



# Cathedral OUTREACH

*St Michael & All Angels, Kelowna*

*"I've been coming here for the past year and this place has helped me from time to time when I had nothing. The people running this place are kind and caring and make me feel at home. I appreciate everything I get from this food cupboard."*

By Janet MacArthur

The Outreach initiative at St. Michael's has been a mainstay of the church's community service in Kelowna for nearly ten years. Formed by Dean Nissa Basbaum, it was created to serve "interests larger than our own" in the "community and the world beyond."

Our Cathedral Cupboard, a food bank open to clients on Fridays from 10 to 11 am, is our main focus. It is generously supported by the Cathedral community and the United Way, not to mention a large contingent of about 35 volunteers. Our weekly clientele can exceed 40 people. Before they shop, Cupboard hosts serve clients hot or cold beverages and a snack, if they like, in the library of the Old Rectory. Our volunteer hosts have learned a great deal about the overwhelming challenges facing many of our clients, and have come to respect their resilience. (The COVID pandemic has, of course, altered some of our procedures.)

After shopping hour is over on Friday, volunteers make a grocery list, then send it on to the shopping volunteers who purchase orders of between \$100-\$200 early in the next week. Good relations with local suppliers, such as Independent Grocery, Superstore, BC Tree Fruits, and others, who give discounts, and with Artisan Bakery and It's a Bakery, who donate food, have been established. In addition, Andy and Louise Griffin shop for bulk bargains once a month. We are also blessed to have an onsite Cathedral produce garden, tended by Pat and Byron Elliott. It is a work of horticultural art and a great boon to healthy Cupboard offerings.

On Thursday, the volunteer stockers make up bags of tea, coffee, cereal, detergent, sugar, powdered milk, rice,



*St Michael and All Angels Outreach Committee.*

and pasta for the shelves, and also put out canned and prepackaged foods, and some toiletries. Friday morning, volunteers arrive about an hour early to set up before opening. For Thanksgiving, we gave our clients a pumpkin or apple pie and a canned ham along with their other supplies.

The Cathedral Outreach has also promoted, fund raised and supported the Share the Abundance Program, Inn from the Cold, Camp Owaissi, PWRDF, and LARC. For example, Outreach raised money for last year's "Buy the Farm," a PWRDF program wherein donors buy livestock and agricultural supplies for people in other

parts of the world. Outreach volunteers have also met with others in our community involved in food, shelter, and other initiatives for the disadvantaged and visited their facilities. Some of these include First United Church and Metro Church, the Central Okanagan Food Bank, and Journey Home. Amber Webster Kotak, former Faith Formation Coordinator, has been a valued consultant to the team and has provided tremendous insight. Our service to those with mental health and addiction challenges has evolved over the years through much discussion and fine-tuning of policy and procedures, and a workshop



*Volunteer preparing food for distribution.*

with Canadian Mental Health. Plans for more outreach initiatives at the Cathedral and in the community are also being considered.

Given COVID, Outreach has been challenged, but the Cupboard has adapted very effectively, remaining open thanks to the efforts of our masked and sanitized volunteers. A survey of Friday clients done in December of 2019 is replete with fulsome praise and gratitude, and reveals a high level of satisfaction with our Cupboard.



# ADVENT MESSAGE

*Comfort, O comfort my people,  
Says your God...*

By Dr Lynne McNaughton  
Bishop of Kootenay

*"Comfort, O comfort my people,  
Says your God,  
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem...."*

*"A voice says 'Cry out!'  
And I said, 'what shall I cry?'  
All people are grass,  
Their constancy is like the flower  
of the field.*

*The grass withers, the flower  
fades,*

*When the breath of the Lord  
blows upon it;*

*Surely the people are grass.*

*The grass withers, the flower  
fades;*

*But the word of our God will  
stand forever." Isaiah 40*



*Gerard van Honthorst - Adoration of the Shepherds (1622)*

This beloved familiar reading from the prophet Isaiah graces the second Sunday of Advent. We long to hear God directing the prophet to "comfort, comfort my people". I can feel my body relax when I hear this passage. "Comfort, comfort my people". It is what we need to hear in this year of turmoil and this time of dark cold winter.

This prophet, sometimes called Second Isaiah, was speaking to the people of God in exile. The super-power Babylon had destroyed their city, their temple, their economy, their leadership. After such upheaval and trauma, people were defeated, numb, fearful. They were a people in despair.

How does Isaiah speak about hope into this situation when all seems hopeless? What is a word of Comfort to the exiles? Isaiah contrasts the fragility of humans (the grass withers,

the flower fades) with The Eternal, the enduring Word of God.

How do we carry hope through this weary winter of pandemic restrictions? As we live through this Advent of 2020, we are preparing for a Christmas that doesn't have our usual joyful expectation of family and friends or gathering for worship to sing carols of peace. After the distressing year of disruption we have lived through, when we are all too aware of the fragility of life, the season of Advent invites us to rest in the perennial steadfast Word of God.

What is that enduring Word in which we can hope? The Eternal Word is that God is with us. That is the meaning of the Hebrew word Emmanuel, and the central doctrine of our Christian faith, the Incarnation. God is with us! We are not alone in the universe. As Julian of Norwich says: "We have been loved since

the beginning". The Creator of the Universe dwells with Creation. Our Creator longs to be in relationship with us. The Sovereign Holy One came amongst us a human in Jesus to be reconciled with us. An everlasting characteristic of God is to offer us steadfast love, faithful covenant love. This is the Word in which we can trust, upon which we can rest our lives.

May you find in the Scripture readings and music of this season the comfort that God whispers in our ears and sings to our hearts. Hum along!

*"...Get you up to the heights and sing, Proclaim to a desolate people, the coming of their king".*

*(Common Praise 106)*

Yours in Christ,

+ *Lynne*

## The HighWay

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By John Lavender

This Advent edition of *The HighWay* contains a potpourri of articles all of which bring an element of hope in the times in which we now live. I will be very happy; as I'm sure you will be, when none of the articles mention Covid-19. Nevertheless, under these circumstances we have

# Editorial

## THE HOPE OF ADVENT

articles of hope and creativity. What gave me hope in the early days of the pandemic was the fact people were being creative in adverse times. Within weeks of finding out we might have to wear masks, colourful designs appeared as a substitute for the clinical ones. I'm old enough to remember the Donald Duck gas masks for kids that were issued during the battle of Britain in WWII. At least they looked a little like Donald Duck; I don't think it was intentional.

In the area of creativity, I point you to the back page of our December

edition. Norene Morrow has written an article about how these times have unleashed the creative spirit, with the potential of turning a negative situation into an opportunity to create art. I also noticed that musicians were the first to lead us in song, when everything was being shut down.

Austin Spry has written a new piece following on from his "Sacred Spaces". It's called "Making Some Space."

I like it when people take the time to write about their ministries in their local church. The front page article

illustrates this. The Cathedral's Outreach Committee submitted an article on their Food Pantry operation under Covid-19 restrictions. Food Banks are vitally important now more than ever.

Andrea Brennan's article asks the question, "What is Community?" The writing has a lightness about it that makes it sound like a personal diary. She relates the events of the days as though she is confiding in us.

There are three articles about Advent including Bishop Lynn's words of Comfort.

□

### St George's, West Kelowna, first service inside the church since lockdown.



At St. George's, Thanksgiving Sunday was the first In Person Worship Service. 30 people pre-registered, which was the limit set. 29 people attended. Information and photograph by Loretta Cooper.

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When you've finished with your copy of *The HighWay*, leave it in public places where others can enjoy it.

- doctors' offices
- seniors' centres
- libraries
- hospitals
- book swap boxes

ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA

**Dear God**  
Prayers for young children

Text by Judy Rois  
Illustrations by Nichole Nidenoff

Receive a free festive stocking when you order a copy of *Dear God* (while supplies last).

anglicanfoundation.org



By Andrea Brennan

*Rev. Andrea Brennan, Shared Ministry Christ Church Anglican and Knox United Church Fernie, BC*

It's been over seven months since we closed our buildings in response to COVID-19. Since that time there's been a lot of waiting. And I mean a LOT of waiting. At first, I thought that we would be in lockdown for a couple of weeks, I mean, Holy Week was coming up. We couldn't miss that, could we?

Apparently we could.

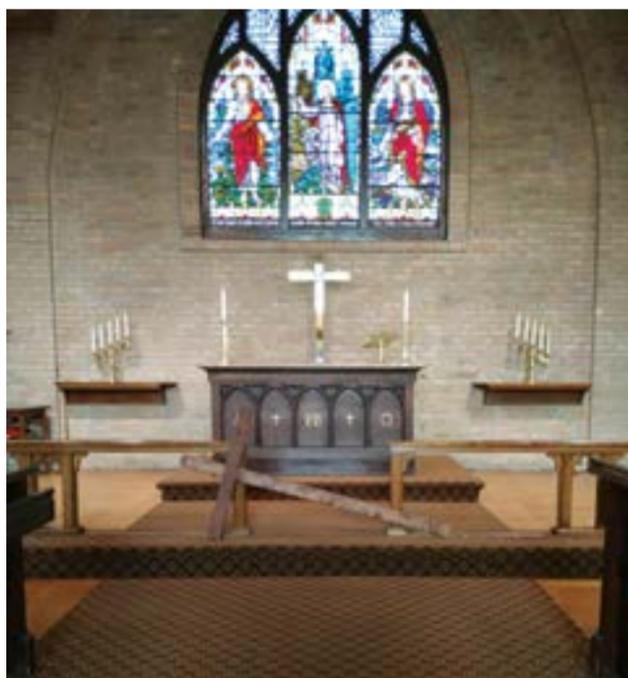
Then I thought we would be open in time for Easter Day. Surely, we could have Easter in our Worshipping Communities.

Apparently, we could not.

And so we adapted, fairly quickly, to provide online worship through Zoom. I began sending out an email on Wednesday's with announcements and observations, as well as the Saint of the Day. Christ Church has traditionally had Saints Day Worship in person on Wednesday's. We would offer the Saint's Day biography without the in-person worship.

# What is Community?

## *Journal of a priest during Covid-19*



*Empty Christ Church during the lockdown.*

On Saturday afternoon I'd send out the Zoom link, and any other announcements that needed to be made.

On Sunday, after Worship, I'd send out the Worship Notes, Sermon Notes and links to *The HighWay*, as well as any Diocesan News, and news of the Pacific Mountain Region (UCC).

The most astounding thing began to happen. We began getting requests from people to be included in our Zoom Worship. Many of these requests were from people who were not connected to either Christ Church or Knox United. And slowly,

we became an Online Worshipping Community. A community of folks who care deeply for each other and yet, many of whom we have yet to meet "in person".

A year ago I would not have imagined this possible.

Our rhythm of worship currently is the first and third Sunday's are United-style worship and the second and fourth Sunday's are Anglican-style worship. Because I am leading Worship in the United Church as well as the Anglican Church, I have permission to preside at Communion. I did this for the first time at our First

Anniversary Service of Shared Ministry on the 26th of August. It was a beautiful and powerful service.

The United Church tradition is to receive Communion once a month, on the first Sunday of the month and we are continuing to do so. When we re-opened Christ Church for Wednesday Worship, we asked permission to celebrate Eucharist. At first we used a modified BCP Morning Prayer service and it was very well received. Then we received permission to celebrate Eucharist, in person, on Wednesday's.

It's not the same as it was before. The Service is a modified Eucharist from the BAS. It's not what it was, but it is what we have and for now, it will do.

The thing is, we cannot go back to how things were before COVID-19. We must take the lessons we have learned during this time of Pandemic, couple them with the rich history of our Churches, and move forward into a brave, new Church where relationship is more important than paraments. Where people are is more important than bricks and mortar.

We are told we cannot go back again, and why should we? We have discovered a richness of community online, and we have blended that in our Sunday Worship for those who choose to join us in the building. Together we are discovering new forms of worship, new ways to worship, and new ways to be Church.

Thanks be to God! □

### St Andrew's, Trail, first service inside the church since lockdown.



*St Andrew's Trail opened in Trail on October 4 for Morning Prayer. Attendance was 35 by advance online booking, with support of 1 outside greeter, 1 inside greeter, 1 usher, 1 LLM, 2 musicians (from the same household) and 1 clergy person. Information and photograph by Jennifer Serges.*

# A New Life

## for St Michael's & All Angels, Balfour

By John Lavender

St Michael & All Angels in Balfour is becoming St Michael's and All Angels Chapel and Performance Centre.

An open house sponsored by the Balfour and District Business and Historic Association took place on the last Sunday in October. Old members of the church and the curious came together for a tour of the church and to view the plans for an extension. The last service was held earlier in the year, but there was still an attachment for the old church by its past members.

The purchase of this historic church is conditional upon future financing, for which the Diocese of Kootenay (Anglican Church of Canada) has granted a one year term to complete.

This quaint building, with its steeple and the distinctive circular, stained-glass rose window above the entranceway in the nave, has stood quietly as the backdrop for many local events over the years. In the old days it was a place of lodging for the Ktunaxa people when they were in the area during annual fishing trips. It withstood the record flood of 1894, when water was said to lap the foot of the church steps.

The first wedding in the church took place in 1910, uniting Balfour couple Eveline Hobson and Arthur Hazeldene Noakes. Two years later, Longbeach residents Winifred Goodwin and Commander Burrard Smith were also married there. During the time when the CPR hotel at Balfour



St Michael's Chapel & Performance Centre, Open House

was used as a military sanatorium from 1917 to 1921, the church's vicar was on hand to aid the invalid soldiers. Years later, when the Anglican churches in Procter and Longbeach were closed, some of their furnishings and their Rolls of Honour were brought here.

In 1889, Charles W. Busk, a native of Greenwich, England, staked a 200-acre pre-emption claim for the townsite he named Balfour. He donated the land for the church and it is believed that he personally contributed some money for its construction, although his aunt in England donated

most of the funds. She also bought the original church bell.

Through the decades, the Ladies' Guild has hosted countless fundraisers, raffles, even fancy dress balls, to raise money for improvements and repairs. Likewise, parishioners have been instrumental in painstakingly maintaining this community symbol. They've handled big jobs, like painting the exterior, repairing the steeple and replacing the roof — not once but five times — to innumerable small jobs, a necessity when it comes to battling the signs of age.

Thanks to grants from the Columbia Basin Trust and Regional District of Central Kootenay, the Balfour and District Business and Historic Association has been able to fund over 70 per cent of the church's purchase price. The association's first goal is to complete the funding for the remaining difference of approximately \$35,000. This will be achieved by hosting fundraising events and through private donations.

Plans are already in the works for minor upgrades aimed at improving public access and providing the building with a few amenities, all without altering the church's historic character. A small addition on

the church's north side will provide wheelchair access, a washroom and a storage area. Also, some work will be needed on the grounds for septic facilities. Financing for these projects is expected to be paid through grants and the work is slated to begin once the conditional sales agreement has been finalized.

It is the intention of the Balfour and District Business and Historic Association to have this historic church available for weddings and other events, such as performances, storytelling and lectures for the enjoyment of the community. In keeping with its new role, the church will be re-named St. Michael's and All Angels Chapel and Performance Centre. It will also continue to be home to the Christian Science Church.

"While this is a big step for the Balfour and District Business and Historic Association, we are convinced the small chapel can be economically sustainable with community support while retaining its historic value to Balfour and the Outlet district," said a representative.

Anyone wanting more information about the chapel project or who has ideas for fundraising events that they would like to share, or wants to make a donation can contact heritage committee members. See the website for further details as the project progresses. <http://balfourchapel.org/>

ANGLICAN  
FOUNDATION OF CANADA



By Judy Rois

Canon Judy Rois is the Executive Director of AFC

At AFC we love, more than anything, to say Yes! and to help our parishes imagine more. The Foundation has

been saying yes steadily and unfailingly—through good times and bad—for more than sixty years.

In the Diocese of Kootenay, since 2010, we have said Yes! to nearly \$160,000 in grants and loans for your parishes. The vast majority has been invested in buildings and programs, but AFC has also provided funding for the Kootenay School of Ministry, ecumenical youth ministry, and organ studies. This past May, in spite of the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis and the impact on AFC's investment portfolio, we said Yes! to All Saints' Church, Vernon, and their Xeriscape project which is a more environmentally friendly alternative to traditional landscaping.

For nearly ten years now as Executive Director of the Foundation,

## Grants to Kootenay since 2010

I've had a front row seat to some of the Canadian church's best ideas: the ministries and programs parish visionaries might undertake if only they had some strategic funding to help them get started. Knowing what I know about the innovative and compassionate character of the church nationally, I cannot help but feel hopeful about the future.

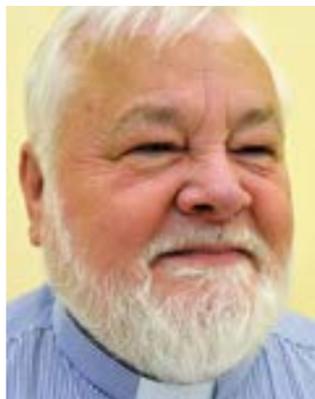
Please be assured that AFC will continue to be a force for stability: we have been there and will continue to be there no matter what the future may hold. In order for AFC to remain strong and vibrant, however, I am asking those who can continue to partner with us to do so. If you are a member I ask you to renew your membership. If you have never been a member of the Foundation before,

please accept this invitation to pay-it-forward.

The social and economic impact of COVID-19 on people and communities will undoubtedly give rise to compassionate and innovative responses on the part of our churches. To those currently discerning how to meet a real and pressing need in their communities—faithful leaders in the Diocese of Kootenay among them—we want to respond as generously as possible.

Join us and help AFC continue to be able to say Yes! to the dreams and aspirations of the people and parishes in your diocese, and to so many more across the country.

To donate to the Anglican Foundation of Canada visit [anglicanfoundation.org](http://anglicanfoundation.org)



By Yme Woensdregt

*The Rev Dr Yme Woensdregt is a retired priest who continues to live in Cranbrook.*

December is the month of Advent, a season of anticipation and looking forward. In the past, we'd have been gearing up for all the activities surrounding Advent and Christmas. It would be a busy time in the church and a busy time in our lives as we got ready for Christmas.

But now what? What will Advent and Christmas look like in this time?

Waiting in Advent has taken on a different meaning for us. We have been waiting for eight long months. We have been waiting endlessly, it seems. This year, Advent comes in the midst of such a strange time that all the normal practices and activities mean something different.

This year, we are waiting for this all to end. We are waiting for a time to come in which we can live life more fully again. We are waiting for the vi-

rus to run its course, for a vaccine, for an opportunity to gather with friends and engage in something as simple and as profound as giving a hug.

I don't know about you, but I'm tired of waiting. I'm not sure I want Advent to come this year.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, I have taken comfort in a wonderful prayer of Thomas Merton: "My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

This prayer is making Advent 2020 even more meaningful for me.

We have no idea where we are going. We don't know what's going on. Our knowledge of the nature of this pandemic is growing, and our response to it changes as our knowledge increases. And although we cannot know for certain where this will end, we continue to live in faithful trust that God, who is coming, accompanies us.

So we act out of love for our neighbours—we wash our hands; we pay attention; we take care of each other by maintaining physical distance; we try to reach out to others so that we may find ways of social connection. In all of these very simple and basic acts, we love our neighbours as ourselves.

And as Advent arrives, I hope that I am following the God of life. I hope that through these acts of love, I am preparing the way of the Lord as we see Christ in our neighbours and in our world.

And above all else, I trust that even though I may not see the way before me as clearly as I would like, that in all I am doing, I am following God's way in faithful trust and humble hope.

I have learned in the last few months that when there's no clear

end in sight, the waiting is filled with a mixture of emotions and feelings, hopes and fears. It seems endless, and in some ways, pointless. There are times I wonder whether the waiting will ever end.

Sometimes, I have learned that we simply have to step into God's silence and wait patiently.

Other times, we simply need to act on our own best intuitions and trust that God is guiding us.

Above all, in this time of anticipation and hope and trust, I will not give in to fear, for even as we wait for the One who is coming, that One is always and ever here.

At Christ Church in Cranbrook, in Advent we would sing a prayer with the line, "While we are waiting, come." Advent 2020 I will sing that prayer with all my heart: Come. Come Lord Jesus. Come and hold my heart.

□

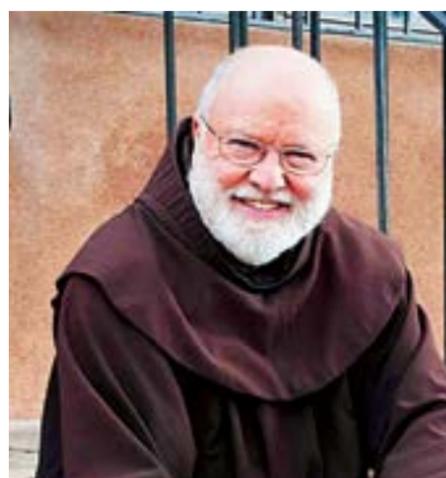


By Martha Fish

*The Rev Martha Fish is a member of the Spiritual Development Committee*

"The first lesson that golf teaches you is humility" reads the sign in the golf club's ladies' washroom. My husband and I enjoyed playing golf this summer, but it was indeed a humbling experience. No matter how carefully you addressed the ball or set up your shot, all too many times that ball would end up in the rough. Even the pros have poor shots sometimes, which I confess I find comforting! It shows that none of us has total control.

The first lesson this pandemic has taught us is humility. We humans



*Fr Richard Rohr a source for Action and Contemplation [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)*

have no control over this microscopic virus that has turned our entire planet upside down. No matter how rich and powerful you are, or how virtuous or healthy a life you have lived, you are still vulnerable to getting sick, or even dying. We can take all the precautions, but none of us has total control.

Humility is an underrated quality in our society. All too often it is equated with self-abasement, or being meek and passive, qualities which are seen as negative. But being "humble of heart" has been encouraged, even commanded, by all the great spiritual

leaders—Jesus, Buddha, St. Francis, St. Benedict among them. Being humble means recognizing that I am not the centre of the universe, but just one small part of it. It means recognizing that I am not in control of my life, and certainly not of your life. I can't even control a golf ball!

Humility recognizes that only God is the centre of things, that only God is in control. The presence of God demands a total response, what spiritual leaders call surrender to God's will. This is not done in an abject way, but by trying to align our lives, our wills and behaviours, to God's purpose for us. When we do, we can find great inner peace.

Sr. Joan Chittister, in her book on Benedictine spirituality titled "Wisdom from the Daily," says "humility comes from understanding my place in the universe". There is so much in the world that we can't control, but we can control how we react. We can place our world, our concerns and

fears, in God's hands.

How do I know what God's will for me is? A good first step is through prayer, especially contemplative or centering prayer. This spiritual practice teaches us how to be still, how to silence our "chattering monkey mind" and to listen for God's "still small voice" to speak to us. It enables us to try to put our ego, our "false self", aside in order to surrender our will to God, to be open to learning God's purpose for our lives.

There are many resources to learn about contemplative or centering prayer. There are groups in our diocese who meet regularly; while many groups cannot meet in person now, two resources which can be accessed online are:

Center for Action and Contemplation (Fr. Richard Rohr and others): [www.cac.org](http://www.cac.org)

The Contemplative Society: [www.contemplative.org](http://www.contemplative.org).

□

## Who's in Control?



# Servant's Heart

## from the desk of a deacon

### *Watching and waiting*

By Richard Simpson

*The Rev Richard Simpson is a deacon at St Saviour's Penticton*

*"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." Desmond Tutu*

As we begin the season of Advent in the Church we find ourselves in the midst of the darkness of a global pandemic. It seems somewhat appropriate to me that as we begin our Advent journey, we find ourselves in the deepening shadows of uncertainty as we look to the future. Advent is a season of waiting; waiting for the Light to come into the world. Waiting is not something many of us do very well, but it can be a very rich time for us. How can we use this time of waiting to discern what God is leading us into? This is not only a season of waiting, but also a season of prepara-

tion. It's a time when we anticipate the advent of God's light breaking in upon human kind.

Being in the midst of the darkness and gloom of these pandemic times may actually enable us to see the much anticipated divine light easier. The darkness has certainly shone some light on issues in care homes, health care institutions, essential service providers and many other aspects of our lives. To quote Leonard Cohen from his song Anthem, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in." As our eyes have adjusted to the present darkness we might ask, what do we see God doing in the midst of lockdowns, restrictions, economic challenges, illness and anxiety? Where do we see glimmers of the light of God shining through the cracks? What gives us hope as we reorient ourselves in our present circumstances?

One of the great disruptions caused by the pandemic has been the disruption of ways of being connected to one another. We've momentarily become cut off from what we've been accustomed to and perhaps some of

us feel a bit disoriented in the darkness. As our eyes become accustomed to the darkness, they adjust, we begin to see signs of light and life and we find other ways of connecting and working together as a community of faith. It's important for us to take some time to look around and to discern what God is doing in our communities.

I've witnessed neighbours helping one another. We see families and friends coming together in new and creative ways; Zoom meetings, phone trees, and so forth. The Church has been innovative in adapting to new ways of gathering and serving our congregations and communities. There have been many virtual gatherings for YouTube and Zoom worship; outdoor services and greatly modified indoor events. It has been a challenge for both leaders and laity to adapt to the new ways of being and doing. In the midst of the transition, we are also being emboldened by our church leaders to not become lazy about our spiritual lives, but rather to adapt and enhance our spiritual practices of prayer, study and service to others,

albeit while observing health and safety protocols.

As a Deacon, I've found it challenging to adapt to new ways of serving. The imposition of pandemic restrictions has meant I've had to pause some of the ministries I've been involved in. However, it has opened other avenues of service and opportunities for continuing education and personal development, perhaps preparing me for what will come after. Perhaps for each of us, some of the waiting is to wait and to watch for future opportunities to serve.

Throughout this Advent season of waiting and anticipation, I encourage you to look for the places where the light of Christ is beginning to break in on the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in. Where do you see God moving? Where are the cracks where the Light is piercing the darkness? What is being illuminated by that Divine Light? How will you respond to what is revealed? What is God calling you to do and be in these challenging days?

□



By Austin Spry

*The Rev Austin Spry is the Incumbent for Holy Trinity, Grand Forks.*

*Ah, you who join house to house,  
who add field to field,  
until there is room for no one but you,  
and you are left to live alone  
in the midst of the land!  
(Isaiah 5:8)*

There is a vision for God's people in the land, and you will find it shot right through the Torah and the Prophets. It is a vision of a bucolic, agrarian society: humans as the benevolent caretakers of a landscape teeming with life. Those that manage the land do so in a way that leaves

## Make Some Space



*Finding some room for those who don't fit.*

room for the powerless. The edges of farm fields are left unharvested, so that those who don't quite fit in "proper" society can have food to eat (Leviticus 23:22). When we fail in our role as God's people the whole land suffers (Hosea 4:3). There is a dream of God's chosen not using the world for their exclusive benefit, but for the good of all people and all creatures. If there was a time when we were close to living into this vision it was before the Assyrian invasion of Israel not long before the Exile into Babylon. We know this because the prophets mourn the loss of this landscape. Archaeologists find evidence that after the Assyrian invasion of

Israel many small-scale domestic grain mills, olive and wine presses of Israelite small-holdings are replaced with a few industrial scale facilities: centralised and serving an entire area. Keepers of the land were converted to farm labourers: no longer caretakers, but tenants. The Assyrian Empire gained an efficiency with industrial agriculture, but sacrificed something in the process: space for the widow, alien, and outcast; and the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. The prophets lament a Godly way of life lost.

I don't think it is contentious to state that in general we are far more like Israel under the yoke of Empire than the idyllic and open country dreamed of in Scriptures. We farm the best land, fencing it in. Important wetlands to migratory waterfowl have to be guarded zealously against the constant pressure to convert them to farms, sea ports, and airports. There is little space for those at the margins of society. The city is locked down to those who don't fit into mainstream society.

I had a friend once who struggled intellectually due to having had a difficult birth. The poor guy

was constantly being victimized by opportunists who took advantage of his simplicity. He struggled to make his way in life as an individual, but he didn't want to become a ward of the state and lose his independence. It's a pity because his life was fraught, but I remember thinking to myself, "You know, he'd be just fine on a farm, with a few people that loved him."

I've always liked L'Arche communities for this; they organise people with disabilities and their carers into a functioning community. In these communities every person has some contributing role. What a beautiful act of redemption! Those who might have had a terrible, lonely existence cut off by the walls of an individualistic society are brought together by a strong institution to experience the fullness of community. The institution of L'Arche uses its organisational capacity to create space in the landscape for those who would otherwise be relegated to the margins. This is real Kingdom of Heaven stuff. I often wonder at the opportunities the Anglican Church has to use its organisational capacity to carve out some room for those who don't fit, to make some space in the landscape for that abundant, open, agrarian vision. □



# An Opportunity for Connection and Creativity

By Norene Morrow



Screen capture of a production by Cathedral drama group via Zoom called "Breathe" by Norene Morrow. You can watch it on YouTube <https://youtu.be/RSzbK0Yndyw>

Shortly after the pandemic became a real threat, restrictions were imposed regarding staying home and not gathering in large groups. A few weeks after that, I began hearing people complain that they were bored and had nothing to do. My experience has been the complete opposite. I have looked at this time as an opportunity to make some changes in my life and explore new things. These have included doing a lot of walking, attending various singing and acting workshops online, adjudicating poetry performances for an online, and taking Japanese lessons. For those early months, it was a solitary existence but I was never bored.

As time went on, however, I really missed my church community at St Michael's. I watched services online

but it just wasn't the same. There was no singing, no Eucharist, and no congregation. This got me thinking about how important it was to find ways to stay connected and perhaps bring some creativity to the parish during this difficult time. One of the first things I did was to attend the weekly Tuesday Morning coffee group. In the warmer weather we met outside. No coffee was served but each person brought their own chair to visit for an hour or so. It was there that I learned about how a group of parishioners had been regularly phoning some of our older members who are alone, how the children and youth were keeping connected, and how the Cathedral Cupboard continued to provide food for those in need. Suddenly, I did not feel so alone and it

made me want to reach out to others in my own way.

When our online worship services began to include the addition of video recordings of parishioners reading scripture, leading prayers, and singing hymns I decided to get involved. I also got our drama group together via Zoom. This resulted in the creation of a video presentation called "Breathe", which was about coping with Covid-19 and the rising tensions around racism after the death of George Floyd. Happily, since September, we have been able to resume our meetings/rehearsals in person (socially distanced) to work on special projects for Remembrance Day and Christmas.

What I am saying is that while this pandemic continues we can use this

as a time of opportunity; a time for emotional and spiritual growth, especially if we can find a way to connect with others. It might be as simple as practicing daily gratitude, connecting with someone by phone, having a video chat, or offering a service that can be done from home.

Recently, while surfing the net, I found an article called "100+ Ideas for Pastors and Churches to Do during Covid" (<https://baptist.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/100-Ideas.pdf>). While the suggestions are not from an Anglican perspective they might just spark some ideas that will motivate your creativity, and perhaps bring some light into the lives of those who are struggling during these difficult times.

□

## ADVENT CALENDAR 2020

- Fight for a cause that Jesus would support**
- Give a small gift to someone**
- Use a centreing prayer to hear God's voice**
- Set aside time and place to listen to the Holy Spirit**
- Read Luke 3:7-18**
- Study the life of Jesus written by scholars**
- Invite someone to discover part of God's beautiful Earth with you**
- Bring lunch to someone who doesn't get out much**
- Read Luke 21:25-36**
- Encourage someone with kind words**
- Invite someone to share coffee and conversation**
- Do a secret act of kindness**
- Bake/buy cookies or muffins and share them with friends, co-workers, or anyone in need on the street**
- Listen for God's voice in music**
- Re-read and study the Gospels this month**
- Read Luke 3:1-6**
- Watch a film version of the Gospels**
- Read Luke 1:39-45**
- Reconcile with someone you've been estranged from**
- Read Luke 2:1-20**
- Share your Christmas feast with someone!**
- Inspired by the book, "Surprise the World," by Michael Frost**