

ANGLICAN LIFE

NEWSPAPER OF THE THREE ANGLICAN DIOCESES IN
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

June 2020

St. Andrew's, Bishop's Falls, Thanks Essential Workers With Sunshine Bags

Article by
The Rev'd Jeff Blackwood
Photographs by Ellen Barnes

Amid the chaos of the COVID-19 pandemic, the congregation of St. Andrew's in Bishop's Falls decided it would be a fitting gesture to give back to the essential workers, particularly to truck drivers, for their dedication.

A call went out to the congregation for donations to help prepare "Sunshine Bags"—a bag of snacks and other small essentials for the long trip on the highway.

Within a couple of days, enough donations came in the fill over 100 bags for distribution!

On April 27th, four members of the ACW (Ellen Barnes, Marilyn Sheppard, Linda Granter, and Linda Thorne), along with Rev'd Jeff, stationed themselves at the Irving Station along the highway at Bishop's Falls, and distributed the bags to transport truck drivers, paramedics, couriers, and even a fire truck delivery!



The response was immeasurable, and within a few short hours, all of the bags were on their way to various locations.

The ACW Social Concern wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the Sunshine Bag Project, and prays that everyone continues to stay safe until we can all gather for public worship again.



Rules Of Engagement

The Rt. Rev'd Dr. Geoff Peddle
Bishop
Anglican East NL

I write to you during the last week of April in order to be published in the June edition of Anglican Life. It's not unusual for publishing deadlines to be a month or more before the actual date of publication, however, this is one deadline that makes me nervous. I am uneasy about writing at this time because everything is changing so rapidly that I fear my words will be irrelevant

by June. As I write, our social life in Newfoundland and Labrador is severely restricted with all kinds of limitations every time we leave our homes. They call it "social distancing" and the writer Damian Barr observes that we aren't exactly in the same boat right now because actually we're all in our own boats, but we are all in the same storm. Yet even in the midst of social distancing there is

a social richness as people discover new and caring ways to reach out and touch someone. I am reminded of the words of St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians (13:13): "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

In my opinion, the people of our province have been remarkable in how quickly they have adapted to this new, albeit temporary,

normal. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are a very social lot, and I have written over the years about how religious life here is highly relational, so it has been no mean feat for us to transform social life as quickly as we have. Credit must be given to the goodwill among the fine people of this province and we should also give credit to good leadership on this from our Premier, and

Health Minister, and Chief Medical Officer on down the line. Even though we knew at the beginning we might not all be in the same boat, they quickly made us realize that we were in the same storm. Reliable channels of communication were put in place so well that it is quite impossible in our province today to have a conversation of any

...continued on page 5
under "Rules"

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ANGLICAN LIFE in Newfoundland and Labrador is the newspaper of the Anglican Church of Canada in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. A co-operative effort of the three Dioceses in Newfoundland and Labrador, it publishes ten issues each year with an independent editorial policy.

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Touton Brunch Held At St. John The Evangelist, Corner Brook

Submitted with photographs by
Sadie Genge

A lovely, sunny west coast morning on March 7th brought out a large number of people from St. John the Evangelist's church family, and the wider community of Corner Brook, to our annual "ACW Touton Brunch." Several members of the ACW made large batches of bread dough for the delicious and highly popular toutons, which were served with homemade baked beans, sausages, and bologna. The proceeds from our brunch are contributed to PWRDF. A sincere "Thank You" to all for your support.



Good Can Come From This Difficult Time

Allison Billard
Columnist

Well it certainly has been a year for the history books hasn't it? We had a week-long, storm induced, state of emergency in January. That was followed two months later by a global pandemic which led to a public health state of emergency of as yet undetermined length. Hopefully, as you read this we are making some headway at getting folks back to work and lifting some of the restrictions,

sort of responsibility for making sure our kids don't unlearn everything they've learned, and maybe even maintain or grow in some areas, so that when they do return to school it's not an awful transition. Oh, and don't forget about limiting screen time, making sure they get enough physical activity, keep to a normal schedule, ensuring that they don't suffer from social isolation, and so on and so on!

Quite early on we had to adopt a philosophy of "one day at a time: just do what we can," and if that meant skipping the school stuff to spend the day outdoors, or baking, or playing with Lego just to maintain some peace, that is what we would do.

As time went on, we all settled into some sort of routine. We have had some great days, and plenty of not so great ones, but we learned to accept it all for what it was, enjoyed the fun parts and moved past the frustrations. Well, mostly.

The hardest part has been the isolation, and not spending time with our families; not going out with our friends; no playdates; no playgrounds; talking to neighbours from driveway to driveway, 20 feet apart. We are social creatures all of us, albeit in varying degrees (I still enjoy my personal space!), and being



although as I write I am trying not to be too optimistic.

It has been a whole new world of parenting challenges for those of us in the trenches with little ones who still require a lot of hands-on care and supervision. At our house, we have been so fortunate that we both were able to continue working. I was still required at work and my husband was working from home. But this new dynamic was certainly new ground. We now need to take some



From the Twitter account of @FreshCleanWater: "A jellyfish was spotted swimming through Venice's unusually clean canals after a national lockdown significantly reduced the traffic on the city's waterways."



From the Twitter account of @erskate: "On a positive note, at least nature is returning to our cities. This is from Bergamo, Italy."

forced to be separate has been awful. My elder son cries regularly because he can't hug people outside our bubble. We "visit" (appropriately distanced of course) but even that is too much sometimes, just reminding us all the more of what desperate times we are living in.

I do take refuge in the fact that much good could come out of this. Have you seen the photographic evidence of how this global shutdown has impacted air pollution? It is truly remarkable. And it goes to show that we *can* do something about climate change, we just aren't willing to do it under

normal circumstances. I can't help but wonder if this really is part of some divine plan, to get us to slow down and look at the impact we are having on our planet and each other, to better understand our interconnectedness. While it has been horrific, and many lives have been lost, we should learn from this experience. We can adopt new norms—

norms that prevent this from happening again, and protect our environment for all the generations to come. The tragedy of this situation need not be for nothing, good can come from it, we just have to be willing to embrace it.



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- more local stories
- links to parish online worship and prayer groups during the COVID-19 pandemic
- more stories from the National and International Church
- links the latest updates on our website

A Small World With Huge Needs

News from PWRDF

Article by Mona Edwards
PWRDF Representative,
Diocese of Western Newfoundland

As I write this column, we are in the middle of a global pandemic and, as has been the case since social media began, the world has become an even “smaller” place. We know what’s happening in far-reaching countries with regard to COVID-19, but still don’t hear a lot about ongoing needs such as food security.

Most non-essential businesses have shut down and many people now work from home, including PWRDF staff who must continue the essential work of supporting our most vulnerable sisters and brothers around the world. Zoom, teleconferencing, and email have become the norm for connecting with each other.

To address the needs of underserved communities in developing countries, PWRDF has granted \$60,000 each to Partners in Health and Village Health Works. Both are long-time partners of PWRDF and are well placed to support people dealing with COVID-19. PIH Rwanda and VHW have been key partners in PWRDF’s “All Mothers and Children Count” program, supported by tens of thousands of Canadians and with funding from the Government of Canada.

Given the lack of ICU beds, personnel, and treatment options, VHW’s strategy is in line with Burundi’s Ministry of Health and will focus heavily on containment efforts. Initial measures will be education, prevention, and protection, with the goals “to protect patients, health workers, the population (including workers who are building our urgently needed hospital), and to treat what we can treat,” says Catherine Christensen of VHW.

A further allocation of \$40,000 will contribute to the ACT Alliance Global Appeal to support organizations building awareness about COVID-19 and working



Patients wait at a Village Health Works in Burundi, practicing social distancing. (Photo by PWRDF)

closely with health officials to prevent fatalities and intense pressure on already fragile public health systems.

“The work of our global partners to respond to this pandemic is critical right now,” says Will Postma, Executive Director of PWRDF. “They are helping the most vulnerable in areas where even the basics of soap, running water and two metres of physical distancing can be a luxury.”

To support needs in Canada, PWRDF is also allocating \$40,000 to HelpAge Canada to support vulnerable seniors in Canada coping with COVID-19.

HelpAge Canada provides grants to organizations across Canada who are responding to seniors who are at the highest risk of COVID-19 infection. Initiatives include providing food, medications, personal care as well as supporting those who are putting themselves in harm’s way to care for them. HelpAge Canada has raised almost \$110,000 towards its COVID-19 appeal, including the gift from PWRDF.

The economic fallout of COVID-19 has been devastating, for some more than others. We encourage

you to do what you can to support PWRDF and our partners, both in Canada and around the world during this unprecedented global crisis. Please hold in your prayers those who are unwell, vulnerable to illness, facing financial uncertainty, and for whom physical distancing is not possible. We continue to lift up our hope for a more

just, peaceful and healthy world.

PWRDF is accepting donations to support our partners responding to COVID-19. Please go to: www.PWRDF.org, and make your gift in Emergency Response, and indicate COVID-19 in the message box. You can also donate by phone by calling 1-866-

308-7973 toll-free (please leave a message and we will return your call), or 416-822-9083. You can also donate by mail. Simply write COVID-19 in the memo field of your cheque and mail to PWRDF, 80 Hayden Street, 3rd floor, Toronto, Ontario, M4Y 3G2.

Thank you for your continued support!

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, many churches have moved their worship and fellowship times online. Does your parish have a story about that to share with the readers of Anglican Life?

Wanted:

Your Parish’s Stories for the next issue of Anglican Life!

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Very large, high resolution photographs (minimum of 300 dpi). JPEG or TIFF format. Please include the photographer’s name.

Upcoming Anglican Life Deadlines:

September Print Issue - 31 July

October Print Issue - 1 September

November Print Issue - 1 October

If One Member Suffers, All Suffer Together With It

The Rev'd Cynthia Haines-Turner
Columnist

This COVID-19 pandemic: it's pretty much that one day, everything was normal and the next it wasn't. Without any real preparation, we entered into crisis. As we try to make sense of it all, we find ourselves using a whole new language and a whole new set of clichés, at least 1000 new words according to CBC. As the saying goes: if I had a dollar for every time I heard the words 'new normal' and 'unprecedented'.... It used to



be that if you said someone "lived in a bubble," you might be questioning their grasp of reality; but these days, if you say someone is living in a bubble, you are affirming that they do in fact have a grasp of reality and are being considerate of their fellow human beings!

The pandemic is forcing people into difficult and painful situations—putting their livelihood in jeopardy

by staying home; risking their health and that of their families if they are in workers in essential services; staying away from family members in nursing homes or hospitals; not allowed to go to funerals of loved ones or dear friends; learning how to homeschool their kids. Then there are those who are in situations of violence whose lives are worsened by this crisis.

Given that, it seems somewhat self indulgent to lament the fact that we have to sacrifice gathering and worshipping together as a church community and abstain from celebrating the Eucharist. But lament we do. Loss, or sadness, or feelings of deprivation are not measured in relation to the difficulties of others: they just are.

The same can be said for our appreciation of the positives we take away from this time. That does not diminish the sadness and pain we feel at the losses. While we feel the hurt and loss of lives, of employment, of human contact, we also understand that this crisis has made us more aware of the value of community. People speak of being in touch with family members and friends more than ever before, or of the benefits of having more time together

at home. We have come to appreciate being able to pray and worship together online. A long awaited hug, as we saw in the video of the grandmother getting to hug her grandchildren, can bring us much joy.

“Loss, or sadness, or feelings of deprivation are not measured in relation to the difficulties of others: they just are.”

As churches, we have something to say to people who are experiencing pain as well as to those who are grateful for that which is positive in their lives. As a community, we cry together and we rejoice together. While this pandemic wasn't around in the early church, they knew crises and understood what it meant to be part of a community, part of the body of Christ. As Paul said, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26. I don't think we needed this crisis to understand that, but it sure helps us to appreciate its truth just that much more.



Photo by E. F. Rowe

“Rules” by Bishop Peddle, continued from page 1

length with any person without referencing the latest news on COVID-19.

Members and former members of our military will be familiar with the term "Rules of Engagement." For them it refers to specific limitations and authorizations in dealing with an opponent. Those rules governing the actions of our armed forces members on dangerous and unpredictable missions, and potentially even in war, are as comprehensive as they can be when our country places them in harm's way. We are in something of a war right now, not against a human aggressor, but against another kind of enemy—a miniscule virus that has already demonstrated its lethal ability. And we really are in this battle together. We have already been given

our "Rules of Engagement" with the enemy and "Rules of Engagement" with each other. We have gotten pretty good at keeping our distance, and washing our hands, and limiting social contact to our "bubbles;" and because of that, as I write, the news is starting to look pretty good in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I really hope that by the time you get to reading these few words in June that our "Rules of Engagement" will have been relaxed as we begin returning to familiar ways of being with one another. As I write at the end of April, I am hearing that certain public health restrictions may be relaxed during May. Hopefully over the summer we will see our churches begin to resume traditional activities also. And so, this is the first time in all of the years I have written in our esteemed church newspaper that I do so with such hesitation. Things have changed so fast in the last couple of months that it is really difficult to comment on what might happen in the next couple of months. Let's hope that the positive trend we are seeing as of this final week of April continues and strengthens so that June will bring even better news in every way.

With my every blessing,
+Geoff

“Suddenly nothing made sense anymore...”



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Palm Sunday Celebrated in St. Anthony Amid Pandemic

Photograph submitted by Lorelie Cull

Commemorating Palm Sunday without palms or a gathering, green branches adorned some houses in St. Anthony. Worship services were provided through Facebook and other electronic media to celebrate the occasion.

Praying Through A Pandemic

The Rev'd Canon Gerald Westcott
Columnist



What a time we are living in! A global pandemic with a novel virus, for which there is no vaccine, that has put societies around the entire earth into various degrees of lockdown mode. Every human being on the face of the planet has been affected by COVID-19. We have been awakened to the real and ever present uncertainties of our shared tomorrow, and to the inherent interconnectedness and fragility of all of life.

When I was a chaplain in the Canadian Forces, I heard an old crusty army colonel use a battle field phrase that said, "there were no atheists in foxholes." When our world as we've known it has fallen out from under our feet, and death in its various forms is lurking, the human spirit will turn to and seek out a "Higher Power" or God.

We are living in such a time, and the only way to see ourselves through such chaos and uncertainty in a healthy and life giving way is to pray our way through it. We have to think also. Thinking is important, and we need to be reasonable as we sort out how to survive each day with some sense of moving forward. But thinking and reason are not enough for us to discern our way into tomorrow.

In order to "unlock" the energy and power of love, and to have that love inform and direct our thinking, we have to pray. Prayer is the key. We have to learn to pray our way through this season of pandemic and into a new tomorrow.

There are as many ways to pray as there are people on the planet. In all its myriad of forms, prayer at its foundation, is about opening and connecting. That is to say, prayer is about opening up the limitations of our thinking minds, and connecting with our deeper and truer selves—our divine selves, our love selves.

So whatever it is that opens you up and gets you out of your head and connects you to your larger self, then go and do it—and do regularly and intentionally.



photo by Patrick Fore on www.unsplash.com

We need to "love" our way into the unknowns of tomorrow. Love is the energy of change in the universe. Love is our deepest and divine identity. Love is what attracts us to each other and connects us in life giving ways. Love is the energy that is drawing us into our new tomorrow.

It might be sitting down with sacred scriptures and reading and reflecting. It might be in the reading of poetry or gazing on a piece of art. It might be in nature or remembering a loved one. Whatever it is that wakes you up to God, go and do it, and do it regularly and with the intention of connecting with love. In this shared global pandemic, whatever your religious tradition is or isn't, together we can pray our way into new and emerging tomorrow.

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Some Updates From Queen's College During The COVID-19 Pandemic

Article and photograph by
Emily F. Rowe

Queen's College has, of course, been very much affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so here is a short article to keep the readers of Anglican Life up to date on how things are going at our local seminary.

Queen's has recently finished their winter 2020 term, and can report an enrolment of 336 students, and of those 52 will graduate from their respective programs. Convocation, which had been planned for May 14th, is of course postponed due to the pandemic restrictions on gatherings. The graduates



The new tile floor and paint at Queen's College

of Queen's this spring truly represent mission and ministry in the current age, and included in the group are lay people, deacons, priests, and even

a bishop, as well as a SA Officer. There are eight denominations represented: Anglican, Moravian, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and Salvation Army.

There has been extensive work done on the fabric of Queen's College over the winter, and in spite of the unexpected setbacks due to asbestos, the term was able to be completed on time

thanks to on-line options. New flooring and paint were installed to give Queen's College a "facelift."

Provost, Dr. Rick Singleton, said, "We are now in planning mode for the Fall 2020 Semester. At this point, we will plan as if things will be back to the regular schedule (I won't say normal), and we will plan for other options, if operations cannot resume for the start of the term."

Administrative Office Assistant, Dana Bishop, will be in the office on Mondays only, and then working from home. The Provost is in the

office for short periods of time on most days, but the main doors are now locked in order to better allow for social distancing. If you need to get in touch with someone at Queen's College, please call ahead and something can be arranged. The phone number is: (709) 753-0116.

This information was compiled using the latest Queen's College newsletter and other information from their website and Facebook page, which will continue to offer up-to-date information as the COVID-19 pandemic progresses.

An Interview With Provost, Dr. Rick Singleton

Dr. Singleton kindly shares some answers to a few "frequently asked questions" about Queen's College in light of the global pandemic, and how it will shape the future of the college

Q. What is the theme word of your Winter 2020 Semester?

A. Resilience has to be my word for the College, our students, faculty members and community of friends of the College who have shown their hardiness and flexibility. It was a challenging semester...one like no other in my experience as

a student, instructor, or administrator. We had a sequence of obstacles. We anticipated having our space refurbished with new flooring and painting by the start of the winter semester. The tradespeople discovered there was asbestos in the sub-floors. That required major work to complete the asbestos removal. That caused a delay to accessing the college for on campus classes, chapel, and activities for the first week of the semester, so we had online classes. Then, we were just underway, and we were hit by "Stormageddon," and we then had sequential snowstorms...and in mid-March we had to make the adjustments for COVID-19. Our students and faculty members rolled with the challenges. We stayed on schedule for classes, and finished the term on schedule. The resilience is not only showing the mettle of our people, but we are learning from it.

Q. What lessons are being learned from the experience of this global pandemic?

A. We are learning numerous lessons. I will name a few: 1. The capacity to be connected while being separated. A few years ago, we started to use the internet to connect people for studies. We are now seeing the capacity to build substantial connections and community by prudent use of online technology. We continue to have an online community gathering for Mid-day Prayer and conversations each Tuesday at noon. 2. A second lesson, in my mind, is the value of our initiative in missional leadership and spiritual entrepreneurship. The world will not go back to the way it was. We must be serious about going into the world to connect in new and different ways. It gives opportunity to discern how we join God in bringing about the Kingdom in a restructuring world. 3. A third lesson, not new for most I hope, is the value of being rooted in the joy of

the Gospel...the knowledge that God is faithful to us at all times, including in the mystery and confusion of this lingering global crisis.

Q. How will you prepare for the fall semester?

A. While we do not know how things will resolve with COVID-19, we are planning for the fall semester and we are gearing up to offer a full program. We will adjust as needed. We do know we will likely need to allow some flexibility in our program regulations. We will consult regarding internships, both parish internships and supervised practice of ministry. As we move through the spring and summer, hopefully, things will become clearer and we will become more specific on course and program planning. We will continue to offer our usual online courses and our Associate program.

Q. What are you plans, considering you were

planning to retire in July?

A. I originally took the position of provost for three years. The Corporation asked me to stay on for an extra year while a new Provost was recruited. That year will end on July 31st. But, like most others things on earth, COVID-19 has forced changes to plans. This time of turmoil is not a good time for change of leadership in any organization. I will stay on as Provost until things settle in to a new routine and stabilize enough to allow for a transition of leadership. I expect to be here for the Fall Semester.

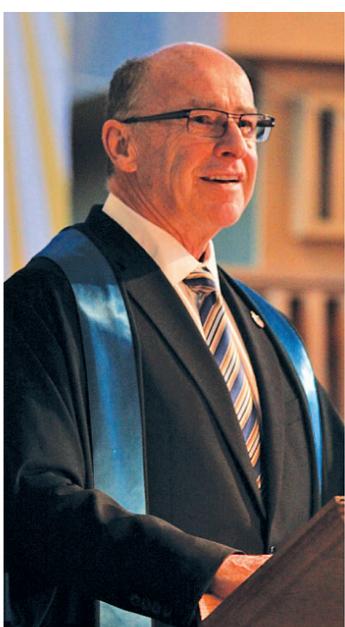
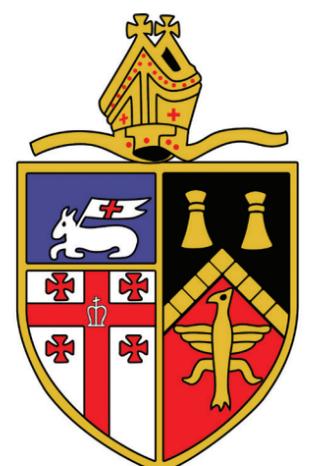


Photo by E. F. Rowe

Dr. Singleton, taken at Queen's Convocation at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, 2018



A Little Good News

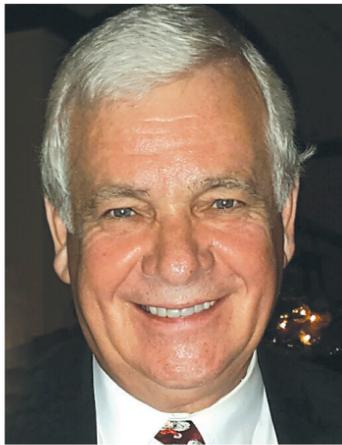
Kevin Smith
Columnist

Editor Emily gently reminds us each month that another submission is due for Anglican Life. This time I received her advanced notice, but she added a kicker: "Perhaps uplifting columns would be nice." Whoa! Considering what we have been through for the last six months, something "uplifting" would be a struggle. But I knew where Emily was coming from so I decided to meet that challenge.

"I continually look for uplifting thoughts in the ministry of planned giving"

It has been a rough six months. Bishop Geoff has written extensively about this, and in an article took a positive view of the current situation. He wrote, "I am even starting to wonder if we might come out of this time with a kinder standard of decorum and charity online for each other and if so, something truly wonderful will have been achieved."

Rev'd Cooke of St.



Mark's began a recent sermon by saying, "It feels to me we all could use some good news." He went on to say that people need to hear from clergy that, "they are not alone. Someone cares. Someone understands what we are going through because we all suffer and are trying to make sense of the world we live in."

Home Again Furniture Bank has 150 families on the waiting list for gently used furniture, and with a limited inventory is able to deliver to just a few homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this may have slowed them down during these uncertain times, the kindness and generosity of IKEA Canada will ensure they will resume deliveries with the largest

inventory of furniture to date. IKEA Canada approached Furniture Link <https://www.furniturelink.co/> with a request for assistance to distribute donated goods on a national basis in response to COVID-19. In a coordinated effort between the national Furniture Bank Network and participating members, IKEA donations will be distributed to furniture banks across the country. This is great news, and officials with Home Again tell me that this donation will go a long way in ensuring families and individuals have the items needed to create a home, and reduce the wait list significantly. Meanwhile, Home Again Furniture Bank continues to seek cash donations to support their efforts at eradicating furniture poverty in our region.

Well, I continually look for uplifting thoughts in the

ministry of planned giving in which I am involved. The pandemic has shut down many activities including visits with clergy and laity as well as a couple of wills seminars. Clergy are facing the same problems. I was encouraged, though, that many clergy were doing worthwhile ministry outside of the church buildings.

I also recently received some good news. I learned that two parishes have received, or were about to receive, bequests from a lady who passed away earlier. These were parishes that invite members to prayerfully consider leaving a bequest in their will for the ministry of their church. In other words, they ask and they get a positive response.

In conclusion, I am constantly reminded of a quotation that I have used for years from stewardship writer

Herb Mather who states:

A planned gift is rarely made without an invitation. Planned giving rarely reaps a harvest unless there are regular, consistent invitations. Notes in every bulletin and newsletter support seminars, letters and other kinds of reminders so that people know the church is serious about helping them make a planned gift when they are serious about making the planned gifts.

Kevin Smith is a gift planning consultant for Anglican East NL. He can be contacted at 709 739-5667 or by email: kevin.smith709@gmail.com

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Unprecedented Times!

Ronald Clarke
and Melanie Clarke
Columnists

We have been under a state of emergency for months now. The world has seen hundreds of thousands of deaths. Millions have had the COVID-19 virus. In many respects, our world has been turned upside down. As Newfoundlanders, I think we have found physical distancing to be tortuous. Newfoundlanders have a natural instinct towards



being friendly, which used to mean touching someone you met. Nowadays, until a vaccination is found, touching is a big no-no! For me anyway, the lack of free and generous hugs from my grandchildren has made these past few months difficult.

Another area which has taken a toll on me is the lack of company around the house. My whole life has been surrounded by friends and family. My wife often joked that the door never stopped swinging! These past few months have made me feel lonely and disconnected from everyone.

Aside from the loneliness in my house, I also feel the loss of attending a regular church service. As many of you know, church isn't just a place of worship but also a place to connect with friends and loved ones. Each week my wife and I have faithfully watched the services and participated in the singing of the hymns and reading of the prayers. These services are a *port in the storm* so to speak, but after 91 years of attending church in a community, I

missed some of the feeling that is naturally created when you sit with others and interact.

So, life has changed for sure.

It was during all this upheaval that I began to think about all of God's children. So many more around the world, like me, are feeling disconnected, not from God, but from the community we Christians have created. The ritual of attending weekly church services always made me feel grounded for the week ahead. The service centred me, reminded me of the important things of life and uplifted my soul. I would be ready to face the issues which would come my way in the week ahead.

The new *normal* we now face is difficult for me. I know however, that despite feeling a little adrift in the world, what keeps me safe and sound is the love of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Jesus didn't need a formal service to do his preaching. He addressed the disciples when and where the spirit moved him. This pandemic changed my *routine* but it strengthened my *faith*. So many people are in such distress because of this virus, but people have risen to the occasion and have done everything possible to help everyone navigate this stressful time.

As we head into the summer, I ask you all to remember the church community and all it offers you. Being with our Lord and Saviour in his house creates a sense of belonging and family. The church community is the place to come and centre yourself during all the turmoil created by the pandemic. Routines change but God never changes nor does he abandon you!

May God Bless you and keep you all safe and well this summer!

ACW Executive for Seal Cove, 2020

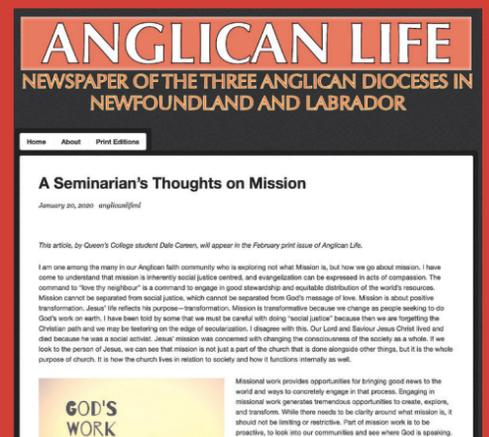


photograph submitted by The Parish of Seal Cove

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A More Virtual World With Room For All

Dr. David Morgan
Columnist

“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous works among all the peoples.” Psalm 93:6 NRSV

I am a fairly “virtual” person. No, not “virtuous”-well, maybe, but that’s for someone else to judge. What I mean is that I live a technology-centric life. I order food using apps on my smartphone. I work remotely, videoconferencing with clients I have never met in person. I ride a bike on a stationary trainer that connects to my laptop in order to cycle in a virtual world. I use Google Maps everywhere I go.



And now, like so many of us making the most of things during the current pandemic, I have embraced worshipping online. From the comfort of our homes, let us recline in our chairs, *ahem*, kneel, to pray.

Usually, it is my connection with God that gives me the greatest joy when worshipping. But I have to tell the truth...at least for now, my greatest joy comes from knowing that worship is now

infinitely more accessible to those who couldn’t attend traditional “in the building” worship. Whether it is because of mobility restrictions or physical/mental health challenges, there are a lot of people who can’t worship in a church. Frankly, I don’t care that it took a pandemic to make worship more accessible – after all, penicillin was discovered by accident, but that doesn’t make it any less awesome.

But “virtual” community isn’t for everyone. Though virtual worship is enabling new connections on a huge scale, our present dependence on virtual interaction has brought technological inequality to the fore. There are communities that do not have enough internet speed to watch a virtual service in real time. Many people have lived long lives without computers/internet and they aren’t about to become tech-savvy overnight. And, lots of people can’t afford computers, tablets, smartphones, or internet.

But the good news is that the Church is full of creative people who are up for a challenge—and, the Holy Spirit will help them find creative solutions. Parishes are delivering in-print bulletins and newsletters to those without email. Tablets preloaded with videos of worship services are being distributed to those without computers or internet (appropriately de-COVID-ed before delivery and upon return, of course). People participating in real-time virtual worship

are holding the phone to their computers so that others with poor internet access (or no access) can listen to the service over the phone. Churches have arranged for their services to be broadcast on TV and radio. Priests are calling everyone on their “parish lists” to check in and maintain relationships.

In the future, I think that the Church’s blend of offerings will be more “virtual” and less “in-person” than it has traditionally been. Personally, I don’t feel that the “COVID all-clear” is going to usher in a new era of hyper-presence, where the Church maintains its current virtual gusto on top of all the in-person stuff it has always done. The Church operates in an era of limited resources—a big reason why “virtual” community is thriving during the pandemic is that nearly all of the “in-person” demands have

been put on pause. At the end of the pandemic, some church communities will return to their buildings and their virtual presence will peter out. Others will do the opposite.

As each church community finds its new place in the “virtual” world, they will evolve. Some of us might start to feel that the church community that was right for us before the pandemic is no longer fitting quite so well. That’s totally OK—as some say, “change is the only constant.” What is most important is that the Church, collectively,

finds creative ways to make a home for everyone.

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image by E. F. Rowe

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How Shall We Sing The Lord's Song In A Strange Land?

The Rev'd Jonathan Rowe
Columnist

Since we began feeling the effects of the COVID-19, many Anglicans used the image of Psalm 137 to reflect on the strange new world we found ourselves living in. In the original context, the psalm was about the Israelites' experience of trying to stay faithful to the Lord in the midst of their Babylonian Captivity. When they had lost all the stability of their old lives, how could they adjust to life as exiles, far from home? This was the question that many people applied to the challenges that social distancing and shutdowns have created for our society.

Ironically, the 'strange land' that we have been exiled to has generally been our own homes. While in some ways, our homes ought to be some of the most familiar places to us, throughout this crisis, we have been using them in strange and new ways.

Our lives, our routines, our stability has been disrupted. Now that we can't go to church, church has to come to us, and perhaps we need to give some thought to how our faith lives intersect with our home lives.

When we tune in to a digital service, should we eliminate all distractions, force the children to sit up straight next to us, and do everything we can to replicate the traditional Sunday morning routine? Should we relax comfortably in our pyjamas, or should we dress up in our Sunday best? Should we watch live, or tune in afterwards, at a time (or day) that's more convenient? Should we tune in to our own parish's liturgy, or shop around for something that we think will 'feed' us best? Should we choose services broadcast from a church, or ones where those leading worship are praying from their own homes, like we are? Should we watch the service all the way through, or fast-forward to the parts we're interested in? Do we 'channel surf', scrolling through our other options, or do we pick something and stick with it? Should we sing along and say the responses, or listen as others do those things better than we might? Should we comment on the video and interact with others who are tuning in, or is that the same thing as 'talking in church'?



Fr. Rowe leading the daily offices from his home during the pandemic on the Parish of St. Michael and All Angels' YouTube channel

I'm not sure that there are right or wrong answers to any of these questions, but they're worth thinking about. Even if you answer them differently from me, it's better to make principled decisions. It's very easy to simply fall into bad habits, and almost impossible to stumble upon good habits, as if by accident. What kind of habits are we developing as we sing the Lord's song in this 'strange land'? Are they habits that contribute

to us being participants who take our worship seriously, or simply spectators who are content to watch others worship?

As I write this, conversations are already beginning about how and when we can start relaxing restrictions, but it is clear that when all of the restrictions are lifted, we won't simply be going back to the world we had to retreat from in March. That world has changed during the crisis, and we

are also being changed by the continuing effects of isolation. As we make those transitions, we will likely have to have more of the same conversations about how we adjust to life in a church that looks so much like the one we left, but is now profoundly different? How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land, whether that strange land is our own familiar homes, or our own familiar churches?

Go where life takes you, but plan ahead.

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