



What is our parish's reputation?

by Cheryl C. Palmer



To be known for our faith and commitment to Christ actually means we can make a difference to the lives of people in our community and in our city.

What is our parish's reputation? What is the word on the street about us? What images pop into people's minds when they hear the name Christ Church Deer Park?

What reports sound forth about us? What is our reputation in the community? For what are we known? I do not mean what reputation would you like us to have, but rather what are they really saying about us in this community—in the diocese? Many churches are known for something: their youth program, the music, preaching, evangelical zeal, their warm and welcoming culture, they hold the best bazaar in town, they are poor, they are rich, they fight with every rector, the church is beautiful...and on and on. For what are we known?

And when you have thought about that for a while, I have another related question. What reports sound forth about you as a person of faith? As someone who claims allegiance to Christ, how would your family and friends describe you? What is your Christian reputation?

When I first read the epistle we just heard—the beginning of Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians—it energized me in a way that no other passage has in a long time. As I read it I thought, "Wouldn't it be great if people spoke like that about our congregation?" And I started imagining a letter from our bishops on my desk.

"Andrew, Kevin, and Ryscilla, Anglican Bishops in Toronto to the Parish of Christ Church Deer Park in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers and sisters, beloved by God, that he has chosen you, because our

message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction... And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of all your financial worries, property repairs, and COVID concerns these past several years, you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Toronto. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you...in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. For the people of the diocese report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from worldly concerns, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven."

I want that letter for us. Do you want that letter? I hope so, because I cannot obtain it by myself. What an amazing reputation to possess! "And with that great reputation there comes a great influence—an ability to move hearts and minds to give praise to God and to live a more godly life." (Richard Fairchild, "A Godly Imitation and Reputation") To be known for our faith and commitment to Christ actually means we can make a difference to the lives of people in our community and in our city. Friends, this is not impossible. It is our purpose, our calling, and the reason why we are a church. As Richard Fairchild, a United Church minister in Golden, B. C., so clearly says:

"It is nice to be known for our pumpkin pies or lobster sandwiches. It is pleasant to be known for our hospitality and warmth. It is not even so bad to be known for our beautiful sanctuary or our cozy community. But it is far better to be known for our faith, and for what we do in faith to show our love for God and for one another.

"A godly reputation is a wonderful thing—because it means that we are leading lives of joy and of love, lives of compassion and of service, lives noted for their radiance and their peace, lives that are good for us and good for others.

"Paul's letter to the Thessalonians suggests to us what such lives are based on—it suggests to us that we can have a godly reputation like those in Thessalonica if like them we practice a godly imitation." (Richard Fairchild)

✦ *The Venerable Cheryl C. Palmer has served as the Rector at Christ Church Deer Park since 2018. This sermon was first preached at the Wednesday Eucharist service on October 25th, 2023. Cheryl's last day at Christ Church Deer Park before retiring was April 28 2024.*

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Walking through the Gardens of Scripture

by Bradley Lennon

The Rev. Cathy Gibbs hosted a series of workshops on the theme of “the garden” in the Bible. These classes coincided with our parish’s planning for the establishment this spring of a pollinator garden of the west lawn of our CCDP church property.

To almost anyone hearing of a Lenten study about gardens in the Bible, the Gardens of Eden and of Gethsemane come to mind. The theme of the garden arises repeatedly for the Israelites throughout their scriptures. Every portrayal of a garden in the Bible inevitably relates to the events in Eden. The story of the first garden vividly illustrates the profound sense of harmony, or shalom, that the first humans shared with their Creator, with one another, and with all of creation.

Harmony came to an abrupt end. As Dr. Ellen F. Davis has written, “The Garden of Eden was the place where the first human creatures might have acquired wisdom: Eden was the place for total intimacy with God, and that is the sole condition for becoming wise. Day by day they might have grown in wisdom and stature, taking those strolls with God in ‘the breezy time of day’ (Genesis 3:8). But they could not wait to get smart, so they chose the quick and dirty method...”. Trying to make our lives self-sufficient on our terms, we alienated ourselves from our Creator.

In seeking beauty and abundance outside of God’s company, humans found themselves banished from wholeness and security. Where God, on walking through the garden, had expected humans alongside and calls out to them, “Where are you?”, they do not appear. However, God’s mercy provided a second garden through which humans could find themselves dwelling in companionship with the Source of all life.

The temple of Solomon was to have been a meeting place where Abraham’s descendants might enjoy Yahweh’s glory and presence once again. Tree-like pillars flanked the entrance to the Temple, decorated with pomegranates and topped with a lily design. These recalled the two trees in the Garden, the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil (I Kgs. 7: 18-20). For the worshippers going up to the Temple several times a year, this was the way for them to return briefly to Eden.

The Torah and the Prophets urged Israel to remain faithful and obedient to the terms of the covenant that renewed the Almighty’s intimate relationship with God’s people. Yet the people continually refused to heed the Law and the Prophets. Forsaking the Temple and God’s abiding presence in that place with them, the Hebrews turned toward the gods of their neighbours and to contrary sites of worship. Their repeated refusals to listen to God calling them leads again to a second exile, this time, not from Eden, but from Jerusalem to Babylon, and to the destruction of Solomon’s temple.



Then a new chapter in the stories of the Bible’s gardens begins with the envisioning of a third garden. Psalms like 65, 72, and 85 re-picture for us a time of faithfulness and restoration of the fullness of Creation. The prophets, like Hosea, envision a future day when Israel will at last return to their own God (14:5-9). However, no biblical writing provides a fuller vision of the restored garden—as the multi-leveled healing of relationships, divine-human, male-female, and humanity-creation—than the Song of Songs.

*Now look, the winter is over,
the rain has passed, taken itself off.
The blossoms have appeared in the land;
the time of melody has come,
and the voice of the turtledove
is heard in our land. (2:11-12)*

The images of Eden in the Song of Songs were not meant as nostalgic longing for a by-gone past. They instead push our religious imaginations forward to immerse ourselves into the depths of desiring God’s presence in our hearts, in our connections with each other, and in our interactions with our world of nature around us. We hope that by planting together as a congregation this spring, we will join in the ambition to nurture and preserve the richness of our world surrounding us.

❖ Bradley Lennon is a member of the Climate Action Group and the Property Committee of Christ Church Deer Park. Brad is a regular contributor to Spiritus.

Biblical Paraphrases and Re-imaginings

by Emily Chatten

During a Wednesday Eucharist last fall, Cheryl gave a homily in which she re-imagined one of the Epistles (in fact, you’ll find that sermon in this issue of Spiritus). Having once been a letter-writer, and having an over-active imagination, this “re-imagining” really brought the day’s Thessalonians reading (1:1-10) home for me. It also got me thinking about the history of paraphrases and re-imaginings. Some of these we encounter regularly during our worship services, others you may have encountered in Christian education classes or during your own readings.

As an exchange student to Denmark almost 30 years ago, I encountered a Bible that entralls me. The version I have is a reproduction of one owned by the Danish King, Christian IV. On the cover is printed “Solis Billed Bible,” ‘Billed’ meaning picture. It has taken me almost three decades to sort out that “Solis” refers to the name of the engraver, one Virgil Solis. Taken mostly from the Old Testament, the engravings in this Bible are heavily detailed with medieval flourishes. Looking at this Bible always leaves me wondering what Christian IV, or others who saw Solis’ Bible, gleaned from its pages.



Prior to the Reformation, during services, psalms would generally have been chanted in a plainsong style by a cantor or a choir or monks. It was not until Luther’s introduction of the metrical psalm that congregational singing of psalms really began. The innovation of the metrical psalm resulted in the broad interest in and adoption of psalm paraphrasing. The largest and perhaps best-known of these projects was “The Sidney Psalter.” These psalm paraphrases were begun by the Elizabethan poet Philip Sidney; after his premature death, his sister Mary completed the majority of the project. There are numerous other psalm paraphrases. Aside from paraphrases, it can be useful to write in the style of the Psalms. A number of parishioners took part in a learning event during Advent in which they had such an opportunity and so have chosen to share their new psalms with us. Thanks to all of you!

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



Pondering the Psalms

In the fall of 2023, Christ Church Deer Park offered a course on the Psalms. This series included an introduction to the Psalms and then studying in more detail the Psalms of vengeance, the Psalms of lament, and the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving. Thirty-four people gathered online to ponder these hymns of the Old Testament. At the final class, people were invited to write their own psalm, four of which we would like to share with you. Enjoy.

I Am Bound

(by Ward Lindsay)

Infinity has no bounds.
Your love has no bounds.
But grief and pain seem to have no bounds,
Yet in darkness you are there without bounds.
Can your peace be felt without bounds?
Priceless gifts know no bounds.
I rest my head and heart,
where a joyful life is boundless.

A Psalm

(by Phyllis Creighton)

You, O God, created the stars and the earth, I stand in awe of your power. You gave me—and all humans—the thinking part of the web of life—responsibility to care for all humanity and all creatures, for forests, plants, fields, mountains, ocean, lakes,

But I have been irresponsible and selfish. I have ignored hungry, homeless fellow human beings. I have used up earth's resources carelessly.

Forgive me, O God. Strengthen my will to heed your commands, to make amends for my heedless conduct and selfishness.

You are faithful to penitent sinners.

I give thanks for your love and your presence in me. Empower me to love and to serve others and care for the earth You gave us dominion over.

A Psalm of Gratitude

(by Leslie Crabtree Savage)

*O merciful creator of all the heavens, the stars and moons and our blue marble Earth
Accept our blessings and gratitude for the good things of our small world, and forgive those whose troubles and pain wreak havoc on parts of our world today and throughout all of history, the reasons for which pass all human understanding and must somehow be part of our enduring weakness.*

*Accept our blessings and gratitude for the beautiful things of our small world,
The sunshine of every season, the soft winds when these blow rain our way, the insurmountable beauty of the world of trees and leaves and flowers, the enlivening activity of the animal world that so enriches our everyday life in uncountable ways, the love we share with parents, with children, with friends, with colleagues, in deeds large and small, the smallest often the most remarkable and memorable.*

Accept our blessings and gratitude for science and the miracles of its reach, for music that fills our lives with joy, for the visual arts that delight our eyes, for theatre and dance and performances that exalt the achievements of our humanity, for the care we are enabled to give one another as humans, for the joy in the dance of domestic animals in our lives.

Accept our blessings and gratitude, O creator, for the intelligence we enjoy even when this falls short of our exalted expectations.

Accept our blessings and gratitude for the sensitivity of which we are capable as humble beings yet striving to extend our care to others even when this seems totally impossible.

Accept our blessings and gratitude, O creator, for the range of emotion we enjoy, and for the means to extend this into our own lives and those of others around us.

*We who fall so short of our own aspirations, O creator, remain humbled by the sight of the moon, by the sound of the birds about whose powers we know so little, by the knowledge of butterfly flight, by our vast ignorance of the oceans that comprise so much of our planet, we plead with you to accept our blessings and our gratitude for the knowledge we do have, and for our ability to want to continue to expand that knowledge to encompass more of your great creation.
Amen*

A Psalm

(by Tony van Straubenzee)

Oh Lord, in your divine wisdom, give us the insight and strength to appreciate your greatness.
Help us to overcome the rising hatred between nation and peoples who are on a path of destruction.
We pray that we may have the confidence, the cooperation and the courtesy to deal with each other in a civil way and avoid conflict.
May we accept your love and follow the path of righteousness.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The Language of the Psalms

by Andrew Harding

Do you have a favourite version of the Bible—perhaps the one you grew up with? Many people still prefer the King James, as did John Godfrey, who was a longtime member of CCDP. There is a story that when he was to read at the Sunday morning service many years ago, he brought his King James Bible and read the lesson from it, rather than from the more modern NRSV which we generally use. The rector at the time was none too pleased!

For all its poetry and authority, the King James uses a version of English that is more than 400 years old. Could there be a better translation of the Old Testament now? Of course, this depends on what you mean by better. One of the things the King James did well was to translate the original Hebrew language, in which the vast majority of the Old Testament was written, into English in a way that preserved the feel of the poetry, especially in the Psalms. But there were, dare I say it, mistakes in the translation.

Accuracy is important and so is the rhythm of the language. This is where the acclaimed new translation by Robert Alter of the entire Old Testament comes in. Here is how Alter begins Psalm 40:

“I urgently hoped for the Lord; he bent down toward me and heard my voice, and he brought me up from the roiling pit, from the thickest mire. And he set my feet on a crag, made my steps firm.”

When translating poetry, it is important to convey the feel of the original Hebrew language. Hebrew is a very concise, earthy, and tactile language with wordplays and specific forms of repetition that all combine to create the meaning.

The start of Psalm 40 in the King James reads:

“I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.”

Note two differences in these versions to start with, apart from the old-fashioned feel of the King James. Alter translates the adverb ‘patiently’ as ‘urgently.’ There is a sense in the original Hebrew of an anticipation and expectation and hope of God’s rescue—a hope that leans in rather than impassively waits for rescue whenever it might happen to come. It is a hope that trusts in the faithfulness of God, trusting and needing God’s rescue. Which word in English can convey all this?

The other difference is more subtle. What is the difference between a rock and a crag, on which God sets the writer of the psalm? The imagery of a crag is at once more specific. You are lifted up to a crag, itself secure yet hardly a resting place. But it is all you need for rescue and salvation in the moment. You will move on from it, but in the moment it is the difference between life and death. A crag is also a specific point in a landscape—a rock could be anywhere.

Which version is the best depends on what the translator wants to achieve, how the text will be read, and by whom. All translation is interpretation. There are often no English words exactly the same as the original Hebrew, and the form and flow of English is very different to that of Hebrew.

Which translation is best? In an important sense it is the one you actually read. I encourage you to explore, to read a few different translations. As with each of the four Gospels, they all give a different perspective on the fathomless riches of God’s Word.

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



**The Hebrew Bible
– A Translation with
Commentary
by Robert Alter**

CCDP Prayer Circle

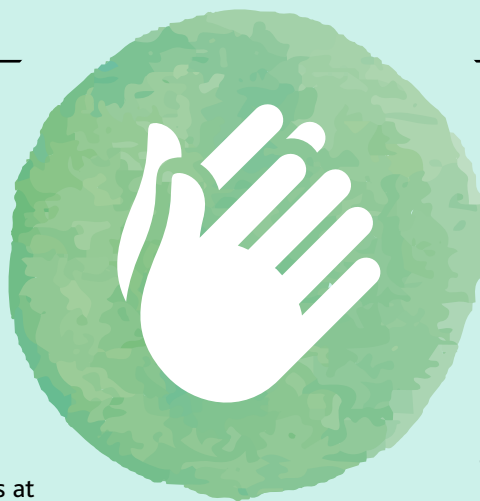
by Jan D'Angelo, on behalf of the Prayer Circle

**Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct
thy paths.**

PROVERBS 3:5-7 (KING JAMES VERSION)

When I was growing up my mom often used to quote this verse to us kids. She would pray with us as we headed off to school and taught us to give our day to God.

Perhaps you weren't aware that there is a small group of us at CCDP who are committed to pray as requests are sent to our clergy and me. In many ways this verse from Proverbs encompasses what we do. The Prayer Circle joins with you in trusting the Lord with whatever you feel you need to bring to Him in prayer. It means when the difficulties and crises come, you are not alone...we are walking with you. All prayers are kept in confidence...and the only thing you need to do is let us know who and/or what you need prayer for! Also, it is encouraging to the circle



if at some point you can give us an update...but we are committed to praying for you no matter what.

We would also like you to know that we would be delighted to have you join the circle and become committed to praying along with us. This is done in the privacy of your own heart...and requires no prior experience! Again, just let any of the clergy or me know, and as prayer requests come in I will send them out via email to whomever is part of the CCDP Prayer Circle.

Each one of us is committed to supporting you as we faithfully bring you and your requests to God in prayer. Participating in the Prayer Circle is indeed a great privilege!

Contact the prayer circle at prayercircle@christchurchdeerpark.org

❖ Jan D'Angelo and her husband, Peter, started to attend Christ Church Deer Park in the spring of 2019.

Born to Atonement

—*Al-Shifa Hospital, 2023*

My God, she is forsaken.
None intercedes on her behalf.
The Pontius Pilates wash their hands
and do not even ask, what evil has she done?
See ye to it is their silent chant.

Fresh from the womb scarce taken,
transparent manger for a bed,
her term abrupt. So small
and yet no comfort on her mother's shrivelled breast;
an early taste of vinegar with gall.

Her people cower, shaken,
poured like water though none be,
nor food nor light nor heat.
Her brother whimpers, will my toys still be alive? ¹
Her cross of girders, smoke and dust, concrete.

The Pontius Pilates wring their hands,
and do not dare to ask, what evil has she done?
See ye to it still their wordless chant.

And what of he, the Liege Lord of creation
who thrusts the cup into wee fists
unable to say no?
May generations hold him to account on her behalf,
reproach the unearned suffering he imposed.

Born to Atonement

by Genevieve Chornenki

At the end of 2023, I sat in on the course presented by our clergy on the Book of Psalms. I say “sat in on” because, while I always appreciate learning about ancient poetry and while participants made many insightful comments on these celebrated songs, I was distracted by their content. I could not relate to the group’s enthusiasm for the personal deity addressed in the psalms, the one that takes sides. All I could think about were bombs dropping on besieged civilians and premature babies in incubators that had no electricity, and that god was—where?

In the final session, we were invited to write our own psalm using a template from which I deviated. For a prompt, I chose Psalm 22: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* That phrase reappears in the New Testament as the anguished cry of Jesus the Christ, a crucified man, an adult who, despite his cry, accepted death, a death that Christians interpret as a willing sacrifice on behalf of the world.

“Born to Atonement” is a parallel passage written for the world of the present.

✦ *Genevieve Chornenki is a former Christ Church Deer Park warden and was the founding editor of Spiritus.*

¹ See “Younger Than War” by Mosab Abu Toha, *The Atlantic*, November 9, 2023.



Bells

by Edna Quammie

City dwellers are exposed to a lot of ambient noise. It can be difficult to separate one sound from another or identify specific voices and vibrations. But if parishioners think they heard a hymn or a popular song on bells on a Sunday after church, it wasn't in their imagination. In September 2023, Yorkminster Park Baptist Church installed a new carillon, a set of tuned bronze bells played from a keyboard.

The bells were unloaded last summer and installation took several months. On Friday, September 29, 2023, a special commemorative lecture was held on the subject of Toronto's carillons to mark the inauguration of Yorkminster Park's new carillon: <https://ypspeakersseries.yorkminsterpark.com/event/toronto-home-of-the-oldest-and-newest-carillons-in-north-america/>.

What do we know about church bells in this day and age? Edna Quammie offers this primer:

- 1 » Church bells are used to call worshippers to church for a communal service and to announce the fixed times of Christian prayer (the canonical hours). The hours are Matins (Nighttime), Lauds (Early Morning), Prime (First Hour of the day), Terce (Third Hour of the day), Sext (Noon), Nones (Ninth Hour of the day), Vespers (Sunset or Evening) and Compline (End of Day).
- 2 » The bells are also rung on special occasions, such as weddings or funerals.
- 3 » Some church bells are rung every fifteen minutes, some every hour, some only before church services on Sunday.
- 4 » In the Roman Catholic Church the bell or bells are rung during the Mass. The first bell rings prior to the consecration of the host to signify the important part of the mass is taking place.
- 5 » The spiritual and religious ringing of the bells is a symbol of awakening, mindfulness, and connection with God over and above the secular things of the world. This would mean the sounding forth of the Word of God.
- 6 » Bells may signal the start of a prayer, meditation, or worship. The bells help to centre and focus our thoughts.
- 7 » The church bells began in Italy. The larger the church, the larger the bells. Bells could be a status symbol— larger, wealthier churches had larger, more ornate bells and bell towers.

- 8 » Hand bells were used in 400 A.D. to call people to worship.
- 9 » The bell or bells may be rung at any liturgical occasion of great joy; CHRISTMAS EVE, or MORNING or SUNRISE service on EASTER SUNDAY.
- 10 » The occasion may also be a solemn one such as a funeral or GOOD FRIDAY.
- 11 » Bells are mentioned in the Bible only in Exodus 28: 31-35: the bells were attached to the hem of the high priest. This was to signal his entering and exiting the place of worship.
- 12 » Psalm 55:17 suggests praying 3 times a day, evening, morning, and noon, and many Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran churches ring the church bells at 6am, noon, and 6pm; calling the faithful to recite the Lord's Prayer. Other Christian denominations ring the bells at 9am, 12pm, and 3pm to call the faithful to recite the Lord's Prayer.
- 13 » An inspiration to me: when I heard the bells from Yorkminster Park Baptist Church on Thursday 8 September 2022 ring out, I knew that The Queen had died.

❖ Edna Quammie is a past Reader/Server at the 8 a.m. Service and an occasional contributor to Spiritus.





Watching Loved Ones Disappear

by Pat Butler

Just focus on being present. My mum began cognitive decline at 74 and died at 86, so I've had personal experience with dementia. Now that contemporaries are being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD), I owe it to them (and their caregivers) to stay in touch. I endeavour to meet each person exactly where they are, which takes planning and practice, but leads to rewarding moments for both of us.

Some tips that have worked for me:

1. HONOUR THE PATIENT'S EMOTIONS.

The last time I interacted with mentally confused Mum when she lived at home, I learned an important lesson. When visiting Beaconsfield with my sons of 11 and 14, I'd taken over all meal preparation and organization. One day Dad took me aside and explained she was feeling hurt.

"You've taken over all her tasks and hardly ever speak to her," he said. "I've been told that a patient's emotions are the last thing to go, so they can still feel ignored and offended."

Once I admitted how right he was about my take-charge attitude, I softened and actively sought her opinion. Because her reasoning was now impaired, I didn't implement all her ideas, but she was happy to be consulted.

2. LAUGH WHENEVER YOU CAN.

At the end of that same visit, the boys were settled in the car for our drive to Toronto. When I popped back inside to retrieve something, Mum said to me, "It's been lovely having you here. Next time bring the boys." They'd just been living in her house for a week! It took a while for me to recount this to others and laugh about it.

3. PROMPT RECALL WITH PHOTOS.

When mailing a letter or card to friends with AD, I include a couple of photos to remind them who I am. A photo of us together, with date and description of the occasion, brings comfort and prompts recall—which may be fleeting, but gives pleasure. Caregivers tell me these photos are kept on display.

4. VERIFY PLANS REPEATEDLY.

After planning to see each other, I send an email to the caregiver to be sure it's clear what will happen and when. Then I telephone my friend a couple of hours beforehand to repeat exactly when to expect

me and what we'll do together.

5. ACCEPT SUPERFLUOUS HELP.

Putting myself in my friend's shoes, I thank him when he tells me how to drive to our destination. Even though I know the way, he feels knowledgeable and useful when telling me precisely where to turn and where to park. So much of his day involves feeling foggy-brained, clearly recalling a familiar route brings him joy.

6. STAY IN THE NOW.

When reconnecting with a fully functioning acquaintance, you likely ask plenty of questions: "Do you remember the time...? How's your daughter doing?"

Questions can threaten the AD patient because they seldom know the correct answer and worry about getting it wrong. I try to avoid putting them on the spot by using statements. Instead of "How are you doing?" I say, "How lovely to see you again!"

When describing a person or place she previously knew well, I over-explain—to pre-emptively fill in the details. When I hear my friend searching for a word, I guess and try to supply it—this involves careful listening and focus.

Isn't that what a social interaction is all about? Nobody knows whether you two will ever see each other again. What matters is your time together today. To keep it smooth and meaningful for your friend, just focus on what will give your loved one the most delight.

The AD sufferers I've spent time with enjoy talking about concrete, visible things (like a necklace I'm wearing) in lieu of abstract ideas or opinions we would have discussed previously.

If you manage to stay relaxed and flexible as conversation ebbs and flows, chances are they will, too. If you sense that your friend isn't exactly sure who you are, don't worry about it. Don't put them on the spot by asking outright, "Do you remember who I am?" Just drop lots of clues.

Be happy that you are in each other's company and able to share a goodbye hug before they disappear completely.

❖ Pat Butler is a regular contributor to Spiritus, a member of the Christ Church Deer Park choir and the Flower Guild.

One of Those Political Churches

by Supipi Weerasooriya

When I decided to get baptized, a well-meaning friend asked if my church was "one of those political churches." I fumbled through a non-committal response before diverting the conversation. Even though I wasn't keen on defending the merits of the church that I attended, the question remained with me. As I read through the Gospels of Mark, Luke, John, and Matthew in preparation for baptism, the life of Christ emerged as a profoundly political existence.

Which surprised me. But it shouldn't have.

Somehow, along a lifetime of religious learning and practice, I had separated faith and social activism. Going to temple or church, lighting lamps, chanting prayers: these existed on an unsullied and ethereal plane in my mind, elevated from the lesser and perhaps more divisive concerns of the living. Religion was pure. But the very religious pioneers that I worship seemed to be responding to radically political concerns of their times. Jesus Christ sought to unify all as the children of one Creator. "I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity" (John 17:23). Gautama Buddha departed from stately life to create an egalitarian Śāsana that eradicated caste differences.



Perhaps, I would still shy away from defending the church or the faith of my choice. I like that it lives in that far-away plane in my mind that I don't allow others to access. My relationship to God feels sacred and personal. But, I can now entertain the possibility that the practice of faith can be deeply activist. When we include the marginalized, when we provide homes for those who flee violence, when we explore ways to live a more sustainable life, the many ways Christ Church Deer Park practices the Christian faith feel passionate, political, Godly. As a newbie Christian, I am so curious to find out what my own personal walk of faith will reveal to me and about me.

For now, perhaps, it is quite alright to be a part of one of those political churches.

❖ Supipi Weerasooriya is a newly baptized Christian and member of the Spiritus Editorial Team.

CHAOTIC SPRING

by Emily Chatten

changing climate

warmest year on record

el niño

"blink and miss it" winter

snow in April gives spring bulbs frostbite

homeless man sleeps among the frost-destroyed tulips in downtown Toronto

are we growing homelessness instead of spring flowers?



One Last Hurrah!

THE RETIREMENT OF THE VENERABLE CHERYL PALMER

Cheryl was ordained a deacon in 1985 and a priest in 1986, in the Diocese of Niagara Falls. She has spent most of her career here in the Diocese of Toronto. She even did a stint as an Honorary Assistant here at CCDP while working as a Chaplain at Sick Kids in the early '90s. We were pleased to welcome Cheryl back in 2018 and we are sad to see her leave but we know that she has exciting adventures ahead!





Cheryl,

for your many gifts and the ways you helped CCDP to grow and evolve:
Thanks be to God.

For your insight, your guidance, your companionship, your integrity, and for all the sacrifices you made:
Thanks be to God.

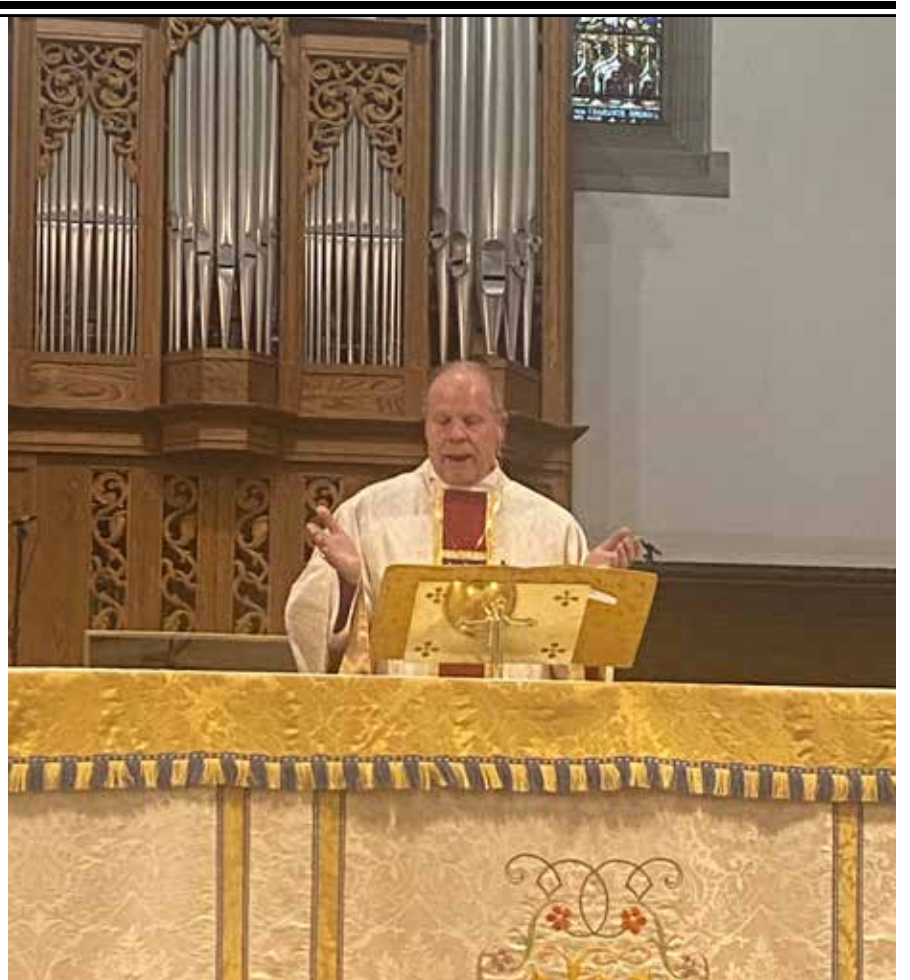
Cheryl, as you continue the journey with new friends and new adventures, new gifts to give and receive:
Go in peace.

May your life be a legacy of goodwill, love, service, and joy. With our faith in you, our hope for you, and our love of you:

Go in peace

❖ Words from the Prayer of Leave-Taking during Cheryl's Final Service at Christ Church Deer Park on April 28, 2024





Bishop Andrew Asbil's Visit

April 6, 2024

With Holy Week just barely under our belts, we welcomed Bishop Andrew Asbil for his first official visit to CCDP. Like Cheryl, Bishop Asbil began his career in the Diocese of Niagara before coming to the Diocese of Toronto! He was elected coadjutor bishop in 2018 and became Diocesan Bishop in early 2019. If you were not with us on April 6, we hope you will enjoy these pictures from the day!





by Sandra Geddes

When I started to think about what I wanted to say about hospitality, and why gathering together after our services on Sundays is so important, it seemed obvious to me—it is a great way to get to know each other, deepen our friendships, exchange ideas, and spend an enjoyable half hour or hour together. And it is all that, and community-building is a very important reason to have a cup of tea or coffee together after church. But hospitality shared with fellow travellers on journeys of faith is more than enjoying the company of friends. It helps to build a community that can sustain us through the challenging parts of our journeys and rejoice with us in times of great gladness. I think Jesus was intentional in encouraging us to build supportive communities through hospitality.

As I started reading about hospitality and community in the Gospels, I noticed how pervasive both the giving of and the depending upon hospitality are throughout them. Sharing and receiving food with all sorts of people in all sorts of situations seems to have been an important modus operandi for Jesus to get his message out. The stories of Jesus eating with his friends and with strangers, inviting himself over to sinners' homes for a meal, feeding crowds of listeners, and filling fishing nets, as well as parables involving feasts, and his exhortation to Peter to feed his sheep, aren't recounted just because eating and drinking with someone is a pleasant way to spend time, although it is quite handy if one of your guests can top up the wine supply if you happen to run short. Jesus was making a point. Following him is going to involve group effort. Jesus shared in the giving and receiving of physical nourishment while at the same time sustaining the people he was with with his generous love. He still feeds us with his ultimate act of hospitality and love, and likewise wants us to sustain each other on our faith journeys as well.

But that is not all. Hospitality isn't only about building a strong and supportive community for ourselves. It is also about sharing the hospitality and love we have been shown with any strangers who happen by on their journeys. You never know when we might be entertaining angels unawares (Hebrews 13:2).

Please come out and join us for coffee hour and while you are there, consider signing up for a Sunday. We'll teach you everything you need to know.

❖ Sandra Geddes is a longtime member of Christ Church Deer Park and is currently coordinating the 10:30 am coffee hour.



”
Jesus was

*making a point.
Following him is going to
involve group effort.*

Health Care

by Tony van Straubenzee

Were blessed to live in a country that provides good care. I recently suffered a very nasty fall landing on the pavement. My forehead received a gash which painted the street red.

The outstanding concierge staff at my building came to my rescue and called an ambulance which arrived in minutes. The nice woman in the ambulance asked me my name. When I told her, I think she thought I was really out of it. She then asked me to spell it. It wasn't until she read my health card that she believed me.

I asked them to take me to St. Michael's hospital where my cardiologist practices and they said "sure." But the destination was the Toronto General. Being wheeled in on a stretcher was a new experience for me and one that I hope will never be repeated.

The nurses took a good look at me and said that I would require stitches. A lovely young woman in a yellow gown introduced herself as Dr. Erin O'Connor. She told me to hang in there and that she would get to me as soon as possible. She was a dynamo as I watched her go from one patient to another. She instantly gave me confidence that I was in good hands.

Apart from the fact that I was in some pain, it was fascinating to watch what went on in the emergency department. There were families with loved ones, police with sinister-looking guys, nurses dealing with hysterical wives and husbands, people who didn't speak English trying desperately to communicate, and stretchers with all types of problems going by.

Dr. O'Connor smiled as she told me there would be a little burn as she froze my forehead. She did the stitching so quickly I hardly knew it was happening. And she said, "you are good to go." The nurse called a cab which the hospital paid for.

I was overwhelmed with gratitude for our health care. "And I thank God for watching over me!"

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



Saying Good-Bye: Anne Larkin Memorial

by Emily Chatten

I suspect it will be a long while before many of us forget the morning Anne Larkin died. The shock in the choir room, then again in the church. The watery eyes, the tears, the memories. There were requests for an opportunity to share memories here.

In the days and weeks since Anne has left us we have heard how important she was to almost everything at CCDP. Sometimes, it was difficult to find specific stories; in other cases people found their stories were too personal to share.



Anne's huge contribution to the breakfast program bore witness to her worship of the living God.

Just a few days after her passing, our Wednesday evening custodian, Carlos, shared a lovely story with me. Carlos also works across the street at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church and he told me that on Sunday mornings, Anne came in early before the 8 am service to stop by at Yorkminster and say good morning. He told me he knew something was wrong the morning she died because she hadn't stopped by.

The mother of two young men in the parish passed on that they were distraught with grief when they learned about Anne's passing. For just a moment this puzzled me, and then I remembered all the young people who had worked on the Community Breakfast over the years. I know many of these young people developed a special relationship with Anne:

"Like so many parishioners, I have very fond memories of Anne Larkin. Through most of my middle school and high school years, Anne and I worked together at the Saturday community breakfasts (I was the guy who fried the sausages). Her enthusiasm and energy at 6:30 in the morning on a weekend were unmatched and contagious. She always took a keen interest in the lives of the young people involved in the church, and after I moved away to university, I looked forward to catching up with her on Sundays after church when I was home."
– Nicholas Chornenki

Her enthusiasm and energy at 6:30 in the morning on a weekend were unmatched and contagious.

Reflecting on Anne's impact on a young person from a parent's perspective, Mary Bredin writes: "I have many wonderful memories of Anne but I think my best ones now are of her with my son at the community breakfast. How she motivated a sleepy young boy to participate fully and be inspired was wonderful. She made him feel special and that his contribution mattered. One time, she called for volunteers to help with packaging meat at the food bank and it was an eye-opening experience for Rory. She had a huge grin on her face when she told me about it. He still talks about how "gross" it was. She always asked after him and was always so keen to hear news of his life at university. She will be so missed."

The community breakfast was not the only program Anne was involved in, but as you read this you can tell it is one in which she impacted many. On the Saturday following her passing, a record number of volunteers arrived at the Community Hall. Andrew Harding shares these words about breakfast on that February morning:

The Saturday morning community breakfast the week after Anne Larkin died was the saddest, most heartfelt and joyful breakfast I have ever known since I began in 2019. There were almost 20 volunteers, old and new, who came to serve and celebrate Anne's love

and leadership—not only of the breakfast program but in many areas of our church life. Carl Wehniainen read a prayer of thanks for the gift of Anne's life and service, and many of us shared our memories of Anne. Dry eyes were few and fleeting. She loved freely and generously and was loved freely and generously in return. We heard of her time as a nanny to the Canadian singer Anne Murray, of her love of choral music, and of how she always had time and space to welcome a new person to the breakfast team. "Come on in," I can hear her say in reply to my asking if I would be needed one week. Her last messages to me after my knee injury were: "wonderful...you are joining us. Thank you for coming...a reunion with our guests." The people she served were not so much guests, as gifts from God—people whose own generosity and gratitude shone all the brighter amid the darkness in their lives—people who needed more than a meal organized by saints like Anne, but the company of others and the presence of someone who would really listen. There were moments where I was blindsided by the grace and goodwill returned to her. Now I see what it means to be part of the body of Christ.

Anne's huge contribution to the breakfast program bore witness to her worship of the living God. Just as naturally as she drew breath from the Sunday and Wednesday services, she gave out the gift she had received to all she served. Worship and service were as natural as breathing in and out. Receiving the body of Christ in the Eucharist was the source of her loving service. I'm not sure Anne would have described it quite like that, but her life was Eucharist-shaped, constantly being filled with the bread of new life given for her, which she helped us all to share with people at the Saturday morning breakfast. At least on this side of the resurrection, Anne will never know just how many lives she touched. Neither will we. She gave selflessly all her life. Through her giving, she enabled many, many other people to give to others, and in ways that I, for one, will go on discovering. What better way to live a Eucharist-shaped life—receiving by grace the bread of heaven and a life of service to others. Anne's life showed us that is what church is for.

As Rev. Cheryl Palmer said, may she rest in peace and rise in glory.



If you watched Anne, one of the things you would have noticed was her ability to connect with people. Anne was especially good at connecting with people others often lacked the patience to connect with: the elderly, those who were under-employed or under-housed. I feel like I have a little bit of firsthand experience to share with you about this, and fair warning, it is a bit of a personal story. For five or more years, I was on medication that required self-injection in ever increasing amounts. In theory, this isn't difficult. Most self-injection programs involve pre-filled syringes with very fine needles and a dose so small you wouldn't notice if the medication caused resistance. This was not the case for me, and because the doses were large there were only two approved areas on the body. This meant if you experienced pain while injecting in the stomach the only other place—you guessed it. It takes a certain amount of trust to approach someone and ask them to help to put a needle in your backside because you just can't see back there. In those days, I mostly knew Anne as a crucifer, but aside from being a nurse away from the church, I didn't know much about her. Despite my feeling nervous approaching her at the church with such an odd request, Anne made me feel at ease, both about my request and dropping my drawers in front of her. Experiencing this kind of sensitivity helped me to understand how people in difficult times in their lives would have also connected with Anne.

Finally, our former editor, Genevieve Chornenki, shared these words, reflecting on Anne's funeral:

Many of us who attended the funeral of Anne Hepburn Beardmore Larkin on February 16, 2024, found the service to be extraordinarily evocative, infused as it was with the gentle and engaging spirituality that characterized Anne's way of being. The readings and hymns celebrated the life of this parishioner who followed Christ in the most practical and concrete ways. Yes, Anne was a model Christian. She was also a bodhisattva, deferring her own gratification in order to relieve the suffering of others.

When I got home from Anne's funeral, I took down my copy of *The Way of the Bodhisattva*¹, a seventh-century meditation on the compassionate life. Anne would never have uttered these words; she would have been too embarrassed to do so. But she certainly lived by them.

8.
*For all those ailing in the world,
Until their every sickness has been healed,
May I myself become for them
The doctor, nurse, the medicine itself.*

9.
*Raining down a flood of food and drink,
May I dispel the ills of thirst and famine.
And in the aeons marked by scarcity and want,
May I myself appear as drink and sustenance.*

10.
*For sentient beings, poor and destitute,
May I become a treasure ever-plentiful,
And lie before them closely in their reach,
A varied source of all that they might need.*

11.
*My body, thus, and all my goods besides,
And all my merits gained and to be gained,
I give them all and do not count the cost,
To bring about the benefit of beings.*

❖ *These memories have come to you from Mary Bredin, Andrew Harding, Nicholas Chornenki, Genevieve Chornenki and Emily Chatten.*

¹ *The Way of The Bodhisattva*, translated from the Tibetan by the Padmakara Translation Group (Shambala, 2006)



Notes from the Music Library – Spring 2024:

Welcoming New Director of Music: Stefani Bedin

by Emily Chatten

In January, we were pleased to welcome our new Director of Music, Stefani Bedin, and the week before she started, a large contingent from CCDP went to St. Basil's on Bay Street to listen to her final PhD recital.

Although we have all heard Stefani's impressive CV from the Wardens, I sat with her and dug deeper to get to know her on a more personal level.

Stefani began playing the organ during the summer between university and high school when she was seventeen. She had heard the organ at church and was impressed at its ability to express both the magnificent and the gentle. What then drew her to a career as a church musician? Stefani is fascinated by the liturgical aspects of church music. To her, church music is music with a purpose, and she also enjoys its community aspects.

CCDP's history of music programs was known to Stefani for some time, but it wasn't until last summer

that she heard our Karl Wilhelm organ when, in her capacity as Vice President of the Royal Canadian College of Organists' Toronto Centre Chapter, she attended some Organ Festival events at our parish. Our organ differs from the Casavant organ that Stefani had been playing at St. Basil's the past few years. She found the Wilhelm to be "very responsive" and saw a direct connection between the instrument, performer's action, and the resulting sound. In particular, our organ brought early music alive.

Stefani is in the final stages of a PhD in Organ Performance. Having completed the last recital, she is now finishing her dissertation. I am always intrigued to hear about a dissertation topic, even if it's over my head, and this is no different. Stefani is exploring the impact of the Second Vatican Council on organists and composers working in the classical tradition and how they balance the artistry of music while fostering the active participation of

congregations along with other pastoral directives. Is that not a topic of direct relevance to this parish?

As our incoming Director of Music, Stefani's key objectives will be to help further expand and diversify CCDP's repertoire. In addition to fostering musical excellence in the liturgy, she is also interested in exploring how we can use concerts, lectures, or workshops as outreach tools.

For fun, I asked Stefani about her favourite composers for organ and for choir. For organ she listed J.S. Bach and Duruflé (compositions by both were included in her recent recital) and her choral choices include Howells, as well as those anonymous composers who provided the body of plainsong and chant repertoire.

✦ *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.*



W. H. Auden's Secret Life

by Genevieve Chornenki

*Little children, let us love,
not in word or speech,
but in truth and action.
—1 John 3:18*

We've been reminded from the pulpit many times that being a Christian is not a private, devotional matter. Fair enough. But does that mean we must talk to strangers about Jesus or invite people to join us in the pews? Is "proclaim the gospel" a literal injunction? Or, more generally, does practising Christianity necessitate our making explicit oral statements about our religious choices?

The Anglo-American poet, W. H. Auden (1907–1973), who took communion in the Anglican Church every Sunday, had a different way of being Christian, a secret way. So under-the-radar was this way that Auden's biographer and literary executor, Edward Mendelson, found out about it only by chance.

Throughout his life Auden made what Mendelson describes as "unobtrusive gifts of time, money, and sympathy," gifts that were often at odds with the way Auden allowed himself to be seen by the world. He paid for people's medical care. He supported emerging poets. He engaged in ongoing correspondence with a Canadian prisoner who contacted him after having found some of Auden's poems in the prison library.

And this: once in the 1950s, when Auden learned that a woman in his congregation suffered night terrors, he took a blanket and slept outside her apartment until the woman's fears abated.

After World War II, Auden arranged anonymously to pay for the annual school and college costs of two German war orphans, only to be outed when the orphans, then graduates, insisted on learning the name of their benefactor.

Once Auden had taken up residence in America, he paid for fines levied against Dorothy Day in respect of a shelter she ran for the Catholic Worker Movement, and he funded repairs with a royalty cheque from NBC that someone noticed had been endorsed, "Pay to the Order of Dorothy Day."

Years ago, I copied down this statement attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: *It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is also our preaching.*

Auden was a man of words—a masterful poet, a playwright, an essayist—yet he understood and enacted the sentiment contained in that statement more than most.

Like Auden, I want to be a walker not a talker.

✦ *Genevieve Chornenki is a former CCDP church warden and was the founding editor of Spiritus.*

Throughout his life Auden made what Mendelson describes as "unobtrusive gifts of time, money, and sympathy," gifts that were often at odds with the way Auden allowed himself to be seen by the world.



How Can We Empower Children to Be Independent?

by Margaret Udovc

We all want our children to develop a sense of independence and to become more self-sufficient as they grow up. But it's often difficult to find the time to enable kids to experience situations where they can make their own decisions and deal with the outcome. Many of us choose to help them through the decision-making process by just telling them how to do something rather than letting them do their own problem-solving. We also do a lot of their tasks for them because it's faster for us to do it and we think they can't handle it yet. In order for kids to appreciate the value of making decisions, we need to enable them to experience different situations and try to get them to problem-solve on their own...sometimes with a bit or a lot of guidance and support.

Tips on how to build independence:

1. PROVIDE POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND ENCOURAGEMENT:

Make a point of complimenting and encouraging children regularly for their achievements throughout the day. Children need self-confidence to become more independent. If they feel good about themselves and their abilities, then this will increase their desire to do more and do better.

2. PRACTISE EVERYDAY LIFE SKILLS:

Children learn life skills through life's experiences. During the day, practise and complete different tasks with children around the house—putting away toys, folding laundry, setting the table for dinner, helping in the kitchen, gardening, etc. All of these basics can help children feel that they have contributed to the family chores and have learned some important life skills.

3. TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO PROBLEM-SOLVE:

Build confidence by showing children how to evaluate a problem and break it down to find a solution. Brainstorm and think of possible ways to solve the problem or handle a difficult task. For example, if they have a large project to complete, break it down into manageable goals. Let them pick a solution and see if it works. If not, then try, try again! Encourage your child to solve problems on their own, but always offer guidance and support to ensure a positive learning experience.

Empowering a child's independence is a process that takes time and commitment. The staff at Rooks to Cooks believe that learning to cook is one of those important life skills that help children become more independent and self-confident. They teach children to advocate for themselves by encouraging independent thinking and honouring their unique perspective.

Rooks to Cooks will be running Summer Cooking Camps at Christ Church Deer Park in July and August 2024. They specialize in educating campers on how to cook in a safe, fun, and supportive environment, but campers also learn about nutrition, teamwork, independence, problem-solving, and more! For more information, please visit the website: www.rookstocooks.ca.

✦ Margaret Udovc is the Communications and Marketing coordinator for Rooks to Cooks.



Spring rummage fun!

by Mary Bredin, Jayne Miles Simpson, and the ReImagine Rummage team

We had a wonderful rummage event on April 20th—40 volunteers and over 300 shoppers! It was just a hive of busy and fun. A lot of positive community energy. Thank you so much for everyone's support to get the sales up and running—from the custodians (especially Dennis and Rikk) to all the amazing volunteers. It truly takes a village! We had almost 40 volunteers to prepare lunch for at the sale. Our local Loblaws store at Yonge and St. Clair provided trays of veggies and roll ups for free and even delivered the goods to our busy volunteers!

Within Re-Imagine Rummage, we are all so grateful now to have had almost two years of in-person sales—clothing, rummage, and Christmas. These events feel like they have reignited our community spirit by providing a place to connect outside of Sunday and church. Re-Imagine Rummage is a project with a more important purpose now. It is not just about making money (although we did make over \$7000 at the spring sale) but about checking in with people we might not see every day. One volunteer at the Christmas sale was heard to say, "this is just like the old days" when we could all be included each to our abilities. It is hard to write about how volunteering is so good for the spirit without Anne Larkin on our team. It is also hard to imagine these events without Anne, but in her memory, we must continue remembering that to serve is its own reward.

We will be back at the end of the summer, as we head into the fall rummage sale. The fall sale will take place on Saturday, September 14, and will be an outdoor sale held on church grounds. Drop off to the church will begin during the last week of June. We will be accepting household goods, sporting goods, records and CDs, and books.

If you have an interest in joining this community, please contact Jayne, Lucia, Sharon, or Mary. Sorting is actually quite fun and oddly therapeutic!

US and THEM

by William Jackson

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
John 13:34-35 (KJV)

There has been a proliferation of the US versus THEM phenomenon of late in relation to personal characteristics: race, colour, gender, ethnicity, religion, social status, and so on. I've been reflecting on this concept of us-and-them over the last few weeks and thinking that it is decidedly unchristian.

How did we get here?

Some of it is about *I'm right and you're wrong*. Some of it is about *it's mine and you can't have it*. Some is about *I am better than you are*. And what happens is that egos, avarice, and fear get in the way of our ability to love.

Lent, which comes once a year, is a time when we are to reflect and, historically, to give up something that has meaning for us. Can we let go of us-and-them thinking? To live without that dichotomy, what would we have to give up—something material, intellectual, or just a feeling?

In the Gospel of John that we read on Maundy Thursday, Christ tells his disciples, and by extension us, to "love one another as I have loved you." This might be seen as an extension of the second great commandment that he stated in Mathew, Mark, and Luke: "love your neighbour as yourself." However, Christ prefaced his injunction in John with the word "new," so I prefer to believe that the commandment recorded in John supersedes the old one originally stated in Leviticus. The new commandment is more important than ever in today's world where we cannot afford to nurse tribal loyalties.

Let's examine "love one another as I have loved you." I don't think it allows for us-and-them categories because there is no *them* if we love as we are loved, if we love indiscriminately.

What does indiscriminate love look like? This is a very important question. What would you have to do in order to give up your concept of *them* and accept that there's only *us*? What will allow us to really be all-inclusive, nonjudgmental, and welcoming? Are we a family unit, a congregation, a nation?

Loving everyone as we are loved—how can I actualize that concept? At this point, I don't have an answer, but I believe I have to try.

So, this past Lent my mission was to look at everyone I saw, met, or communicated with as one of us to see if that will make our community, our neighbourhood, our country, our world a better place. This is a journey I will continue throughout the coming year. What about you?

❖ William Jackson is an occasional contributor to Spiritus and long-time member of Christ Church Deer Park's Pastoral Care Team

Dear Church Mouse



Dear Church Mouse

I am writing with a concern about the "Prayers of the People," which are part of our regular worship services at CCDP. My concern is focused on the end of the prayers where the reader says, "Lord, in your mercy," and the congregation responds, "hear our prayer." I am confused in the moment because it seems to be a situation where we are asking God to hear our prayers as if God will or can choose to hear our prayers or not. In my mind this is counter to a relationship with God through Jesus who enables us to live in the glow of the Resurrection. A suggested option for the ending of the Prayers of the People would have the reader saying, "Lord, through your mercy and unconditional love." The congregational reply would be, "You hear our prayer."

Regards,

A Positive Person in Prayer

Dear Positive Person,

You are right when you say that the intercessory prayers should convey a sense that our prayers are heard by God. The question is whether such confidence is best to be placed in the petitions themselves or in the responses. At the moment, this mouse thinks that well-written prayers with variety, creativity, and scriptural grounding will express this confidence in the petitions themselves. The responses should be familiar and not break the concentration of the people or take the focus away from the petitions by using longer or unfamiliar phrases.

As Prayers of the People, the content and focus can vary from week to week, in keeping with the theme of the lectionary readings and sermon. The Psalms are always a guide here. Confidence in God's faithfulness is sometimes expressed with a hint of uncertainty about whether God has heard the psalmist. Other times, the sense of confidence that God has heard the petition of the psalmist is more certain. This mouse prefers just a small slice of humble pie (or cheese) in asking God to hear our prayers, and wonders if a response of "you hear our prayer" gives God no choice in the matter. However, variety is good, and there could be different responses at different times of the church year, for example in Advent, where the response could be, "come, thou long-expected Jesus."

Dear Church Mouse

In the Israel/Gaza war, civilian deaths continue to mount, and Christians are being killed in Gaza too. How can I motivate our Anglican leadership to unequivocally condemn what's happening? Don't tell me to pray. I'm already doing that.

Regards,

Disenchanted

Dear Disenchanted,

Write to the head of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, directly to let her know the depth of your conviction. The war in Gaza is heartbreaking. It has depths of complexity that we as outsiders cannot begin to understand. And yet the simple fact is that thousands of people, including many children, are dying. In the Psalms, lament comes before vengeance. We should weep before calling for justice. Archbishop Linda Nicholls called for a personal day of prayer and fasting on February 16, 2024. In December 2023 she called on the government to support the human rights and safety of children and youth. There are also calls from a few outspoken Canadian doctors and pediatricians for the government to speak out and call for a ceasefire. Even so, continue to pray!

Dear Church Mouse

What are the rules for who can officiate and preach at the funeral of a loved one?

Regards,

Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead,

The officiant needs to be ordained Anglican clergy. Anyone can preach; however, a sermon mustn't be a eulogy in praise of the person who died. Other parts of a funeral service are for that. Instead, we must preach Christ crucified and resurrected—a tricky thing to do at a funeral, so if a layperson is preaching it's best they do it with some consultation with clergy/an experienced theologian.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
Do you recognize these faces? This picture ran in the 1994 Herald, announcing the marriage of Danylo and Cheryl, then our Honourary Assistant Priest! Congratulations on 30 years of marriage as you begin your retirement Cheryl!



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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.

The next *Spiritus* deadline is July 15, 2024. 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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