



Climb Every Mountain

by Alexandra McIntosh

In early August, on the Feast of the Transfiguration, I had a chance to share some of my thoughts regarding mountains. Some of the most sacred moments in our scripture happen on mountains: the Binding of Isaac, Moses at Mount Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the Transfiguration. We are always climbing, searching for ways to be closer to God.

I am a great lover of climbing mountains: searching for beautiful places above the clouds, all the while hoping for moments of revelation and peace after a difficult journey. I know I am not unique. I believe it is a very human thing to do. We expect mountains to be transformative. That’s why parents and mentors tell young people to go off and climb some mountains, both figuratively and literally. They tell youth to climb some mountains so they can grow from their experiences, and then come back and be ready to live their adult lives. Graduates and retirees, at times of transition, set off across the world looking for mountains to climb in order to illuminate what their next steps might be or how to let go of the past. But as we climb down from these peaks, our epiphanies fade, our connections are severed. We fall back into old routines and patterns, and on particularly bad days we wistfully look out a window and think, “if only I was back in that place above the clouds.” Reflecting on the Transfiguration, I found myself relating to Peter, who wanted to cling to that experience: why can’t we stay on the mountaintop?

I know that many of you have had your own mountaintop experiences (both literally and figuratively). I know how powerful these experiences have been by the way you tell your stories. It is a privilege to hear someone share an account of something that changed their life. The thing is, sometimes when you hear these stories you feel like you have to go off and do the same thing in order to get the same revelatory

We are always climbing, searching for ways to be closer to God.

experience. Like Peter, we feel like we have to search out and dwell in that sacred space to be transformed. Like Peter, we think that we must cling to that experience. How do we hold on to the transformative experience and carry it down the mountain with us?

Keeping in mind that we will celebrate the season of creation this year in September and October, I encourage everyone to climb every mountain their heart desires! I encourage us to look for God and transformation in the little things. Behold God’s glory in the backyard harvest of late August tomatoes. Look for Jesus’ presence in the way children delight in the splash pad at the park, and in the ways that plants grow in the cracks in the concrete of our sidewalks. Listen to the leading of the Spirit as you cast open your curtains in the morning, letting in the warm light of the sun. To quote Richard Rohr, we live in a “Christ-soaked world.” God is everywhere. Our job is to open our eyes and bask in it. I am continually transformed by the faithful actions of members of the Christ Church community. We are abundantly blessed by people from all walks of life who gather together to proclaim belief in God’s kingdom. Through our community we are building that kingdom brick by brick. Every Sunday is a mountaintop experience for me, and I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else! Thanks be to God.

❖ Alexandra (Ali) McIntosh is Assistant Curate at Christ Church Deer Park.

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How to Be a Faithful Survivor

By Andrew Harding

September can feel like the start of a new year. Schools, colleges, and universities begin a new year. Summer is over and people come back to church. September is also often a time when people look for a better job.

September brings the Jewish New Year—Rosh Hashanah—from sundown on the 15th to nightfall on the 17th this year (like Easter, the dates change each year). Rosh Hashanah is the time to reflect on the past year and ask God for forgiveness, in preparation for Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement. This is the holiest time of the year for Jews. These ten days of repentance, as they are known, are the time to draw closest to God through fasting and prayer when seeking God’s forgiveness.

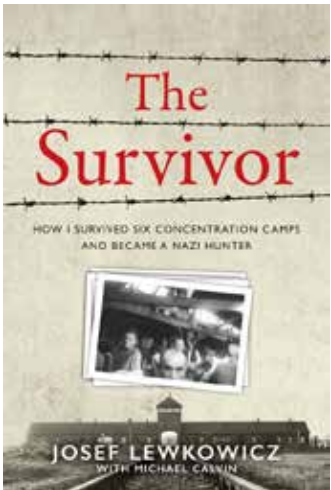
This was brought to mind by a new memoir from one of the last remaining Holocaust survivors, Josef Lewkowicz. His story was published this year: ***The Survivor—How I Survived Six Concentration Camps and Became a Nazi Hunter***. One incident was particularly striking. In one of the most brutal concentration camps of World War II, amid the forced labour that destroyed body and soul, someone remembered that it was Yom Kippur. This caused a stir. A junior guard noticed. Asking what was happening, he was told it was Yom Kippur—a day of rest and prayer. “Here’s what I’ll do,” he said. “I will keep watch for the SS guard. You can lie down and rest from work. When I see them coming, I will shout at you to work harder and flick my whip. When they have passed, you can return to rest.”

Apart from the graphic brutality that he witnessed and describes, it is Josef Lewkowicz’s deep faith in the goodness and sustaining presence of God that he credits to his survival. It was a presence learned from earliest childhood with the Shema prayer and then through synagogue worship, his Bar Mitzvah, and then personal study with a Rabbi—all before he was 14. That his faith endured and was strengthened, I find remarkable.

Reading this memoir made me realize afresh that the Jewish faith is the living foundation of Christianity. Jewish scripture, what Christians call the Old Testament, is also Christian scripture. To deny this is to draw dangerously close to the German church that failed to resist the Nazis. Christians have much to learn from Jewish faith when we see that we too worship the God of Abraham, celebrating that we are included at His table. We share a faith that God is at work in the world and helps people who cannot help themselves—however mysterious His ways appear to us. We have a common understanding that the world is God’s to save and not ours, though we have our part to play. Top of mind for me is that the study of the scriptures, sermons, and commentaries accompanied by lively debate is the very lifeblood of faith.

As we return to church after summer vacations, I hope we can look forward to the forthcoming year with the words of the *Shehecheyanu* prayer for Rosh Hashanah. *Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v’kiy’manu v’higianu laz’man hazeh*. Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

❖ *Andrew Harding is chair of Christ Church Deer Park’s property committee, an occasional chorister, and a regular contributor to Spiritus.*



The Survivor—How I Survived Six Concentration Camps and Became a Nazi Hunter
by Josef Lewkowicz

Eighty-six

by Tony van Straubensee

I recently had my eighty-sixth birthday, and never, ever did I think I would live this long!

The hell of it is that I have lost all but two of my oldest friends. Fortunately, my wife, Mary, and my dog, Brady, are very much alive, and we get out walking every day. Since we live around the corner from the University of Toronto, we see the wonderful array of international students enjoying life and working hard. Many of them stop to speak to my dog.

Gosh. It was 66 years ago that I was a student at university.

I have fond memories of my time at university, particularly of one occasion when I was registering for a course. There was a lineup, and the girl in front of me was very attractive. She was a little cool and resisted my trying to chat her up, but I finally got her name *and* her phone number. When I called her that evening, her mother answered the phone and said, “Oh yes. You are the boy with the long name. She is expecting your call.”

Nothing immediately came of my call, but the mother had a hunch I would become her son-in-law—and she was right!



Tony and Mary at University of Toronto

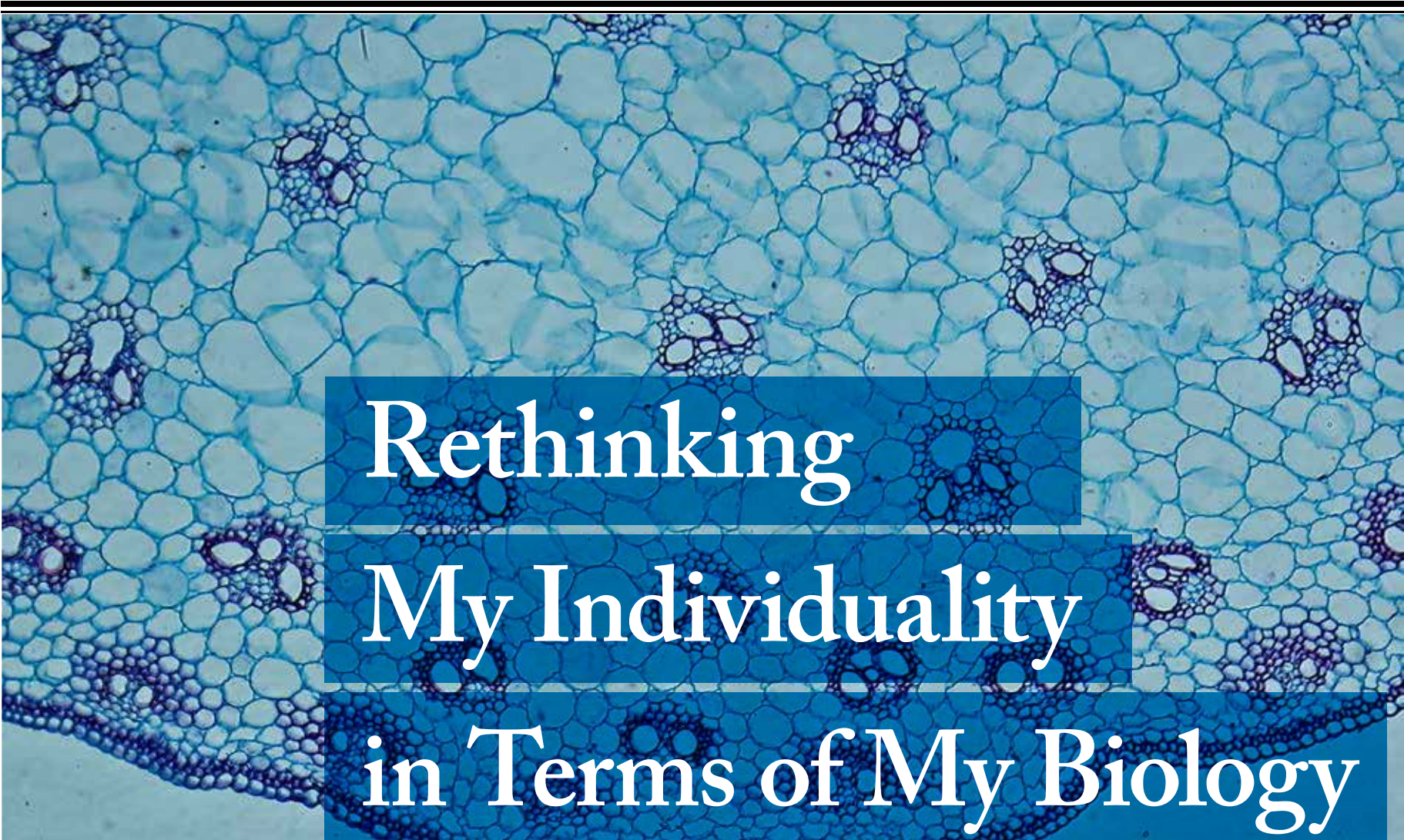
Unlike the girl in the lineup, my dog, Brady, did not initially resist my interest, and we quickly became fast and very committed friends.

Yesterday, I had a pain in my leg and went to see my doctor. He said, “Look, you shouldn’t complain. You are, after all, eighty-six, and you have already dodged two bullets—a heart attack many years ago and prostate cancer fairly recently. Your pain will go away. It’s probably just a nerve. You can still walk and keep at it.”

“Righto,” I said. “Sorry to trouble you.”

I used to get calls every six months from the Princess Margaret Hospital inquiring about my prostate cancer. The caller was usually a young woman who was obviously reading questions from some form. The last phone call was interesting. She asked, “When was the last time you had an erection?” I answered, “When I was thirteen.” I could hear her laughing, and she hung up. There have been no more calls.

❖ *Tony van Straubensee is a former churchwarden and staunch supporter of Christ Church Deer Park. He contributes to Spiritus on a regular basis.*

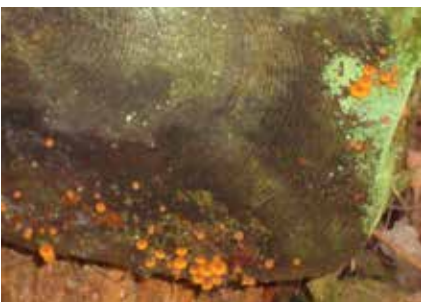


Rethinking My Individuality in Terms of My Biology

by Bradley Lennon

In each of us human beings, our individual bodies contain, on average, 37 trillion cells that have derived themselves from the fertilized egg that brought that person into existence. However, seen from another view, the body of an average human contains twice as many cells as this, although these other cells are much smaller than the cells we usually think of as part of our bodies. When we total the whole mass each one of us carries in the weight of our bodies, not just those cells with a direct genetic connection to a single, fertilized egg, the complexity of my body astounds me.

Every bit of the surfaces of our bodies is covered inside and out, every nook and cranny of the human body, with cells to which we are a host. Some of these other cells—bacteria, fungi, microbes—are mere passengers. Many are symbiotic and beneficial to us. They, and not just our parents’ genes, encode functions that have a crucial role in our human health, such as digestion, immune function, metabolism, and even mental health.



We are not what we are just by the link that we have with our parents. We are assemblies of various components that have co-evolved into one functioning unit. Some of these microbes, in our guts for example, can fend off disease-causing pathogens. Other microbes break down fibrous plants into smaller molecules that the cells of the body can metabolize. These microbes produce molecules that signal the cells of the human body, which in turn can return signals to the cells that the body hosts. Serotonin, for example, is a neurotransmitter produced by the gut bacteria that carries impulses between our nerve cells. Serotonin plays a key role in such body functions as mood and sleep and digestion.

Doesn’t this make us people much like trees in the forest with the mushroom mycelium weaving itself around their roots, altering the shape of the root so that the mushroom absorbs water and minerals for the tree? The tree in return gives the mushroom nutrients, and trees are able to communicate with each other through these mycorrhizal networks. Mycorrhizal fungi interact with a wide range of other soil organisms, in the root, in the rhizosphere, and in the bulk soil.

Paul writes in Colossians 1:16-17 that in Christ “all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible” and in Christ “all things hold together.” This indicates to me that a divinely-ordered unity underlies the natural world and binds all things together, including us humans living in this world. The story of Adam and Eve shows that we humans failing to heed this ordering that frames creation has led to an ongoing disruption in the harmony God had set between all things. This failure results not only in a broken relationship between humans and God, but also between humans and all the natural world.

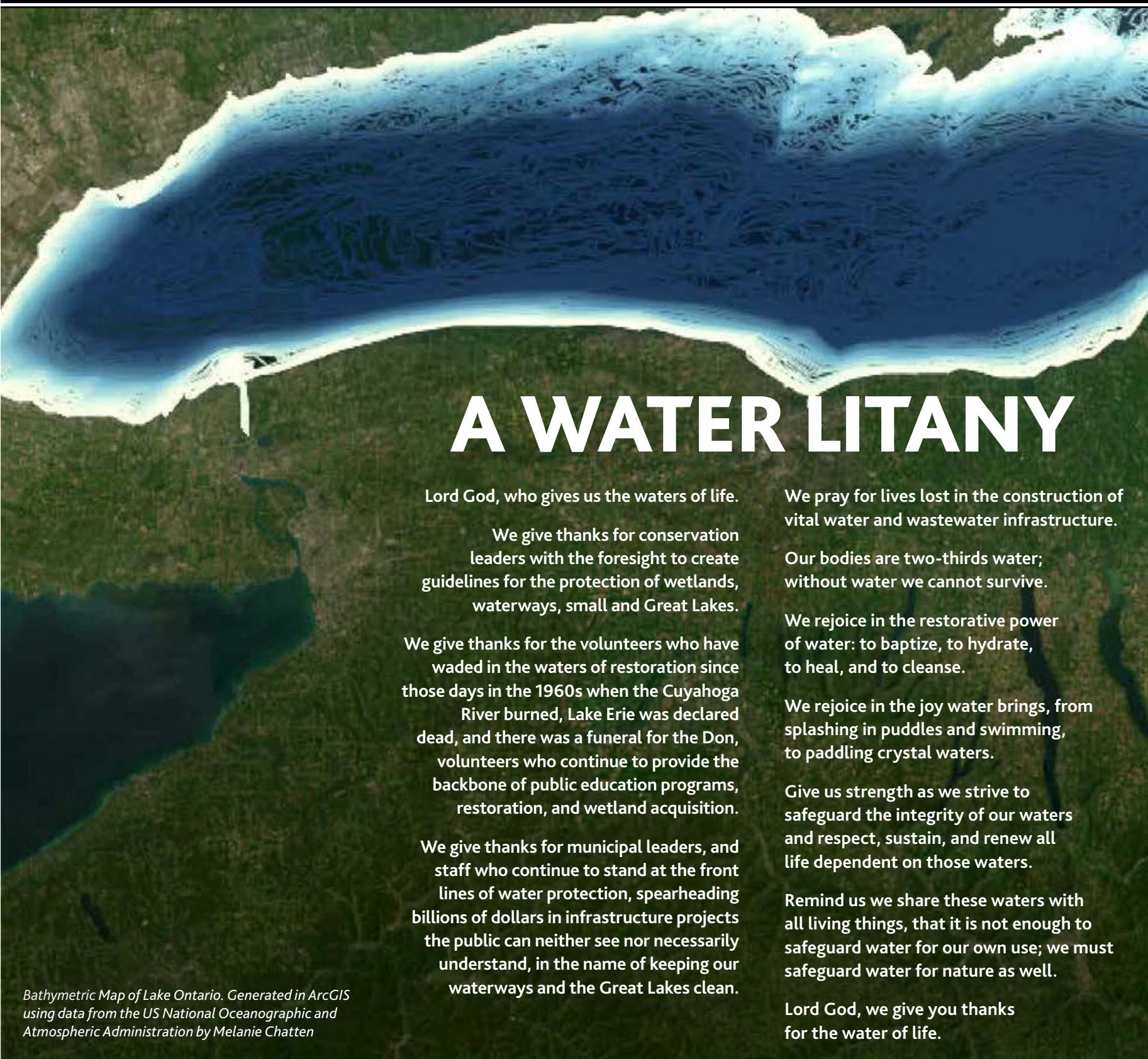
However, the letter to the Colossians goes on to declare that, through Jesus Christ, God seeks to reconcile all things to the Divine Self (1:20). As we and creation await the fulfilment of this promised reconciliation, Paul perceives the longing of creation for redemption and liberation from its bondage to decay (Romans 8:19-22). He writes of creation “groaning” with labour pains as it suffers from humanity’s captivity to waste. Creation therefore waits “with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.” This passage in Paul’s letter implies that the interconnectedness of all created things will ultimately lead to restoration of their divinely-set order in God’s plan for all things.

Indigenous peoples of this continent know that all facets of creation are interrelated, are in harmony with one another. This sense of relationship extends to the land, the earth, the birds, the animals, to our sisters and brothers, and to the Creator. With this sense of the interdependence of humans with what surrounds us, Indigenous peoples have maintained respect for all parts of creation.

But for someone like me from a West European background, the sense that I myself am “an entity made of many species—all inseparably linked in their ecology and evolution” is something new. It means for me that we are products of our environment in ways I never imagined before. I had known that a healthy environment is necessary for healthy individuals, but I am beginning to understand that “my health” means that the environment must be healthy for even the minute microbes we need for our bodies to function, and even for the microbes that help make the plants we eat.

✦ Bradley Lennon is a member of the Climate Action Group and the Property Committee of Christ Church Deer Park.

“
*Every bit of the
surfaces of our
bodies is covered
inside and out,
every nook and
cranny of the
human body, with
cells to which we
are a host.*



A WATER LITANY

Lord God, who gives us the waters of life.

We give thanks for conservation leaders with the foresight to create guidelines for the protection of wetlands, waterways, small and Great Lakes.

We give thanks for the volunteers who have waded in the waters of restoration since those days in the 1960s when the Cuyahoga River burned, Lake Erie was declared dead, and there was a funeral for the Don, volunteers who continue to provide the backbone of public education programs, restoration, and wetland acquisition.

We give thanks for municipal leaders, and staff who continue to stand at the front lines of water protection, spearheading billions of dollars in infrastructure projects the public can neither see nor necessarily understand, in the name of keeping our waterways and the Great Lakes clean.

We pray for lives lost in the construction of vital water and wastewater infrastructure.

Our bodies are two-thirds water; without water we cannot survive.

We rejoice in the restorative power of water: to baptize, to hydrate, to heal, and to cleanse.

We rejoice in the joy water brings, from splashing in puddles and swimming, to paddling crystal waters.

Give us strength as we strive to safeguard the integrity of our waters and respect, sustain, and renew all life dependent on those waters.

Remind us we share these waters with all living things, that it is not enough to safeguard water for our own use; we must safeguard water for nature as well.

Lord God, we give you thanks for the water of life.

Bathymetric Map of Lake Ontario. Generated in ArcGIS using data from the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration by Melanie Chatten

From the Primordial Ooze to Sewage Treatment: Renewing Your Baptismal Covenant in the Waters of the Great Lakes

by Emily Chatten

In this issue of *Spiritus* you'll find an infographic entitled: "*From the Primordial Ooze to Sewage Treatment: Renewing Your Baptismal Covenant in the Waters of the Great Lakes.*" A couple of Old Testament readings in the spring from Isaiah had me thinking about linkages between the Bible and recent legislative changes that impact our coastal areas. But how do they fit together?

My education is in environmental studies and political science. My professional background is in Great Lakes and water policy. I started in provincial parks in natural heritage education, providing nature programs to park visitors; that background supported projects I worked on in Great Lakes education, public education, and even contributing to the curriculum.

Much of my work has been engaging with stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard in Great Lakes decision-making. Despite that, I would largely describe myself as a desk jockey. I've found it important to get back to my park roots and try to get involved in field projects. That may involve going out as a volunteer for a day or two, but these projects have involved everything from assisting scientist colleagues in collecting data to participating in restoration projects. Toward the end of my undergrad I was able to fit in a course on environment and spirituality. In the ensuing years I have continued to read ecotheology.

The pictures on the infographic are all from my personal collection. The map is bathymetric; you can think of that as the opposite of topographic. Topographic maps show elevation on land; the bathymetric data set used here maps water depth.

What you see in *Spiritus* is a combination of my experiences in policy, public education, and ecotheology. There are pictures, Bible passages, a few facts, and a range of actions you can consider taking related to the passages and facts. The water litany I have written draws together water use and resource management and our ongoing concern about the future of water, with delight in the enjoyment of water and thanks for all water provides for us as humans and the environment. I hope that you will find the water litany a useful starting place for reflecting on the role of water in your life.

To that end, I'll leave you with a quote that theologian Larry Rasmussen gives from a pastor friend regarding the water of baptism: "wash away any indifference you have, any despair you feel, any fear which clouds your vision. And let it symbolize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon a transformed people. Let it remind us of the thirst of the earth and the thirst of the people in many parts of the world who live parched lives. Let it remind us of the dream of children to dance and bathe and drink clean water. Let it remind us of the promise of scripture that streams forth in the desert, and that the river of the water of death will be replaced by the river of the water of life."

ENGO is not defined on the infographic, it stands for Environmental Nongovernmental Organization.

✦ Emily Chatten is a volunteer chorister at Christ Church Deer Park who helps to maintain the parish music library. Emily has recently joined a group of volunteers editing and producing *Spiritus*.



1

And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas.

GENESIS 1:6 & 1:10

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures."

GENESIS 1:20



2



3

Wetlands are transitional zones between open water and dry land that are one of four types: marsh, swamp, bog, or fen. Often described as the earth's sponges, they're also areas high in biodiversity, especially in temperate areas like ours. They may be at or below the high water mark. Houses built on filled wetlands will be flood-prone.

Listen to me in silence, O coastlands; let the peoples renew their strength; then let them speak; let us draw near for judgment.

ISAIAH 41:1



4

Places water meets land are subject to constant change. Beaches, dunes, and cliffs by their nature are unstable and can change with a wind or rainfall. This is the reason in the past Ontario has had regulations intended to keep buildings away from these hazards.



6

"Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him went into the ark, to escape the waters of the flood."

GENESIS 6:11-9:18

Almost all cultures have a "Great Flood" story that is consistent with the flooding described in Genesis.

FROM THE PRIMODIAL OOZE TO SEWAGE TREATMENT:

Renewing Your Baptismal Covenant in the Waters of the Great Lakes



5

TAKE ACTION

- » Only flush toilet paper.
- » Never pour fat down the drain.
- » Listen to Haydn's oratorio "The Creation" or read Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
- » Pressure the provincial government to restore the Conservation Authorities Act to ensure the safety of our wetlands and shorelines, and to ensure flood protection.
- » Contribute to or engage with ENGOS like Save the Don who educate Torontonians about improving water quality.
- » Contribute to and engage with ENGOS that actively purchase and save wetlands, shorelands, and other wildlands, like local Land Trusts, Ducks Unlimited, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- » Protect wetlands you own in perpetuity through the Conservation Easement program (provincial).
- » Install rain barrels at your downspouts. Rain barrels help reduce pressure on storm sewers. Use rainwater to water your garden.
- » RAIN BARRELS DO NOT REPRESENT A POTABLE WATER SOURCE
- » Never allow anything other than storm water down storm drains.
- » Get to know your local waterways. Walk the Don, Humber, Ravine, and Waterfront trails!



7

Until the institution of sewage treatment in the early 20th century, cholera epidemics were common in Great Lakes cities.



8

With both the Spadina and Rosehill reservoirs, our neighbourhood has been a hub for Toronto water infrastructure for the past century.



9

The City of Toronto has approximately 5200 km of storm sewers, 4400 km of sanitary sewers, and 2600 storm sewer outfalls.



»

Action: Switch to using laundry and dishwasher detergent labelled "phosphate free" or without phosphate ingredients listed.



»

Action: Modern human bodies carry a heavy toxic load. Respect our waters, environment, and the law. Bury ashes in regulated cemeteries or keep them in urns, but do not spread them in the water, on shores, or elsewhere in the natural environment.



Notes from the Music Library:

Blessed Earth (TERRA BEATA)

by Emily Chatten

When I think about hymns and the theme of Creation, without a doubt, one hymn comes to mind before all others: “*This Is My Father’s World*” (TERRA BEATA). I know I am not alone naming “*This Is My Father’s World*” as a favourite. The story of the hymn was new to me. The more I learned, the more sad I was to find that there was not more information available about the life of Rev. Maltbie D. Babcock. “*This Is My Father’s World*” was published posthumously in a book of his poetry and other writing by Rev. Babcock’s wife.

Babcock was born (1858) and raised not so very far away, in Syracuse, New York. As a young man, Maltbie was known for his athleticism and as a skilled musician. He stayed in Syracuse for university, then continued to the Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City, training to become a Presbyterian minister.

His first charge was as the pastor in Lockport, New York, a small town on the Niagara Escarpment, south of the Niagara River and west of Lake Ontario. It was here, during walks on the Escarpment, Babcock was inspired to write “This Is My Father’s World.” In particular, you can see the beauty of the Niagara Escarpment reflected if you sing an original version of the hymn. Heavy editing of hymn texts, as was popular in the 1990s, loses Babcock’s message and in particular his sense of place and grounding in the Escarpment.

After a few years in Lockport, Rev. Babcock was transferred to Baltimore and eventually back to New York City. In reading the few references one is able to find regarding Rev. Babcock, you learn that he had a magnetism as a preacher and was constantly in demand, both in the pulpit and in seminaries. After taking up his post in New York City, Rev. Babcock embarked on a trip to the Holy Lands. He died in Naples on the trip home. It appears that Babcock contracted Malta Fever (aka brucellosis). While generally the result of eating unpasteurized dairy, Malta Fever was endemic in the Mediterranean at the time. With a lack of proper sewage treatment Malta Fever outbreaks occurred in much the same way as cholera outbreaks. Babcock died in hospital in Naples in 1901, at the age of 42.

The Presbyterian organist and a friend of Babcock, Franklin L. Sheppard, set Babcock’s poem text¹ to music after it was published. Sheppard’s tune, TERRA BEATA (occasionally also known as TERRA PATRIS), is almost universally set with Babcock’s text.

✧ Emily Chatten is a Christ Church Deer Park chorister who helps to maintain the parish music library. Emily has recently joined a group of volunteers editing and producing Spiritus.



1 [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:This_is_My_Fathers_World_poem_\(2\).JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:This_is_My_Fathers_World_poem_(2).JPG)



”
Meeting this outspoken
red-haired stranger
was a healthy nudge
to move me outside my
comfort zone—as Jesus
teaches us.

A Quirky Encounter

by Pat Butler

Curious to check out our hotel’s terrace, I climbed up the white concrete stairs. We’d just checked into Hotel Sidra, in Hydra, Greece, for three nights. The island has very few residents and no cars or motorcycles. Donkeys provide transport.

The raised terrace provided seating for about 20 guests. One end was covered by a metal frame, supporting a thick profusion of white bougainvillea blossoms. The shade beckoned as I stood in the hot sun.

One chair was occupied by an older man facing in my direction reading a book. A woman sat behind him at a separate table. She called out hello and I waved, then chose a distant chair.

After the three of us had read in silence for about 15 minutes, she walked over to initiate the typical ‘Where are you from?’ conversation tourists launch when seeking variety from solitude.

“Canada. And where are you from?” I responded.

“I’m from Norway. We come here every year.” Her dyed-red hair was short and curly, and her pale blue eyes twinkled. She was fit and energetic, and probably in her 70s. She visits Hydra because she’s such a Leonard Cohen fan.

“Yes, every day that we are here I buy fresh flowers and place them on the front door of his house. My husband thinks I’m crazy, but I have to honour that amazing man.”

I shared a couple of anecdotes about Canadian-born Leonard, mentioning that I’ve read *I’m Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen*.

“Oh, I’ve read that. I’ve read everything written about him.” Hmmmm...she certainly is an obsessive fan, I thought.

The topic switched to our current trip, and the need to change our itinerary when I contracted COVID in Delphi.

“Having had six vaccinations, I think my case was milder than it would have been otherwise,” I commented.

She said, “Oh, I don’t believe in vaccinations. Haven’t had any and I haven’t gotten the virus. I don’t believe in any religion, I just worship Mother Earth and stay perfectly healthy. I meditate and love all natural things. And Leonard Cohen.” She went on and on.

After parting, I was amazed at her adamant disdain for vaccinations. Then I remembered George, our Greek chauffeur who’d shared his COVID experience.

“When the pandemic first hit, I didn’t think it was serious. When vaccinations became available, I refused to get one. The government bribed people to get the shot by paying them 100 euro, but I didn’t trust its motive.

“Then I contracted COVID and was terribly sick for two straight months. I lost about 50 pounds—a pound a day! I nearly died. As soon as I could get a vaccination I did. I’ve had COVID twice more but both cases were mild.”

My quirky Norwegian acquaintance reminded me that it takes all types to make a world.

During my consulting career I became an expert at “reading” new people. Given that I’ve been retired for 17 years, most of the people with whom I now interact socially have similar values and cultural tastes to mine. Meeting this outspoken red-haired stranger was a healthy nudge to move me outside my comfort zone—as Jesus teaches us.

When we eventually visited Leonard’s house, we saw the remnants of her fresh flower tribute lying on the doorstep. I like knowing how they got there.

✧ Pat Butler is a volunteer chorister at Christ Church Deer Park. She is also a member of the Chancel Guild and arranges flowers for Sunday worship.

Property Update

by Andrew Harding, on behalf of the property committee

We are planning two larger projects for the forthcoming year. The first is to refurbish the downstairs kitchen with a \$39,000 grant from the federal government's Community Services Recovery Fund, through the United Way. The kitchen will be commercially certified and available for rental when complete. The countertop and underneath cabinets will be replaced with stainless steel, and the electrical outlets will be upgraded—with new outlets in the community hall and guild room. A new oven will be purchased, along with commercial refrigerators/freezers. There will be a new kitchen island that can be moved out into the hall. The whole kitchen will be repainted and freshened up. As of late August, this work will commence in September and is expected to be completed in November.

The second project is to waterproof the foundation wall around the northeast stairwell. This will involve digging around the foundations and repairing the drainage. Once this is complete, the interior damage can be repaired. Alongside this, we are planning to repave the northwest corner area near the Oriole playground to drain the rainwater behind the hall and down through the parking area towards the Yonge Street storm drain. The paving in parts of the parking

area will also be upgraded. We anticipate that at least the surface drainage work will be completed this year. Funding for the drainage project will come from the Moore Family Challenge fund.

No less significant but at lower cost will be to refurbish three rooms in the basement and three in the upstairs area so that they can be rented out. We have a lot of unused space that is needed by people in the neighbourhood. The upstairs rooms include the boardroom and the two rooms previously used by the young children—'Nest' and 'Promise Land.' Children now meet in the refurbished basement chapel.

There are numerous smaller repair projects, including the garden shed from which the lawnmower was taken in July, and refinishing the lower part of the bell tower doors that were replaced a few years ago. They are south-facing and in the full sun.

We thank Ed for all his work in the gardens this summer, turning the church into a welcome spot of beauty on a busy corner. Thanks to Don Doherty, Anne Larkin, and the rest of the property committee for leading the kitchen project.

❖ *Andrew Harding is chair of Christ Church Deer Park's property committee, an occasional chorister, and a regular contributor to Spiritus.*

Dear Church Mouse



Dear Church Mouse

Have you ever read the Old Testament—really read it? What are we to make of the violence, vengeance, and tribalism it contains?

Put Off

Dear Put Off,

Don't be.

This mouse looks back to the early days of Christianity and sees that people like Marcion, a bishop in the second century CE, raised just these concerns about the Old Testament. He proposed a Bible without the violence. Perhaps the problem with a squeaky-clean Bible is that the Bible we have is the story of how God never gives up on the human race (though it was a close call with Noah). We see what people are truly capable of when they ignore God, and we see how far God will go to save the very people He created but who have turned against Him. We see God working through unlikely people. Remember that Jesus was descended from King David, who for all his greatness raped a woman and had her husband killed in battle. Saint Paul was on a seek-and-destroy mission against Christians before becoming a follower of Christ and writing half the New Testament.

But there are two hard questions that this mouse may be accused of avoiding. The first is that God needs violence in order to do good. The second is that Israel itself is a story of conquest and imperialism. To this mouse, these questions look like traps, and we know what happens next. For now, this mouse is going to talk with her Jewish cousins and accept their invitation to Sabbath celebration and prayers before returning to the scriptures.



RUMMAGE 2023

by Mary Bredin

This is not just a story about how wonderful our rummage sale in the spring was, but also about how it helps with my environmental anxiousness these days. The list of strange new weather "events"—heat domes, "land spouts," thunder/lightning during snowstorms, dense fog, grey days with no sun, smoke-filled air, etc.—makes me anxious, so I wanted to report that volunteering at the rummage sale has really helped me feel better! Just in case it's affecting you too.

But first, congratulations to everyone who volunteered at our spring "clothing rummage sale." The Reimagine Rummage team and our volunteers put on another action-packed event on April 22, 2023. We sold clothing, accessories, baked goods, and had a café etc.. It was Earth Day and despite lots of other events going on, our turnout was great! We made \$6000!

But, for me, the sale is more than just fundraising for the church (so great) and community spirit (also great)—I believe strongly that these sales are helping our environment. We get so much stuff, which is what we need of course, but there is so much! I am thrilled to know all this is not going to landfill. I am certain that a lamp or a tray purchased at the sale really does mean one less item purchased at Walmart or Costco. This helps me feel better.

We shop too much, but at least donating some of the things we don't need to a good cause is a great alternative. Yes—there's Value Village, a very much for-profit endeavour (www.invw.org/2019/11/08/value-village-rebuked-by-judge-for-deceiving-consumers). There are also those random bins all over the city which also have dubious profit connections (and dumping our stuff in other countries seems bad too), so donating to help the church seems like a great way to recycle your unwanted items.

We are happy to get your stuff for our sales! A group of volunteers works many Saturdays to ensure that all the donations are appealing for resale. It is a tiring process, believe it or not. We want the sale to be good.

This brings us to Sale Day, which is Jayne's vision. Jayne manages to ensure we have volunteers in the right places and ready to go. The feeling of being useful, of helping people find things they might want or need, or just enjoy a bit of low footprint "shopping," is truly priceless! Everyone is in such a good mood! Folks are hunting for that bargain, even if it is to resell it online—there is a feeling that the circular economy could work—someone's old stuff is another person's treasure.

Please join us if you are feeling a bit anxious at the way things are going—we need volunteers! If you have any suggestions on how we can make the sales better—please come talk to us. We would love to have someone help with our sales online/through social media.

❖ *Mary Bredin, Jayne Miles, Lucia Nesby and Sharon Kirby and all your friends on the Reimagining Rummage team!*

MY SUNFLOWERS

By Ward Lindsey



Over the summer months I was engaged in an email conversation with the members of the CCDP Community Connection Group of which I am a member. The topic was my Sunflowers. Below I share my emails.



JULY 16:

A Sunflower Saga

One of my favourite summer flowers is the Sunflower, standing bright, tall, and assertive. I delighted in seeing the photo of Sunflowers on the cover of today's 10:30 am service bulletin. The Gospel of the day was the parable of the farmer who went out to sow seeds and how the seeds fell to the ground in various locations.

Now I need to back the calendar up to last March when I bought, after many years of procrastination, a package of garden Sunflower seeds. With the seeds initially planted in the warmth of our basement and then moved outdoors, my delight was hinged on the hope of forthcoming blooms. The fledgling plants were moved to a suitable location and by about one week ago they had attained a height of about a metre. But their growth was being undermined by an unknown chewing creature. I spotted this creature a couple of days ago as it happily made off with one of the Sunflower's immature buds, leaving

behind a truncated stem. The culprit was a black squirrel who had taken on an acrobatic position to reach the Sunflower bud. Who knew that squirrels love Sunflower buds? Today there is one flower bud left and my Sunflower-growing ambitions have morphed into a bit of a despondent feeling. There is an offsetting feeling of hope as I have located some new flower buds on the multiple truncated plants. This variety of Sunflower was advertised as only producing a single bloom per plant. What's going on?

To summarize I need to return to the Gospel for today. There are seeds sown in hope, seeds sown as a promise, and seeds sown for us. Don't let the squirrels get to you.

Ward

JULY 28:

Hi everyone,

I hope you are having an enjoyable summer. The mixture of heat and rain has certainly kept lawns green, flowers exemplary, and crops thriving. And this leads me to bring you up-to-date on my Sunflowers. Earlier this week Kathy and I went away for a few days and returned yesterday afternoon. As we pulled into the driveway a squirrel was going up the hydro pole which my Sunflowers surround. I could not believe the timing. He had just chewed off a Sunflower bud and was taking it up the pole. Wondering what damage may have been done over the previous days

I went to the Sunflowers and found that the largest bud from a week ago was now in full bloom. It's good to know that with the right nurturing the potential of a seed can be realized.

Ward

AUGUST 15:

Hi everyone,

Here it is mid-August already and perhaps you have been wondering about how my Sunflowers are doing. In a previous email I mentioned that I had a large bloom in spite of a thieving squirrel. In response Jill mentioned that it "looks like some for you and some for the squirrels." That leads me to report that about 50% of the buds have survived and are in various stages of blooming. So, I'm happy and I guess the squirrels are happy too. The larger flowers are heavy-weighted, bending over, and have abundant maturing seeds. Attached is a photo of a bloom supplying a bumblebee with nourishing nectar and pollen.

Pulling my thoughts together I need to go back to the Gospel reference in my initial email. The sowing of seeds also means that they provide. Who knew what a little packet of seeds would lead to? Sunflowers, squirrels, and bumblebees.

❖ Ward Lindsey is a frequent contributor to Spiritus and a long-time member of Christ Church Deer Park.



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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.

Stay tuned for the deadline to submit to the next issue of Spiritus. Please send your submissions directly to Emily at elwchatt@gmail.com.

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

Christ Church Deer Park

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