



Hungry and Afraid in the Wilderness

By Cheryl Palmer

And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness... (Mark 1:9-15)

Isolation

Fear

A parched dry land

Thirst and hunger

Temptation

That was Jesus' lot for forty days, but it astounds me how similar his wilderness experience appears alongside our pandemic life today—at least on the surface.

Isolation. Though for our own welfare, this is not usual human behaviour. Hermits isolate, not all individuals in entire societies. Even introverts have remarked that social isolation has not been necessarily good for their mental health and can lead to high levels of loneliness; see "Introversion and the Psychological Impact of Covid19-Related Circumstantial Changes" by Maryann Wei.

Fear. This has gripped our communities. The coronavirus has us all on edge. We suspiciously eye each person we encounter as a potential carrier. And our fear has, at times, bred anger because we have judged others to be not serious enough about the pandemic.

A parched, dry land. If we dare to wander our streets, we see stores closed, the arts decimated, school yards empty, churches shuttered. Human activity has been greatly curtailed and we have left our public places parching for people.

Thirst and hunger. The virtual hug, the Zoom gatherings, online theatre productions, Covid Church...All are necessary but pale substitutes for the real thing. We hunger and thirst for in-person interactions, for life without masks, for travel, for our favourite restaurants...We hunger and thirst for all that has been excised from our lives. And thus, we are tempted.

Temptation. Our isolation, fear, dryness, hunger, and thirst tempt us to sin as we try to find ways to skirt the demands of our pandemic life or as we rail against our neighbours, family members, and the government for their irresponsibility.

But as we enter Lent 2021, Christians are uniquely poised to experience and grow in this wilderness time as we relate to Jesus's dark forty days. Interestingly though, his time was not all dark. In both Matthew and Mark's account, we are told that the angels ministered to Jesus. God was present to him in the desert as he is present to us in the pandemic. The wilderness is not a place without hope, without possibilities. It is not a place of meaninglessness.

As some of you know, my husband, Danylo, was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer this past autumn. And so sometimes it feels as if we began Lent many weeks ago. But like this season of the pandemic, like Jesus's wilderness time, our difficult and painful periods can be occasions for growth, even as they are simultaneously times of sorrow.

During this Lent and all the Lenten experiences of our lives, we are challenged to make a seemingly barren time fruitful. How will you do that this Lent? How will you maintain equilibrium as you walk with Jesus through isolation, fear, a parched dry land, hunger, thirst and temptation? By a careful keeping of these holy days, through prayer, study, and self-reflection, we can grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.



✙ The Rev. Canon Cheryl Palmer is the Incumbent of Christ Church Deer Park.

INSIDE

<i>Lent: A Time of Equanimity and Hope</i>	1
<i>Prayer of Thanksgiving and Strength During the COVID-19 Crisis</i>	1
<i>The Larkin Award 2021</i>	2
<i>Community Connection – Heartfelt Christianity</i>	2
<i>Lent 2021 – Quit COVID Kvetching!</i>	3
<i>Notes from the Music Library: Lent 2021</i>	3
<i>Book Review</i>	4
<i>Exile – Our Chance to Become Church</i>	4
<i>Living in Exile Christ Church Deer Park–A Lenten Study</i>	4
<i>George Monbiot's 10 Things to Do</i>	5
<i>The Parish Prayer Team Has Your Back</i>	5
<i>Lent Interrupted</i>	5
<i>Volunteer Spotlight</i>	6
<i>Book Review</i>	6
<i>Shhh, Editor's Choice</i>	7
<i>A Poem by Rebecca Wells-Jopling</i>	7
<i>A Video by Ward Lindsey</i>	7
<i>Dear Church Mouse</i>	7

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Strength During the COVID-19 Crisis

Sourced and suggested by Edna Quammie

The following prayer was jointly developed by Archbishop Terrance Prendergast and Rabbi Reuven Bulka, two religious leaders from the Ottawa region. It has gained support from many other religious communities and can be said at any time. Consider adding it to your Lenten prayers. Pray also for Rabbi Bulka who was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic and liver cancer in early January 2021.

O God,
We gather together separated by life-saving distancing, but united more than ever in spirit;
We know we are in a war against COVID-19 together, and the more together we are, the better and stronger we will emerge:
We know the challenges are enormous, yet so are the opportunities;
That whether we are in isolation with loved ones, or alone, we will have abundance of time;
We commit to using that time to the max, to help those in greater need in whatever way we can;
We know we all have the opportunity, and time, to be life savers and life enhancers;
We give thanks for those who are on the front line taking care of those who are not well;
We give thanks for the researchers who are working at breakneck speed to find cure and vaccine;
We give thanks for our leaders, federal, provincial and local, for their dedication to all of us;
We give thanks for the providers of our daily needs who go to work in spite of the risk;
We give thanks for those who have ramped up their ability to produce life-saving supplies.
We pray for the well-being of all our life savers; For those who are not well, that they recover fully;
For those enduring difficulty, that they may overcome their challenges.
We pray that a cure and vaccine will soon be available,
And that we all — family, friends, all Canadians, the entire world may be healed in body and spirit.
We ask you, O God, to bless our leaders, our front line care givers, our life savers and life enhancers.
We ask you, O God, to bless Canada, to bless the world, to bless everyone.
Amen.

The Larkin Award 2021

Below is the text of remarks delivered by
Tony van Straubenzee on Sunday, January 10, 2021.

Six years ago, I created this award to annually honour one or two parishioners who have given extraordinary service to the life of Christ Church Deer Park and worked in the parish continually and tirelessly, exhibiting strong Christian values.

The award was named in honour of our fellow parishioner Anne Larkin who, for many years, has and continues to devote her time and talents to enrich our parish. She demonstrates a degree of service in caregiving, being part of our worship services, serving on key committees, working for the food bank, and being our conscience.

With that same love and commitment to ministry and love of our parish, Andrew van Nostrand and Genevieve Chornenki have served diligently in this place. Even this year, they were both very active behind the scenes on the re-opening committee, making sure that the right decision was made for the safety of our parishioners and hundreds of community users of our space during this pandemic. But that is only this year’s work.

I have watched Andrew grow up in the parish from a young age. Of course, his entire family has been active for years, and his father was a pillar of this parish. Andrew has served on the management team for the past four years with clear thinking, constancy, and devotion to his role as warden. He is also a volunteer at our Saturday breakfast and was the guy in charge of PPE adherence as we rolled out our plan to feed those in need during the pandemic. His leadership as Scout Master here is legendary, and who can forget the Christmas tree sales he managed with his Scouts? Andrew has a deep dedication to Christ Church Deer Park and takes any opportunity to support the marginalized in our community. He also runs marathons for charities.

Genevieve has been involved in so many ways, often quietly behind the scenes. A superb warden, a sub-deacon, an ingenious editor of *Spiritus*, and more recently a dedicated member of the re-opening committee. She approaches all her roles with rigour and deep commitment. Genevieve is a force! I was on a search committee with her and recall getting into an argument with her. I lost, of course, but came away full of admiration for her.

What you may not know is that Genevieve has written a book. It’s not out yet, but I talked to someone who has read the manuscript and he said it is “charming”—and it wasn’t William Jackson! Stay tuned for the book launch.

Each of these individuals has a dedicated partner—Caroline and William—who are also significant contributors to the parish.

Andrew and Genevieve, we thank you so much. We are so lucky to have you. Congratulations.

How This Year’s Recipients Applied the Larkin Award



Andrew van Nostrand

I matched Tony’s generous contribution and will be splitting the funds between the Rector’s Discretionary Fund and the Churches on the Hill Foodbank.

The Rector’s Discretionary Fund has been victim over a number of fiscal years to budget belt tightening. The fund allows the Rector to act in extraordinary circumstances. Usually, these are small individual occurrences of people in need where a small one-time leg up will help.

I also donated to the Churches on the Hill Foodbank in recognition of Anne Larkin’s ongoing involvement in this critical ministry. In March of last year, 40% of foodbanks across Toronto were forced to close their doors as the many of their volunteers came from retirees in the high-risk category for COVID-19. The impact of foodbank closures was exacerbated by the skyrocketing demand for foodbank services due to the rapid increase of unemployment across the region driven by COVID-19 lockdowns.

I also applied for a matching donation from my employer, Microsoft Canada, so that we can turn Tony’s generous contribution of \$250 into \$750 of impact.



Genevieve Chornenki

The Larkin Award was a delightful surprise, so much so that when I heard Tony say my name that Sunday I turned to my husband, William, and remarked, “I think Tony misspoke.” Thank you, Tony.

The award includes a monetary sum to be allocated to a church charity, so I asked that my portion to be given to the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund. The PWRDF is engaged in many initiatives, including equipping a clinic in Burundi with PPE and cleaning products , and working with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to provide food security in developing countries. It was tempting to pick one particular project, but I decided not to allocate the gift to any specific initiative so that the charity could use its discretion to meet urgent needs.

Tony’s and Andrew’s generosity inspired me to go further, but when I did, I coloured a bit outside the lines. I made an equivalent donation to a nonchurch charity, The Canadian Friends of the Panzi Foundation. Since 1999, the Panzi Hospital, located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (www.hopitaldepanzi.com) has cared for over 50,000 women who have survived sexual violence and more than 40,000 women with gynaecological pathologies. It also treats survivors infected with the HIV/AIDS virus.

Community Connection – Heartfelt Christianity

By Rebecca Wells-Jopling

“The heart of Christianity is personal relationship, persons sharing love with each other,” says Dr. Eleonore Stump, a Catholic philosopher.¹ Is it too strong a characterization to say that this is exactly what we are doing each week in our Christ Church Deer Park connection group? Can it be, in this time of jarring news stories, unemployment, schools in disarray, world-weariness, and uncertainty, that these modest-sized groups of brothers and sisters in Christ, meeting for a modest one hour each week to speak modestly about our lives in such times, are connecting more deeply and meaningfully with each other, not than we *could* have, most certainly, but perhaps than we *would* have, if our building were open and we were attending coffee hour together?

These times of loss and more loss have limited us to a new way of connecting: by video, in front of our computer, but with the real-time interaction with those in our parish whom we might not have happened to spend extended time with. Sunday coffee hour has been a time of so many wonderful conversations, insights, laughter, and sharing for my family over the years. But thankfully, now, during this precious hour together each week, I do not find myself slowly moving away from conversations to hurriedly glance around the room to find the person I needed to speak with about the reading group scheduling, or the pancake supper clean-up, or the costume planning for the pageant.

In this new way of socializing, our group shares fellowship within the “four walls of [our] new freedom”.² We are bound to each other for these sixty minutes. The virtual “room” is small, but comfortable. The time is pre-determined but not too long or too short. The sharing is focused, authentic, intimate, respectful, and patient. Where would we be racing off to? We learn about each other. We talk about our latest challenges and successes. We laugh. We discuss the week’s Scripture passages, Sunday’s homily, and supplement our musings by picking and choosing from among discussion questions that inform, provoke, and inspire. And we pray together.

I can’t help feeling that this modest thing that we are doing is indeed at the “heart of Christianity.” But are we really surprised at how very lovely Christian fellowship can be even under such circumstances? Jesus’s promise to the first men and women to walk with Him is no less a promise to us: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”



⊕ Rebecca Wells-Jopling is a member and subdeacon at Christ Church Deer Park.

References:

¹ Stump, E. (2019). Wandering in Darkness: Eleonore Stump on Suffering, Evil, and Personal Encounter [online]. La Mirada, CA: Biola University, Inc. Available from: The Table Podcast [accessed 3 January 2021].

² Merton, Thomas. The Seven Storey Mountain. Orlando: Harcourt, Inc.

Lent 2021 – Quit COVID Kvetching!

By Genevieve Chornenki

I call him the **Potato Man**, but he sells other vegetables at the St. Lawrence Market on Saturdays. Lately, he’s been covering his nose and mouth with a calico mask and wearing rubber kitchen gloves that reach to his elbows.

“Wishing you a happy and healthy 2021,” he said in January, handing me change for a squash with \$4.30 written in black marker on its side.

“You, too,” I replied, then added, “Happy is in our control. Healthy? Well...”

“I suppose that’s right,” he said. “People can choose to be happy under any circumstances, can’t they?”

Can they? As the day progressed I thought about our exchange, but I was dubious; I could simply list too many *what abouts*. What about the refugees on Lesbos who wait in line four hours to collect a few cucumbers while tourists dine on grilled octopus? Or the boy who submerges himself up to the neck in a swamp for days to escape armed marauders in his country? Or the woman who walks into Dr. Denis Mukwege’s rape clinic, carrying the victim—her nursing baby?

No. The Potato Man wasn’t referring to them. He meant *us*, and he was correct to conclude that many of us have the luxury of choosing our attitudes. We who covet and enjoy unearned advantages that can so easily be taken for granted or assumed to be universal—sound physical and mental health, unimpeded mobility, proximate medical care, single family dwellings, second or even third residences, private automobiles, investment and savings accounts, induction cook tops and sous vide machines, plenty of bandwidth—can chose to be happy in current circumstances. So, forgive me when I say that I’m tired of the kvetching, mine and yours, about how COVID-19 and related restrictions are impositions or, heaven forbid, violations of civil liberties. I don’t want to hear, read, or think any more about our “pandemic fatigue.”

Glasses fogging up in cold weather when you wear a mask? Someone steering their grocery cart the wrong way down the pasta aisle at Sobeys? Wrinkles too prominent and hair too unkempt on Zoom? Family Day reduced to jig saw puzzles at the kitchen table? Restaurant dining off limits? Ditto for in-person worship and parish coffee hour? Need I add that your teeth haven’t been professionally cleaned in a year?

My grade two teacher, Sister Mary Angelus, would have had the antidote to each such complaint—*Offer it up*, by which she would mean accept your crosses and bear them willingly on behalf of others. Suffer, vicariously and with joy. Or, as a friend’s little niece once put it, “Grizzle your mind.”

I can’t think of a more appropriate and convenient 2021 Lenten discipline than to accept without complaint the restrictions and inconveniences imposed by the pandemic. For what is conveyed by the image of the crucified Christ, that which is remembered and revered on Good Friday, if not the deliberate and willing acceptance of suffering?

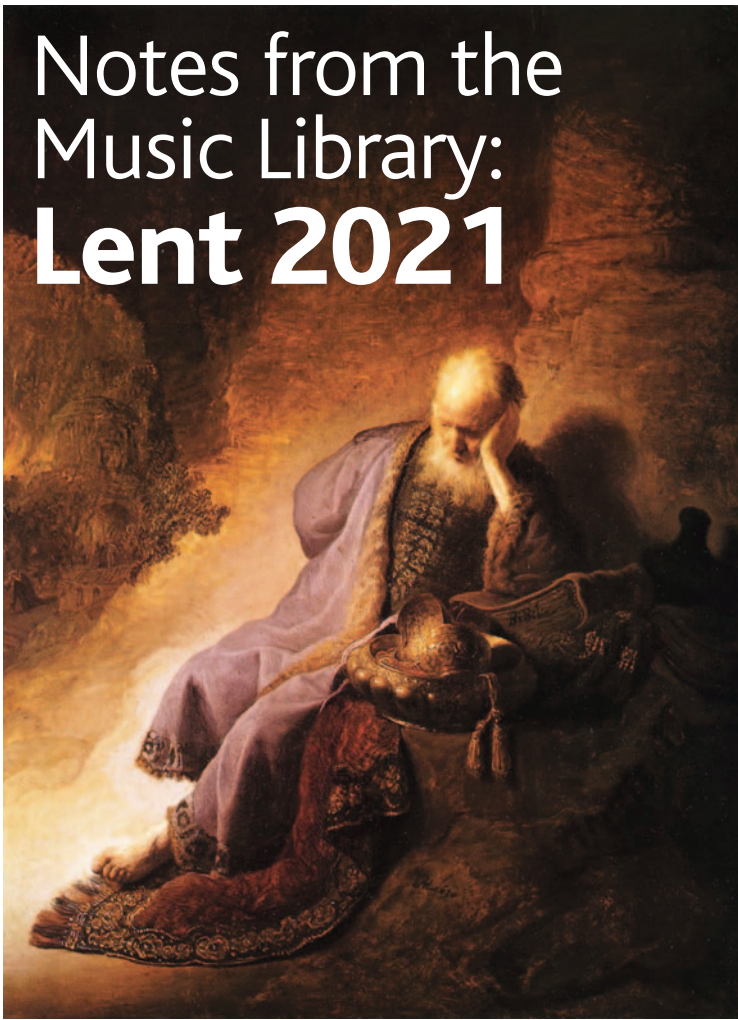
We may not be able to match the scale of the undertaking reflected in the Crucifixion, but given what is being asked of many of us at this time, we can surely match the spirit.



⊕ Genevieve Chornenki has served as the editor of Spiritus since its inception in 2015.



Notes from the Music Library: Lent 2021



By Emily Chatten

Last year as Lent came upon us, someone in the parish said to me how much Lenten music seemed to be a dirge. I was sad to hear this. The music of Lent and Holy Week is intended to reflect the spiritual journey undertaken. Yes, there is some desolation in this music, and there is struggle, but there is also comfort and eventually joy as it works toward Easter. As the COVID lockdowns drag on, I want to offer something that includes many of those elements and more.

If you’ve given a careful reading to the Lamentations of Jeremiah it will not come as a surprise to you that those poetic passages have often been associated with Good Friday. The vivid and short text is well suited to music and appears in choral and instrumental settings by numerous composers over the centuries. I’m offering the Lamentations during the pandemic because it seems like a time for lament.

According to Jeremiah-expert Kathleen O’Connor, laments follow a pattern in which the speaker calls out and clearly complains to God, petitioning God for help. There may be a second voice that offers words of assurance, ending with praise and confidence that God will answer the petition. In Jeremiah, there are liturgical prayers written in either the first or third person. The key to these prayers, what makes them a lament, is the element of complaint.

In other traditions, laments use music, language, gesture, and crying. They may be performed only by women and are often used in the context of weddings, funeral preparations, and funerals. In the Karelian tradition in Eastern Finland, the Balkans, and Soviet Karelia, wedding and funeral rituals contained as many as fifty specific laments. The intention of these laments was to accompany separation, transition, and reincorporation of the bride to wife or the deceased to ancestor. Karelian women who lament “cry with words.”

The Lamentations are full of pain and bitterness. The community of Judah used the language of suffering through prayer and lament, both individually and in community to do the work of community healing. The people of Judah started with a traditional form of lament that they knew from the Psalms.

O’Connor writes that Jeremiah is a poetic mirror for his people. In the liner notes for Peter Tongi’s “Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae,” Keith Horner identifies Jeremiah as a prophet for our times.

Around us is a sick and broken world. It’s unlikely we will meet in person before Easter. Take up this opportunity to listen to one of the wonderful Lamentations of Jeremiah. Make your own lamentations, said or musical. If you need inspiration start with the Psalms, like the people of Judah.

To listen to the Lamentations of Jeremiah, visit the library website: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/> and search “lamentations.” When you find an eMusic file through the Naxos Music Library that you’d like to listen to, follow the instructions I provided in the Advent issue of Spiritus.

May your Lenten lamentations bring you Easter joys.



⊕ Emily Chatten is a Christ Church Deer Park chorister who helps to maintain the parish music library. She is patiently awaiting the day when the choir can resume!

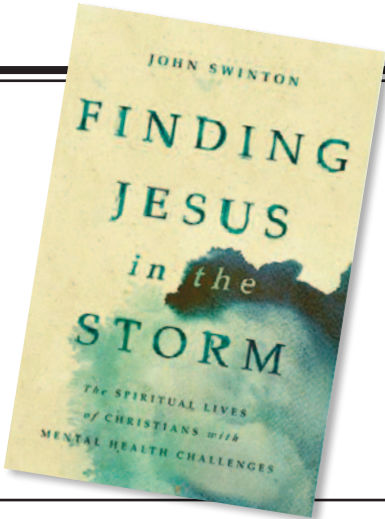
Above: Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn: Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem (1630)

Book Review

Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges

John Swinton
(Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2020)

By Ward Lindsey



This book title *Finding Jesus in the Storm* communicates much by the choice of one word. That word is “the.” If the title had read “Finding Jesus in a Storm,” the reader would not have been led to ask, “What storm?”

Author John Swinton leads us to the journey of followers of Jesus who have mental health challenges. Within this area, he has significant insights as a result of his experience as a nurse in the field of mental health, a community health chaplain, and recently as a professor of pastoral care and practical theology at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland.

For John Swinton, the issue at hand is not a clinical approach to severe mental illness but the experience of mental health *challenges*. In his words, the purpose of his book “is to provide readers with rich, deep, and thick descriptions of the spiritual experiences of Christians living with mental health challenges.” He succeeds by taking us along a sequence of enquiry, explanation, biblical connectivity, and personal experiences.

Of primary importance for Swinton is the need to distinguish between thick and thin descriptions. “A thin description provides us with the minimum amount of information necessary to describe a situation or context.” For example, in order to provide a thick, rich approach, he takes to task the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*. For Swinton the DSM can lead to the issue that “people no longer have an illness; now they are the illness.” His discussion about the DSM is contained in Part I, “The Art of Description.” Following are Part II, “Redescribing Diagnosis,” Part III, “Redescribing Depression”, Part IV, “Hearing Voices,” and Part V. “Redescribing Bipolar Disorder.”

With his task set to find Jesus in the storm, Swinton allows that he is “a theologian, not a psychiatrist, after all. My focus is not so much on eradicating or controlling pathology, but more on how people can live well with Jesus even in the midst of such experiences.” This is where he intersperses conversations with a number of people who face mental health challenges within the context of their Christian faith. He describes this as “disciples talking to a disciple about the things of God.” This description provides a foundation of reality to his book and allows us to respond to those in need with, “accuracy, compassion, and faithfulness.” Continuing with thick lines of thought, he touches the realms of lament and joy that resonate with a seeker’s journey of faith.

The crescendo success and conclusion of this book comes in a final segment, “Redescribing Healing,” where Swinton states, “The temptation is to conflate healing with curing.” In closing he binds together cultural healing, liturgical healing, biblical healing, theological healing, epistemic healing, testimonial healing, and relational healing. He has met his intended goal “to inform, illuminate, entice, and bring about change.”



⊕ Ward Lindsey leads the “Challenging Christianity” discussion group at Christ Church Deer Park. He is also a volunteer chorister.

Exile – Our Chance to Become Church

By Andrew Harding

As we live through another month of lockdown, I doubt I’m the only one who feels like we’re living in exile within our own neighbourhoods. A foreign invader called COVID is ruling our lives and we are living under occupation. We really miss the nourishment of going to church, and it can feel like the joy is ebbing away from life when we unable to hug or a visit a loved one. How can any good come from this time, never mind seeing it as a gift?

As Christians, we have a resource to draw on that goes back to the time five to six hundred years before Christ when much of the Old Testament was formed. In fact, now is the best time to learn from one of ancient Israel’s most formative experiences, which will help us do three things: discover our long history of hope, see how God can be experienced more fully in exile, and give us a way of being newly relevant to our world.

First, while the theme of exile goes back to the earliest stories in Genesis, the focus here is the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Until being forced into exile, the people around Jerusalem lived on a legacy of wealth and identity as God’s people. And then, exile in Babylon. Everything seemed lost (Psalm 137 and Lamentations). But as it happened, in exile a new vision of a better, different future began to be heard. The prophets in Isaiah, Ezekiel, and especially Jeremiah himself reflected on everything they thought they knew—the nature of God, the promise to Abraham and delivery from captivity in Egypt, God’s promise to be in Zion (Jerusalem). The phrase “they shall be my people and I shall be their God” is repeated by Jeremiah.

Second, from this time of grieving for what had been lost and struggling to understand what to do, the new sense of God’s promise was heard. Rather than granting a return to normal, God was actually promising to do a new thing for Israel—which is, in fact, what we read about in preparation for Christmas each year. Especially in Isaiah, there is a vivid sense of God’s promise of a return and restoration of Jerusalem. But just as surely as this is promised, it is not going to be a return to how things were.

Third, what were the people to do as captive exiles in Babylon, not knowing how long they would be there? The prophet Jeremiah developed a model of service that has new relevance now. “Seek the welfare of the city where I sent you into exile and pray on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare,” (29:7). It was in exile that the Israelites discovered that God’s purpose for them all along was to be a blessing to the people around them, without assimilating into them.

Exile can teach us that God can bring liberation through suffering and grief. God does not work for our success but does new things to be with us.



⊕ Andrew Harding and his family joined Christ Church Deer Park in 2019. He has since become a regular contributor to Spiritus.



Living in Exile Christ Church Deer Park– A Lenten Study

For almost 50 years the people of Israel lived in exile in Babylon. Exile. That place which is not home. Their lives were changed forever. Books in the Old Testament tell us their story. Where have our lives intersected with theirs? We have been living with COVID-19 for a year now and, with that, have been living in various states of isolation. We have been in exile from our friends, families, and all activities familiar to us.

Our Lenten study will explore how exile might reflect how we have been living this past year. Through the scriptures and a series of guest speakers, we will apply the concept of exile as it might affect people of colour, Indigenous people, those with mental health illnesses, and those who do not have access to the Corona virus vaccine.

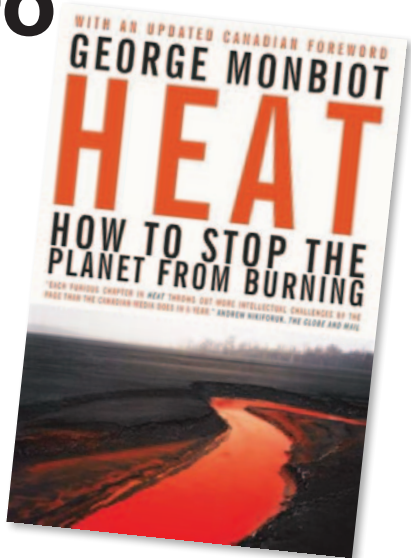
Dates: Tuesdays: February 23, March 2, March 9, March 16, March 23

Time: 7:00-8:30pm

Place: Zoom

To Register: send an email to Cathy Gibbs (adultministries@christchurchdeerpark.org) or phone her (416.454.7717)

George Monbiot's 10 Things to Do



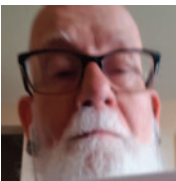
By Bradley Lennon

It was *Guardian* columnist George Monbiot's book *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning* that convinced me of the necessity of my making sweeping changes in my personal lifestyle. I believe these commitments of mine to be important steps towards our collective goal of reducing our carbon emissions by fifty percent in 2030. In addition, I want to keep pressing our public officials to think beyond upcoming elections and towards the policy changes our world requires if we are to preserve anything resembling our current way of life.

Here are some concrete actions that Monbiot suggests for us to do as individuals:

- 1. Cut your flights.** Nothing else you do causes so much climate change in so short a time.
- 2. Think hard before you pick up your car keys.** On average, forty percent of the journeys made by car could be made by other means—on foot, by bicycle, or on public transport.
- 3. Organise a "walking bus"** to take the children to school.
- 4. Ask your boss to devise a "workplace travel plan"** which rewards people for leaving their cars at home.
- 5. Switch over to a supplier of renewable electricity.** You don't have to erect your own wind turbine, but you can buy your power from someone who has.
- 6. Ask a builder to give you an estimate** for bringing your home up to R2000 standards.
- 7. Ditch your air conditioner.**
- 8. Turn down your thermostat:** 18°C is as warm as your house ever needs to be. You just have to get used to it.
- 9. Make sure every bulb in your house** is a compact fluorescent or LED.
- 10. Do NOT buy a plasma TV.** They use five times as much energy as other models.

In these cold winter months, I struggle with keeping my thermostat turned down to 18°C, just as I have difficulty not turning on the air conditioning in the midst of summer. Nevertheless, I believe Monbiot's recommendations are good goals for me to set as challenges for myself.



⊕ Brad Lennon is an active and committed member of Christ Church Deer Park's Climate Action Committee. This article is submitted on behalf of the committee.

The Parish Prayer Team Has Your Back



Devote yourselves to prayer. (Colossians 4:2)

By Jan D'Angelo

A number of years ago I faced some major decisions regarding my career. My usual practice at such a crossroad is to discern what to do on my own with my husband's assistance and through prayer. My Bible study group supported me in many ways but also held me up in prayer. Those prayers made a difference to my decision-making process and gave me great peace. I understood what it meant to be part of the Body of Christ on a whole new level, and I experienced firsthand the blessings that come from being prayed for by others.

When Molly Finlay asked me to consider coordinating a prayer team for the parish, I was delighted. Christ Church Deer Park is such a caring community, and praying for others as they have need seems like a natural fit. So, a team of people interested in being a part of the endeavor was assembled. That team has supported many through prayer over the past year.

Here is how the prayer team works: If you find yourself in a situation where you would like the team to pray for you, a loved one, or a particular person or cause, contact Cheryl Palmer or Cathy Gibbs. Your request will be passed on to me, and I, in turn, will send it out electronically to the prayer team. All prayer requests are kept confidential by team members who commit to praying for the particular request for at least two weeks and ongoing, as needed. If you have updates, these can be passed on to the team through Cheryl or Cathy.

As a prayer team, we have had the privilege of praying for members of our parish when they have requested prayer and, in turn, our faith has been stretched and renewed. We have become more aware of God's powerful presence in our midst, and we are grateful to be part of this significant ministry at Christ Church Deer Park.



⊕ Jan D'Angelo and her husband, Peter, started to attend Christ Church Deer Park in the spring of 2019. They thoroughly enjoy the wonderful worship and caring community. Jan is the Team Shepherd for a leadership development program called LAUNCH, a program of Youth Unlimited.

Lent Interrupted



By William Jackson

In early 2020, I undertook to put myself out in the world as part of my Lenten practice. I planned to "break bread" with others who were strangers to me, arming myself with food gift cards and giving out at least one a day to an individual living on the streets, but only after I had engaged in a conversation with the person to the extent that I at least knew who I was dealing with and what their situation was.

COVID-19 put paid to last year's plan because, in the pandemic's early stages, Yonge Street was deserted and few people could be found outdoors. Lent was a bust! Now, I could sit at home, humming and singing the melodies and words of "Comfortably Numb" and "On the Turning Away," songs by a favourite band of mine, Pink Floyd. My very blest position in society left me comfortably numb to the perilous nature of life on the streets here in Toronto. And, concomitant with my numbness or ignorance, it was much easier to turn away than it was to engage with these individuals.

But now I am no longer excused by circumstances. We have masks and prescribed distances. We have fully open drug stores and grocery stores. We have people walking to and fro on the sidewalks. And we have clearly visible individuals who are obviously in need on the streets of our neighbourhood.

So, this Lent I plan to revive my plan for 2020. This year I hope to again connect with the people of the Yonge and St. Clair strip. My goal for this Lent is to actively engage with these strangers, get to know them, understand their situation, and do what I can to alleviate any immediate issues. I suspect the two biggest issues will be food and shelter, large and systemic issues. I will try to do my small part by keeping a stock of food cards on hand as well as tokens for transportation.

In anticipation of Lent I have already started on this journey. Wish me luck!



⊕ William Jackson is the chair of the parish's Congregational Care Team. He misses baking bread for Communion.

Volunteer Spotlight: Claire van Nostrand

By Deborah Wilkinson

When did you first start coming to Christ Church Deer Park?

I have been going since I was born. My Dad's family has attended for generations, so it was important for him to introduce us to the community. My uncle and his family plus my grandmother and great aunt still attend.

Please tell us about yourself.

My family is very close family, and I am the middle child. I attended St. Clement's School for 12 years and then chose Queen's University in Kingston. This year, I will complete my undergraduate degree in Sociology.

What is your dream vacation?

Greece or Italy. Both seem beautiful, and experiencing their history, views, food, and architecture would be incredible.

Favourite sports team?

My Dad's side are major Toronto Maple Leafs fans. My Mother's side loves the Montreal Canadiens. I love both, but Toronto is my home, so I pick the Leafs.

Favourite ice cream flavour?

Chocolate—boring, I know, so I mix it with banana ice cream.

What books you're currently reading

At school, I'm pretty swamped but did read one for a course on surveillance in society, *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools*

Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor, by Virginia Eubanks. The book is intense and scary but informative about surveillance systems that perpetuate inequalities.

How do you volunteer at the parish?

Being away at university, I wasn't able to volunteer for the last couple of years, but last summer my uncle, Andrew, mentioned a Wednesday lunch initiative similar to the Saturday community breakfast. There I worked with people like Andrew, Anne Larkin, Debbie Wilkinson, and my friend Katie Marshall, serving hot meals to whomever wanted them. The parish also connected me with the Churches on-the-Hill Foodbank where amazing people work. I helped them sort food and deliveries.

Why is volunteering important to you?

Parish programs allow individuals to access a hot meal and food to take home, but also to receive emotional support. They offer a safe space for guests to interact with volunteers—a rarity for some people with the prevalence of COVID-19. Volunteering makes sure these programs continue. Volunteering is associated with giving back and selflessness, which is why I volunteer, but there's more. Last summer, volunteering gave me purpose by allowing me to interact with guests (from a safe distance and with PPE) who also listened to me and asked me questions. I learned about different people, different perspectives, and

different struggles. The experience was incredibly rewarding. I gained positivity, knowledge, and awareness. I like to think we made a difference in the lives of our guests, but they made just as substantial an impact on me.

How has giving to Christ Church Deer Park impacted you?

The parish has been part of my life as long as I can remember—learning lessons in the children's program, completing a photography project with other parishioners, and now volunteering. It taught me about community and the importance of compassion, support, and collaboration. I constantly meet new people who share their perspectives, ideas, and stories, and what makes the parish so special is that these unique people are able to come together. I also respect that the parish encourages individuality and is a safe and supportive place.



Deborah Wilkinson currently serves as People's Warden at Christ Church Deer Park. If you would like to be interviewed for an upcoming issue or want to offer someone's name, please contact Deborah at ccdpcoffee@gmail.com.



Claire and her brothers, Jack and Alec.

At the heart of evil and suffering

Book Review:

The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami?

David Bentley Hart
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005)

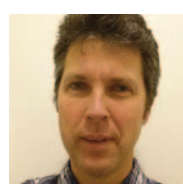
By Andrew Harding

Every so often, a book is written with a prophetic urgency apparent only years after the fact. Deep into a global pandemic, Hart's 2005 essay is a short, sharp introduction to the issue of God's presence in events that kill millions. Although it was written in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami where 250,000 people, many of them children, perished, *The Doors of the Sea* is a primer on the basic character of the Christian God.

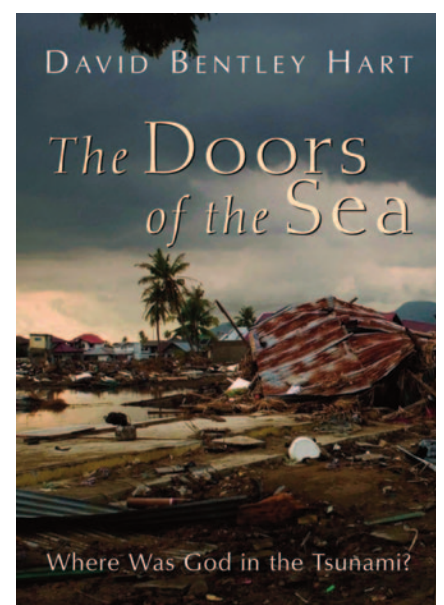
Hart explores the difference between what God wills and what God permits to happen. This is not an academic distinction but one that defines the heart of God—that is, does God need suffering and evil in order to achieve his whole plan for creation? Or is God working with what happens in such a way that his saving grace folds all things into his good purposes? Hart strongly favours the latter view and rejects the idea that all things happen according a pre-set plan.

For those who believe in The Plan, Hart gives the example of trying to explain to a father weeping with grief over his four children from dead the tsunami, that their deaths are all part of God's pre-ordained plan. This might not be a controversial point to most Anglicans but many of Hart's points are made against the reformed tradition of Christianity with a more deterministic account of God's will.

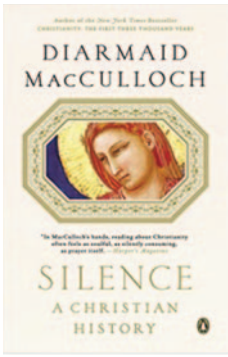
Hart is a forceful writer, the more so in this short book. He concludes by saying that "seeing the goodness indwelling all creation requires a labour of vision that only a faith in Easter can sustain."



Ⓜ Andrew Harding and his family joined Christ Church Deer Park in 2019. He has since become a regular contributor to Spiritus

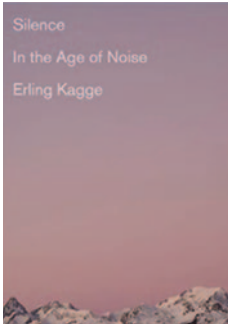


Shhh, Editor's Choice



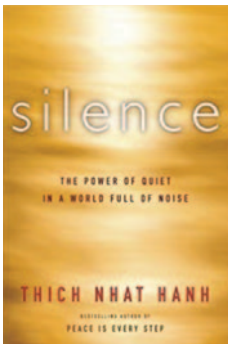
Silence: A Christian History
Diarmaid MacCulloch
(Penguin Books, 2013)

If Christians are enjoined to share the Good News, where does silence fit in? Diarmaid MacCulloch does a thorough job of explaining its place, both positive and negative, from silence in the Tanakh through to that surrounding slavery, the Holocaust, and clerical abuse. His interest in silence began when he was a young gay man who observed how messages are conveyed by both what is said and what is not said. That, he says, credentialed him to begin his investigation. *Silence: A Christian History* was developed from MacCulloch's 2012 Gifford Lecture, and it focuses on silence in the Western Church.



Silence: In the Age of Noise
Erling Kagge
Translated from Norwegian by Becky L. Crook
(Pantheon Books, 2017)

Erling Kagge is well acquainted with silence. He was the first person to reach the South Pole alone, walking for days without a radio. He believes that silence is essentially an inward quality, fundamental to happiness. Indeed. Kagge is an explorer, publisher, and an art collector. His book is a delight to hold, punctuated with full colour reproductions of evocative artwork. But can a person really experience true silence in a contemporary urban environment where a condominium is being constructed on every corner? Read the book and decide for yourself.



Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise
Thich Nhat Hahn
(HarperOne; Reprint edition, 2016)

Like Erling Kagge, Zen master Thich Nhat Hahn speaks of silence as an inner resource. One needn't go anywhere to find it. It's available here and now. How so? The author (1924–2019) was part of a contemplative community living in a retreat centre in southwest France. The community engages in noble silence. "If we are talking, we are talking. But if we are doing something else—such as eating, walking, or working—then we do just these things. We aren't doing these things and also talking. So we do these things in joyful noble silence." Translation: no multi-tasking. Another 2021 Lenten discipline?

A Poem by Rebecca Wells-Jopling

Across

Aching.	Scared.	Knees.	Hands.
Broken.	Scarred.	Knees.	Hands.
Sin.	My sin.	Knees	Hands
Loss.	Our loss.	knees	hands
Hollow	voices	knees	hands
Ashen	days	knees	hands
Dust	driven	knees	hands
	I cannot	knees	hands
	but for You	nees	hands
	Son of God	n h	
	Savior	ε σ	
	Lord	Ω	



Editor:
Genevieve A. Chornenki

Creative Design:
Henry Zaluski



WANTED
CONTRIBUTORS AND
PHOTOGRAPHERS
OF ALL AGES AND STAGES.

Would you be willing to take on a specific assignment or take pictures? Is there something you would like to research and write about? Do you have a constructive comment? Or, is there an activity or initiative that you would like others to join? If so, please contact us at spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org

Submissions should be 250 to 500 words in length and in Word format, and all submissions will be subject to edit. **Copy deadline for the next edition is Monday, August 16, 2021**

A big thanks to all of the contributors for this issue of *SPIRITUS*.



Christ Church Deer Park
1570 Yonge Street
Toronto ON M4T 1Z8C
416.920.5211
ChristChurchDeerPark.org

Sanctus: A Video by Ward Lindsey

The stained glass window is high in the east wall of our church. In the video the phrase "people look east" has two meanings. First, when in the church, look east and see the window and ponder the artwork and meaning therein. It was put there for some reason. Secondly, the phrase "people look east" is taken from an Advent carol. So why is reference made at this time coming up to or in fact in the season of Lent? Take a look beyond the star in the east of Christmas, and you will end up eventually in EASTer.



[Click here to play video](#)

Dear Church Mouse



Dear Church Mouse,

What would it take for the church to be open during the week for anyone to come in and sit quietly? Or do we wait until the pandemic has passed?

Silent Seeker

Dear *Silent Seeker*,

To be honest, this mouse is enjoying the silence and serenity of an empty church. However, if you believe that the church should be open for quiet individual prayer, I suggest you talk to the Rector and the churchwardens about relevant health and safety directives and other related concerns. While you're at it, begin to assemble a team of volunteers willing to take on the risks and work alongside you.