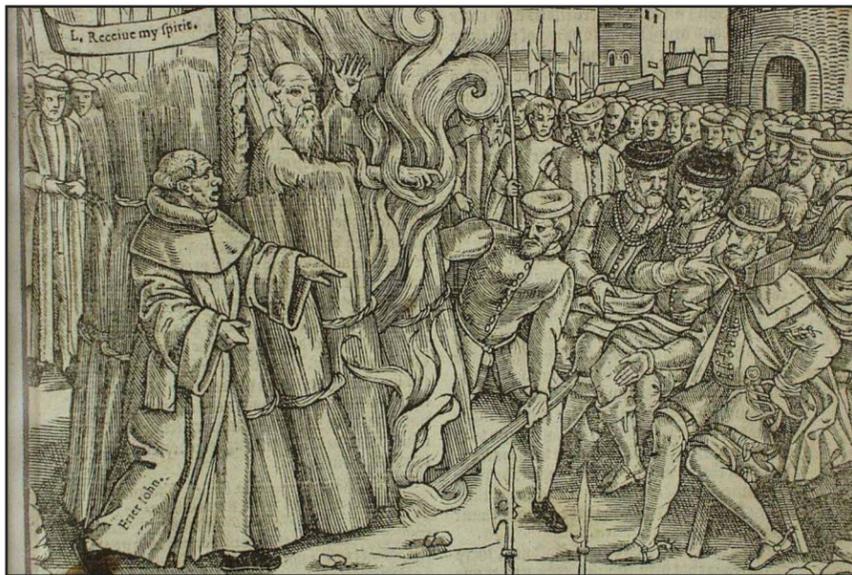


# SPIRITUS

NEWSLETTER OF CHRIST CHURCH DEER PARK

ISSUE NO. 35 LENT 2026



In this woodcut, from John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" 1563, we see John Cranmer burning at the stake.

## Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), Translator and Reviser of the Liturgy, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr

by Pauline Thompson

**FIRE: Ps 107:33-43; 108:1-6 (7-13); Exodus 2:23 – 3:15; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13**

What was going through the mind of the persons who chose these Scripture passages for the Feast of Thomas Cranmer on March 21st? Perhaps they were thinking of Cranmer's martyrdom<sup>1</sup> and wondering if a reflection on the biblical imagery of fire might make it more vivid for us. But first, let's rehearse the most important details of Cranmer's life.

First, as Archbishop of Canterbury (1533-56), he helped negotiate the divorce of Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon and oversaw Henry's installation of head of the English church. During Edward VI's reign, he confirmed the establishment of the Protestant church in England, drawing up the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* and writing or translating most of the collects used for centuries afterwards. Then Edward died and Mary came to the throne, intent on retribution against Cranmer because of his part in the humiliation of her mother, Catherine. To avoid execution, he agreed to a set of Recantations and signed on again to fundamental Catholic doctrines: the supremacy of the Pope, Purgatory, Prayers for the Dead, The Real Presence in the Eucharistic elements, etc. When it became clear to him that these Recantations were not going to persuade Queen Mary to lift the death sentence, at the last minute he recanted his Recantations (which had troubled his conscience) and was led to the stake in Oxford, deciding to thrust his signing hand ("his unworthy right hand") into the flames first. Such is Thomas Cranmer's experience of fire. And now, let's look at the Biblical readings for his feast day.

There are over 500 occurrences of the word "fire" in the Bible, ranging all the way from the pillar of fire in the desert, to the devouring fire of the glory of God on Mount Sinai, to the chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire that took Elijah to heaven, and many images and mentions of refining, consuming, punishment, jealousy, wrath, sacrifice.... But for Cranmer's feast day, the most interesting is the one that burned in a bush but didn't consume it, a fire acting against its own nature.

No wonder Moses was intrigued. He comes to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to

him as a fire blazing out from a bush. "Why ever does the bush not burn away?" he wonders. As an attention-seeking device, this is pretty successful. But it is more than that: the fire is an image of the glory of God. Moses is awestruck. He is told to take off his shoes as a sign of reverence, and is given a commission by the voice of God emanating from the bush, a commission he really can't refuse, although he tries. In the passage following the one suggested for Cranmer's feast day, Moses tries to get out of the assignment by claiming that he was no good as a public speaker (Exodus 3: 10). He, like Cranmer, understands the importance of language in the leadership role he is being offered. But this burning bush fire is quite different from the one that consumed Cranmer. Why is it an appropriate reading for Cranmer's commemoration?

There are over 500 occurrences of the word "fire" in the Bible

The epistle asks us to reflect on St Paul's famous hymn to love in 1 Corinthians 13. In verse 3, Paul states, "I may give my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I gain nothing by it." Was this sentence going through Cranmer's mind as he approached the stake? Verse 7 goes on to say, "There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance," including, apparently, burning at the stake. In his final speech at St Mary's church in Oxford, Cranmer quotes the first three verses of James 5:

*A word to you who are rich. Weep and wail over the miserable fate overtaking you: your riches have rotted away; your fine clothes are moth-eaten; your silver and gold have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and consume your flesh like fire.*

This seems to be a warning to those who were intent on burning him at the stake, already set up for him down the road. But it perhaps also testifies to his love of family, his church, and his God. At the end, his conscience was clear.

The 1 Corinthians reading is obviously relevant to Cranmer's martyrdom. The story of the bush which the fire did not consume? Perhaps the person who chose these readings saw some hope for Cranmer in this bush: the bush radiated the glory of God, the God who cared so deeply for his people that He was preparing for them an Exodus, a new life in a new land: and for England, eventually, a new sovereign and

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Calendar" on page ix of *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1959

# In Solidarity. So What?

by Genevieve Chornenki

**“What are your plans for Lent, if that’s not too personal a question?” At the parish Pancake Supper people at my table were sharing their intentions for the forty days leading up to Easter. Now it was my turn. I’m planning on cooking Palestinian meals throughout Lent, I said, specifically ones without meat.**

My plan met with approval, but in truth my intentions were shaky and ill-defined. Even now that Lent is underway, I’m dubious about my choice.

I own and *read* cookbooks, often comparing regional recipes from one book to another before riffing on a particular dish. In the last three years, my library has grown to include books devoted to the cuisine of Gaza such as *The Gaza Kitchen: A Palestinian Culinary Journey*, 3rd ed. by Laila el-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt (which merges recipes with inserts about the people and history of Gaza), *Boustany: A Celebration of Vegetables from my Palestine* by Sami Tamimi, and *Bethlehem: A Celebration of Palestinian Food* by Fadi Kattan.

My Lenten notion was to restrict dinners to vegetarian Palestinian dishes, in solidarity with the Palestinian people of Gaza as well as those in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. On a practical basis, that would mean cooking with dried pulses like green and red lentils and chick peas, something I do regularly anyway. It would also mean loosening my winter discipline of Ontario-grown carrots, cabbage, onions, and beets in favour of ingredients like lemons, peppers, eggplants, zucchini, and spring onions, ingredients that might appear on Farm Boy’s reduced shelves but do not grow within 100 miles of Toronto in the winter. To add “gravity” to my voluntary undertaking, I also planned to cook in a cast-iron frying pan rather than turning on the oven. (Hence my gratitude for Tamimi’s dry-fried flatbread recipe.)

Almost all of the Gazan recipes require significant prep time, including dry roasting spices, grinding garlic, and/or peeling and chopping vegetables. But so what? My little Lenten “discipline” sounds more like an indulgence than a sacrifice or a penance, doesn’t it? After all, chopping onions can be meditative and roasting seeds satisfying. Beyond that, my focus on meal preparation and eating borders on the obscene. More food and aid might be entering Gaza in recent months,

but living conditions are harsh and malnutrition continues to claim the lives of children and adults every day.

Doctors Without Borders has documented mass starvation, especially among children and pregnant or nursing women<sup>1</sup>, and in 2025 its medical teams had to add a new acronym to records —BBO or Beaten By Others, referring to people injured in their attempts to secure food rations.<sup>2</sup>

So, what does it mean for me to claim solidarity with the Palestinian people? Is it enough to be mindful of their suffering every day, to earnestly wish for their relief, for the restoration of their safety, security, and dignity? Is it enough to “think” about them as I crush garlic and strain chickpeas? Is it enough to hold them in the Light, as my Quaker friend would say, even though they’ve no way of knowing that I do so?

No, it’s not enough, and my efforts do not amount to solidarity. They’re sentimental. They’re individual. And they can’t possibly make a practical difference. Like prayer, my intentions might be good, but their effect, if any, is far beyond my control. What I really need is to enact the idiom *Put your money where your mouth is*, and the only way I can think of doing that is by making a significant donation to an NGO on the ground in Gaza, one that is actually involved in the relief of suffering.

After considerable research, I’ve opted to donate to IDRF.<sup>3</sup> My friend and colleague Cheryl who is an active member of Independent Jewish Voices ratifies my choice. IDRF started working in Palestine in 1994, and from what I can tell, is not on the list of NGOs that Israeli authorities intend to ban from working in Gaza.<sup>4</sup>

I won’t pretend that my donation amounts to “sacrificial giving.” I simply hope that it goes some way to getting food, clean water, medicine, and food into the hands of suffering human beings in a small area on the planet. Yet even as this Lent/Easter issue of *Spiritus* is being put together, civilians elsewhere in the Middle East are being displaced and people living in one of Beirut’s suburbs have been warned that their neighbourhood may soon “look like Khan Younis,” a city in southern Gaza.

❖ Genevieve Chornenki is the founding editor of *Spiritus*.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.medicinsdumonde.org/app/uploads/2025/05/EN-Gaza-Acute-Malnutrition-report-final.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.msf.org/ghf-run-food-distributions-gaza-are-sites-orchestrated-killing>

<sup>3</sup> <https://idrf.ca/appeal/palestine>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/31/which-aid-groups-is-israel-banning-from-gaza-now-and-what-will-it-mean>



## »Thomas Cranmer

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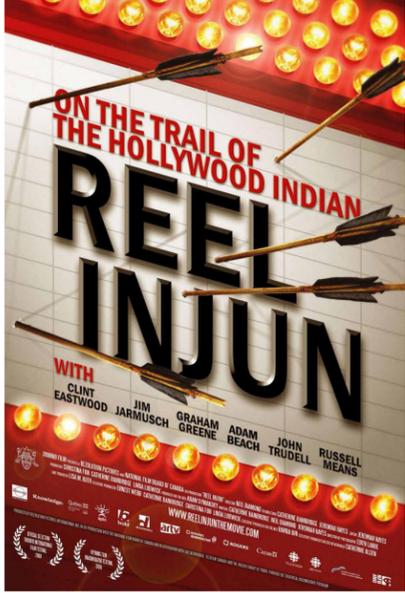
a revitalized church. The Protestant Bishops Richard Latimer and Nicholas Ridley were condemned to die at the stake in Oxford shortly before Cranmer. It is reported that Latimer said to Ridley: “*Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out.*” A candle. A very small fire. Whose sole purpose is to provide light.

*O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake our Lord.*  
Amen.

—Thomas Cranmer

This collect first appeared in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, a translation of a Latin prayer in the Gelasian Sacramentary.

❖ Pauline Thompson is a member of Christ Church Deer Park. She chaired the parish selection committee that recommended Alison Falby as our rector.



# Why Movies Matter

by Mary Bredin

**W**e all know the impact that a great movie has on our lives. For me films like “Casablanca” and “The Wizard of Oz” have left a lasting impression and have so many lines that I use time and time again. Stories we see on screen have a “realness” that gives them impact, and right now what is real and true is a major issue in our media. I just saw an amazing photograph of a journalist for the Washington Post, taken in Kyiv, Ukraine. She is sitting in her car in the dark writing with a pencil when she learns she has been fired. Is it a coincident that Jeff Bezos now owns the Washington Post?

We must increase our awareness of who gets to tell the stories and why. This theme is one of the areas we are considering this Lenten season in Reverend Cathy’s Lenten Series of “Unlikely Stories.” The first movie we watched on Friday, February 20, 2026, was called “Reel Injun”<sup>1</sup>. It follows how Indigenous people have been portrayed over the years by Hollywood and how these stories have had a huge impact on how Indigenous people are seen in society. In one instance, the director Neil Diamond visits a camp in the United States where a boy camper is proud to proclaim that he is head of the “Sioux Tribe” at his camp. We see how the Indigenous culture has been manipulated through history according to Hollywood’s needs. (Or is it really on account of a government’s agenda?) Watching “Reel Injun” will make you realize that it is hard to separate some views from the Hollywood story. How do we untangle a story we have been told again and again through stories played out as “Cowboys and Indians” as children?

Recognizing that we need to re-learn a whole history is an important step in the Truth and Reconciliation journey. Overall, as Cathy mentioned, Lent is not meant to be gloomy. In that spirit, it must also be mentioned that this film threads wonderful humour into the serious themes.

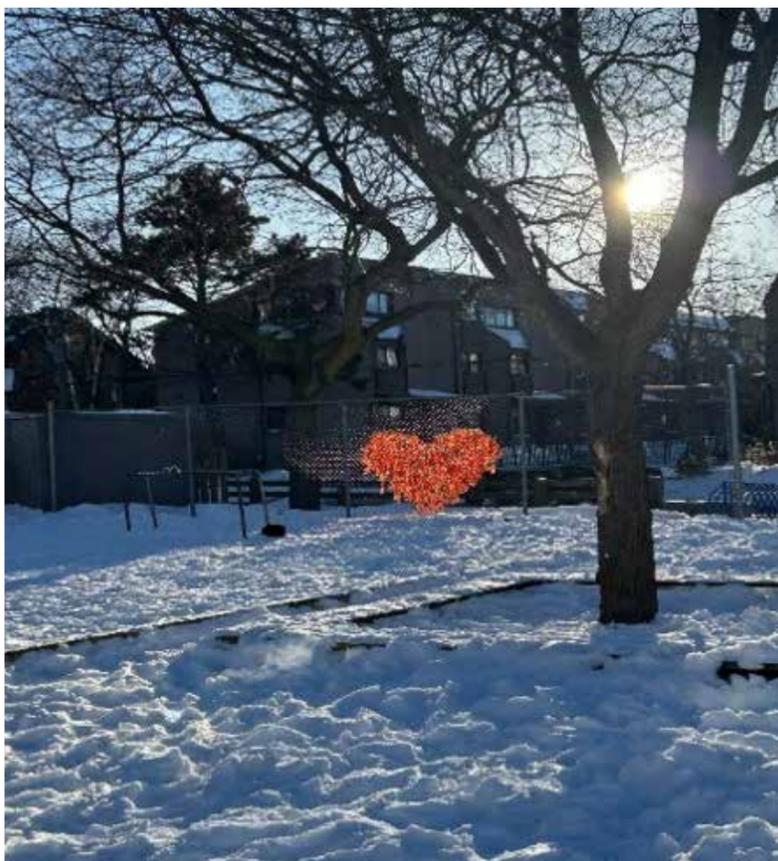
After the movie, we really focused then on how “Reel Injun” and the version of history we have been told also has messages for us for Lent. For me, the issues of social justice and living in solidarity with those who suffer felt significant.

The next sessions will follow Lenten stories of lesser known figures and then we will watch “Beans” (March 13) and “After the Last River” (March 27) which will be our last session.

I note you do not have to have to come all the Fridays, but I do hope to see you there.

❖ *Mary Bredin is a long-time member of Christ Church Deer Park who volunteers with the ReImagining Rummage Team and currently chairs the CCDP Truth and Reconciliation Committee.*

<sup>1</sup> Available at the NFB website – you can watch for free.



*The photo is of a Heart by Clinton Public School Children for the Indigenous Children who did not come home. Photo taken January 2026 by Mary Bredin.*

## A Prayer for Stewardship at Christ Church Deer Park

*Gracious God,*

*We thank you for the gift of Christ Church Deer Park and for all who have shaped this parish over generations.*

*Guide us as we care for this community today, that we may enrich its worship, deepen its fellowship, and faithfully steward its life and buildings for those yet to come.*

*May all we do be offered in gratitude, trust, and hope, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

## Stewardship as a Way of Life

Cheryl Bedard

on behalf of the Stewardship Committee

**When we hear the word stewardship, many of us think first of money. Yet in the Christian tradition, stewardship is far richer and more expansive. It concerns how we live, how we share, and how we care for what God has entrusted to us.**

In the opening chapters of Genesis, humanity is given a calling: “The Lord God took the human and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it” (Genesis 2:15). From the beginning, we are stewards—caretakers of creation, community, and one another.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus deepens this understanding, in which servants are entrusted with resources according to their ability (Matthew 25:14–30). The point is not simply financial return but faithfulness and participation—those who use what they have been given, whether much or little, are praised. The one who withdraws in fear is gently challenged.

Stewardship today is about engaging what we have been given in the service of God and neighbour. It includes financial generosity, as well as time, skills, hospitality, prayer, music, teaching, listening, maintenance, governance, and countless quiet acts of service. As Saint Paul reminds us, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4).

At Christ Church Deer Park, we are blessed with many gifts. Some among us give financially. Others give their time, wisdom, creativity, professional skills, or pastoral presence. Many serve quietly and faithfully. All of these are acts of stewardship. All are needed.

In recent years, much of our attention has understandably focused on financial needs. Yet stewardship is not only about sustaining a budget. It is about sustaining a community—a place where people belong, worship is beautiful, care is given, and faith can grow.

Stewardship is not about pressure or guilt. It is about invitation and participation. Each of us is invited to contribute what we can in this season of life, so that no one feels left behind and everyone has a place.

The psalmist writes, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1). Everything we have is a gift. Stewardship is our grateful response.

❖ *Cheryl Bedard is member of the Stewardship Committee. Other members of the Stewardship Committee include Stephen Clark, Alison Falby, Bob Hutchison, Carolyn Kearns, Paul Kingston, Amy Leung (Chair) and George Lewis.*

### Practising Stewardship This Season

Stewardship is how we live out our faith in everyday life. Here are three simple ways to start:

**TIME:** Offer an hour—attend worship, join a parish activity, or check in with someone in the community.

**TALENT:** Share a skill or interest—music, gardening, administration, hospitality, technology, or simply listening.

**TREASURE:** Consider how your financial giving reflects your gratitude and capacity in this season of life.

# Hafez—Model of Piety?

by William Jackson

From time immemorial, human beings have found different ways to refer to the Divine and to express their feelings towards whatever that may be. Christians tend to use words like God, Father, Creator, Jehovah, and the Almighty in their hymns, prayers, and rituals. But this Lent, I am allowing myself to be taken in by the Sufi mystic and poet Hafez (CE 1320–1389) who sometimes refers to the ineffable as the *Beloved*, the *Friend*, or even my *Lover*. By using those terms, it seems to me, Hafez is both seeking and accepting a personal relationship of some sort with the entity beyond these concepts.

I find his approach instructive. Although Hafez may give the Divine a name and may be referring to a close individual or a patron at the same time, his poetry conveys the sense of the unknowable. What I mean to say is that Hafez gives me the sense that the Divine, even if described as drinking wine or sounding like a nightingale, is beyond knowing.

Of course, I am reading the work of Hafez in translation, principally the translations of Dick Davis who is fluent in Persian. I also sometimes read Daniel Ladinsky, who does not speak Persian and whose poems are essentially renderings. Regardless, Hafez's words are inspiring and evocative. They allow the reader (me) to have an experience not otherwise accessible. (Call my experience spiritual or call it religious, as you prefer.) So, this year as a Lenten discipline I decided to read and reflect on a different Hafez poem each day. Here's an example taken from *Faces of Love and the Poets of Shiraz*, translated by Dick Davis (Penguin Books, 2013):

*Good news, my heart! The breath of Christ is wafting here;  
Its sweetness, brings the scent of One who'll soon appear.*

*Don't cry and pray for exile's sake; last night I cast  
Our fortune, and an answer to your prayers draws near;*

*Not only I rejoice within this valley's fire –  
Moses, in hopes of borrowed embers wanders here.*

*There is no one who has no business in Your street  
and all are drawn here by the hopes that they hold dear–*

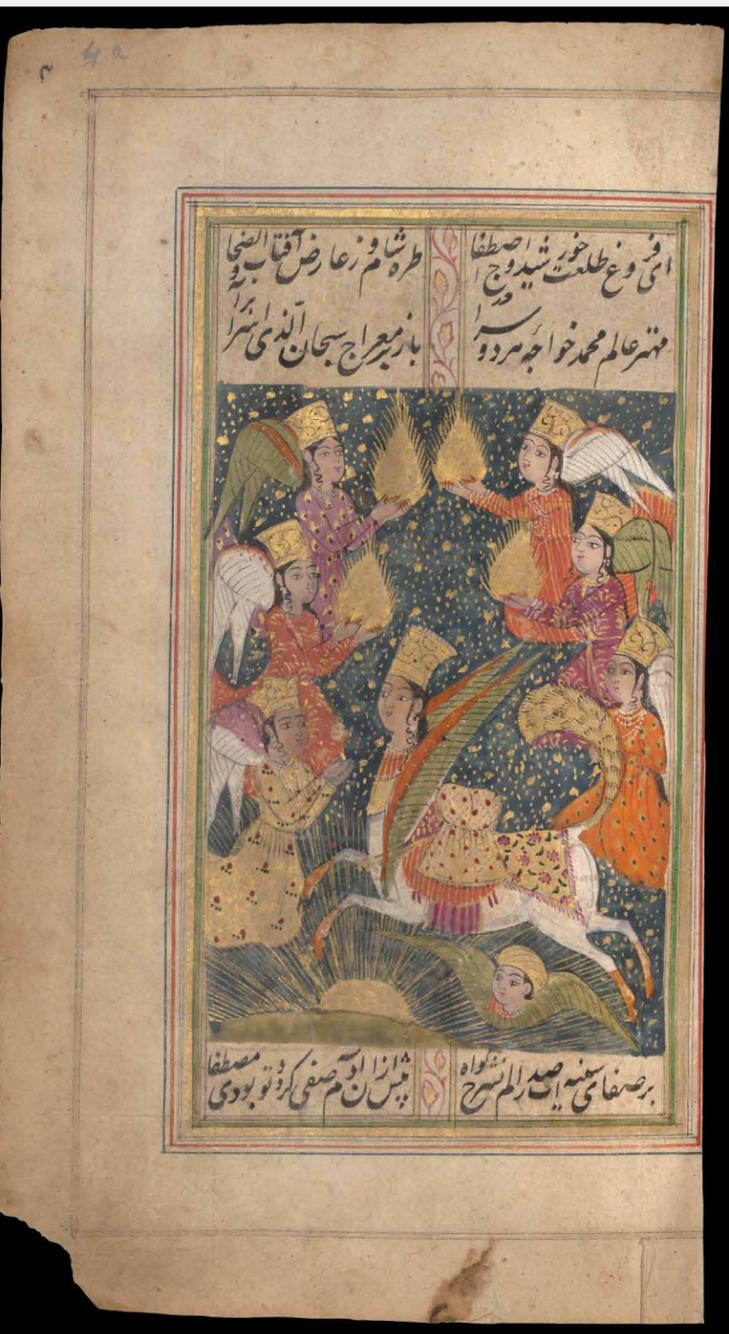
*No man can know where his beloved now resides,  
But still the bell that summons him rings loud and clear;*

*And if a friend should ask how one grief-stricken fares  
Say, "Well! He's breathing still – he's not yet in his bier,*

*But ask this garden's nightingale for news, since cries  
Of longing from within a cage are all, I hear.*

*My friends, the Friend is hurting Hafez's poor heart;  
A falcon hunts a fly, or so it would appear!*

❖ William Jackson is a longtime parishioner and a member of the Congregational Care Team. He is also a reader at the 8:00 a.m. Sunday service.



This 18th Century Hafez Anthology is from the Metropolitan Museum's collection and made available through their Open Access Policy.



## Updates from The Churches on-the-Hill Foodbank



### FOODBANK VOLUNTEER POSITION AVAILABLE

– our Treasurer is looking to recruit a newly retired **BOOKKEEPER** who is proficient with Quick Book for 4-5 hours per week (late November and December could be higher, other months lower).

The position entails entering Accounts Payable, credit card reconciliations and tracking of restricted donations. Anyone interested should call the Foodbank telephone **416-967-3842** and indicate Bookkeeper position as well as a name and telephone number.

The March Food of the Month donation is

**FAMILY SIZED PEANUT BUTTER** for our Babies programme.



With rising food costs the Foodbank is serving record numbers of clients (approximately 1200 people per week). In order to ensure that the Foodbank can continue in future years we need the financial support of the community.

Visit us at our website [www.cothfoodbank.ca](http://www.cothfoodbank.ca) for more information or to donate either on a one time or a pre-authorized monthly basis. On behalf of the clients, volunteers at the COTH Foodbank, thank you for your support.

## Notes from the Music Library: Lent-Easter 2026

# Afrocentric Music

By Emily Chatten

**One Saturday afternoon in January, the Toronto Centre Chapter of the Royal Canadian College of Organists held a workshop on Afrocentric Music at CCDP for both organists and choristers. Stefani suggested that I join; I was one of a handful of our choristers who came along for this educational experience and I am glad that I did.**

At CCDP, our library has a growing number of African-American Spirituals, but like many in our choir, I have struggled to sing some of them, with their complex rhythms, with the kind of ease or comfort with which I approach traditional Eurocentric music.

Brainerd Blyden-Taylor of the Nathaniel Dett Chorale, who led the workshop, opened my eyes to the diversity of Afrocentric music. In fact, the liner notes of a recent recording of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's choral music made a similar reflection, saying of it: "I was blown away by the variety, skill and beauty in all of them." I know I had read bits and pieces of the history of this music before, but this workshop cemented its history for me.

The enslaved Africans that arrived in the Caribbean and early America spoke dozens of different languages. The only language they had in common was that of the Europeans, most commonly English. As they learned and listened, they heard the religion of their captors, in which they heard stories that rang true to their own experiences. Enslaved people began to use these Biblical stories as the basis for music using rhythm and beats from their homelands. These songs represented acts of defiance and liberation, only later becoming songs of religion. Often songs were used to accompany work to help slaves keep on time in order to avoid beatings. Over time, the genre split into spiritual and secular songs, and eventually grew to include many styles under the category of Afrocentric music or music by Black composers.

The story becomes more complicated after Emancipation in the United States. It was not long before the music of those who were now freed was heard beyond the plantations of the South and people were interested in listening to it. Sometimes, there were whites performing it, sometimes in blackface. Eventually there were choral performances, like those of the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University. Fisk University was one of the first universities for Black students after the Civil War. In order to raise money for the crumbling buildings they were given, they went on a fundraising tour of the Northeast States. Not only did they become famous, bringing back much needed funds for the school, but the following year they published one of the first books of Spirituals.



## How Long Is Your Prayer List?

by Edna Quammie

**When we pray for others it is usually an act of intercessory prayer. We ask, among many things, for restored health, comfort, strength, protection, and guidance. We act as the mediator between the person prayed for and God. Intercessory prayer allows for deep spiritual and emotional benefits when our prayers answered.**

Jesus is our model, of course, and we are to follow him as loving Christians, but there are others in the Christian tradition who also serve as good examples when it comes to prayer. Abraham, Moses and Paul were intercessors on behalf of their people. They "stood in the gap" as mediators for those in need of prayer(s). All three men prayed for the multitudes. They were used by God as intercessors.

Abraham was persistent (Genesis 18:16-33). He seems to haggle with God by being specific, compassionate, and reverent. He never stopped asking God to spare his people.

Moses acted as mediator between God and the Israelites (Exodus 32-34).

Paul was a very prolific intercessor, committed to intercessory prayer. He prayed for the churches which he established and for his companions, and he wrote "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Today when we gather together in church we pray for the whole state of Christ's church. We pray for

the church, our families, our friends, and neighbors. We pray for the sick and dying. We pray for those in conflict and in mental distress. For our city, country, and the environment, we pray. For those who are grieving and for those whom we no longer see.

**We pray for  
the church, our  
families, our friends,  
and neighbors.**

The prayer list is never ending. We each decide what our prayer list looks like. We decide, with God's grace, how we divide the list, the urgency of prayers needed, the ongoing prayer. We want to include, prayers for strength, protection, and guidance for those whom we pray for and

ourselves. We ask for restored health, peace of mind, and the easing of our burdens.

A prayer list can be long or short. Your prayer list is your personal guide.

Lord in your Mercy hear our Prayers.

*Edna Quammie is a long-time member of Christ Church Deer Park, a past Reader/Server at the 8 a.m. Service and an occasional contributor to Spiritus.*



The Canadian-American composer R. Nathaniel Dett expressed concerns about the use of Spirituals and Black religious music in fundraising, worried about commodification. Dett wondered: "in doing so the songs and also the singers run the risk of losing that indefinable something which all things of the spirit seem to lose when too closely associated with the commercial." As a result of this, Dett arranged some Spirituals for hymnbooks. For the most part he used this traditional music as the basis for choral scores. According to American academic Marques Garrett, Dett was not trying to improve the music but instead trying to find different ways to preserve it. He explains that Dett's music "remain[s] true to the character of the folk songs either through repeated use of the folk song melodies, motivic development based on the rhythms and melodic contour, added polyphony, or the use of characteristic idioms such as call and response, syncopation, and pentatonic scales."

As the 20th Century went on, it was more common for composers to write arrangements of the earlier source material. Pieces by William Dawson of the Tuskegee Institute and Moses Hogan are especially common, and at CCDP, we have a number of each of their arrangements. David Hurd, whose plainsong mass is often used during the 10:30 service, is a much celebrated Black composer, whom our music director Stefani Bedin has written about in her music notes. While this column is limited, I feel like my own research and reading in preparation has opened a whole new world of music.

*Emily Chatten is a volunteer chorister at Christ Church Deer Park who acts as music librarian. Emily is a volunteer editor of Spiritus.*

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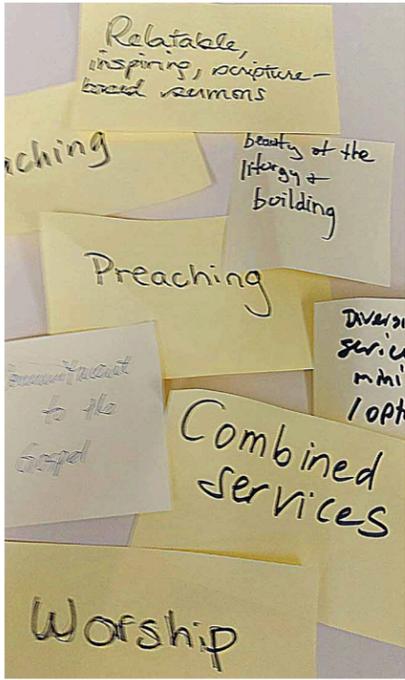
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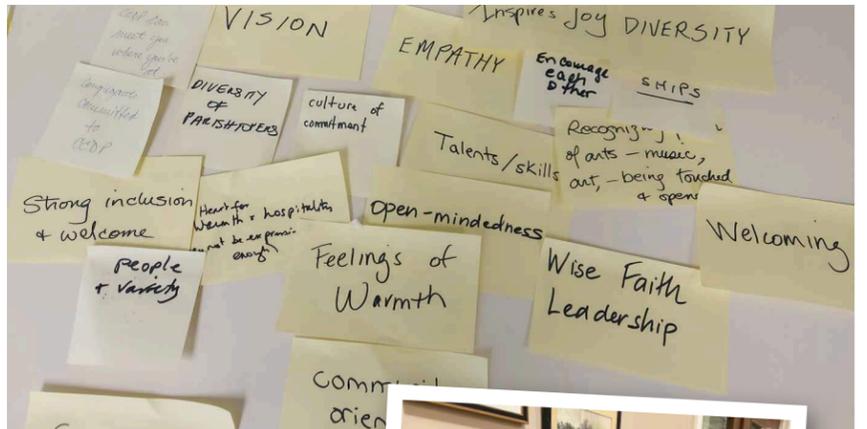
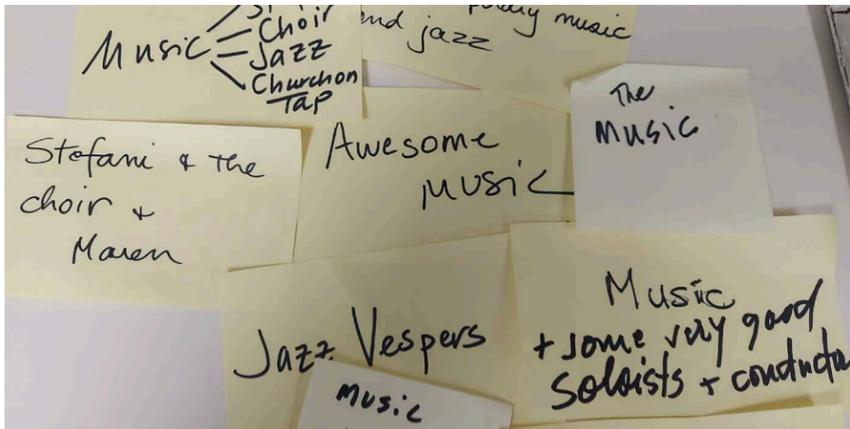
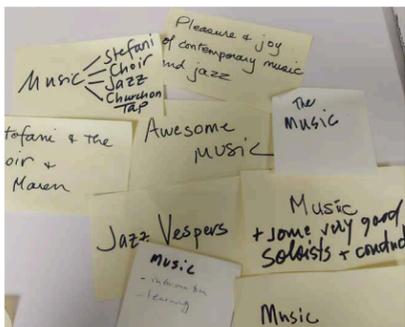
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January Photos:  
**Parish Visioning Day**



January Photos:  
**Alison's Induction**



# Colouring Outside the Lines

by Genevieve Chornenki

**A**t least ten years ago, a respected parishioner gave me a ride home after a meeting at the church. I don't remember what prompted his remark, but as we drove south on Yonge Street, he turned and said, "I don't believe Jesus is the only begotten son of God any more than I believe that you or I are. It's just not something I broadcast." I understood his reluctance. Community is a wonderful thing, but it can be coercive. Few of us want to risk group disapproval.

Have things changed at Christ Church Deer Park since that conversation in the car? Or do parishioners feel less inhibited about expressing their religious convictions? Judging from the parish planning meeting in January 2026, I think we still have a way to go. At the meeting, I detected an undercurrent of reluctance to be frank on the part of some participants, and I watched people censoring themselves.

"Maybe I shouldn't say this," one participant said, "but, I consider all of this to be mythology."

"I regard myself as a Christian, but I don't think the Incarnation is literally true," confessed another, but privately.

And yet another said sotto voce, "It doesn't matter to me whether others believe in Jesus. There are lots of valid spiritual paths."

Graham Greene, whom many think of as a staunch Roman Catholic writer, was actually a skeptical convert (unlike J.D. Vance). Green called himself an "agnostic Catholic." Why not generalize that to "agnostic Christian—those who willingly follow the teachings of Jesus, who may even use the word Christ, but who aren't sure what animates the universe and don't feel the need to cry out, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief?"

Against the backdrop of the parish planning session, I found Reverend Alison's sermon "Who is Jesus? Come and See" very appropriate, even encouraging. She explicitly acknowledged that there is a range of attitudes toward the Incarnation. Some Christians see Jesus as a teacher and only a teacher, like, say, the Buddha or Mohammed. Others attribute both humanity and divinity to Jesus. And, in case you missed it, Alison specifically said.

*It is easier to recognize Jesus as a teacher than as God in human form. And there's nothing wrong with seeing Jesus as a teacher. That's where the first disciples began,*



*after all. One point of this text [John 1:29-4] is that recognizing Jesus as a teacher is one step to following him.*

Then she went on to ask parishioners to identify themselves in that Sunday's reading from John.

*Are you John, pointing out Jesus to the people around you, using images and language they understand?*

*Or are you one of the first disciples who recognize Jesus as a teacher, bringing him your deepest longings and hopes?*

*Or are you one of those disciples who has already taken up Jesus' invitation to "come and see"? Have you already developed such a relationship with Jesus that you call him "Messiah" and invite others to meet him?*

To be clear, the rector was not rewriting the Articles of Religion or editing the Apostles Creed. What she did do, however, was convey to self-censoring Christians that it is safe and acceptable to be honest and that Christianity is not a pass/fail exam. Nobody should be checking credentials at the door.

*It's ok if you identify with more than one of these categories, or move back and forth between them: the journey of faith isn't linear!*

That kind of openness matters if Christ Church Deer Park is serious about being neighbourly and approachable, especially in today's individualistic and skeptical society.

I once took a course on corporate and board diversity. One of the lecturers remarked that external characteristics like socioeconomic class, ethnic background, religion, and the like can give the appearance of diversity but may actually be superficial. What really matters, he said, is diversity of thought.

Diversity of thought. That's the kind of diversity that I think Alison was inviting us to accept. That's the kind of diversity we should aspire to if we're serious about building our membership back up and strengthening our finances. And surely that's the kind of diversity we should embody if we really mean to be a welcoming Christian community.

❖ Genevieve Chornenki is a member of Christ Church Deer Park who has served the parish in a variety of roles, including Rector's Warden

*What really matters is diversity of thought.*

## Community Connection Groups Turn 6 this Spring

by Andrew Harding

**Small-groups are a vital part of church life, but it took the pandemic closures to start them at Christ Church. In 2000, Rev Cathy Gibbs set up several groups to meet weekly to help people keep in touch when everything was online and the church was closed – except for the Saturday morning breakfast program. This was six years ago now, and what Cathy helped to launch then is going strong today.**

Four groups meet each week, three on Zoom and one in person (TBC). As well as getting to know each other more deeply week by week, we spend a good deal of time reflecting on discussion questions that Cathy provides. These are based on the sermon from the previous Sunday. It's a simple format that gives focus to the meetings and enables conversations to flow far and wide. We read and discuss the scripture readings on which the sermon is based, how these relate to the sermon and how the sermon helps to shape our lives as Christians and understand some of the problems in the world in a clearer light.

An important part of the meetings is to listen to each other closely and to try to understand our different perspectives. All of this is done in the context of the scripture readings and sermons where we listen for the new perspectives, connections and relationships

that God has invited us into. Our conversations often turn to the challenges of being faithful witness to each other and to the wider society. We pray for each other and those known to us in a more personal way than in corporate worship on Sundays.

So what makes for a healthy group that stays the distance? Here are some of my observations:

**1 COMMITMENT.** Even when we are tired or travelling, we commit to being present for each other each week and as a result we are energized and uplifted. One of our members called in from Greece at 1am local time!

**2 HONESTY AND LOVE.** Everyone is committed to listening to different views so as to understand more about the other person. Being able to do this not only makes any disagreements easier to define but opens the way for a fuller and richer conversations.

**3 WE BOTH CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT** each other. Being open with ourselves and each other helps everyone to sense when someone needs empathy and support, and at other times when we need to ask searching questions so as to help each other grow in faith.

**4 WE CELEBRATE AND ENCOURAGE** each other. Much of Christian living is done in everyday acts of care and kindness that needs to be recognised.

**5 KNOWING OUR LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES.** If matters arise that require professional input from a priest, counsellor or therapist, we recognize this and contact the clergy for advice.

**6 KEEPING FRESH** comes from seeking to know more about each other and more about the scriptures and the Christian faith. Encouraging curiosity really helps to keep things interesting. Looking at different scripture translations, different Christian traditions and different pastoral responses enriches and stretches us, and keeps us coming back each week, month and year.

There are currently four groups and each have taken on a life of their own and become part of the culture at Christ Church. If you would like to join a group, speak to Cathy Gibbs: [cgibbs@christchurchdeerpark.org](mailto:cgibbs@christchurchdeerpark.org)

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



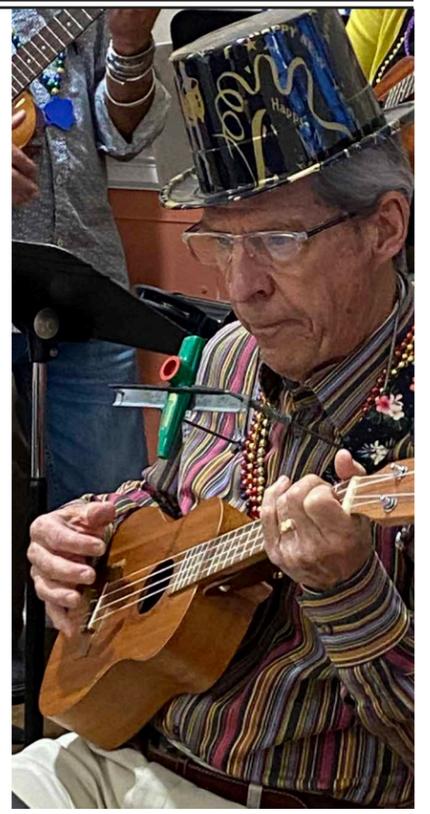
Shenanigans



Dinner Underway



Happy Pancake Cooks: John Cole, Hunter Simpson, Andrew Harding and Gregory Lowe



Ukelele concentration

## Shrove Tuesday 2026: Hospitality at Christ Church Deer Park

by Jayne Miles Simpson

Twenty-one years ago was my first Shrove Tuesday at Christ Church Deer Park. Sheila Stanley and Manuel Rodenkirchen hosted the most wonderful event. We still used oodles of helium balloons in those days. Don and Carol Dority were very involved, and I recall one year seeing Don and Manuel aproned and wielding flippers. My kids all worked the set up and running food up the stairs. I remember Hunter's travel car seat sitting on the kitchen counter while I made salads in 2008. My daughter and a girl who was her bridesmaid a few years ago worked in the kitchen helping to prepare. They were twelve years old. I think Elizabeth Joy was the president of the Anglican Church Women then.



Undated Pancake Supper Pictures from the Archives. We only know this dinner was coordinated by the choir. Do you remember this? If so, we would love to know more. Send us a note: [spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org](mailto:spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org)



Time flies. And thanks to Sharilyn's beautiful idea of evolving into a Games night after dinner, our evening was full of prep for what will in years, become a key feature. The Arthur Smith room was set up with tables, and a great selection of board games was on offer. The only people who took advantage of our games this year were our student volunteers. And they loved it. Next year, I believe that guests will plan for this extra hour and come prepared to play.

Our new and improved Shrove Tuesday dinner was a resounding success. From the moment everyone entered and were handed their Mardi Gras beads, they could see the fabulous festive decor created by our many students working with our volunteers.

Did you know that Tuesday evenings we have a Ukulele chorus who plays here? Me neither. Until a few weeks ago. Reverend Alison invited them to join in—and they did! They dressed for Mardi Gras, and they wore hats and fascinators. They even prepared special music for their program, including a pancake song. Their director Ronnie added a lot to Shrove Tuesday. Fingers crossed that they will join us next year.

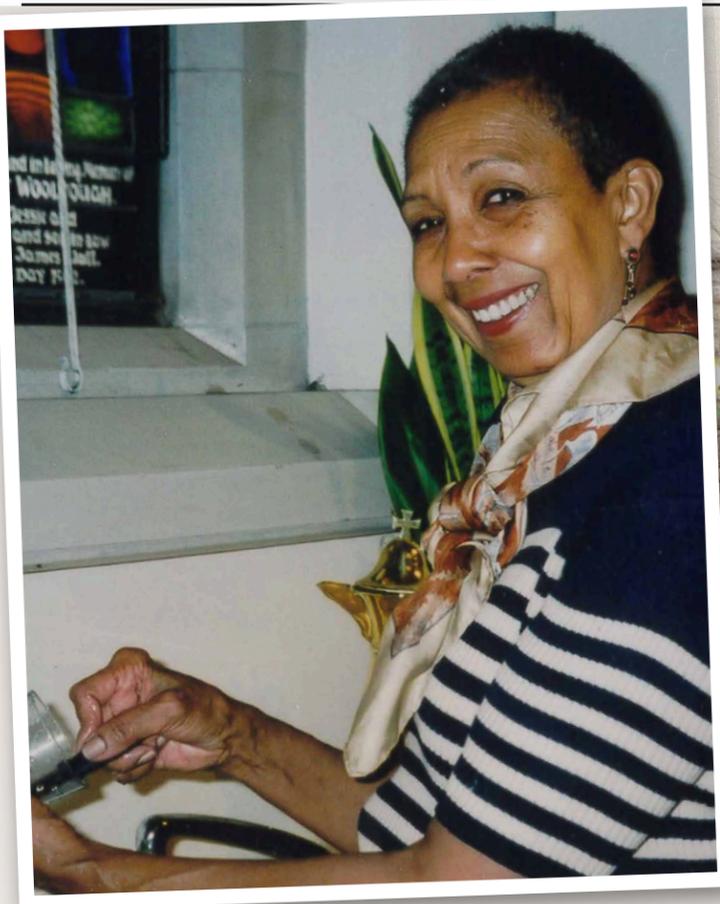
The guys downstairs in the kitchen were amazing. Everyone loved, loved dinner. Thank you, guys. Thank you to the many people who brought salads for our salad table. Thank you to our fabulous cooks, to our creative decorating, and set up team. To Leanne Dennis who will be taking over the student volunteers coordinating portfolio from me. To Sharilyn Robinson for your huge effort to add the games and kids' area, tastefully. And, to our fabulous students from Northern Secondary School and Upper Canada College, thank you so much.

And these ladies deserve a medal for their energetic cleanup after the Shrove Tuesday dinner: Ruwani, Karen, Adele, and Maryilyn. But the gold medal must go to Lizzie who dug in for nearly two hours. We could sure use more help cleaning after our events!

❖ Jayne Miles Simpson is a longtime member of Christ Church Deer Park. She is the chair of Reimagine Rummage and has been hosting hospitality events for many years.



The good times rolled as the Ukes of York provided ukulele music for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Ukes of York meet every Tuesday from 7 to 9 in Elliot Hall and are open to all levels, including first time players. Come and try us out. \$15 a session (waived for first session).



Joy Graham's happy place: at work in the Sacristy



Easter morning at CCDP with Carol Knowlton Dority's Easter Flowers

## From the Archives: Easter Memories



Elizabeth Joy arranging Easter Forsythia



Memories of the CCDP Easter Garden: perhaps someone would like to set it up?



February Photo:

# Nurturing Faith

Sharilyn having fun with the kids at the first Nurturing Faith Session in February.



# Remember: Dog is God Spelled Backwards

by Brady with assistance from Tony van Straubensee

My name is Brady and I am a seven-year-old Norfolk Terrier. You might remember me from other *Spiritus* columns or you may have met me with my Lord and Master, Tony, at the 9:15 am service on Sunday mornings.

Starting with Family Day, I had a great week! We went to Niagara-on-the-Lake, a nice town that likes dogs. We stayed in a nice place with a hot tub, but my family wouldn't let me go in. How mean is that? My master bought a pair of socks in Niagara with pictures of Norwich Terriers, but I'm not pictured. They would be much more elegant with pictures of me.

Lately, I have been enjoying the Olympics with my master. I particularly like the luge and would love to participate. I bark when I watch it, which annoys my family. I also like watching the snowboarding, and I

fantasize about jumping off the hill! The hockey is OK, but the long-distance skating is boring. The skaters just go round and around. I do enjoy the figure skating, and the ski jumping is fantastic. The Canadian team wears red which is my favourite colour. I don't know why my family isn't participating in the Olympics. They don't go skating or skiing, but they say they used to. Yeah, I bet!

The weather is turning nice and I don't have to always wear a coat outside now. Tomorrow, my family is going to something called Souleppper, and I am not invited. Good! I hope the luge is on TV while they are gone so I can bark at the TV all I want.

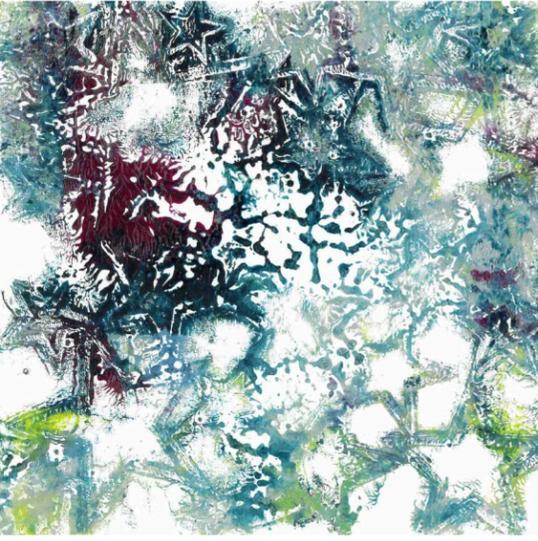
Belated Happy Family Day!

✦ *Brady and God have a close relationship, closer than Brady and Tony. When God made Brady, he saw that he was good.*

## Holy Week Word Search

M O K P A L M S U N D A Y E J O S E P H O F A R I M A T H E A  
 A E I I N X Q P O H P K I N G O F T H E J E W S Q W M R R S X  
 R L M N V S X D A E S D N T F F H D E W O R C K C O C E M C A  
 Y P F E T A F V X T G T S I M O N P E T E R U Q A S L E E P O  
 M M J Q L M E D I S D E C R E I P N O I T A T P M E T I G U U  
 A E Q Q C A E N O I S S A P Y S M Y G O D M Y G O D A C N K Y  
 G T O Q I B S N J S T S W A P P Z A Q L K V W V X C X C O Y N  
 D E D S B P M U T T P G D W F R S A Q J O M B P G F P J P Q N  
 A H Y Q L S D O R S T I A S R A Z C O C Q L P L B O O R S T Y  
 L T E L D E E I T E R X H N I Y X P D U K M M W L Z B D F K O  
 E F H J E M G K S F J R F Y X E X L I N T O T H Y H A N D S E  
 N O T X N X U N D C O D I I M R P O W P G N I H S A W T O O F  
 E N T E I Z B O A U I F U L F I L L S C R I P T U R E V U V F  
 O I A O A A O J D R H P E Z C T I R I P S Y M T I M M O C I G  
 K A H C L G L K Q G S L L N V D K C W T X Z C W H L R B J S I  
 M T W T F N B J L E N J Z E C R U C I F Y H I M Q Q B L S Z A  
 I R T M M T R G C T D L P K S U B P E G O L G O T H A F I R P  
 N U O E S I D A R A P N I E M H T I W E B L L I W U O Y Y E I  
 P C N R Q F Y C G O Y U L Y J E S U S O F N A Z A R E T H V L  
 S R W E X O S N R O H T F O N W O R C T O T O W H G R S G O A  
 X R O K X H T A E D E N A M E S H T E G O Y S N C B X A F S T  
 S E N P U D Y L N K M Y B L O O D L I A W G E I Y D O B A S E  
 T T K Z H W G R Z Y A D S R U H T Y D N U A M K R M T B B A K  
 O S Y W N E D L A S T S U P P E R D X X Q T V Z N H U A E P L  
 L A E V P M S N O I T C E R R U S E R O Q R Q F B O C R T M Y  
 T E H H P Z S Y Q Y Y B F M Z G J E B Z K S R S A Z D A R E R  
 S F T G V I N E G A R O H P W D E K C O M Y S E A O G B A E P  
 A E M N E K A S R O F U O H T T S A H Y H W A O T D O U Y F Q  
 C O H H X B A B E Q B R E H T O N A N O E V O L R A U I E T W  
 P V F A A T J I N J M P S A L M T W E N T Y T W O C W J R L W

JESUSOFNAZARETH  
 PALMSUNDAY DONKEY PASSION  
 PASSOVER MAUNDYTHURSDAY  
 LOVEONANOTHER FOOTWASHING  
 SIMONPETER BODY BLOOD  
 LASTSUPPER PSALMTWENTYTWO  
 DISCIPLES GETHSEMANE PRAYER  
 TEMPTATION SLEEP JUDAS  
 BETRAYER DENIAL PILATE PROPHECY  
 GOODFRIDAY COCKCROWED CHRIST  
 MOCKED KINGOFTHEJEWS BARABBAS  
 CRUCIFYHIM CROWNOFTHORNS  
 CROSS GOLGOTHA SPONGE VINEGAR  
 FULFILLSCRIPTURE CASTLOTS  
 THEYKNOWNOTWHATTHEYDO  
 YOUWILLBEWITHMEINPARADISE  
 MYGODMYGOD  
 WHYHASTTHOUFORSAKENME  
 INTOTHYHANDS ICOMMITMYSPIRIT  
 CURTAINOFTHETEMPLE  
 DEATH PIERCEDSIDE WATER  
 JOSEPHOFARIMATHEA TOMB  
 SHROUD EASTER MARYMAGDALENE  
 OINTMENTS ANGELS JERUSALEM  
 RESURRECTION



# All of Us Go Down to The Dust

by Emily Chatten

One of the things I find unavoidable in the Liturgy of Ash Wednesday is its deep reminder of our immortality. How fitting, then, that this year in the days following Ash Wednesday there were funerals held at Christ Church Deer Park for two important members of our community, Elisabeth Lunder and JR Thornton.

Just after I learned of Elisabeth's death, a friend and I spoke about funerals. He maintained that funerals were a waste a time and said that his wishes were to have no funeral. I argued that funerals are important opportunities for closure not only for family and close friends, but for the community. However, I noted, there were "good" funerals and "bad" funerals.

I expect, like me, most of you have seen both kinds of funerals. The "good" funeral is the one in which you leave feeling that the deceased is at peace and you have paid your respects to a life lived. For me, the "bad" funeral is one where the priest or pastor forgets that the good news of Christ is that He died so we could live. That is a "bad" funeral. Then there was the pastor who gave the same homily, word-for-word, at the funerals of my both my great aunt and my grandmother. Those were "bad" funerals, too. But of the many funerals I've attended as a family member, friend, or chorister, these are rarities.

The day after Ash Wednesday at evening choir practice, we reviewed the Croft Burial Sentences because it had been some time since we last sang them. The middle section draws on Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon this earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Like the Ash Wednesday liturgy, these words bring me back to the most basic foundations of mortality. It was difficult to keep the tears at bay, anticipating funerals on the coming two days.

At JR Thornton's funeral on February 20th, I sat amongst friends, while at Elisabeth Lunder's funeral the following day, I was robed and sat with the choir. For those who were unable to attend, these were both "good" services that honoured these two women. And yet, I was struck by how very different the services were.

At JR's funeral, her daughter Alice Taylor read a tribute to JR called the "Moore Park Tea Lady" that had come from someone at Christ Church Deer Park years ago. (We are reproducing that for you in this issue of *Spiritus*.) For anyone who did not know JR, this will give you an idea of the "force of nature" she was known to be. If anyone knows who might have written the "Moore Park Tea Lady" or the occasion for which it was written we would love to hear from you.

Elisabeth was remembered for many things: her smile, the twinkle in her eye, her Nordic humour and sarcasm. Many remember that Elisabeth loved to walk everywhere and that began (and continued on her trips home) in the mountains of Norway. Elisabeth's daughter Karen shared that Elisabeth had many deep and hard struggles over her life. Elisabeth had cultivated an independence and courage to move through those struggles and to help others. We remembered Elisabeth both with words and music and in Elliott Hall after with Scandinavian pastries.

During the Ash Wednesday service, Reverend Alison remind us that we did not come from just any dust, some of that dust was left over from the big bang; we come from stardust. The week of Ash Wednesday may have brought an extra dose of mortality this year, but the thought there is stardust mixed in the dust from which we are created also gives me an extra dose of hope.

✦ Emily Chatten is a volunteer chorister at Christ Church Deer Park who acts as music librarian. She is also a volunteer editor of *Spiritus*.

“Funerals are important opportunities for closure not only for family and close friends, but for the community”

“During the Ash Wednesday service, Reverend Alison remind us that we did not come from just any dust, some of that dust was left over from the big bang; we come from stardust.”



JR and David Thornton



Elisabeth Lunder

C.C.D.P.  
OUT OF THE COLD

### THE MOORE PARK TEA LADY....

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT CARING AND CUSSING AND EVEN LOVING.  
IT'S ABOUT THIS MOORE PARK LADY - WHO HAS TOUCHED THE HEARTS OF AN AWFUL LOT OF GERRARD ST. BOYS....  
SHE CAN TALK THEIR TALK; BUT SHE DOES IT IN HER OWN "ST. CATHERINES" WAY...  
SHE SAYS SHE CAN DO IT BECAUSE SHE SMOKES....  
THE REST OF US DON'T BELIEVE THAT FOR A MINUTE.

SHE IS TOUGH WITH THEM - SHE REALLY SAYS OUTRAGEOUS THINGS TO THEM..  
BUT SHE'S THE ONLY ONE AT CCDP THAT THEY TRULY LOVE. THEY  
MIGHT BE THANKFUL THAT THE REST OF US ARE THERE - AND GRATEFUL  
FOR THE FOOD AND THE SPACE - BUT THEY REALLY DO LOVE THIS  
MOORE PARK "TEA LADY"...

AND WHO CAN BLAME THEM -  
THERE WAS THE TIME SHE SANG "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" TO ONE OF THEM ON FRONT ST....  
THERE WERE THE MANY, MANY TIMES THAT SHE WORRIED ABOUT THE ONES SHE HAD TO SEND AWAY...  
THERE WAS THE TIME SHE WENT TRAIPSING THROUGH ALL THOSE  
BOARDING HOUSES LOOKING FOR RONNIE.... AND THAT WAS AFTER  
SHE HAD TAKEN HIM SOME CLOTHES AND A SUITCASE AND A WHOLE LOT OF RESPECT....  
THERE WERE ALL THE HUGS - SHE GAVE - AND REALLY MEANT -

SHE NEVER SEEMED TO STOP.... AND SHE WAS EVERYWHERE.... SHE WAS THE FIRST ONE EACH WEEK TO SAY -  
"DOES THAT CHICKEN/STEW/MEATLOAF EVER SMELL WONDERFUL!"  
SHE WAS THE LAST ONE EACH WEEK TO CHECK AND MAKE SURE THAT EVERYTHING WAS CLEAN - AND SMELLED CLEAN FOR THE  
SUNDAY SCHOOL....  
AND IN BETWEEN - SHE GOT OUT THE TOWELS, AND THE TOOTHBRUSHES AND THE RAZORS AND SHAVING CREAM.... SHE MADE  
SURE THAT THE  
TABLES WERE JUST SO - AND THE LOW LEVEL LIGHTS WERE IN THE RIGHT SPOT.

SHE HAD HER COFFEE - AND WAS AT THE DOOR - EVERY SINGLE SATURDAY NIGHT BUT ONE!

SHE TALKED TO THE ONES THAT NEEDED A SPECIAL WORD...  
SHE HUGGED THE ONES THAT SOMETIMES DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT THAT WAS WHAT THEY WANTED...  
WHEN SHE WASN'T THERE - THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHERE WAS JR? DO YOU KNOW I LOVE JR? NOT ONE SAID THAT BUT HALF  
A DOZEN....  
SHE WAS STILL THERE WHEN THE SOCIAL TEAM ARRIVED - AND MADE CERTAIN THAT THEY WERE OK... AND THEN -  
BACK AGAIN ON SUNDAY MORNING MAKING SURE THAT THOSE BLANKETY BLANK MATTRESSES GOT CLEANED.  
AND IT CONTINUED ON DURING THE WEEK - SHE TALKED TO THIS PERSON - GOT A DENTIST FOR THAT PERSON - SPOKE TO  
SOCIAL WORKERS AND PAROLE OFFICERS... THIS MOORE PARK TEA LADY...

AND, SOMETIMES SHE FORGOT AND TREATED THE REST OF US LIKE THE BOYS FROM GERRARD ST ....  
AREN'T WE LUCKY TO BE TOUCHED WITH THE SAME CARING?

THANK YOU JR FOR TEACHING AT LEAST ONE OF US (AND I SUSPECT MORE OF US) WHAT "LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOUR" REALLY,  
REALLY MEANS!



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# The Ultimate Rite of Passage

## *Sometimes, a feeling of detachment yields a crucial insight.*

by Pat Butler

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**O**n a sunny January morning, we slowly walk into a large unfamiliar church. We pause in the foyer to greet the few people we know. My husband and I are here to support his cousin and her family because her Portuguese mother-in-law Amelia died on December 30th. This 82-year-old widow was struck with terminal cancer just before Christmas and mercifully didn't linger.

After marrying Eric 12 years ago, this is the fourth funeral of his extended family I've attended. We briefly hug the mourning couple and take our seats. A practicing Anglican, I am comfortable with Christian rituals and think I know what to expect.

I study the décor of this Catholic church in the Little Portugal neighbourhood of Toronto. Statues of Mary and Jesus adorn the sanctuary; 14 large stations of the cross in bas-relief adorn the side aisles; lovely images decorate the ceiling with carvings and gold leaf. Come to think of it, this is the first time I've ever attended a service in a Roman Catholic church. On my overseas travels I've visited countless places (including Saint Peter's Basilica in the Vatican) with holy water near the door, votive candles flickering to one side, and an ornate altar.

Today a woman sits at an electric organ, accompanying herself while singing in Portuguese, English, and Latin. I have never met Amelia, the deceased. Judging by the significant number of attendees that join us she was well-loved. A priest in his 40s busies himself preparing candles, microphones, and items needed during the mass. Precisely at 10 o'clock he begins a procession from the back of the church, and we all stand in respect.

A casket covered by a white damask cloth is slowly wheeled up the centre aisle by two employees of the funeral home. Six male family members (I recognize two grandsons) solemnly accompany the casket, gently resting gloved hands on its cover. Immediate family members follow and take their seats in the front rows.

Sitting through this hour-long service conducted in Portuguese and Latin, with perhaps 15% of the content in English, with no programme to follow, honouring a complete stranger, I feel detached – an observer rather than participant. After other funerals, I've heard non-religious attendees complain, "It was all just long prayers. They barely mentioned his (or her) name. Too rigid and impersonal!" Today I am feeling rather indifferent, too.

I let my mind wander.

The night before I'd rewatched the movie, *Eat Pray Love*, in which the heroine travels abroad for a year attempting to recover her equilibrium after divorce. She spends months in an ashram in India and then studies with a medicine man in Bali – just two of the innumerable spiritual practices existing on our planet. Every person alive must cope with the death of loved ones and accept the inevitability of their own death. Does every religion embrace the concept of afterlife? What happens when we die? Does the soul transition to another state? Can we talk to and be guided by those we've loved who are now on "the other side"?

I reminisce about my own parents' Anglican funerals – one on a grey November day, the other on a lovely June afternoon. Days after the latter, I sat on a bench near the lake where Dad sailed for thousands of hours and felt his presence. Goosebumps galore.

Contemplating the fact that we all die soothes my frustration of listening to a service I cannot understand. What matters is the comfort this end-of-life ritual brings to those present. Before administering the host, the priest explains, "Only those of you who are baptised Roman Catholics, who have had First Communion, are able to receive." I welcome this clarity and settle into the pew while most attendees line up in the aisle.

My personal comfort level shoots up the minute Amelia's son approaches the lectern. He reads a beautifully composed eulogy which describes her origins in the Azores, her marriage and immigration to Canada, and the trajectory of her life. With just the right amount of humour to lift our hearts. I vicariously come to know the remarkable woman whose picture graces the entrance to the church. She was generous, loving, resourceful, uncomplaining, and talented – with countless accomplishments. Amelia was certainly among us.

Attending this funeral is all about supporting her family and close friends who are facing an Amelia-shaped hole in their lives. This collective ritual of grief makes a huge difference to those left behind. How glad I am that I decided to accompany Eric today.

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

“  
My husband and I  
are here to support  
his cousin and her  
family”

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# An Ancient Faith Gives New Life

By Andrew Harding

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**I**t was during the 10:30 Easter Sunday service last year that I discovered the freshness of music that may be as old as the Gospels. The moment lasted barely a minute, but the effect has remained all year. While we are used to hearing the words of scripture that are almost 2000 years old, we hear much less of the music of the ancient church. Do we stop to think how extraordinary it is to be singing music that may have been heard by Jesus?

During Easter season, at the moment in communion when the presider breaks the bread, the choir sings what is called the 'fraction anthem.' This occurs immediately after the bread and wine are consecrated: "the disciples knew the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread which is the communion of the body of Christ. One body are we, alleluia, for although many we share one bread." I was in the choir that morning, singing these words together in one

single line of melody on Easter Sunday. As a choir we were many, and our singing together enacted the meaning of the words. It was one of those 'this is what it's really all about' moments.

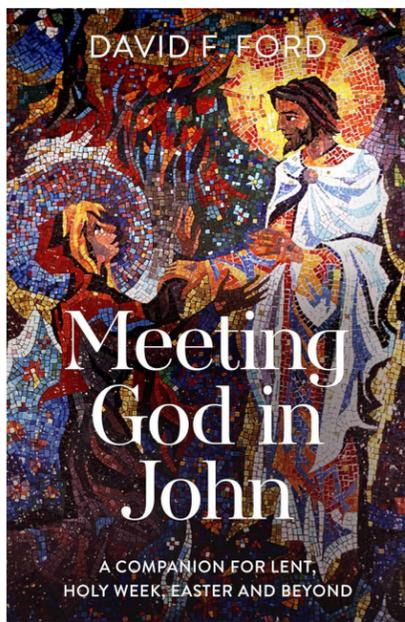
There is a further dimension. In singing the communion service and the fraction anthem together, we respond to Christ's command and invitation to be made part of his mystical yet physical body. We are formed into the community called church that is Christ's body on earth. We could speak these words together, but to sing them is to say something more. Singing involves more of our bodies than speaking. In singing we give more of ourselves, not just with the greater physical effort needed, but through the emotional and spiritual dimension of the music. It is these that bring to life the drama of what God is doing to create and nourish us, the church, Christ's living body. Through the beauty of sound,

we are saying with our bodies and souls that we are responding to the gift—the invitation—to be part of the divine life given through Christ's body given for us. Through the singing of this anthem, we are brought closer to Christ and to each other.

Singing together has a profoundly important role in bringing people to God. The story in Acts (16:25) where Paul and Silas sing hymns to God before their miraculous release from a maximum-security prison illustrates the power of praise sung to God, even in the most dire of situations. Sacred music sung in church is not only for our own edification. To quote the Scottish composer James MacMillan: "Music is a form of revelation to the world; not just to believers, but in their own way non-believers and the skeptical in general are having their souls opened up by an artform that opens a window or door onto the very nature of God...music can be part of a re-conversion of the world towards the love of God."

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

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The moment lasted  
barely a minute,  
but the effect has  
remained”



**Meeting God in John:  
A companion for Lent,  
Holy Week and Beyond**

David F. Ford  
(Society for Promoting Christian  
Knowledge, 2025)

*Book Review & Commentary:*

## Praying the Gospel of John

by Andrew Harding

**The Gospel of John was written after a lifetime of prayer, meditation, and living the way of Jesus. It is fitting that this new book from theologian David Ford is also the product of a lifetime of Christian faith and many years of deep reading, conversation, and reflection on John's gospel with his church in Cambridge, England. Church members studied John in depth for a year. The vicar reflected that, "it proved truly extraordinary, as the church grew increasingly able to know and trust Jesus. We also experienced significant growth in numbers—perhaps because the year's sharp focus and energy drew newcomers. In line with John's emphasis on love, unity and forming community."**

*Meeting God in John* isn't an academic treatise or even the journey of one person or congregation through John's gospel, but the result of Ford's immersion in John's gospel with people from many Christian traditions, as well as with Muslims and Jews.

Ford returns over and over again to the main purpose of John: for those who read his gospel to trust in Jesus and commit to a life of faith, finding our vocations in following Jesus in all sorts of different ways. Ford starts with the three questions Jesus asks at the beginning of his ministry in John: who are you, what do you desire, and where are you truly at home?

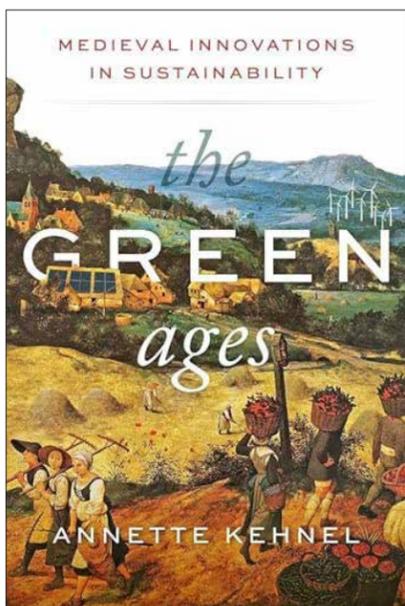
There are three essential practices in John that Ford wants us to learn from and imitate: learning (as disciples),

praying, and loving. These form our view of everything where the deepest meaning and love come together in Jesus. More than the other gospels, Ford says that John shows us that "Jesus is utterly at one with us as the word made flesh and utterly at one with God. That is the essence of a Christian worldview." Ford shows us how John's gospel draws people into a life of deeper relationship with Jesus—deeper into learning, praying, and loving, and then into the mission to the world, sent in love as Jesus was sent.

Ford draws out and connects two vital dimensions of the Christian life: complete unity with God (not for our own satisfaction for the sake of the world) and Christian formation as people trained and able to be the salt and light of the world. The way Ford brings out this two-fold purpose and vocation of the Christian life and brings them together in our vocation to go as deep as possible into relationship with God, is what makes the book so engaging. The deeper we go into the life of God, Jesus, and the Spirit, the deeper we will be drawn into community and the deeper we will go into the world.

If you want to renew your sense of being guided by the abundant love of God, this book will indeed take you well beyond Lent.

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



**The Green Ages**

Annette Kehnel  
(Brandeis University Press, 2024)

*Book Review:*

## How Can It Be Otherwise?

### *Lessons from the Middle Ages for Greener Living Today*

by Brad Lennon

**A common view of the Middle Ages, after the fall of the Roman Empire, is that Europe experienced intellectual decline, cultural stagnation, and scientific ignorance. In her book *The Green Ages*, historian Annette Kehnel challenges this stereotype of the Middle Ages as environmentally backward and economically primitive. Her book argues that pre-modern European societies offer valuable lessons for today's environmental and economic challenges.**

Kehnel shows how medieval people practised sophisticated and effective systems of sustainability based on necessity and common sense. She offers a numerous examples of pre-industrial communities and practices that anticipated modern ideas of sustainability and ecological balance, and invites us to imagine a possible future by re-examining and learning from the past.

Kehnel tells us of the Beguines, groups of single lay women in Belgium and the Netherlands who, beginning in the 12th century, practiced a form of "sharing economy" where wealth was pooled to ensure that no member fell into destitution. They lived communally in urban settlements without taking permanent religious vows as nuns would. They could leave the community to marry if they chose, and they often retained control over their own property while benefiting from the safety and resources of a collective.

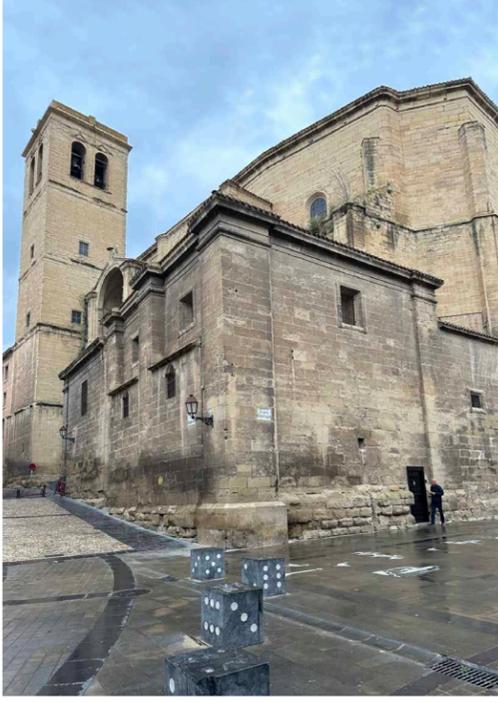
The Beguines were urban farmers and often skilled workers—largely in nursing and the textile industries. Because they lived together in "beguinages" (semi-enclosed

neighborhoods) they were able to negotiate better prices for their goods as a collective, and to avoid the restrictions placed on individual women in the male-dominated guild systems. By sharing tools, living spaces and labor, they reduced individual waste and increased the community's overall resilience against economic shocks.

Kehnel tells about the 13th century French Franciscan theologian and philosopher, Peter John Olivi. Despite a vigorous defense of poverty within his own order, Olivi was an acute observer of the marketplace. His *Treatise on Contracts* was a milestone in economic thought because of its discussion of the pricing of risks and probability. Centuries before the term came into today's common usage, he formulated the concept of capital, and he thought about how capital might be used most rightly.

Kehnel highlights communal trading systems in Italy (the *monti di pietà*) that functioned like microcredit; common land management in Great Britain; and practices of recycling and repair. Medieval peoples developed cooperative, resource-saving approaches out of necessity and shared cultural values. Throughout the book, she connects these historical practices to contemporary challenges like finite natural resources, inequality and consumerism, suggesting that revisiting and learning from these earlier forms of community-based sustainability can offer inspiration.

Kehnel argues that earlier generations than ours were better at long-term thinking than we are. They wanted to sustain local ecosystems so that [Continues on page 15](#)



## Camino Cathedrals and Churches: Part II

# Inglesia de Santiago el Real, Logroño, Spain

by Ariane Heisey

This is the second installment of my series “Camino Cathedrals and Churches” which I visited on my 2023 pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain.

After ten days of walking, we arrived in Logroño, the capital of the province of La Rioja. Located in the north of the province, with a population of 150,000, Logroño has a rich history dating back to the Middle Ages.

One place we stopped to see was the Inglesia de Santiago el Real, the oldest church in the city. It is believed that James, the Apostle preached near here, perhaps at the temple which preceded the current church, whose construction took place between 1513 and 1527, with the tower built later between 1570 and 1573.

The façade of the church, in Renaissance style, was constructed between 1669 and 1672 by Juan Raón embellishing the rather plain original Romanesque structure. Many works on the façade depict Santiago Peregrino.

In 1667, Juan Raón was commissioned to change the upper choir for a lower choir with a back section. While the work started at a good pace, it was soon halted. However; a new low choir was completed in 1668. The 25 high choir stalls and 18 low choir stalls were created first, followed by the creation of an exquisite choir grille in 1676, offering the monks a sense of privacy and reverence. It was not until 1773 that Esteban de San Juan constructed the organ in the Rococo style, a significant element within the sacred space because of its beauty. As a chorister myself, I longed to sing in this perfect setting.

While the low choir was a work of art, the altarpiece is simply stunning. The current altarpiece was commissioned to an artist who was unable to complete the work due to his death in 1653. The second artist hired was not able to finish the work either and it wasn't until a third artist was finally hired in 1656 that the work was completed.

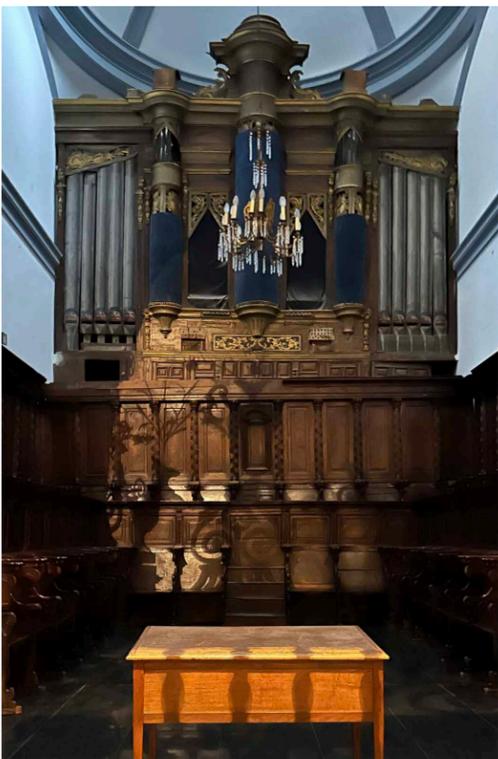
This impressive structure is designed over three “floors” with five vertical “streets,” and depicts scenes from the life of the apostle James. On the first floor of the altarpiece are prominent figures such as St. James on horseback, as well as St. Peter and St. Paul. An image of Santiago decapitated shows the symbolic richness of the work. On the second floor are St. Isidore and St. John the Baptist, as well as St. Jerome holding the ark containing the remains of St. James. In the center is a Gothic figure of St. James the Pilgrim dating from the 14th century. Finally, on the third floor, is a representation of the Battle of Clavijo, as well as Santiago el Menor, the Assumption, San Felipe and the apparition of the Virgin of the Pillar as shown to Santiago.

In the attic of the altarpiece are images of Saint Anthony the Abbot and Saint Theclaw centred with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ with St. John and the Virgin Mary at the foot of the cross. The altarpiece remained in its original state of clean wood until 1740, when Don Manuel de Samaniego y Jaca, who was the Archbishop of Burgos, decided to gild it.

The tower has undergone several modifications and restorations over time. It measures 40 metres in height—a prominent landscape marker. Its five distinct sections are marked by mouldings adding decorative detail. Construction of the tower began in 1570; however, both architects died before completion. One of the architect's sons assumed responsibility for the work and finished the construction. In 1778, the original wooden spire was replaced with an octagonal one of brick. In 1902, the brick spire was dismantled because at 300 tons it was causing instability to the tower.

The Inglesia de Santiago el Real is located right along the Camino de Santiago and has been serving peregrinos for centuries, as it did for us on our pilgrimage.

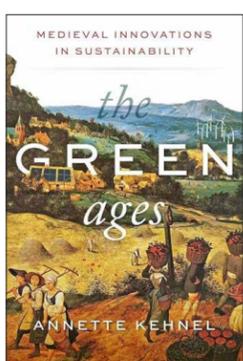
❖ Ariane Heisey is a chorister and a member of the Congregational Care Team at Christ Church Deer Park who walked the Camino de Santiago in 2023.



“While the low choir was a work of art, the altarpiece is simply stunning.”

## »How Can It Be Otherwise?

continued from page 14



their children could benefit from them. But because we today view history as progress, believing that something better will always come along, our bias is to discount the past and its lessons. Hence we miss valuable insights for addressing today's challenges of finite resources, unsustainable consumerism, and growing inequality.

*The Green Ages* was originally published in Germany in 2021 with the title *Wie konnten auch anders – How can it be otherwise?* The book's translation into English is lively, readable and up-to-date. It makes astute observations about the outbreak of COVID and about the rising opposition and setbacks to climate policies seeking to curtail

carbon emissions. The book is written with an eye to the past so as to apply lessons for the future. As Kehnel declares,

*The aim of this book is to help increase our scope for action. I hope that it will spark your curiosity, dispel some fears and whet your appetite for the future.*

An interview with Annette Kehnel about her book can be found on YouTube here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmQdcp\\_fb14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmQdcp_fb14)

❖ 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.



# Dear Church Mouse

*Dear Church Mouse,*  
Dirty dishes abound in Christ Church Deer Park's kitchens. There used to be a clear understanding—You make a mess, you clean it up. It was pretty straightforward. Do we need to have rules or guidelines for the use of church kitchens?  
*Not My Mess*

*Dear Not,*  
Oh, how Church Mouse appreciates leavings and leftovers! Alas, you raise a good point: too many Marys and not enough Marthas.

Rules and guidelines sound perfectly reasonable, and this mouse sees nothing wrong with posting gentle reminders in the kitchens. You don't indicate what sort of users are leaving messes, however, and that counts. If it's parish groups, go ahead and initiate conversations about appropriate norms. If it's renters, check the parish's rental agreements to see how their obligation are spelled and whether there are financial or other consequences for leaving a mess.

Just don't let your resentment simmer. This mouse knows from experience how that makes another sort of mess.

*Dear Church Mouse,*  
My prayer group wants to do more for Truth and Reconciliation than wear an orange shirt, and I promised to write on my own behalf.

Although some First Nations' spokespeople see land acknowledgments as "the beginning of some sort of conversation," the acknowledgments droned on at public events are often full of errors and totally lacking in consequences. Christ Church Deer Park's version is more accurate, but hidden on a back page, is unlikely to spur action.

I'm convinced that many Anglicans want to do much more to compensate for decades of injustice. So, how about getting more direct and explicit congregational participation at Sunday worship, such as by way of a three-part, call-and-response acknowledgment right at the beginning of the Eucharist?

*Concerned and Committed*

*Dear Concerned and Committed,*  
Your energy and commitment to Truth and Reconciliation are strong, as are that of your prayer group. What about the rest of the congregation?

Church Mouse knows that not all parishioners accept the notion of collective responsibility for events that took place before they were born or before they came to Canada. So, rather than introducing mandatory language into the Liturgy, this mouse suggests that you extend the conversation to others, not for the purpose of convincing or educating them, but in order to listen and understand their reservations and concerns.

An unwelcome chore, perhaps. But then, this mouse is accustomed to rolling about in mustard seeds.

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER

### at Christ Church Deer Park

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**SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 29**  
Liturgy of Palms - Outside of Mt Pleasant Cemetery gates, 10am  
Palm Sunday & Passion Service - CCDP 10:15am

**HOLY TUESDAY: STATIONS OF THE CROSS, MARCH 31**  
Tuesday, with opening prayers, 5:30-6:30pm  
Wednesday, self-paced, 9-10am  
Thursday, self-paced, 5-6pm

**HOLY WEDNESDAY: CHORAL TENEBRAE, APRIL 1**  
Holy Eucharist, 11am  
Choral Tenebrae Service, 7:30pm

**MAUNDY THURSDAY: HOLY COMMUNION AND FOOT-WASHING APRIL 2**  
Simple Supper, Elliott Hall, 6pm  
Evening Service, 7:30pm

**GOOD FRIDAY: THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION, APRIL 3**  
Morning Service, 10:30am  
Ecumenical Community Walk. Arrive at CCDP, 12:50pm  
Church on Tap, 7pm

**EASTER EVE: EASTER VIGIL (ZOOM ONLY), APRIL 4**  
7pm

**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 5**  
Holy Eucharist, 8am  
Contemporary Eucharist, 9:15am  
Sung Eucharist, 10:30am (Livestream +Sunday School)



## Spiritus Online Archives

By Emily Chatten

Readers might not know that the parish has a full archive of our Spiritus issues online. To access them, visit [christchurchdeerpark.org/spiritus-archive](http://christchurchdeerpark.org/spiritus-archive)

Click on the "News" tab and then on the "Spiritus" link on the menu. That will take you straight to the archive.

I recently browsed through all of our back issues, and as I went through them was pleased to reread past stories (many which continue to be relevant) and see pictures of friends, some departed and some who remain.

I am sure you will enjoy these past gems with your afternoon tea on a stormy afternoon.



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Melissa Walter  
Leslie Savage  
Genevieve Chornenki

Layout: Anders Carlén,  
Carlén Communications

**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 Emily at [elwchatt@gmail.com](mailto:elwchatt@gmail.com)

Submissions should be 250 to 500 words in length and in Word format, and all submissions will be subject to edit.

Upcoming Spiritus deadlines for 2026 are: May 8, September 8, and November 6. Reminders will be printed in the Sunday bulletin. Please send your submissions directly to us at [spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org](mailto:spiritus@christchurchdeerpark.org). A big thanks to all of the contributors for this issue of *Spiritus*.

## Christ Church Deer Park

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