October 1, Bishop Kamani arrived in the diocese for his first visit to St. Andrew's / Zion in Colinton. For the next 17 days the bishop would have a very full itinerary in this part of Canada.

On October 6, Bishop Fraser Lawton brought Bishop Kamani to St. Mark's Church in High Prairie, where they received a very warm welcome. The parish had invited people from all the churches in the town to come and meet Bishop Kamani. About 60 people arrived to share a meal and hear his description of life in war-torn South Sudan.

The parish offered a potluck feast of beef, elk, moose, turkey, ham, salmon, lamb and much more! We had much to be thankful for on this Thanksgiving Weekend. Later, we all moved into the church for Bishop Kamani's presentation on life in Ibbra, he observed how much we enjoy God's Grace and to be thankful for all its benefits, large and small.

As the Diocese of Ibbra is surrounded by a war zone, people cannot move freely in and out of the diocese. They face many daily challenges. Health services are almost non-existent. There are no drugs to prescribe, only pain killers. The local health centre had to close as it could not provide any medications to patients. Clean water is scarce and what little water there is has to be carried a great distance to people's homes. The diocese now offers hand-washing advice and even goes into the market places to demonstrate how beneficial such washing can be.

The rate of illiteracy is high amongst the population, including clergy - all of whom are non-stipendary. The Mothers' Union and



Bishop Wilson Kamani with indigenous dancers Val Willier (left), and Erin Thunder.

the doctors of the diocese, whom we might call prayer warriors, offer prayers for sick people several times a day, and are a very valuable part of the evangelising work of the diocese.

The Diocese of Ibbra runs a career training centre for young people. Once the students learn English at a Grade 8 level, they receive practical training in areas such as computers. It is hoped that these skills will make them employable when the war ends.

These and other facts provided a sobering image. When I asked Bishop Kamani why most of the people in the pictures seemed to be so happy in such dire circumstances, he simply replied: "we are so happy and blessed by all the things that God does for us, and we give thanks to Him for even the smallest thing."

I offered thanks to Bishop Kamani for his visit to us. The parish presented a gift of two red and white prayer shawls, symbolic of the provinces and territories of Canada, to Bishop Kamani and his wife Agnes. They also received two angel pins. The shawls are made by ladies from various churches who gather together at St. Mark's each Friday morning to pray and knit.

True, the bishop does not need a shawl to keep him warm back home, but it is hoped that when he has one wrapped around his shoulders in times of prayer or meditation, he will feel a close connection to the people of the Athabasca diocese.

At St. Mark's, Bishop Kamani also received a warm Canadian welcome from the new head of the local RCMP detachment and the Mayor of High Prairie, followed by a traditional greeting from two indigenous dancers in full regalia of which he was most appreciative.

It was a very blessed evening, and those of us attending our diocesan synod would have the good fortune of seeing Bishop Kamani again in just a few days.



Diocese of Athabasca Bishop Fraser Lawton (left) and Padi Leon, rector of St. Mark's, High Prairie (right), welcome Diocese of Ibbra Bishop Wilson Kamani, from South Sudan.

Joys and challenges of building God's Kingdom in South Sudan

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

The Diocese of Athabasca invited Bishop Wilson Kamani of the Diocese of Ibbra, South Sudan to visit Anglican parishes in northern Alberta and share with us the reality of everyday life in an African diocese surrounded by war. In turn, we gained a better understanding of each other and our cultures.

Bishop Kamani's visit was timely, as he was able to bring greetings from his diocese to the Diocese of Athabasca's triennial synod in Peace River. He also led two workshops on the Ibbra diocese, sharing its joys, challenges and plans.

The Diocese of Ibbra is one of 51 dioceses in the western internal Equatorial Province, inaugurated in 2016 in the Episcopal Church of South Sudan. Stretching 125 miles north of Ibbra, 40 miles south, 27 miles east and 5 miles west, the diocese is much smaller in land mass than the Athabasca diocese. It is made up of eight rural deans and 15 parishes, attended by an average of 1,000 people per week. Bishop Kamani is assisted by four archdeacons, who help the diocese focus on the areas of evangelism, education, the Mother's Union, health, peace and transitions.

In addition, the diocese has 74 evangelists, 15 in each of the 4 archdeaconries and 15 in the cathedral. Part of their work is to pastor the Mother's Union and the church youth members. These spiritual doctors reach the unreached with the Good News of Salvation.

They organise outreach programs in every parish, visiting and counselling the sick at home and in hospital (often staying overnight in prayer with them) and in prison.



Bishop Kamani and Bishop Lawton

Under the direction of an evangelism coordinator, the evangelists also organise fasting and prayer programs around issues of concern, such as the need for rain and peace, or an outbreak or epidemic. The evangelists go door-to-door sharing Jesus every first week in September. Their Week of Witness is a very important time in the Ibbra diocese.

Education is the diocese's greatest concern. Literacy is an area severely impacted by war. Illiteracy is a major concern for people of all ages. Teachers are prevented from entering the communities from outside. Money is of no value, and opportunities for work fail to exist. Access to primary education is difficult for the children of pastors and many of the pastors themselves have not completed elementary education. The clergy of the diocese are non-stipendary and depend on subsistence agriculture to feed their families. The people's sole source of food is their own crops. Prayer sustains the pastors who, despite poor living conditions, love their work in serving God.

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With Courage, Faith and Commitment Athabasca's Hopes for Renewal in Mission Take Flight

Continued from Front Page.

There are some very real challenges to us in embracing and living our "why." Some of these are part and parcel of the age and culture we live in, and some are our own. We do not live in a Christian culture or society. We cannot presume that we have some sort of privileged place in society, general support, a common understanding of the gospel and its importance, or friendly, supportive governments... Others have, perhaps very gradually, fallen into the trap of reinventing the gospel to better fit the world and to be more "relevant." However, that undermines the very hope we have to offer. We also have our own diocesan challenges. One obstacle we feel is the perceived lack of personnel. We would love to have a priest in every congregation to lead and equip the people. The work that suffers the most is the "why" work of discipleship and evangelism. We have too often provided insufficient equipping and resources required by those who are engaged in this work. (And there are people in this diocese who are deeply committed to this mission and who are living it out).

It is clear that we have some significant challenges. We also have some profound assets. I did not mention age or finances in the list of challenges. We only face a resource "crisis" if we allow past models, methods, and expectations to define and control us. As to our age, we need to remember that God has always used those who would answer His call. Neither Abraham, nor Moses, were "spring chickens" when they began the work God called them to. Nor does youth disqualify a person – consider God's call of Timothy or David. Our success does not rest in our ability, but in the power of the Living God... This diocese is filled with people who are very capable, talented, skilled, devout, and gifted by God. We see some quickening of desire for the change that is required and to truly live our mission. We see some people who are committed to prayer such that they take the time to meet together regularly to

pray together. We live in a hungry and needy culture yearning for community, meaning, and identity. In other words, the harvest is ripe...

The Diocese of Athabasca is at an intersection point in its life. Some of us are already pushing to pursue mission and to be different. Others among us still feel the call for serving our preferences or to try and keep what "has been" alive. We live at a moment where choosing the gospel is a radical and counter-cultural thing. We live in a time where even people in the church have some very different views of what the gospel is and how it is to be served in this age. As we sit at this decision point, which way will we go?

Real change will require commitment and sacrifice. Not all of us will be willing to pay that price. History says, though, that the prayerful, worshipful investment of commitment and sacrifice shares in the harvest of the kingdom. In order to get beyond mere words and good intentions requires a strategy and the courage and commitment to implement it...

This work must, absolutely, be undertaken and supported at every stage by dedicated prayer... As many of you have now heard from Bishop Kamani, every Friday evening in the Diocese of Ibbra, people gather for an all-night healing service and time of prayer and fasting. This is the kind of prayer that is needed to undergird this work. The Lord will give us His direction in what we need to do and how to do it – provided we are devoted to the mission He has given us...

Let us be brave and courageous. Let us take up the challenge to re-mission ourselves. If we do, we will truly and intimately know the presence of God and that we cannot out-give Him: not in generosity or time or grace. Again, in our generation the question is being put to us. Choose this day whom you will serve. Choose life. Choose Jesus.

Bishop Lawton's call builds on the process initiated at a gathering of the Diocesan Executive Council in January, 2017 and continued by the "Unity in Mission" event held in late spring.

Athabasca Synod: Day One

On the morning of Friday the 13th, synod moved from St. James' Cathedral to the HFCRD Catholic Conference Centre a few blocks away in Peace River. Following a service of Morning Prayer led by members of the Peace Deanery, presentations were made by various committees of synod, including a response by the Bishop's Charge committee.

Subsequently, one of our international guests, Bishop Wilson Kamani from the Diocese of Ibbra in South Sudan, Africa, brought forth greetings from his home diocese, and spoke of his visit to many parts of the Diocese of Athabasca. Bishop Kamani also presented a synod workshop.

Our theme speaker, the Rev. Gene Packwood, a retired priest from the Diocese of Calgary, gave four engaging talks with the assistance of his wife Judith. The talks began with the word "Jesus," and included live guitar music and audience interaction. Packwood had studied alongside our own Bishop Fraser, and he was able to share a few memories that showed a different side of our bishop. A brief mention of the amazing contraptions invented (and thankfully, never patented) by Bishop Lawton to assist in church matters, garnered him many laughs. Interestingly, Packwood, our bishop and our guest presenters from Holy Cross parish in Nassau, Bahamas, are also involved with the Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM).

Two significant orders of business included the Renewal of the Covenant, approved after a brief discussion, and the matter of the proposed amendment to Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church). Synod elected its delegates to General Synod 2019 in Vancouver. As this was also an opportunity to include as many people as possible in preliminary discussions, we devoted two sessions to reviewing background and respectfully sharing our thoughts, concerns and opinions on Canon XXI. (The resolution to allow same-sex marriages in the church passed its first reading at General Synod in July 2016, a required second reading will go before General Synod in 2019.) and its repercussions.



From top, clockwise: Fariborz Khandani (front and center); Christopher Tapera, Lissa Tapera and Blessing Shambare; Dane Neufeld. Photos: Peter Clarke

There was ample time allotted for reflection and for attendees to share what was important to them. As a person who has attended several General Synod's where this topic was debated, The topic was broached with an impressive level of care, absent of acrimony or harangue. Quite naturally feelings ran the gamut yet, at all times, synod maintained a standard of understanding and respectfulness.

Anglicans often gather together around food, and so it was at this synod. The coffee breaks, lunches and banquets were certainly testament to the blessings we receive. Food was provided courtesy of the parish of Grimshaw-Berwyn on Friday, and courtesy of the Cathedral Parish of St. James' on Saturday.

On Friday afternoon we dealt with matters financial, receiving reports from the treasurer and then moving on to adopt the Budget for 2018. The overall mood of this synod was patently optimistic in all matters, including financial. Even the budget's (\$18,000) deficit did not seem an insurmountable obstacle to overcome.

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Both the Peace and the Athabasca Deaneries nominated members for the Diocesan Executive Council, and introduced the two new regional deans: the Rev. Fariborz Khandani, Peace; and the Rev. Dr. Dane Neufeld, Athabasca. Bishop Lawton subsequently concurred with those names and assented to the people named to those positions.

During a special music break, two of our priests, the Rev. Christopher Tapera and the Rev. Blessing Shambare, both formerly from Zimbabwe in Africa, shared with us a typical song from their homeland. It was to be one of three such joyous times during synod. The Rev. Fariborz Khandani, playing guitar, performed a song in Farsi, the language of Iran, his country of birth. Then, on Saturday afternoon, the Rev. Leon (Padi) Cadsap from the



Athabasca Synod theme speaker Gene Packwood, with wife Judith Packwood and Canon Terry Leer, Archdeacon for Mission Development.

High Prairie parish, who came to us from the Philippines last year, taught us a Maori song from New Zealand, complete with actions. It was great fun. It almost looked like a bunch of charismatic Anglicans! In hindsight, the choice of a Maori song was fitting, given that our theme speaker and his wife are originally from New Zealand.

There is a new reality of cultural diversity in this diocese as more people from various parts of the world choose to make northern Alberta their home. At least one-third of the priests in the diocese were born in other countries, and several of our priests hail from other parts of Canada. In fact nearly all of our speakers and workshop leaders came to us from other countries originally.

A spontaneous request for parishes to report on what was happening in their communities yielded an overwhelming display of diversity, originality and caring. Time ran out before everyone lined up for the open microphone had had a chance to speak. It proved to be a fruitful time for parishes to share what they are doing and learn from one another. For example, I was approached by two people from a parish on the other side of the diocese to help them with an initiative similar to what we are doing at St. Mark's in High Prairie.

Guest speaker Packwood seemed especially impressed by all we do given our small numbers. In his afternoon session, which began with a cappella song, we were told that being demonstrative was not a bad thing. We should worship with abandonment, and we should imagine that we are kneeling before Jesus as we worship, he said.

The first banquet supper featured a video presentation by John Kivell, Regional Director of Alpha Canada. Our bishop had been pondering the idea of a multi-year diocesan Alpha program, which would see every parish sending people to one or two

locations for training. Evidently, that would be a first for Alpha. The bishop left that discussion for each parish to have, but a unique idea.

Eventually, by the evening of the first day, there came rest.

Athabasca Synod: Day Two

During Morning Prayer, led by the people of the Athabasca Deanery, Bishop Lawton reminded synod that a Coptic priest was recently killed for his faith in Cairo, Egypt, at a place that the bishop had visited last year. We need to hold our fellow Christians in prayer, as we are fortunate not to be so threatened for our faith here.

"Jesus. Always pray and do not lose heart," said our guest speaker, urging us to remember the story of the persistent widow. He also cited Luke 6:12, which describes Jesus spending the whole night in prayer to God. He called our attention to "Freedom 555," the adoption of the Rule of Life as detailed on page 555 of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Our speaker recommended that the Daily Office be used each day, so that we may learn

how to re-mission ourselves. In other words, we should realize that we are the people living in the thorns in Jesus' Parable of the Sower. The time is coming!

Workshops were offered by Bishop Wilson Kamani, from Ibbra, South Sudan; Diocese of Athabasca Archdeacon for Mission Development, Canon Terry Leer on Everyday Evangelism; Mr. Troy Sanders and Mr. Philip Gray, lay members of Holy Cross Parish in Nassau, Bahamas, who spoke about their Lead, Evangelise, Aid, Disciple (LEAD) program; the Rev.

David Greenwood, from All Saints', Athabasca, on Healing Prayer. Stories about these stimulating workshops are featured elsewhere in the paper.

A second banquet, again kindly provided via the Cathedral parish, followed Bishop Lawton's prorogation of synod. Musicians Barry and Sarah Craigen, who had so ably performed their musical wonders during synod, proceeded to lead us in music and singing, later joined by many members and guests of synod.

A large congregation filled the cathedral for the closing eucharist on Sunday morning. The processional hymn, "Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven," was sung with great conviction and seemed the perfect way to send invigorated members of synod out in mission.



From left: Philip Gray from Nassau, Bahamas with worship music leaders Barry and Sarah Craigen.

Bishop Wilson Kamani brought the message and reminded us all to be strong in our faith, be thankful for our wonderful lives, and all the blessings that God showers upon us. He appreciated the time he spent among God's people in this diocese, and encouraged us to move forward and continue sharing our love of God with others.

After the service, we gathered once more for food, fellowship and our farewell's to each other. People went off to their homes, some more than 500 kms away, but all knowing that God was with them.



Members of St. Anne's, Valleyview share about the Reluctant Evangelists program.

Let us be brave and courageous. Let us take up the challenge to re-mission ourselves.

Bishop Fraser Lawton

Nassau Bahamas' parish LEADs with unconditional love

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

The worldwide communion of the Anglican Church is sometimes overlooked, even when our modern connected world makes it possible for us to know our brothers and sisters in Christ around the globe.

We were blessed to have as guest speakers at Synod, Troy Sands and Philip Gray, lay people from Holy Cross Parish in Nassau, Bahamas. Last February, they had welcomed a visit from our own Bishop Fraser Lawton and the Rev. Jane Jones to assist them with a parish project. The visit had been facilitated by our synod theme speaker; the Rev. Gene Packwood, in his role with Anglican Renewal Ministries.

In turn, we invited them to our synod to tell us about the ministry they are doing in their parish of Holy Cross. The parish was thrilled and even raised money for one of the plane tickets. Some time ago, the congregation of about 200 regular attendees needed help with expanding its outreach to people in surrounding areas.

Although many Holy Cross members were from well-educated, upper-middle income families, the parish had accumulated a debt of \$1million from a building project. An inward focus on paying off the loan had stunted parish growth. Then came a new canon who pressed church members to look beyond their parish walls.



From left: Bishop Wilson Kamani, Troy Sands and Philip Gray at the Athabasca synod in Peace River.

Sadly, just weeks after arriving, the canon, his wife and child were held hostage in the rectory and tortured. They were eventually released, but the family could no longer live in the rectory. Police believed that the attackers came from a nearby area called Nassau Village, which was rife with drug crime and killings. A riot had broken out in 2005, and even the police were reluctant to patrol the area.

After much prayer, God appeared in a somewhat unusual guise. Incredibly, the largest wireless provider on the island asked the

church to rent the whole facility for its business. In the process, the parish buildings were upgraded to a "smart" church. It was everything a parish could seemingly desire at no cost. In a few short years the debt would be erased by the new lease.

You may guess what happened next. With the debt all but gone, it was time to get to work sharing God's love in Nassau Village, a troubled community of about 6,000. The police had started an Urban Renewal program in the village to help youth. The parish took the program a step further and made a commitment to help youth as well as the whole community.

The first community visitors received prayer and teaching for six weeks from Philip and Troy. Participants were also invited to participate in a 40-day Lenten Fast and a program of discerning the gifts of the people. The idea was to go out to unconditionally love the people in this unstable community.

Next, a number of parishioners were sent into the village with a simple survey asking people to identify what they needed in their lives. The responses touched on poor living conditions, as well as youth gangs and crime. There were a lot of unchurched school-age children in this run-down community.

For completing the survey, each family received a voucher: church money in the amount of \$300, which could be spent at a future church event called the Free Fair. The church accepted second-hand items in good condition and solicited donations from local businesses. The families were invited to come to the church to peruse the "shops" and buy things with their money. They also offered free health checks to people waiting in line.

The parish of Holy Cross decided to host a "Stations of the Cross" arts competition as a way of interacting with youth in Nassau Village. The parish canvassed the community to provide materials for the young to create and earn prizes. As many were unchurched, it was an opportunity to discuss the Bible with them so that they could fully complete their paintings. Everyone who participated received a prize from the parish and the winning art work was displayed throughout the village. A Stations of the Cross parade was a great chance to evangelize. On Palm Sunday, the



Philip Gray (left) and Troy Sands (right), from Nassau, Bahamas, bid farewell to Diocese of Athabasca host Peter Clarke at the Grande Prairie airport.

parish set up hundreds of chairs in tents in a large park for a large-scale production of *The Passion of Our Lord*, involving camera crews, lighting and a sound system.

On another occasion, the parish grilled food for several hundred people and hosted a Back to School Jamboree at a popular basketball court. Miss Bahamas happened to be doing a photo shoot nearby and had free bags of food to give away. Good thing because they wound up feeding more than 1,000 people! (God will provide and our needs will be met - Matthew 25:31-40.)

The LEAD program, which stands for Love, Evangelise, Aid and Disciple, is now in its second year and is part of a 20-year ongoing commitment. Projects planned for 2018 include a basketball competition organized by the Anglican Church Men and social outreach, providing access to electronics and technology by the Anglican Church Women. Younger people are an intrinsic part of this program and are helping shape future plans.

When a new person arrives at Holy Cross church they are greeted

by someone between the age of 14 and 18 years old who records their contact info using an app on their smartphone. The information is sent to the person keeping parish records and Monday morning the contacts are forwarded to the grand ladies of the parish who welcome each new person with a phone call.

The people of Holy Cross listened to God's prodding, spent time with Him in prayer and fasting and moved way beyond their comfortable pews into a somewhat wild community. God led and they dutifully followed. Their ministries were rewarded as more and more people came to know Jesus. More to the point, they took the Great Commission to heart.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)

Renewal in Mission



On behalf of the Athabasca synod, Bishop Fraser Lawton thanks theme speaker Gene Packwood (left) for his inspiring message. Photo: Peter Clarke

Pioneer cemetery tranquil space for 21st century burials continued

Continued from page 2.

Matthews is a retired army officer and amateur historian who volunteers at the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum. For more than a decade, he has made it his mission to solve the mystery of who is buried in Poplar Lake cemetery “out of respect for the pioneers buried here.” He says the Diocese of Edmonton records held at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, files of the Alberta Genealogical Society, and Census and homesteading land records, as well as the Peel’s Prairie Provinces’ newspaper collection (which includes the first issue of the *Edmonton Bulletin* from 1880), have been “amazing resources.” In recent years, coverage of the cemetery by the local media, including *The*



John Matthews installs the new sign at Christ Church Cemetery Poplar Lake in north Edmonton.

Messenger, *St. Albert Gazette*, *Edmonton Journal* and *Global TV*, has also helped unearth new leads.

The cemetery committee used proceeds from the sale of a half an acre of the cemetery land to Sturgeon County to purchase a C-can

storage container and Kubota tractor. Since 2004, caretaker Glen Gogol, “you name it, I do it,” has been running the equipment for general maintenance and burials.

Birdhouses built by Gogol and placed around the borders of the cemetery, have become home to a population of

tree swallows, and several members of the cemetery committee tend the lovely gardens, planned by horticulturalist and Good Shepherd member Gail Rankin.

Today Christ Church Cemetery

Poplar Lake not only provides a lovingly tended resting place for pioneers of a century ago, but it now offers space for burials that will occur in the 21st century. While a “fair number” of plots have been sold, Matthews hopes the new signs, produced at cost by 1 Canadian Service Battalion (Canadian Forces Base Edmonton borders the cemetery on all sides), will help spread the word that there are hundreds of affordable casket burial and cremation plots available.

The cemetery offers 4’x12’ casket plots for \$1,000 and 4’x6’ cremation plots for \$500. For more information, visit www.goodshepherdanglican.org; call 780-456-4643; or email: cemetery@goodshepherdanglican.org

Kingdom building in war-torn Ibba diocese continued

Continued from page 5.

English language tutors provide instruction to older children and teens who wish to enrol in training programs offered by the diocese. The young people were canvassed about which programs they would like to see and computer technology repair and technology was high on their list. English football is extremely popular across the diocese, and so, as a peace-building exercise, the diocese put together FC football teams and organised play offs and tournaments for the younger people. The final games of the tournament were watched by a government minister, who, it seems, was very impressed at this peace-building opportunity, which may become an annual event.

In Ibba diocese, healthcare has also been crippled by war. War prevents the hospitals and health centres from accessing treatments and medication and painkillers are all they can offer. So the people put all their faith in God for healing. ALL health problems are addressed with by Prayer and Fasting. We were told of a man who had not eaten or had water to drink for a very long time. He did not speak but just seemed to exist. The people prayed over him and soon he spoke and asked for water as he was thirsty. The man was healed.

When Bishop Lawton visited Ibba, he experienced a man being brought to the healing prayer service. The man had not been able to walk for years. After much prayer the man eventually got up and walked away. These healing services can attract

as many as 1,500 people and, as the churches are not big enough to accommodate everyone, there can easily be 500 people in the church yard.

The community looks to the church for assistance. The Mother’s Union has 400 members, with offices across the diocese. Members help mentor youth and young couples. There is much concern over the number of very young girls having children, with little or no ability to provide for them. The Mother’s Union, who meets weekly, has a strong connection with Mary Sumner House in the United Kingdom. Members preach and preach by deeds; courageously proclaiming their love of Jesus by feeding people in hospitals and prisons, where they opened a church.

In the early part of this century, the Mother’s Union helped many people in Khartoum to know Christ and now, in South Sudan, it is expected that everyone preach the gospel and encourage others to come to church. It is working, as churches really only capable of accommodating 200 people, welcome 500-600 people. Presently, the diocese is in process of building a new cathedral for 2,000 people.

Even though members of the Mother’s Union know war and hardship themselves, they are joyful as they know that God is with them in their ministry.

The diocese supplies resources and clean water in some areas, which then must be carried great distances to people’s homes. Bishop Kamani

mentioned that it costs almost \$14,000 US to drill one well for water, which is a vast amount in that community.

Disease awareness and prevention is a primary health concern. Members of the diocese promote regular handwashing at local marketplaces, to prevent the transmission of diseases which can quickly escalate into epidemics. Breastfeeding mothers also receive instruction on how to prevent infection.

At different times in his presentations, Bishop Kamani reminded us that we are abundantly blessed in this diocese. In spite of unimaginable living conditions, the people of Ibba show great joy in the Lord. They demonstrate incredible faith in the promise of Jesus: that He will be with us unto the end.

We were told of the great need

to pray for people. To that end, Bishop Kamani asked us all to pray for specific things, in addition to our regular prayers for him and the diocese of Ibba. Pray for:

- economic sustainability
- primary and secondary school teachers
- communities that have no access to clean water
- health services
- the acquisition of trained personnel
- a means of transportation for evangelists
- peace in South Sudan
- the completion and dedication of the new Cathedral in December this year.

Many of us may remember the church acronym PUSH - pray until something happens.

Athabasca Diocese Election Results

Diocesan Executive Council:

Deanery of Athabasca
The Rev. Dane Neufeld, Regional Dean
Joanna Muzyka
Janice Nowochin
Shirley Nixon
The Rev. Christopher Tapera

Provincial Synod Delegates:
The Rev. Dane Neufeld
The Rev. Fariborz Khandani
The Ven. Canon Terry Leer
Judy Flax
Aldous Walters
Lissa Tapera - Youth

Deanery of the Peace
The Rev. Fariborz Khandani, Regional Dean
Jean Carter
Peter Clarke
Gail Shewchuk
The Rev. Leon Cadsap

General Synod Delegates:
The Rev. Dane Neufeld
The Ven. Canon Terry Leer
Danielle McKenzie
Vicki Townson
Lissa Tapera - Youth

Our Common Ground: ceremony, feasting and dialogue

THE REV. RICK CHAPMAN
Inner City Pastoral Mission
Diocese of Edmonton

Our Common Ground – Healing was the third of four gatherings offered by Inner City Pastoral Ministry (ICPM) in partnership with the United Church Moving Forward with Reconciliation Group. This initiative in response to the Trust and Reconciliation Commission's – *94 Calls to Action* for reconciliation and healing, is funded by the Anglican Foundation. The gatherings are led by Michelle Nieviadomy, ICPM Oskapewis (Helper in Cree).

The most recent gathering took place September 23 at Robertson Wesley United Church in Edmonton. Through ceremony, feasting, listening and dialogue the community continued in the journey of reconciliation. The Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander, Bishop of Edmonton, and Evelyn Day, Indigenous Elder, offered reflections on

their personal journeys of reconciliation and healing. The Ven. Travis Enright, Archdeacon for Indigenous Ministry, carried forward the theme of healing into his reflections on the Seven Sacred Teachings as the way forward: truth, respect, love, courage, honesty, wisdom, and humility – "OGITCHI TIBAKONIGAYWIN." The Great Binding law of Kizhay Manito, the Great Spirit, will guide our communities along pathways of reconciliation and healing. To live well together in the Land the Creator has gifted to us as a nation.

The gathering began with a celebration of indigenous culture. Elder Elsie Paul offered a prayer in her Cree language. Harold Roscher, Director of the Edmonton Native Healing Centre, led a prayer in the four directions. Four traditional dancers offered their prayers by dancing to the beat of the drum! Carol Powder's drum group



Pictured from left: Harold Roscher, Elder Elsie Paul and Michelle Nieviadomy presenting at the second Common Ground gathering in June, 2017.

gathering, held in June, invited the community to listen to the wisdom of eight elders and spiritual leaders from the Edmonton area. The Elders, indigenous Wisdom Keepers, and non-indigenous spiritual and community leaders shared a wide range of perspectives, teachings and stories relating to the four elements: earth, air, fire and water.

Our Common Ground – Thanksgiving, the finale of the four gatherings will be

"Chubby Cree" offered many songs throughout the gathering.

Let's not forget the feast of bannock, berries and refreshments offered while participants listened to the teaching of the Wisdom Keepers.

Our Common Ground – Prayer, the first of the gatherings, held in March, centered on Youth and Young Adults who, it is

Our Common Ground - Thanksgiving
Thursday, December 21, 6:00 - 9:00 pm
E4C gym, Alex Taylor School Building
9321 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton
Join Us for Feasting and a Round Dance!

hoped, will carry forward the vision of reconciliation and healing in their generation by living out the values that support inclusive community.

Our Common Ground - Wisdom, the second

held Thursday, the 21st of December. Join us for feasting and a "Round Dance" as we celebrate the Winter Solstice and the community gathered at the sacred time of Christmas.

Rural communities plant seeds of reconciliation

FIONA BROWNLEE
Aboriginal and Rural
Communities Liaison
Diocese of Edmonton

Here we are nearing the end of 2017, and I am thinking about all the good people I have met, and all the places I have been in our diocese in the last year. Seeds of neighbourly reconciliation are being planted in many of our communities.

St. Mary's in Ponoka has an Outreach Team for its Indigenous Ministry work and they have been meeting and talking for the last couple of years. This past September they decided to open the church hall for a couple of hours on the first Friday of the month. Whoever accepts their open invitation will be welcomed in for coffee, a snack and conversation. It is early, but the team is hopeful this will be the beginning of new relationships. A seed is planted.

St. Saviour's in Vermilion held a very successful Blanket Exercise. They invited the community and they came. In fact, I was able to meet with Kevin John a leader in reconciliation work in that community. The Rev. Elizabeth Metcalfe tells me that the church community is strengthening its relationship with Lakeland College, which is working creatively with First Nations' communities around them. A seed is planted.

I was invited to facilitate a Blanket Exercise for staff at Pe Sakastew Centre, a minimum security facility for indigenous offenders. I met people who are deeply concerned about the healing of the men they work with and deeply concerned about the reconciliation work that needs to be done in Canada and locally in Wetaskiwin and Maskwacis. A seed is planted.

Sixty people turned out to walk from the Wetaskiwin & District Heritage Museum to the cairn that honours the Treaty of Peace between the Cree and the Blackfoot, made 150 years ago. They walked for Orange Shirt Day to remember the children who were taken to Residential Schools and especially those who didn't return to their families. They had conversations as they walked, listening to the young drummers leading the way. A seed is planted.

Every rural community in our diocese is distinct, but they share many similarities, too. They know how to be neighbourly, and they know how to care for those around them. These communities are also on the cutting edge of discerning how to live differently and be better neighbours to the First Nations' communities that reside near them. Seeds are being planted.



Pictured above: 60 people visit the peace cairn in Wetaskiwin on Orange Shirt Day.

Pictured right: Kevin John of Lakeland College and Fiona Brownlee lead a blanket exercise in Vermilion.



As we move through the season of Advent we remember that we are getting our hearts, our homes and our communities ready for the coming of Jesus into the world. We remember that Jesus calls us to live as agents of reconciliation for all our neighbours, wherever they are and wherever we

may meet them. It is my hope that we may become the seed planters and new growth nurturers of neighbourly reconciliation in our churches and the communities we live in.

May you all have a blessed Advent, a holy Christmas and a joyful New Year!

PWRDF: making a difference for moms and their babies



DOROTHY MARSHALL
Diocesan Representative
PWRDF

Thinking of my childhood Christmases fills me with memories of warm family times and the love shared. I remember lots of puzzles and playing games, of going to the Christmas Eve Service and walking home in the dark, sometimes with fluffy snow floating down...it was magical!

I have also been thinking about what that first Christmas must have been like for Mary, more than 2,000 years ago. Although she was engaged to Joseph,

Mary's growing belly would have been seen as a mark of shame in her Jewish community. Just imagine how frightened she must have been, a young mother delivering her first child without the support of her mother or a midwife and doing so in a stable! In the song they call it "humble" or "lowly," but even if you haven't been in a barn lately you can imagine we are talking dirty and smelly. Humble with a capital "H"! She would have been incredibly tired when her ordeal was over. Then, that very night, the stable was invaded by a bedraggled group of shepherds. Not much of a silent night!

This was a long time ago and, of course, our childbirth experience today is different. But the sad reality is that even today approximately 830 women die every day from preventable causes related to childbirth and pregnancy, and 99% of those deaths occur in developing countries.

The good news is that we can do something about it and, with the support of Anglicans like you from across Canada, the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund already is. In the first three years of a Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Program great progress has been made.

In Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and Mozambique:

- education and advocacy initiatives have enabled girls to stay in school and marry later, resulting in a decline in teen pregnancies
- installing solar power on clinics means night time births no longer happen in the dark
- social workers are teaching new mothers about infant nutrition and learning to recognize malnutrition in children, and are advising



In Rwanda, new doctors are being trained in life-saving techniques to help newborns.

program and improved agricultural techniques provides families with better nutrition and more income so mothers and babies are healthier and kids can go to school.

As we travel through this Advent, I hope that we will keep in our prayers all those who, like Mary so long ago, are dealing with the birth of their babies in crude conditions without any trained support.

Today most maternal deaths are preventable. If you would like to learn more or support the continuing work of PWRDF in providing healthcare and nutritional solutions for mothers and babies, please go to our website at www.pwrdf.org and donate either through the "World of Gifts" catalogue, the link online or through your church envelope. For more information, contact the Diocesan Representative, Dorothy Marshall at camfarm@syban.net.

families on providing a diverse, nutritious diet

- farmers have improved their agricultural techniques and diversified their crops, leading to better nutrition for families
- new and refurbished wells have decreased the time it takes for women to get water, from four hours to 30 minutes, and clean water means better family health
- training of health care workers has led to an increase in children being vaccinated
- the livestock

Book review: *Jesus on Justice* offers challenges, not easy answers

A book review of *Jesus on Justice: Living Lives of Compassion and Conviction* by Don Posterski

The Rev. KEVIN KRAGLUND
Social Justice Committee
Diocese of Edmonton

From preface to epilogue, Don Posterski has presented the ministry and mission of Jesus as being inseparable from an intentional pursuit of social justice.

Beginning with Jesus' poverty-marked nativity, Posterski's challenge "for those of us who follow Christ is to link Jesus' first days with his continuing mission" (p. 19). In heeding this challenge himself, Posterski walks us through several areas of justice within a well-grounded theological framework. These areas include gender inequality, excluded children, racism, and poverty

to name but a few.

Commenting on the theology underlying *Jesus on Justice*, the Rt. Rev. George Sumner (Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas) offered these words of endorsement while serving as president of Wycliffe College: "Just as Leslie Newbigin developed a Trinitarian Theology of the Church two generation ago, so Don Posterski offers us a threefold account of the Christian life – great commandment, great commission, and great requirement, namely to do justice. In so doing he joins the ranks of those who would bridge the unfortunate chasm between evangelicalism and social justice."

While this book can be read for personal reflection and formation, it is also an excellent resource for use within small groups. Whether it is read within the context of a Bible study

group, book club, a parish's social justice committee, or individually, *Jesus on Justice* helps to generate conversation. Each of the book's four parts concludes with a section called "Going Deeper" for either self-reflection or group discussion.

What I particularly appreciated about this book is that it doesn't attempt to offer any prescriptions or quick-fixes. It does, however, "invite a vision of the world where: people are treated equally without prejudice and are able to access a fair share of the world's resources; while living with dignity, people are given opportunities to pursue and sustain their well being as responsible citizens contributing to their communities" (p. 17). To help us more fully embrace this vision, Posterski also draws heavily upon the Scriptures which, he contends, offers us a clear

road map to 'doing justice.'

As I worked through this book with care and prayer, I was struck most profoundly by Posterski's question, "Why did it take me so long to see that Jesus' vision and mission includes despising injustice and exclusion?" (p. 183). Rather than answering this question, he leaves his readers to ponder whether we, too, truly despise injustice and exclusion.

Throughout his book, Posterski demonstrates the extent to which Jesus

despised injustice because, "In Jesus' code, to love is to be just. To be just is to love. And when we claim to follow Jesus, we are disciples of justice" (p. 186).

As the final word, Posterski reminds us of our role in the ministry of social justice through the lens of our baptismal covenant: "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?" Then follows our response, "We will, with God's help."

In 2016, members of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton donated 85 units of blood through the CBS Partners for Life Program. The goal for 2017 is 100! To make your donation count, register at www.blood.ca/en/blood/join-your-organization Partner ID# ANGL696986

Tom Snyder, where were you born and what does the word “home” mean to you?

I was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a religious community founded in the 1700s by a group of Moravians, a protestant church group that predated Luther, who were led by Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Though I have many fond memories of Bethlehem, I have lived in Canada for more than 30 years and consider Edmonton my home.

What is your favourite season? When younger, fall and winter. Now spring and hope eternal.

What is your favourite passage from the Bible?

1 Corinthians Chapter 13 (The Gift of Love): ‘If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they

will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.’

What is your greatest desire? Peace among people and with the environment that people are destroying.

Where in the world are you most at peace?

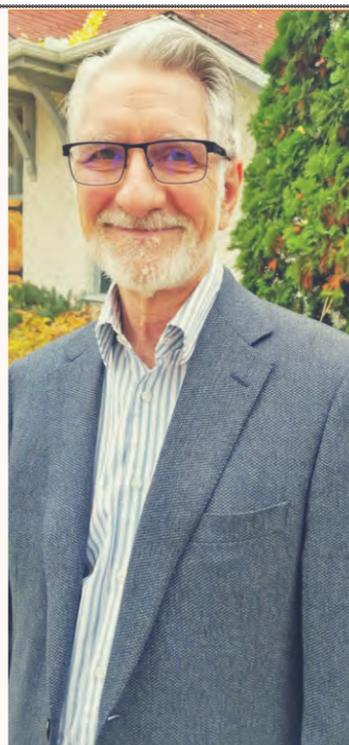
In nature, especially on a mountaintop, far from city or road.

What/who inspires you?

Children inspire me, as do the wonders of nature, poetry and classical music.

What are you afraid of? Myself.

What might people be surprised to know about you? I don’t know, perhaps that I am shy.



Tom Snyder

AROUND THE DIOCESE

Christ Church
Edmonton

What is the best book you’ve ever read?

In recent years, Iain McGilchrist’s *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. When younger, C.G. Jung’s *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*.

What is your favourite meal?

My favourite cuisines are East Indian and Mexican because of the depth and multidimensionality of flavours and textures.

“Smile and be the face of Jesus” - synod theme speaker

PETER CLARKE
Athabasca Editor

On October 13, the Rev. Gene Packwood of Medicine Hat (to Albertans a nice drivable distance from Peace River), began the first of his four addresses to the Athabasca synod with one simple, yet profound word, “Jesus.” The reason we are here. We were immediately reminded that renewal in mission can only be in, for and from Jesus, he said.

When the planning committee for synod met with Bishop Fraser Lawton, he suggested his friend and fellow student Packwood for our guest speaker, given our theme Renewal in Mission. Packwood currently serves on the board of Anglican Renewal Ministries, has been a part of the presenting teams for several Schools of Renewal Ministry and has spoken at both renewal conferences and parish missions.

Quoting Ephesians 4:7-11, which speaks of our calling by God and the equipping that we have already received, Packwood reminded us of our need to respond, because we believe that all authority was given to Jesus, and He will be with us always.

He stressed the need to make time daily to honour God with prayer. It is necessary that we show up to practice, he said. We should be watching for the Holy Spirit to appear in our liturgy. Look at Luke 11:9-15. The prayers we make in the Baptismal Covenant are so powerful. We need to use them often, and live them out each day. As people of God we can also be called to prophecy, as in 1 Corinthians 14: “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.”

By adopting the principles of the Rule of Life - which Packwood has coined “Freedom 555,” in reference to their position in the *Book of Common Prayer* - we might re-mission ourselves, he said. Always pray and do not lose heart. Remember the biblical story of the persistent widow. In Luke 6:12, Jesus shows us how to be in constant prayer: “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.” We were commended to use the Daily Office each day. We worship God to glorify Him forever. When we pray we get in touch with God, but do not necessarily receive the answers to our prayers. God deals with that in His time. In the Parable of the Sower, we are the people who linger in the thorns.

Not only do we need to pray for revival, but to discern where God is calling us to help others. Packwood gave the example of church in the US that responded to their local police department’s request for support when responding to cases of family violence. They needed someone to ride along to those calls and be a calming presence for the people in distress. The church members brought teddy bears to give to the frightened children who are all too often caught in the middle of family disputes.

We, too, should seek ways to be a comfort in the lives of others; to live out Jesus’ great commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves. We know that Jesus is with us, and because of our belief in Him we shall have salvation and life eternal.

Learning to share naturally with others, whether that be with members of our family, work colleagues, or strangers we encounter, was

also a focus of Packwood’s message. Our faith in Jesus needs to be so intrinsic in our lives, that we are comfortable in bringing it into every-day conversations. We are to show the face of Jesus to people we meet. God can, and will, give us faith, we only need to ask.

Music was a highlight of all the sessions Packwood led with the assistance of his wife of 50 years, Judith. The song “Jesus, all for Jesus” was played several times, both accompanied by guitar and a cappella. Our guest speaker acknowledged synod’s gift for singing. He introduced one session by singing a line a cappella and having us respond in unison. Being demonstrative is not a bad thing to do for God, he said. Perhaps we should learn to worship with abandonment. Picture a production in which we, the performers, kneel before Jesus, as though God is our audience and the priest is our director. This was an interesting analogy, given his years of TV experience. Before becoming an ordained priest, eventually retiring in the Calgary diocese, Packwood worked in television production for 20 years. Originally from New Zealand, he came to Canada to work for *Access TV* in Calgary.

Our theme speaker concluded his series of presentations with one final piece of advice: “SMILE, in the name of Jesus.” We were invited to stand and pray over Fraser our Bishop, his wife Veronica and their family. We had been challenged and refreshed by Packwood’s message. It was just what we needed to hear and respond to.

Packwood commended to us the *Discipleship Training Manual* produced by the Ven. Terry Leer, Archdeacon for Mission Development. It is available free of charge through the Synod Office.