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# The Gift of Christmas

The Rt. Rev'd John Organ  
Bishop  
Western Newfoundland

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord."*  
- Luke 2:10-11

Christmas can mean different things to different people. Generally it is a time of generosity and gift giving.

It was not so for the Charles Dickens' character, Scrooge, who despised Christmas:

*"Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster."*  
(A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens)

Eventually, the true spirit of Christmas would transform Scrooge; his heart of stone would become a heart of flesh; his covetousness was overtaken by kindness.

The deeper, spiritual, religious meaning of Christmas tells us that God came among us in Jesus, a babe born in a manger in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph. The Sovereign of the universe was no Scrooge: God left all that power and glory to dwell among us, identifying and empathizing with the most humble and ordinary of human life. Why? Because God loves God's creation; God is not cold, distant,

and indifferent to human beings; God cares and comes to our help and aid.

In Jesus a light has come into the world, and darkness cannot extinguish it! True, human beings create a lot of darkness! Nothing darker than the wars we wage, the harm we do, and the pain we cause. Much of this stems from having hearts closed to those around us—too closed to those who are different—too closed to love. Before we know it we are caught up in the darkness of dehumanization, exclusion, racism, hate, and even violence.

Human beings can get it wrong. We can prefer the dark to the light. We need an intervention. Christmas is exactly that! God has intervened and come among us. In Jesus Christ we are taught how to live and even how to die; instead of hate, he shows us how to love; instead of death, he gives us life; as we draw near to him, we are transformed to be like him. Starting with our own heart, light overcomes the darkness; one by one, as we follow him, we become the person God intends us to be, and in the process he helps make the world the place God intends it to be.

Charles Dickens' Scrooge reveals the power of Christmas to change a man hard as flint into a caring, generous, and loving human being. Christmas, at it deepest



level, brings to each of us the capacity to be light instead of darkness, love instead of hate, life instead of death.

The world needs Christmas. We need Christmas. I need Christmas. With the shepherds, we all need to hear and inwardly digest the "good news of great joy" that is for all people everywhere. God has come among us! A path is set before us! It leads us from our worst to our best! Will we let the light that has come into the world be our gift this Christmas? Will we allow ourselves to be transformed? Will we become gifts of love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, and self-control to those near and far? Will we hear and receive with the shepherds and magi that a Child has been born to us, who is Jesus, the Messiah, the Saviour? Will we follow him and be transformed by him? He is the gift of Christmas! The gift of light, love, and life! Each of us needs Christmas!

## UPCOMING DEADLINES:

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ANGLICAN LIFE





# The Christian's Call To Social Justice

Article by  
The Rev'd Mark Nichols

*“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...”* – Philippians 2:5

The Gospel repeatedly reminds us that the God in whom we place our faith is not a distant deity sitting in the heavenly realm detached from the human condition. Indeed, our God sets aside divine privilege and joins us in the human experience in the person of Jesus Christ.

In taking on our humanity, Jesus was not born into a privileged family or people, but rather into the humblest of families within a marginalized and oppressed people. Jesus experienced first hand what it is to be poor, to be homeless, and to be dependent on others for food and shelter and sanctuary. He knew what it was to suffer injustice, be that at the hands of a foreign army, his own political and religious leaders, or his own people.

Furthermore, Jesus didn't confine his ministry to the synagogue or to those who shared his religious worldview. Rather, he went out among the people, into the messiness of humanity, embraced the marginalized, the oppressed, and the excluded, and called out the injustice inflicted by those with wealth, privilege, and power. He was not one to uphold the status quo.

Reflecting upon the life, ministry, and example of Jesus Christ, Christian writer Marcus Borg described Jesus as a “God-intoxicated advocate of social justice,” and argued that his followers should model this in their own lives.

That social justice work is an integral expression of the Christian faith should not be a matter of debate, at least not among Anglicans. In the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission, we are called “to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.” In our baptismal covenant, Canadian Anglicans promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.” Even our call to care for creation, both in the Marks of Mission and our baptismal covenant, falls within the broader call to work for social justice.

I'm not arguing that social justice work is the most important aspect of Christian discipleship; rather, that this particular facet of our faith is the most neglected, at least in the Newfoundland and Labrador context. Woefully neglected.

Part of the reason for this neglect is our tendency to conflate works of charity with justice work. Both are integral to Christian

**“I think it might be helpful to understand social injustice as sin because that's exactly what it is—social sin.”**

discipleship but they are not the same thing. Charity treats the symptoms of social injustice, while social justice work seeks to transform, if not dismantle, the oppressive systems causing social injustice.

The Church has long been engaged in works of charity—for example, we feed the hungry through the food banks we operate and support. But if we don't get out there and challenge the systemic injustices that necessitate food banks in the first place, we're simply putting band-aids on bullet wounds. To use Archbishop Desmond Tutu's analogy, charity is just pulling people out of the river. Social justice work involves going up-river to find out why they're falling in.

I think it might be helpful to understand social injustice as sin because that's exactly what it is—social sin. Sin is falling short of who God created us to be. We fall

short of who God created us to be on a personal level, absolutely. But we also fall short of who God created us to be on a collective level, as a community, as a province, as a nation, as the human family.

Let's use poverty as an example. The fact that so many people live in poverty in a society as affluent as Canada is sin. That there are people, in our society, with way more than they need to live while so many do not have enough is sin. Poverty is social sin.

Another example would be the climate crisis. The fact that so many people in developing nations right now are suffering drought, extreme heat, floods, and famine because of the cumulative, historical greenhouse gas emissions from the excessively affluent lifestyles of wealthy, developed nations is sin. The fact that we are on a pathway to denying our own children and grandchildren an inhabitable planet by the time they are my age is sin. Climate change is social sin.

I would be remiss not to mention the social sin of colonialism—and colonialism is not just a social sin of the past. The ongoing injustice of colonialism continues to inflict harm on Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is an ongoing social sin.

As social injustice is systemic in nature, it's not enough for us to pray that those in authority will dispense justice and address injustice, when those in authority often perpetuate injustice or maintain unjust structures of society. The Church needs to speak with prophetic voice when this happens. We need to call it out. To do otherwise is to uphold the status quo.

The good news is that Jesus stills walks among us. God is at work right now in the world all around us—dare I say it—beyond the walls of the Church. I clearly see God at work in the activism of those whom I work with in the local fight against social injustice, even though most do not share in my Christian faith and do not see the Church as an ally on the social justice front. If indeed social justice work is an integral part of the Christian faith, we need to ask ourselves why we've largely left that work to others.

The harvest is bountiful but the labourers are few. Never before has the world been in greater need of a bunch of God-intoxicated advocates of social justice passionately engaged in the struggle for justice and peace among all people and upholding the dignity of every human being.

Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.

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# Finding Hope: A Christmas Message of Love and Gratitude

The Rt. Rev'd John Watton  
Bishop  
Central Newfoundland

I am writing this Christmas note on November 1st. Obviously it is several weeks prior to Christmas. Why so early, you might ask? Why would you write your Christmas note almost two months ahead of time? The answer is, I write to ensure that the editor of our paper meets her deadline. I write to support the ministry of our paper. While I do feel somewhat, that writing a Christmas message at the beginning of November makes it difficult to convey what I will be feeling a few weeks down the road, that it will be unfinished, I am sure you will accept a heartfelt word of thanksgiving and prayers for blessing on you and yours, as you read this.

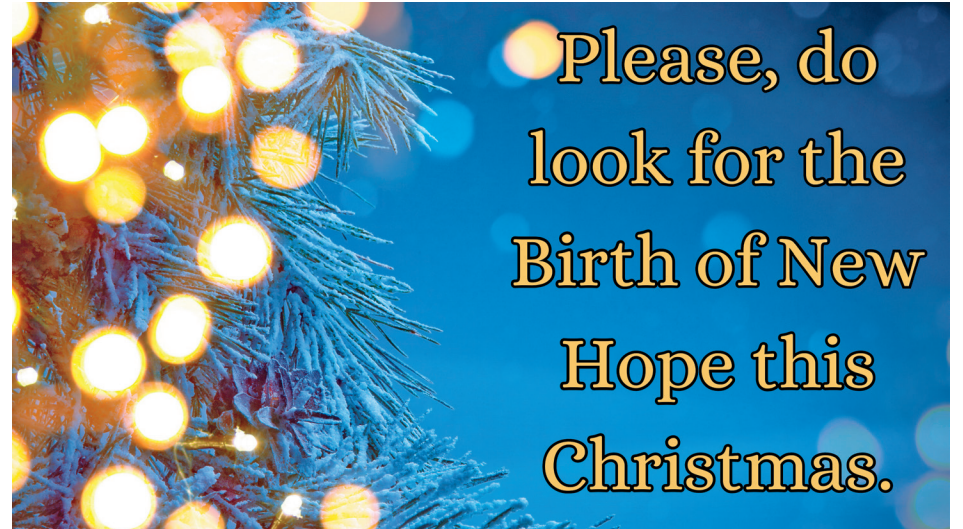
This Christmas, I know that my heart will be focused on the pain and exhaustion that people in every country are feeling. Over the past few months I have spoken with friends who are Christian, Jewish, and Palestinian. I have been reading article after article about financial and environmental



wars in the world, and narratives about human fear, weariness, loneliness, and alienation, wherever people are found.

We are all so tired right now—almost too tired to pay attention to the slim glimmers of love and hope that still appear to us.

Please, do look for the Birth of New Hope this Christmas. Let's lay aside our opinions and agendas as we encounter one another, in favour of seeing each other as a



gift in the moments that we are given opportunity to share.

When I read the Christmas story, I don't try to figure it out or analyze the text. I let the words rest upon my heart, being still with them, until at last they find their way INTO my heart.

That is an image I have of Jesus: crying softly over Jerusalem, praying alone in Gethsemane, and becoming an orphan while still a child.

My prayer now, and I am sure it will be still flowing to heaven for you on Christmas Eve, is to have the Words of Jesus find their way into your hearts.

Thank you for your prayers, devotion, and love through this past year. Thank you for supporting our outreach programs; thank you for opening your hearts to reading this.

May God's Blessing be yours, this Christmas, and always.

## PRAY FOR



## PEACE

**As we think of the stable in Bethlehem, let us take time to remember those who now live in the Land of the Holy One, and pray for peace for all. Those of us privileged enough to live in safe homes, where the threat of war is not a daily reality, must pray this Christmas that all wars may cease, and that the message of Peace on Earth, and good will to all peoples of every faith and background may become real. We bring our broken hearts to God, and pray.**

**May God's divine light shine upon them, offering hope in times of despair, and courage in moments of fear. We pray for the leaders and decision-makers involved, that they may be guided by wisdom and empathy. Grant them the insight to seek peaceful resolutions, understanding that dialogue and compassion can bridge even the deepest divides.**

**We pray for the families torn apart by conflict, that they may find the strength to endure, the resilience to rebuild, and the love to heal. Bless them with your grace, comforting them in their darkest hours.**

**We pray for the brave souls working tirelessly on the front lines, risking their lives to bring peace and aid to those in need. Protect them, empower them, and surround them with your divine light as they carry out their mission. God of all, in your infinite mercy and compassion, hear our prayers. Guide us towards peace, understanding, and reconciliation, and help us become instruments of your divine love in this troubled world. Amen.**



# St. James' Church, Port Aux Basques

## Thanksgiving turkeys



Pictured above are the Sunday School children at St. James' Church in Port aux Basques making turkeys on Thanksgiving Sunday. The children told their teacher they were thankful for their heads and their toes. - photos by Keri Lynn Lomond

## Discipleship dinner



St. James' Church in Port aux Basques held their Discipleship Dinner on October 17th, 2023. It was a beautiful time of fellowship as we enjoyed a lovely meal and a program of Discipleship on the "Fruits of the Spirit." It was well received and everyone commented on how much they enjoyed the program on Joy, Peace, Kindness, Love, Generosity, Patience, and Faithfulness. Thank you to all who helped to prepare the meal, and thank you to all who came out to enjoy it. - Article by the Rev'd Jane Allen; photographs by Barbara Hardy





# Christmas Interrupted

The Rt. Rev'd Samuel Rose  
Bishop  
Anglican East NL

Several years ago, I'd just sat down to my Christmas Day dinner when the parish cell phone rang and interrupted my meal. A voice on the other end asked if any Christmas food hampers were available. This was Christmas Day—December 25th—and all the Christmas hampers had been distributed a week earlier. I explained to the caller that he missed the deadline and should have reached out before today to ensure he would have food for Christmas. He understood and said, "Well, thanks anyway. Merry Christmas, Reverend," and hung up the phone. I sat back at the table and looked at my plate full of delicious turkey, potatoes, and gravy, and I completely lost my appetite.

My wife said, "You know we have some extra food here if you want to bring it to him." I just nodded in shame for being so strict in following the rules of Christmas hamper registration and turning the man away. I called back the number on the phone and told the person I had found some food to bring to him and to let me know where he lived. I brought in the food, chatted with the person, and heard his story about losing his job just before Christmas. We prayed, and I told him to call me if he needed anything. After I left the home, I promised myself that I would try not to be annoyed anymore with these interruptions in my life.

We live in a world that constantly bombards us with interruptions and distractions,



demanding our attention and diverting our focus. However, as I learned from my Christmas Day encounter, we can pause and consider how these interruptions can reveal Christmas's true significance. Instead of being annoyed with them, let us embrace the interruptions of Christmas, for they offer us valuable lessons and remind us of the essence of this joyous season.

Throughout the Holy Scriptures, numerous accounts of interruptions played an essential role in shaping the Christmas story. From the angelic visitations to Joseph and Mary to the shepherds being interrupted by a Heavenly Host, interruptions paved the way for the miraculous birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We can reflect on the interruptions of caring for others. During the Christmas season, as we rush from one event to another, let us be open to the interruptions that call us to extend a helping hand, showing compassion and



love towards our fellow human beings. The story of the Good Samaritan serves as a powerful example of interrupting one's plans to help those in need.

We can also acknowledge the interruptions of reflection and gratitude. It is easy for us to become consumed by the materialistic aspects of the holiday season, focusing on presents and decorations rather than the true reason for celebration. Allowing interruptions that prompt us to reflect on the gift of Jesus' birth and express gratitude for God's love can refocus our hearts and help us find true joy at Christmas.

The interruptions of family and community remind us of the significance of togetherness. Christmas provides an opportune time for reconnecting with loved ones sharing meals, laughter, and memories. Amidst the interruptions of work, school and other daily concerns, we can prioritize these relationships and cherish our moments together.

We can also consider the interruptions of peace amidst chaos. In a world filled with strife, the message of Christmas offers hope and peace. The angel's proclamation of peace on earth interrupts the noise of conflict, despair, and anxiety. As Christians, we are called to be bearers of this interruption, spreading peace and goodwill to all those around us.

As we navigate the interruptions of Christmas, let us remember that the true meaning lies in the birth of Jesus, the greatest interruption to ever occur in human history. His entrance into the world interrupted the darkness with the light of salvation, bringing hope, forgiveness, and eternal life to all who believe.

This Christmas, and every day for that matter, let us welcome, embrace, and learn from the interruptions in our lives. May they serve as reminders of the love, compassion, and peace that form the foundation of this holy season.

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# Sailing Into Advent

The Rev'd Amber Tremblett  
Columnist

As we enter the Season of Advent, we enter a time of expectation. Four weeks where we live into the expectation of the coming Messiah, both as it happened in the past, and as it will happen in the future. This fall, our diocese had the opportunity to dedicate significant time to Set Sail, the Diocesan strategic plan. Many of us have left these intentional times of discernment to continue the work in our parishes. As we focus on the setting of goals, on the returning to ourselves and to Jesus, it makes sense that we would now seek to view Set Sail through the lens of Advent. Our church year has a rhythm that informs our faith and I believe this rhythm can only help with the intentional re-centring we are prioritizing in Set Sail.

When I think about the examples of faithfulness the lectionary offers us during the season of Advent, I notice the consistent state of expectation and hope in which the people of these biblical stories lived their lives. They believed God was at work in their world and it led them

to put their future in God's hands.

Specifically, I think of Elizabeth. Elizabeth knew that her pregnancy, after years of infertility, was a gift from God, exclaiming in Luke, "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people" (Luke 1:25, NRSV). The mystery surrounding her pregnancy, her husband's inability to speak, the experience of her unborn son jumping for joy at Mary's touch, was proof to her that God was at work. She expected something blessed to come from her experience. Then, upon the birth of her son, she insists on a name unlike any in her family. Elizabeth trusted God's word to her husband because she knew God's plan was bigger than she could ever imagine. Elizabeth may not have gotten to witness how her son prepared the way for the Messiah, but she believed that her faith in God would mean good things for her and her community.

It is this history of expectation, this history of trusting God, it is this Advent message that



photo: Close up Advent wreath with candles lit by Kara Gabhardt on shutterstock.com

should inform our Set Sail work throughout the end of the year. At the core of Set Sail is the commitment to return to God, returning to our listening, and following of God as the centre of our personal faith lives, our community life, and our decision making. Advent challenges us to live like we expect God to do something—like we expect God to show up. So, the question is: in our Set Sail planning, in our returning to God, do we actually believe God will do something? Are we actually planning like we expect God to show up? Because we will not see the full potential of our intention, we will not see the God-

given fruit of our ministry if we do not believe God is active, if we do not infuse our prayer, our praise, our planning, with the sort of Holy expectation that Advent teaches us.

So, as we enter the season of Advent, the invitation is this: to live into the "Advent Rhythm" in such a way that it will permeate our Set Sail plans, meaning this disposition of expectation which declares that God will carry us into our future, and will stay with us as we commit to working toward goals that deepen relationships and encourage transforming discipleship.

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## Career day booth for junior and senior high school students

A career day for Junior High and High School students was held at White Hills Academy, St. Anthony, on September 12th. This event was organized by Charlene Curtis of Labrador Grenfell Health. The Western Diocese placed a booth to illustrate work that clergy do on a local, provincial, and global scale.

Pictured (left to right): The Rev'd Canon Terrance Coates, The Rev'd Arthur Kinsella, and The Rev'd Canon Vernon Short.

-submitted with photograph by The Rev'd Canon T. Coates

# Jesus and Scrooge

The Rev'd Canon Jeffrey Petten  
Columnist

Every year when I prepare to write my Christmas sermon, there are two things that I always do. First is the very obvious, I sit and think about the scriptures appointed for Christmas at midnight, namely Isaiah 7:2-9 and Luke 2:1-20. But there is also another thing I do. I watch *Scrooge* the 1952 film adaptation of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, starring Alistair Sim. Each time I read those passages of scripture and watch that movie, there is always something new that hits the heart and the mind very differently each time I encounter it.

This year, in taking into consideration the situation the world finds itself in at the time of writing this article, we have conflicts in many parts of the world, including the conflicts between Ukraine and Russia, and Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The thing that is tugging at my heart and mind is both the scene nearing end of Scrooge's encounter with



the Ghost of Christmas Present, and the words of Isaiah: "And he shall be called...Prince of Peace."

In that final encounter between Scrooge and the Ghost of Christmas Present, the Ghost, who at the beginning appears larger than life but is now average size, the Ghost opens his robe and shows two impoverished children: a boy and a girl, belonging to humanity. The Ghost tells Scrooge that these children are Ignorance and Want. As much as Dickens was attacking the situation of Victorian England, the very same can apply to our own time, in that we too need to be aware of ignorance and want. We have people who have many wants but



image from "A Christmas Carol" in the Illustrated London News, 1844; from commons.wikimedia.org

may be very ignorant of the situation that is around their neighbour. We have those who in ignorance want things that do not line up with the very thing that they are looking for, namely the Prince of Peace.

If there is one thing that the child of the manger brings to us, it's

not only peace, but an end to the ignorance and want in our lives. The child of the manger not only brings the dismantling of ignorance and want, but also brings to us the hope we have in our lives for a better tomorrow, joy which no one can take from us, and the love which overcomes all ignorance, want and

wrong.

As we celebrate the child of the manger, who becomes the man of the cross and the defeater of death, may we too encounter him and may he change our hearts, and celebrate him every day and not just one day of the year.



# More Than Just A Girl's Name

The Rev'd Jonathan Rowe  
Columnist

As I write, the homelessness crisis has become particularly visible in the tent city across from the Confederation Building, and Israel and Palestine are in the midst of a devastating war. As you read, Christmas decorations will be going up and Christmas shopping will be under way. As I write, I am coming to terms with the fact that after twenty-one years of ministry, my Church has no job for me. As you read, I will be preparing to celebrate Christ's birth by living through the season of Advent: the season of hope.

Hope tends to get a bad name these days, and it's tempting to see any of those situations as hopeless ones. Around the beginning of the pandemic, the provincial Health Minister said that "Hope is a girl's name, not a strategy." I understood the point he was trying to make, but I winced every time I heard it. It's the perfect example of how easy it is to erase and trivialise the power of hope.

Hope, in isolation, isn't a solution to a crisis any more than mere thoughts and prayers constitute a

response. However, hope is what sustains our commitment to strategies and solutions, even when circumstances appear most dire. It isn't the same as optimism, but it shields us from sinking into despair and anxiety.

Pessimism is a bleak and cynical perspective that sees everything going wrong and expects things to worsen further, rendering hope futile and foolish. This attitude isn't difficult to find in the Church and the world around us, eroding our capacity to share the good news of the Gospel. Optimism, on the other hand, is a somewhat naive belief that everything will ultimately turn out for the best. In this worldview, hope still seems pointless because everything will supposedly be fine in the end. However, this form of optimism can also breed privilege and denial if we assume that "everything's fine" and simply reassure those who are suffering that it will all work out eventually.

In contrast, hope acknowledges the sin and brokenness in the world, but rages against them. It places trust in



photo by Marcus Wallis on upplash.com

the belief that things will improve while demonstrating that trust through tangible actions aimed at paving the way for a better future. Hope is firmly rooted in the Bible's promises that in the kingdom of God there will be no more mourning, crying, or pain, for 'the first things [will] have passed away,' (Revelation 21.4) but it never forgets those who suffer and cry out 'How long?' (Revelation 6.10). Hope reminds us that the things we fight for are far more important than the things we fight against. In responding to human need, fighting against injustice, or caring for creation, hope never assumes

that these actions alone could ever fix the brokenness of the world, but knows that they can bring hope to others, who can take up the fight themselves.

In short, hope comes from a trust that God really is in control of the world, and cares about us enough to get personally involved in our lives. That's the message of Christmas, which goes much deeper than "sleeping in heavenly peace." It's a reminder that the Reign of God is breaking into this world in surprising ways: in a child born into poverty; in an invitation to feed the hungry, to welcome the stranger, to clothe



the naked; in a fierce determination not to repay evil with evil, but to overcome it with good. These are the themes we reflect on during Advent, themes that keep us from being satisfied with Christmas as a single day, themes that keep Christmas for its whole twelve days, into a new year and new resolve to be part of the work of building up God's Kingdom.

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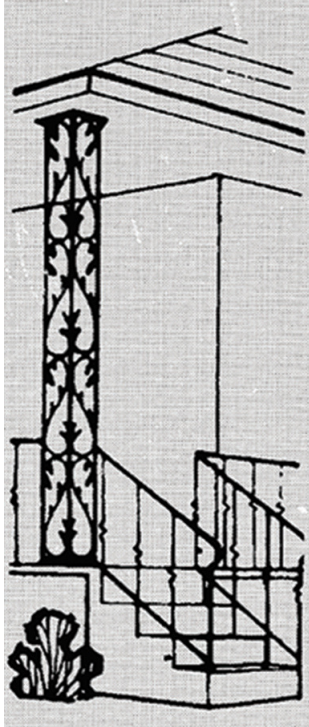
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# Companions On The Journey

## The PWRDF Way

The Rev'd Debbie Pantin  
PWRDF Representative  
Anglican East NL

As you are reading this column, we are just entering the season of Advent and preparing our homes, our hearts, and our lives for the arrival of the Christ. And, too often, we put far more emphasis on cleaning, trimming and stocking our homes than on taking stock of ourselves. Perhaps including PWRDF in your Advent and Christmas preparations this year will help remedy that.

PWRDF's vision of "working towards a truly just, healthy and peaceful world" is guided by Micah 6:8:

*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

The world of development and relief agencies is a crowded one, with all competing for shrinking government funding and in a post-Covid climate of tightened purse strings for many Canadians. And most of these agencies are doing good work. Besides its excellent track record,

impeccable reputation and industry-low administration cost of less than ten percent of total expenses, what makes PWRDF stand out from the crowd is its emphasis on partnership. I believe that is PWRDF's way of walking humbly with God: realizing that we are all companions on the journey.

And PWRDF partners in two directions: It partners with other agencies here in Canada to pool resources and make a greater impact; and it partners with agencies and organizations in developing countries who best know the situation on the ground and can identify the areas of greatest need. PWRDF is never the partner that implements projects; rather, its projects are locally-led, recognizing and respecting the knowledge and expertise of the partners in the field. Its people-centred approach ensures a respect for human dignity, with both sides of the partnership demonstrating a mutual commitment to quality and accountability.

Besides supporting development projects around the world, PWRDF also finds itself increasingly needing to respond to humanitarian crises—whether as the result of drought in Kenya, hurricane Fiona in Atlantic Canada, or the current wars in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza. In the year just ending, approximately two million dollars went to development projects while close to seven million dollars was allocated to humanitarian relief. As in the development projects, disaster relief efforts also rely on partners on the ground to ensure the aid is directed to the area of greatest need and that it achieves its intended results.

But there is one further partnership without which PWRDF cannot possibly achieve its objectives, and that is the partnership between PWRDF and its donors, people like me and you. Individually, we may feel that we cannot make a difference but together we can make "a world of difference", as PWRDF

likes to say.

So, as we are making our Advent and Christmas plans this year, please consider including PWRDF in those plans. Perhaps your ACW unit or choir would like to take on a fundraising project for PWRDF, or the parish might aim to "buy the whole farm" or purchase an entire irrigation kit to help 20 families in Kenya. There is something in the *World of Gifts* brochure that is included with this month's

*Anglican Journal/ Anglican Life* to suit every area of interest and budget.

When we partner with PWRDF we are following in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus' greatest concern is always for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. His was a life of love, justice

and mercy. And, as Mark records in one of the stories about feeding the multitudes, he invites us to partner with him. "You give them something to eat," he says in Mark 6:37. Let us accept the invitation to partner with Jesus, through PWRDF, this year. And remember, the *World of Gifts* catalogue stays open all year long!

Christmas wishes for peace, justice, health and joy from your friends and partners at PWRDF.

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**Find your copy of PWRDF's annual gift guide in this issue!**

\*Up to \$110,000, thanks to an anonymous donor. Order your gift today before the match runs out!

## Letter to the Editor

Hello Emily,

Thank you for your work as Editor of *Anglican Life* and for your initiative in bringing to the light the financial status of what was formerly known as The Newfoundland Churchman.

My first visit to the Anglican Cathedral was 1941 or 1942 when I travelled to St. John's with my father who was selling his annual catch of Cod to Baine Johnston & Co. His first responsibility was to pay his crew of the *James* and *Martha* their share of the voyage and his line of credit issued in the spring by his supplier. If there was any money left over, he bought food for his family and materials needed to repair or make new traps for the next fishing season.

One Sunday morning, he took me by my hand, and we walked across Water Street to Church Hill, entered the Anglican Cathedral of St. John the Baptist and sat in a pew near the font, probably about ten feet from the back door. I stared in awe at the lights hanging from archways that supported a steep gable roof, the canopy over the pulpit, the stained-glass windows, the rows of seats and the giant tower reaching upward into the unknown.

When I finished my visual "tour", my attention was drawn to our immediate surroundings, the rail on the back of each pew, brackets for holding hymn and prayer books and kneelers stretching the whole length of the seat. This was interesting as, when I knelt on the stools I could just see over the rail, the preacher in the pulpit, and the activities throughout the church.

I immediately turned my attention to the rail that covered the top of our pew. I saw it was made of mahogany, oval shaped, approximately 2 inches in diameter, glossy and solid. When my cursory examination was finished, I decided to test the density of this product by biting into the wood. This action did not cause me any immediate harm, but it left a row of teeth marks that, eventually, caught the attention of my father. My punishment? On Monday morning, I had to quote for him and the crew, the text of the sermon preached by the Priest on that Sunday morning. Forty years later when I was serving as a Volunteer Assistant to the Priest of the Cathedral, and standing at the altar, I recalled the rashness of my youth and hastened to the scene of my crime.

I can now testify to the durability of the imprint embedded in the mahogany rail, and of my teeth! Indeed, except for the two teeth that I lost in a battle with a cake of hard (fisherman's) bread, my teeth are standing strong and travel with me whenever and wherever I go either by sea, by land or by air.

Sincerely,  
Oliver Toope



# Trick or Treat?

The Rev'd James Spencer  
Columnist

Trick or treat!

It's perhaps a strange thing to begin with, seeing as you're probably reading this in December. "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays" would be a more suitable greeting, as we see the lights go up on houses, trees sparkling in windows, and people bustling about buying presents and gathering together to celebrate the season.

But still, I say to you, "Trick or treat!"

For me it's not so out of place. As I write this, people are celebrating Halloween. Costumes and spooky decorations are everywhere. It's a phrase that is expected to be heard in abundance right now, at the end of October.

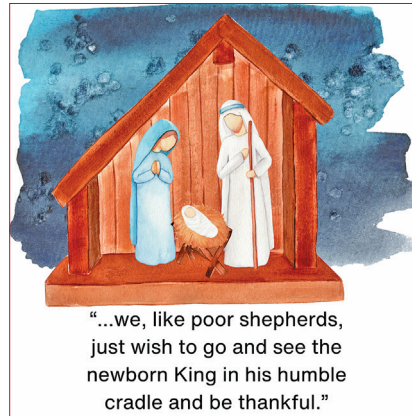
But today I choose to allow a little of Halloween to enter into your Christmas spirit. And I have good reason to do so.

As Christians we have many special days. Saint's Days, days of fasting and days of feast, days of memory and days of joyful praise. And the sad thing is, so many of them pass with little notice, and little due reverence. Easter is a time of chocolate bunnies and colourful eggs, rather than elation



for the Resurrected Christ. St. Valentine's Day is wracked by sappy gifts shared between lovers (or a feeling of loneliness if you happen to be single) and very few take note of the imprisoned Valentine restoring sight to his jailor's daughter. And does anyone notice November 1st as they emerge from the sugar shock of Halloween night?

And Christmas? Try as we might it becomes harder and harder to "keep Christ in Christmas." The baby Jesus has become little more than a background figure for many who celebrate his birth. Like Queen Victoria, who's federal holiday now has more to do with the consumption of alcohol than it does the lady herself, Christ is part of the rather more somber nativity scene amongst the glitter



and opulence that his day has attracted.

Like so many "holy" days, and other special occasions, Christmas has become more about us than about whatever we are meant to be celebrating. The question is never "How do I express my joy about Christ's birth?" and is more "How do I make this holiday feel special for me and those I care about?" And we pour ourselves into it completely, trying to answer this misguided question. And it never really works.

On December 26th we proclaim: "Well... that's another Christmas done," and we feel a sudden exhaustion and emptiness as we face the cold winter ahead. (Never mind that Christmas technically has only just begun.)

A mad dash... a whirlwind of

decorating... an onslaught of food and parties... a flurry of gift buying, giving, and receiving... and in the end we're just more tired, more in debt, and just a little more cynical about the year ahead. We all thought we were getting the treat, but all we got was the trick.

And so it goes, my friends, year after year. Sometimes we try to do things differently. We try to give the season more meaning. But the world shouts at us for not joining in the glitz and glamour. It seeks to cheapen or sneer at our simple joy, as we, like poor shepherds, just wish to go and see the newborn King in his humble cradle and be thankful.

I hope that this year you can make things different. I hope that you and yours find the pure and shining light in the midst of the commercial sparkle. I hope that you can stay steadfast, keeping the Lord in the centre of all your thoughts and actions, not only on Christmas Day, but throughout the season, so that his warmth is with you in the cold days ahead.

The question is asked: trick or treat?

What will you choose this Christmas?

## Dedication of New Columbarium St. John the Evangelist, Topsail

Article by Louise Smith  
Photograph by Sharon Smith

On September 19th, 2023, the Right Rev'd Samuel Rose, Bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, accompanied by our parish priest, Canon Jotie Noel, dedicated our second columbarium to the Glory of Almighty God, giver of life and life eternal.

Our cemetery is located on a slope overlooking the ocean where several members of our congregation gathered on that sunny day to witness and participate in this memorable service.

All the while, sea birds soared over the waters, reminding us of the origin of the word columbarium—the Italian word for dove.

The 40 niches will each hold up to two urns, both

containing the cremated remains of deceased persons.

Six years ago, in compliance with the innovation of new technology permeating all human life, both spiritual and secular, we introduced our first columbarium, also with 40 niches. It was erected as an alternative choice for the cremated remains of our loved ones.

As creatures of faith in our Church, most of us are conducive to this alternative regarding the preparation of bodies for their final resting place. However, this advanced alternative is not solely offered, but an individual choice.

Both columbaria



now majestically grace our cemetery amidst the natural beauty of God's creation—a microcosm of the whole of God's green

earth.  
*That I may know him  
And the power of his resurrection  
And the fellowship of his*

*suffering  
Being conformed to his death.  
- Philippians: 3:1*



# A Tribute to Senior Volunteers at St. Peter's Upper Gullies

Article and photographs by  
Collen Reid

For as long as I can remember, back as far as the early 1970's, I have watched the men and women of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Upper Gullies, Conception Bay South, offer endless hours of their time to serve their Church. These volunteer hours offered by our seniors have taken many forms over the years, some of which I may have never seen. But, the results of all these hours have kept our beautiful, heritage designated, church functioning for decades.

Today, I continue to marvel at the work of these faithful women and men. They continue to do their

volunteer service for the church in spite of the fact that they are now in their 80's. It is also remarkable that these parishioners continue to serve without any "young ones" joining their fold. It seems that the younger generation has come and gone again in our church life, including myself.

On September 24th, 2023, a group of "young ones" (1960 and 1970 babies) came together to admire, celebrate and thank those who have given a lifetime of service to our church. A service of Thanksgiving was held with beautiful music offered by the "young

ones". A slideshow of pictures, to remind our seniors of their service, was presented for their enjoyment. Then to end the morning, a reception was prepared in the parish hall by members of our younger generations. The seniors among us could sit back and be served. They enjoyed a light lunch, music and some "remember when" messages that provoked chatter about days gone by.

This event was a small but an important and necessary gesture to demonstrate to our seniors how much they really are appreciated.



We hope that they realize their work has not gone unnoticed. We are grateful for the hours they spent; making and preparing cold plates, jiggs dinners, seal flipper dinners, beans and sausage dinners, pancake dinners, fall fairs, sewing, knitting, crocheting, baking, quilting, lawn mowing, hall cleaning, shawl knitting, home

visits, group meetings, money counting, church cleaning, linen washing, silver shining, decorating, fundraising, and the list goes on.

We are amazed at your talents and longevity of service.

Thank you from the younger generation and the whole parish.

# The Greatest Gift of All

Melanie Clarke  
Columnist

When I was eight years old, we moved from Kelligrews, Conception Bay South to St. John's. At the time, Kelligrews was a small town and by comparison, St. John's was the big city! St. John's had street buses and thousands of roads. It had more cars than I had ever seen and there were people walking the streets all the time. It was such a change from Kelligrews when I first arrived! The biggest change for me, as an eight-year-old, was the size of the school! There were hundreds in my new school, and I was in a class with no one I knew. This should have been a scary time for me, but I made friends quickly and it wasn't long before I was no longer a stranger.

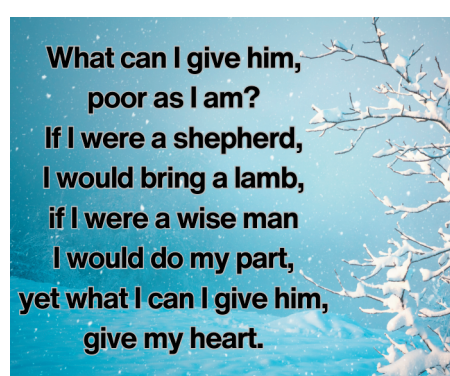
The most exciting part of the new school was all the different activities I could do in my new school. I could join Brownies, band and choir, and after school gym activities! I thought it was all so interesting, so needless to say I joined everything I could.

My most vivid memory



from that time, however, was a Christmas concert the first year in my new school. The music teacher began to teach us new songs to sing and one of those chosen was, "In The Bleak Midwinter." The hymn had a different tune than I was used to, and the teacher brought a drum into our performance. We had to memorize all the words of the songs we were singing for our concert, and we practiced every day until the performance.

While I don't remember any of the other songs we sang for that concert, I still remember, all these years later, the words to "In The Bleak Midwinter." For the first



time in my young life, Christmas became something other than a time for Santa Claus and a letter to Santa.

The hymn's words began with, "In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan. Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone. Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow. In the bleak midwinter, long ago." Living in Newfoundland, I understood very well what a bleak midwinter was. I had seen water frozen and snow falling upon snow. As an eight-year-old, I could relate!

But the part of the hymn which stuck even more clearly in my mind was the end of the song. The

words said, "What can I give him? Poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb. If I were a wise man, I would do my part. But what can I give him, give him my heart. Give him my heart!"

As a young child those words spoke to me. I didn't have anything to give to the baby Jesus. I was a child, and it wasn't possible for me to give the baby Jesus a present! But that hymn told me exactly the present I could give to Jesus. I could give Jesus my heart! That was the greatest gift I could ever give Jesus.

To this day, that hymn remains my favourite. The words are entrenched in my mind and soul. We often think we need to give grand gestures and presents to show our love for one another, but in reality the greatest gift you can give anyone is your heart! Jesus considers your heart to be the best gift, and I pray this Advent season you all receive God's gift to us... H! his son!

God Bless you all and Happy Christmas!



## Help For Willow House



The St. Swithin's ACW Seal Cove, W.B. NL took part in a project from September 2022 to May 2023: to help victims of domestic violence through Willow House in Corner Brook. Two members got together and filled clothes baskets with household items to help with their move from Willow House.

Members are (left to right): Bessie Chaulk, Pansy Eveleigh, Elizabeth Osmond, Betty Banks, Leona Gillingham, Viola Pinksen, Sheila Pinksen, Lorraine Burton, Sadie May & Irene Gillingham

Missing from photo are Madeleine Osbourne, and Patricia Rice.

- Submitted by Irene Gillingham, ACW President

# Reasonable and Probable Grounds to Believe

## A log cabin

Ford Matchim  
Columnist

The day set to go up Newman Sound Bay to Big Bight was a big deal. My father and his logging partner had already spent over three weeks up there building a log cabin. It was long and partitioned in the middle: our family on the left and the other family to the right. Winter supplies were stocked up in advance, and the horse for hauling out logs over the coming winter months was already up there too.

Last-minute things were loaded in the boat at Sandy Cove wharf. Big Bight was over 7 miles away, and for the one-hour plus trip we all huddled together, in the open boat under warm blankets. We had lots of figgy buns and jam breads to eat along the way. As we were approaching Big Bight, we could see in the distance the roof of the log cabin. We were only minutes away from our new winter home away from home. The cabin was located on a heavily treed plateau, close to a small brook that trickled down to the shoreline. We soon adjusted to our new surroundings and came to realise we were snuggled away in deep dense

woods, well protected against the cold, and the coming snow storms and blustery winds of winter.

My father used to cut logs with a bucksaw and axe. He along with his logging partner would start cutting together. And once they accumulated a good supply, and dependent on the coming of the snow, his partner would become a full-time teamster. Seeing big loads of logs on double bobsleighs, being hauled out to the shoreline, for springtime shipping, was a common sight.

On those rare days when my father was logging close to the cabin, my mother would prepare a hot take-out meal, with lots for me too, and I would walk out the snowy woods road. On arrival, my father would already have a fire going, and would have thick layers of spruce boughs spread out on the snow. He and I would then sit by the crackling fire and have a big feed. Those were the days, eh?

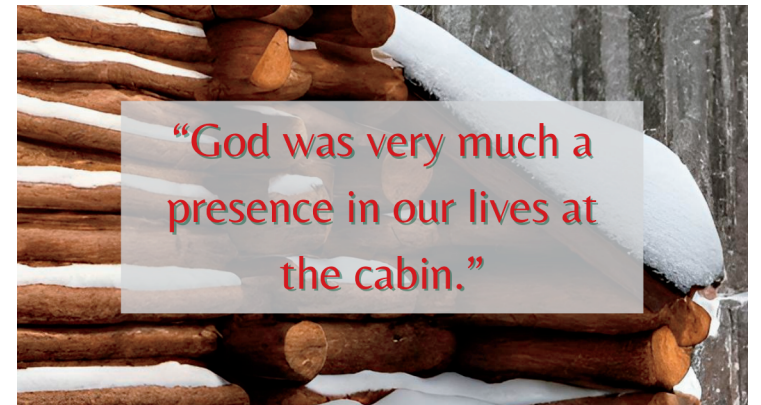
My father's job was back-breaking, bone-tiring work. After cutting the logs he would often have to drag or lug some of them to the horse trail. His relentless sawing and



chopping and dragging and lugging, allowed for few breaks. Toiling in often cold and blustery weather of swirling wind and snow, attested to his strong will and perseverance.

My mother was always busy too. With a family and a log cabin to look after, she did it all in an easy and cheerful manner, and had a marvellous way of coping with the highs and lows of everyday living. Whenever any of life's troubling clouds appeared on the horizon, her no fuss, self-confident way, assured us that everything was going to be alright.

To us the long winter months were really short winter months. Although we were shut off from the outside world, there was no sense or awareness of being isolated. As for my take on it all—the big outdoors country right



at our door contrasted wonderfully with the warmth and cosiness of our log cabin home. Everything seemed just right.

On cold wintery starry nights, along with everything surrounded by deep dark woods, combined to make it our personal winter wonderland. Excitement seemed to be always in the air. My mother and father were in their thirties, and young and filled with life were we.

God was very much a presence in our lives at the cabin. Every night under the watchful eye of my mother, we would dutifully kneel by our respective beds and say our prayers out loud. God's spiritual presence was a reality in all we did, and that his blessings kept us all safe.

On our return to

Sandy Cove in early spring, political changes were blowin' in the wind. Canada joined Newfoundland in 1949! Word came forth that to qualify for Family Allowance Benefits (money) children of school age would have to attend school, full time. Henceforth, the long practice of many Eastport Peninsula fishermen who plied the Labrador Sea, cod fishery in summer, and complemented their income in winter by working Up-the-Bay along with their families, came to an abrupt end. Progress, eh?

As we approach Christmas in the here and now of 2023, may the Spirit of God, the Spirit of peace be with you all your days.



# St. Peter's (Hopewell) Upper Gullies, Part 4

Article by  
William Lee

As outlined in the previous articles, an extraordinary effort was made by the full church community to complete the construction of St. Peter's. Unfortunately, prior to the completion of the church, a tragic event occurred related to its completion. In April 1905, a young man of the congregation was fatally injured when an accident happened on the building site of the new church. The Diocesan (precursor to Anglican Life) June 1905 contained this Memoriam from Hopewell:

*"A death which filled every breast among us with sorrow, came to us almost suddenly on April 12th. Henry Andrews, aged 37 years, in company with other members of the congregation, while blasting some large boulders which appeared to be in the way of work carried on at the grounds of Hopewell Church, became the victim of a dynamite explosion, laid by his own hands.*

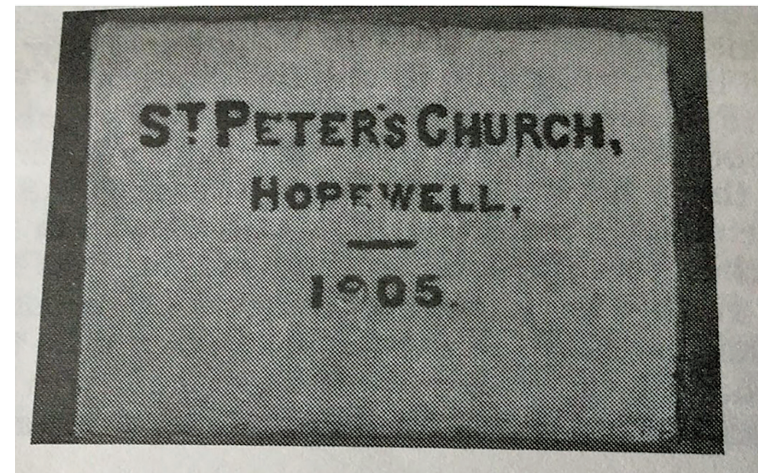
*"Our late brother, having some previous*

*experience with dynamite, together with others of some experience, were in the act of breaking up a large stone which appeared to be of an exceedingly hard nature. Two holes had been drilled into it and two charges set in order. Both charges were to be set on fire at the same time. Two brothers were to ignite them, but Henry had his on fire before his brother, he (the other brother) threw his igniting substance down by the fuse and ran. Henry's charge exploded satisfactorily and allowing a short time for the second with no result, both brothers ran to see if it was on fire, Henry in the rear. The former, peering through some protecting material, saw no symptoms of fire so he ran around to the other side, where he saw that all was on fire. He at once shouted to that effect, but Henry, who had followed closely in his steps, was on the point of peering in the hole when the explosion occurred. It will always remain a mystery as to how it kindled."*

According to the article, Henry died in hospital in St. John's seven days after the explosion, and he was buried in Upper Gullies on Good Friday, in a ceremony officiated at by the Rev'd Caldwell.

It was three months after Andrew's death that the Hopewell congregation laid the foundation stone of its new church building. While the service did not pass without reflection upon the recent tragedy (a prayer was said beseeching God's "protection from all accidents for those who shall be engaged in the building of this house"), the hope of the congregation and the joy of faith were also present. The people walked from the old church to the site of the new, and after hearing Canon Pilot's exhortation to perseverance, sang hymn 545 from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* with this beautiful verse:

*See, the streams of living waters,  
Springing from eternal love,*



*Well supply they sons and daughters  
And all fear of want remove*

At the close of the service, those who wished to do so placed offerings toward the new church upon the newly laid cornerstone.

On Tuesday, November 16th, 1909, the consecration of the Church of St. Peter, Hopewell, took place. The Diocesan describes the day:

*"For hours before the ceremony people from Seal Cove, Indian pond, Hopewell and Upper Gullies, Kelligrews, Middle Bight, Foxtrap and Long*

*Pond wended their way to the new church. Visitors and clergy from St. John's, Conception Bay and Trinity Bay came by train and carriage and when they all assembled the building was thronged to the doors and outside. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated with flowers by the ladies of the congregation"*

This article is based on information researched, appropriately referenced and presented to the Parish by a committee of the Church for the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the church in 1905.

“Suddenly nothing made sense anymore...”



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# 42nd Anniversary of Ordination for Rev'd Peddle



In the above photos, we see (on the left) Rev'd Charlie Cox, Rev'd Robert Peddle, Mr. Carl Rose, and Winston Walters (lay readers); on the right are Rev'd and Mrs. Peddle. On October 21st, 2023, the Rev'd Robert Peddle celebrated the 42nd anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. In honour of this milestone, he presided at Holy Eucharist on Sunday, October 22nd at St. Alban's Church in Grand Bank. God bless you Rev'd Bob and Judi, and thank you for all you have done and continue to do in the name of Christ. - submitted by The Rev'd Charlie Cox

# St. Augustine's, Stephenville

Photographs submitted by  
The Rev'd Nicole Critch



April 2023, ACW Installation & Altar Guild Recognition



May 28th (Pentecost): Vestry Installation (some faces are missing, but are with us in spirit!)



Adult Education Day—Finding God in our everyday work places (chat and fellowship with congregation and Rev'd Nicole)

The following photos are from the Sunday School program at St. Augustine's. Our little disciples of Christ start off with a children's time with Rev'd Nicole, and then go to have fun with their teachers with crafts, story time, music, and lessons.





# Blessing of the animals in Corner Brook



Above photos (left to right): Choral Scholar Maria Veitch leading the singing of the "Prayer of St. Francis" with her flute; Dean Catherine blessing a much-loved pet dog; parishioners and community members gathered with their pets; Deborah Howe reading from Genesis 1

A Blessing of the Animals service was held on the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist's lawn in Corner Brook on October 15th, a Sunday afternoon. Various breeds of dogs and cats gathered with their owners for this service during a dry period between the weekend rains. The service included prayers, a reading from Genesis 1, readings from the writings of St Francis of Assisi, and songs. Choral Scholar MaryJane Jacobs led the song "All Things Bright and Beautiful" with her trumpet, and Choral Scholar Maria Veitch led the singing of the "Prayer of St. Francis" with her flute. The service, attended by both parishioners and community members, ended with the blessing of the animals by Dean Catherine Short and Canon Tanya White. - submitted by Dr. Doreen Helen Klassen

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