



## Our Annual “Blessing Bags” Project: A Community Effort For Those in Need

Submitted with photographs by  
The Rev’d Byron Barter

The partner parishes of St. Nicholas Anglican Church in Torbay and Holy Innocents’ Anglican Church in Paradise recently completed our annual Blessing Bags project. Thanks to the incredible generosity of local community groups, schools, town councils, and individuals, the initiative collected a substantial supply of toiletries and clothing. This year, all donations were dedicated to supporting the vital work of The Gathering Place.

The Gathering Place is a community health centre located next to the Basilica in St. John’s (Newfoundland), and it provides essential services including food, housing, and medical care to vulnerable people facing homelessness and other life challenges. For over 30 years, it has given dignity and independence by offering a caring space with a range of support programs for those in need. The Blessing Bags project was very happy to help them in this important work.



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Bishop Samuel Rose  
Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador

# Check Your Spiritual Engine

If you own a vehicle, chances are you've seen the dreaded check engine light flash on your dashboard. If you are like me, you get anxious when the light unexpectedly comes on as you start your car. That's because you know that your vehicle needs to go to the garage for maintenance. And you are a busy person, and finding the time to check the vehicle's engine can be an inconvenience to your schedule.

I remember a funny episode of the cartoon 'The Simpsons' where Homer ignores his car's flashing check engine light by taping over it, only for the engine to fail spectacularly moments later.

Our spiritual lives are like a vehicle's check engine indicator. Just as a car's dashboard lights up when something is not working correctly, our spiritual lives may also have warning signs or signals when something is not right. These warning signs can be feelings of spiritual emptiness, or a sense of disconnection from God and others. Lent is a good time for us to check our spiritual engines.

Spiritual renewal means deepening our relationship with God and strengthening our commitment to following Christ. This can be done through regular practices such as prayer, meditation, worship, Bible study, and service to others. Spiritual renewal is particularly emphasized during the season of Lent, which is an intentional time of preparation for Easter. This might mean attending Lenten worship, participating in our online Lenten reflections, or volunteering at local food banks or outreach projects. It is about taking on something extra in your spiritual practice to help focus and strengthen

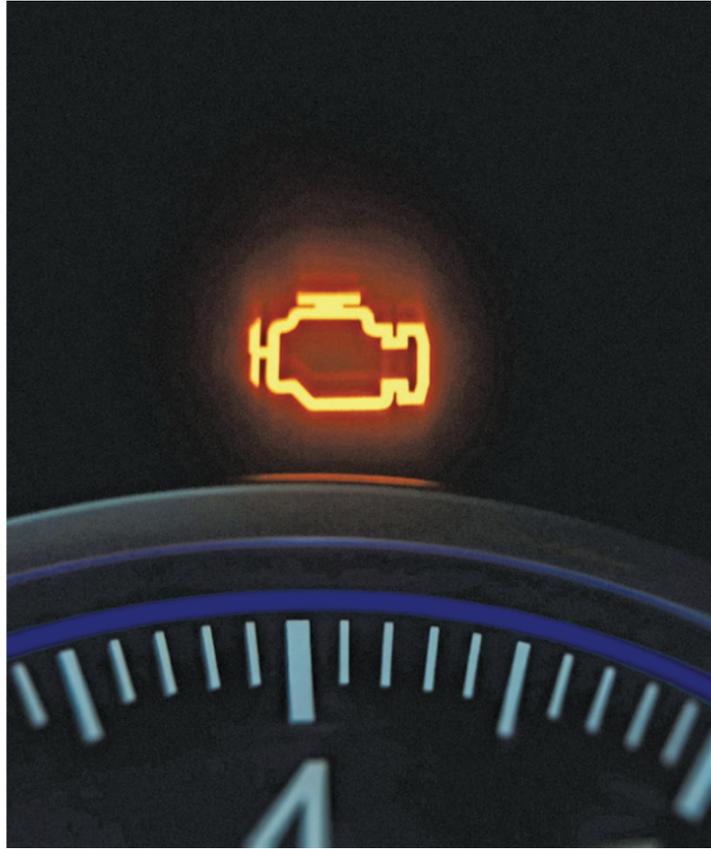


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your discipleship.

Lent helps us refocus on the 'why' of all we do and are as Christians. Before we can do anything in the Church, the first step is to look at ourselves and ask: How is my relationship with God? In other words, 'Do I love Jesus, and how do I show Jesus' love in my own life?' These are personal questions, but ones that are so important.

We are all called to have a personal faith in Jesus Christ, but while our faith is deeply personal, we are called to share it outwardly. As Christians, we can embrace our personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ and renew our baptismal faith regularly. When we do so—when we become active participants with God—we see our churches and communities transformed into inclusive, supportive, and non-judgmental centres of God's love and grace. As Anglicans, we are called to follow the example of Christ and to seek to live out his teachings in our daily lives (see, for example, Matthew 25:35-40 on caring for those in need).

This means being faithful to God and one another, and showing love and compassion to those in need. It also means being willing to confront the sin and injustice in our lives and the world around us. This is about deepening our relationships with others within the Church and those on the margins.

When that pesky check engine light comes on in our vehicle, we know we will eventually have to take it to the garage to get it fixed. Our spiritual check engine light is no different. We can do this spiritual check-up during this Lenten season by looking at what we are called to be and to do as baptized Christians. If a core value is deepening our relationship with God and one another, then this needs to be at the very centre of the life and ministry of every Christian.

So, if your spiritual check engine light is flashing, I invite you to use this Lent as a tune-up for your faith. Let us look honestly at our spiritual lives, and we may go deeper with God and one another.  
Lenten blessings,  
Bishop Sam Rose

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These policies were adopted by the Anglican Life Committee.



# Breakfast, Blessing, and Song: Our Annual Patronal Feast at St. Peter's

Article submitted with photographs by The Rev'd William Strong

We were pleased to welcome 87 parishioners to a complimentary breakfast on Sunday, January 18, at St. Peter's Parish, Conception Bay South. The menu consisted of cream of wheat, boiled eggs, toast, juice, and more.

We were also pleased to welcome members of the Foxtrap/Upper Gullies C.L.B. Company, who helped us process around the church. Before officiating at the annual service celebrating the Confession of St. Peter, Bishop Sam Rose made time to meet with our confirmation class. We estimate the congregation for the service was well over 100 people.

A special highlight of this event was when Parker Butler, age 12, sang a stirring rendition of "How Great Thou Art." Parker is the great-grandson of lifelong parishioner Edna Warford.

We thank God for this wonderful time together.



*Above is Parker Butler singing "How Great Thou Art" On the right is a photo from the patronal service Below are people enjoying breakfast together*



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- May's Issue: 1 April
- June's Issue: 1 May

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# Does The Church Have Room For Bravery?

Article by  
Felicity Barons

I am a child and an adult of the Church, and possibly a dying breed.

Over the years, I have seen many of my peers step away from their faith and church communities. Some left when they were let down by leadership. Others left when the values no longer aligned with their own growth. More left because the Church no longer felt like the “safe” space that it promised to be.

Many of these same folks have asked me how I seem to find resilience in my faith, knowing that I have almost followed their paths for those same reasons, and on many occasions. My answer will vary in a given moment, but generally follows two themes: an assurance that being a part of church is God’s plan for me, and that only vague threads of hope keep me present.

The truth is that I have had to stop and ask myself some very tough questions, many of which have pertained to what it means to be a part of a church community. This has meant times of deep introspection, coupled with examining old rhetoric and practices in an effort to see where I

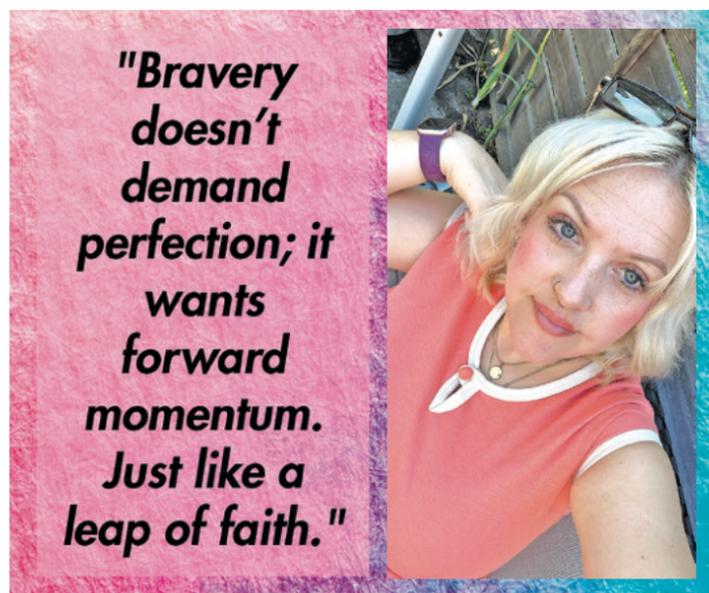


photo by F. Barons; designed in Canva by E. F. Rowe

still fit.

But is there room for intellectual exploration in an institution that has thrived for so long on traditions?

I certainly hope so. And I believe that the Jesus I have come to know would agree.

The New Testament is peppered with stories of Jesus standing up to those in power, demanding that they reconsider how clinging to their messages was falling short of the humanity in front of them. He asked for more than blind acceptance from those who were guiding others. Jesus asked us to see the real life world of the Kingdom as it existed

in the here and now, highlighting that authentic interactions are a staple in loving others.

The Church may feel safe to many of you reading this, and if so, I am happy for you. However, for those of us, like me, who have faced criticism for examining how the Church is actually living out the teachings of Jesus, I haven’t always felt that same security. My experiences have been different and unique to me.

So, how have I managed to stay in a community where I haven’t always felt free to be myself? It is because I have had to rework my

understanding of the spaces I want to be a part of. What is “safe” for one person inherently cannot be “safe” for another person. Any given statement, regardless of intention, can have a negative impact based on past triggers, traumatic experiences, and the effects of systemic inequities.

Trying to maintain a traditionally “safe” space, one where no one feels offended or hurt, is categorically impossible. It also runs the risk of excessive caution, inaction, and silence. “Safe spaces” become spaces where comfort is placed on a pedestal instead of authenticity.

So, I challenge us in the Church to consider a new alternative: “brave spaces.”

“Brave spaces” are compelling because they encourage participants to engage with diverse perspectives to stretch our understanding of the world around us. People are asked to embrace the discomfort of opposing view points and difficult conversations in an effort to more deeply understand others. The goal is to foster more

meaningful connections in which people can be seen for who they are. Individuals can feel free to discuss long-standing biases, systemic injustices, and more without fear of judgment or attack.

It is my hope that in revisiting what is possible when we truly live in communion with each other, the Church might expand its reach. In a world where negative public discourse and injustices have become a prominent part of the day-to-day, why not revisit what a genuinely supportive body of faith looks like?

Finding courage to change can feel intimidating. Yet we forget that being brave isn’t finding an absence of fear, but rather is found in being scared but doing it anyway. Bravery doesn’t demand perfection, it wants forward momentum. Just like a leap of faith.

I am willing to leap into uncertainty and discomfort in order to be brave. Are you?

*Felicity Barons grew up in Labrador, and currently lives in Toronto*

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The Rev'd Cynthia Haines-Turner  
Columnist

# Turning The World Upside Down: The Church And Strong Women

On January 28th, 2026, the Confirmation of Election Service marked the moment when Dame Sarah Mullally legally became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, and the first woman ever to occupy that office. Congratulations and good wishes poured in, but the appointment was not without controversy. Not surprisingly, nearly all of it was because she is a woman. There were many who tried to counter the attacks on the new Archbishop, pointing to how Jesus included women in ministry, and quoting the apostle Paul saying "... there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Gal 3:28.

But the truth is that the Church has never been able to handle strong women. Throughout the centuries, it has done what it can to deny them full participation in its life and ministry. At times, its response has been outright hostility, at times indifference, and at times subjugation. In some instances, the response has been more



*Our Lady of Walsingham, decorated for her feast day in Walsingham, Norfolk (England) in May of 2011. Mary is here portrayed as a strong woman, looking straight ahead: the woman who said that "He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek." (from Luke's Gospel) photo by E. F. Rowe*

nuanced. In the case of Mary Magdalene, for example, she was discredited for centuries, in order to downplay her revolutionary role in the early Church. As for Mary the Virgin, she was domesticated in such a way as to hide the strong disciple that she was. The result is that, often, her prophetic message is lost to the eyes-downcast, submissive image we see in religious paintings, icons and stained glass windows.

Like Jesus, the meek and mild persona of Mary lives along with a passionate advocate for justice in a world where injustice is endemic in our systems and our mind set. They were both gentle and loving with those who were vulnerable, but unflinching when it came to naming the places in our world where those with power and influence lord it over others.

March 25th on our Church calendar is "The Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary." Whether it's because I serve in a Church dedicated to Mary the Virgin or whether

the subordination of her valiant nature goes against the grain, I find myself more and more drawn to her story and to rediscovering who she was. When Mary said to the angel, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word," it was a courageous statement of faith and trust. This same Mary would articulate a profound vision for a just world in the Magnificat, the Song of Mary. Reminiscent of her ancestor, Hannah's song, it is one of the most radical visions of a world turned upside down that we have in scripture, or anywhere for that matter. It's no wonder that those in power would do what they could to tame her and her view of the world as God would have it.

Patriarchy still has a strong grip on the Church and society but maybe, that will be lessened ever so slightly in the ministry and witness of Sarah, Archbishop of Canterbury, and maybe instead, the Church can concentrate on living Mary's vision.

## New Lay Reader at St. Nicholas

Submitted by The Rev'd Byron Barter  
Photograph by James Foss

It was a wonderful day of celebration Day at St. Nicholas Anglican Church, Torbay on January 25th. Scout Quinn received a license from Bishop Rose to be a Lay Reader in the Church. Congratulations, Scout, and thank you!

*Pictured on the right are The Rev'd Byron Barter, Scout Quinn, and The Rev'd Tracy Sullivan*





The Rev'd James Spencer  
Columnist

# Why Worship Needs A Destination

There's a video game called "Desert Bus". It was never officially released and was only intended to be part of a larger game collection. However, people have played it. The game has you sitting behind the wheel of a bus, driving from Tucson, Arizona to Las Vegas, on an empty stretch of road through a featureless desert. You hold down a button to make the bus move forward, and the bus veers slowly to the right so you occasionally have to straighten up.

That's the entire game. And it takes a full 8 hours for the bus to reach its destination and for you to receive one point. Then you do it again. It is considered to be one of the most pointless wastes of time ever produced in the video game industry. Eight hours of your life spent keeping a fake bus on a fake road with no real entertainment and no real reward.

And people have played it.

It really makes one wonder about how humanity chooses to spend its precious time. We seem to surround ourselves with activities that don't really serve much point, and yet they can demand huge



photo by muratart from www.shutterstock.com

amounts of energy and devotion.

Sometimes that's how I feel when I listen to modern Christian music. I can't say that Christian music is meaningless. It certainly isn't. But it is a genre which seems excessively overrun by songs which are best categorized as "worship." I tune in to Christian radio, or listen to Christian music mixes on YouTube or Spotify, or attend church services, and all I seem to hear is some variation on "God/Jesus is great and wonderful, and I will worship and serve him" (often repeated ad nauseam).

Now, please don't get me wrong: worship songs are often beautiful, heart-warming, and very much have an important place in our faith lives. It is good and proper to worship God and proclaim God's greatness by making a joyful noise. Quite a few I consider to be among my favourite songs of all time, particularly among the old-fashioned, traditional songs I have heard for years and years. But when worship songs are all I hear I often find myself wondering: where is the call to justice, to mercy, to lead lives of compassion and care?

Jesus said for us to

love God and to love our neighbour. But so much of the music we offer focuses on the first command, but not the second.

There are exceptions, and I treasure them deeply. "God of the Movement and Martyrs" by David LaMotte is profoundly inspiring. I am always searching for songs which not only give praise to God but also challenge the listeners to live lives of service and love for the people of our world. Our music should be willing to have teeth. It should make the rich, the proud, and the powerful uncomfortable. It should

call each listener to have a heart which does more than just look up. It should draw us into meeting the needs of the outcast, the hungry, the lonely, and those in any kind of trial.

There should be worship: **and** there should be transformation.

That pointless, boring video game: a group of people called "Desert Bus for Hope" started using it as a fundraiser in support of sick children, and have raised more than 12 million dollars since 2007.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, giving praise and thanks, but then make another joyful noise as we answer the call to serve.

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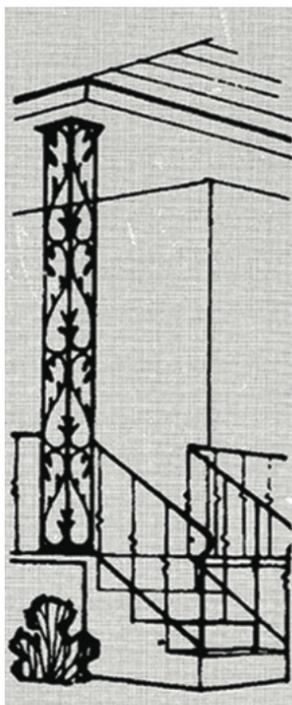
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# Celebrating 37 Years of Ordained Ministry

## Canon Jotie Noel Announces Retirement, St. John The Evangelist, Topsail

Article by Louise Smith  
 Photograph by Sharon Smith

To speak in my favourite unsophisticated tongue, I have been an automatic fixture in the congregation of St. John the Evangelist Parish, Topsail, for nearly sixty-nine years. The first fifteen in the old heritage shrine, and then in 1972, in our present place of worship which was consecrated and functional just in time for my son's baptism—the first in the new church.

I have seen, and worked alongside, and worshipped with many priests since my beginning here in 1957. Each one empowered their own special gifts that I'm sure enhanced and developed our church's faith immensely. I have joyfully said many hellos, and reluctantly uttered as many goodbyes.

But today, I will concentrate on the present, with my thoughts and feelings confined to



our current priest: Canon Jotie Noel. Canon Jotie will be retiring this year, not just from our parish but also from thirty-seven years of ordained ministry.

During a recent Sunday morning sermon, Canon Jotie addressed the congregation announcing his plans. His delivery was a recap

or celebration of those years: not just his time with us, but also in recognition of the other parishes who were also blessed by the gift he had portrayed, beginning in Labrador. It was very emotional and difficult for those present to maintain composure while listening to the depth of Canon

Jotie's sincerity that he espoused.

Canon Jotie was and is special. No matter how serious the discourse, he always managed to inject some humour, which enhanced and made the delivery more interesting, often implying that God had a sense of humour. To quote from the wisdom

of the late Canon George Earle: "For church life to be lived at its richest, humour must not be confined to the secular, but must permeate the Spiritual."

Canon Jotie encouraged freedom of speech: to be a listener, not just a deliverer. This meant that any topic or problem could be discussed without prejudice. Canon Jotie will be deeply missed and leaves very big shoes to fill. As his departure marks the culmination of one journey, we wish him and his wife Pauline many happy retirement years on the trip they are now about to embark upon. When one door shuts, another opens.

*He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he. Proverbs 16:20*



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# Eucharistic Ministers Licensed In Brooklyn Parish

Submitted with photographs by  
Deacon Kathy Russell



Above: Doreen Penney and Heather Skiffington were presented with their certificates at a Christmas Eve Eucharist at St. John the Divine Church in Cannings Cove by retired priest The Rev'd Isaac Hutchings.



Ivy Linthorne was presented with her certificate at a Eucharist at St. Thomas's Church in Charleston on November 16th, 2025 by Rural Dean, The Rev'd John Sparkes.

## Bonne Bay North Fellowship Group Sing Carols

Article and photographs by  
The Rev'd Wilhelmena Green

Christmas was very special this year for the Fellowship Group in the Parish of Bonne Bay North. On a beautiful night in December, with light snow falling, some members of the Fellowship Group took part in the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting in Rocky Harbour and Norris Point by singing Christmas carols.

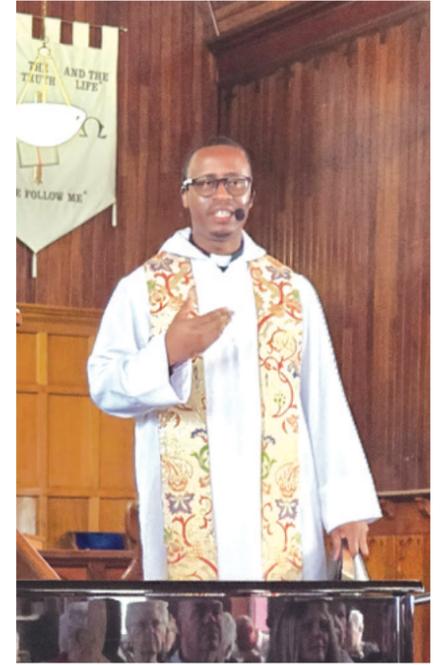
It was wonderful to hear the voices of children and adults singing along: what a joyful sound!

In mid-December, members of the Fellowship Group, and ladies from the community, went carolling in Rocky Harbour and Norris Point. It was

amazing as the night sky glistened with stars, the light snow fell, we saw trees covered with blankets of snow, and heard voices ringing in the air. How joyful it was to knock on someone's door, to let them know the carollers were there, and see how excited they were to come outside in the night air and listen to the singing. For many people it brought back many happy memories of Christmas, loved ones, and traditions.

This is Christmas; this is what it's all about. The Fellowship Group will have memories for ever, and it was a blessing; we look forward to doing it again next year!





## Baptism in Port aux Basques

On February 1st, 2026, St. James' Church in Port aux Basques welcomed into the Kingdom of God Abigail Sophia Ryan with the sacrament of baptism. Abigail was The Rev'd Kuda's first baptism since becoming priest-in-charge here at St. James'. A warm welcome was extended to The Rev'd Mickton Phiri and his family, who joined us for worship. Rev'd Phiri serves as our Diocesan Administrator and is the rector at St. Michael and All Angels' Church in Corner Brook. It was a beautiful church service which was followed by a fellowship in our Memorial Centre.  
 - submitted with photos by Lisa Brown

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# Sparkling Service: The Ladies of The ACW Clean The Memorial Centre in Port aux Basques

Article and photographs  
by Lisa Briown

On January 26th the ACW ladies of St. James' Church in Port aux Basques, got together to clean the kitchen in the Memorial Centre. It was a wonderful day of fellowship followed by a good bowl of soup. A huge thank you to all the ladies who came out: they all did a great job!



## Does your parish hold any special events for Lent?

Remember to send any stories that you'd like to share with the wider Church in for publication in *Anglican Life*! It's easy:

Send a short story about the event, and a couple of photographs in for publication in our next issue:  
[anglicanlifennl@gmail.com](mailto:anglicanlifennl@gmail.com)



# Learning For Lent: The Mapping Exercise and The Lenten Resource: Wild Paths of Peace

## News From Alongside Hope

Article by Canon Deborah Pantin  
Alongside Hope Representative, ENL

In my own Lenten journeys over the years, I have learned conclusively that attempting to “give up” something like sweets over those forty days only truly results in feelings of failure. I have found that my time is much better spent engaging in new or different spiritual practices or learning.

As we continue our ongoing work of Truth and Reconciliation within our country and within our Anglican Church of Canada, I would suggest making plans to offer the Alongside Hope Mapping Exercise in your parish or region.

In the wake of the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, Alongside Hope’s former Executive Director, Adele Finney, spoke with public engagement staffer, Suzanne Rumsey, about how Alongside Hope might create an education piece in response. Adele and Suzanne, together with Esther Wesley, former Coordinator of the Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation, developed a narrative and a process called “Mapping the Ground We Stand On.” The resulting workshop explored Indigenous presence and Settler arrival on the map of Turtle Island/Canada. Piloted at Alongside Hope’s National Gathering in the fall of 2015, this

**“This is a powerful learning exercise and strongly recommended for all who take truth and reconciliation seriously, and perhaps especially for those of us who don’t yet!”**

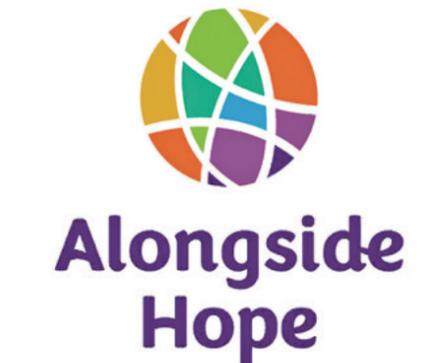
“education for reconciliation” resource was further developed and delivered in parishes and other venues. In 2019, Alongside Hope launched a new five-year strategic plan. The fifth goal is “Mutual Reconciliation: We will accompany and support First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, guided by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the priorities of Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada.” In 2019, a decision was taken by Alongside Hope to train a national network of Mapping Exercise facilitators in Winnipeg. Filmmaker Tim Wilson joined the training to document that process and produced two videos, available on Alongside Hope’s YouTube channel.

It would be an excellent idea to show one or both videos to your vestry or perhaps at coffee hour after service some Sunday to generate interest. You might decide to host a special

Alongside Hope Coffee Hour, including a small bake sale, pamphlets, special envelopes and displays—most of which are available from head office or your Diocesan Rep—and show the mapping video, too.

If your church, like mine, doesn’t have internet to watch YouTube, contact Janice Biehn at Alongside Hope to send you the videos to download onto a laptop. When you are ready, go to the Mapping Exercise page on our website, <https://alongsidehope.org/mapping-exercise/>, to request a booking. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we have our own mapping exercise facilitator, Canon Tom Mugford. It is strongly recommended that you ask at least one month before you hope to hold your event.

This is a powerful learning exercise and strongly recommended for all who take truth and reconciliation seriously, and perhaps especially for those



of us who don’t yet!

In addition to the Mapping Exercise video, Alongside Hope has other short videos available on YouTube or otherwise to bring awareness to your Parish on such topics as “What Alongside Hope Means to Me” and Nurse Itelvina’s story about the huge difference having a solar suitcase means to a rural health clinic in Mozambique.

Since it is still just the first of March, it is not too late to register for the Alongside Hope Lenten Resource: Wild Paths of Peace, written by the Anglican Communion’s permanent representative at the United Nations, Martha Jarvis. In this season of global unrest and conflict, it will do well to consider paths of peace this Lent. Sign up via the Alongside Hope website: <https://alongsidehope.org>

May your Lenten self-examination prepare you for a glorious Easter celebration!

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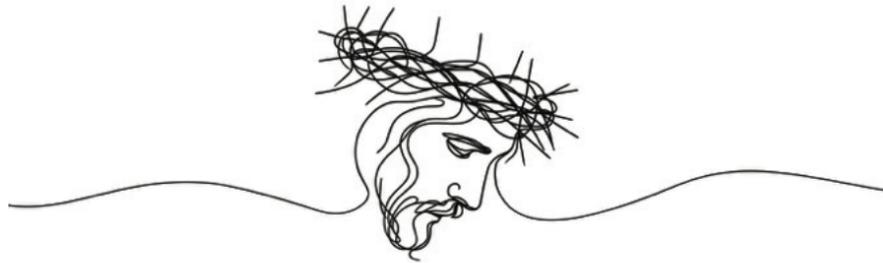


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**Looking For Parish Reporters!**



It’s annual meeting season! Please check if your parish has a dedicated reporter to share photos and stories with *Anglican Life*. There’s no monthly commitment: just send us your major highlights as they happen. This is your space to celebrate the Church’s work and inspire fellow Anglicans across Newfoundland, Labrador, and beyond! [anglicanlifennl@gmail.com](mailto:anglicanlifennl@gmail.com)



## Lenten Wisdom from 1961

Here on the right is a clip from the February 1961 issue of *The Newfoundland Churchman* (which is now this paper, *Anglican Life*) talking about things that we can give up for Lent. I discovered it while looking back through old issues, which you can search for online quite easily these days. In particular, I was looking for anything Lenten: things that have been said or done in the past in our province during this yearly time of reflection, penitence, and preparation. As many of the regular readers of this paper will have noticed during this last decade while I've been the Editor, I have great affection for things of the past, especially those from within the Church.

I was very pleased to find this particular list of things to "give up" in Lent, and I think that they are as true for us today as they were when they were first published 65 years ago.

Many of the suggestions are about having a more positive

attitude and a trust in God. That's not an easy thing though. The news these days, whether from the Middle East, from Europe, or from America, is nothing short of horrifying. It makes the suggestion to "GIVE UP your worries—instead trust God with them," a very difficult thing to ask. And while trust in God we must, we must also take action. Trusting does not mean a lack of action. We can give up looking at people's worst points, speaking unkindly, our hatred and dislike of anyone, and the fear which prevents Christian witness. Pray for the world and for peace.

This Lent, take up your cross and follow Christ, for it is through him that we go forward to change the world with love, never with violence. Make your voice heard, and stand for the things that Jesus asks of us when he says, "Follow me."

- Emily F. Rowe,  
Editor, *Anglican Life*

## What to "Give-Up" in Lent

GIVE UP—Grumbling—instead in everything, give thanks.

GIVE UP—10 to 15 minutes in bed—instead use the time in Prayer.

GIVE UP—Looking at people's worst points—instead concentrate on their best ones.

GIVE UP—Speaking unkindly—instead let your speech be generous and understanding

GIVE UP—Your worries — instead trust God with them.

GIVE UP—Hatred and dislike of anyone—instead learn to love.

GIVE UP—Reading what is cheap and trivial—instead study your Bible.

GIVE UP—TV one evening a week—instead visit some lonely or sick person.

GIVE UP—Buying anything but essentials for yourself—instead give the money for God's work.

GIVE UP—The fear which prevents Christian witness—instead seek courage to speak to others of the Master.

GIVE UP—Judging by appearances and the standards of the world—instead learn to GIVE UP YOURSELF TO GOD.

—from the Lenten Calendar of St. Thomas' Church, St. John's.

The above was scanned in from the February 1961 issue of *The Newfoundland Churchman*; volume 3, No.2. Published by The Literature Committee of the Diocesan Synod of Newfoundland. The image at the top of the article is from www.shutterstock.com, and is by ariami; it is called *Jesus in a wreath of thorns*

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