

# DIOCESAN EPOST

Celebrating the Diocese of British Columbia

A Section of the ANGLICAN JOURNAL

FEBRUARY 2021

## New bishop leads the diocese

*Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee is consecrated and installed as the diocese's 14th bishop*

BY SUSAN DOWN

Masked clergy, hand sanitizing stations at the altar and a required address to the congregation spoken to empty pews were notable indications that the recent ceremony to welcome a new bishop was held during a pandemic, yet the social distancing couldn't dampen the grandeur and solemnity of the occasion.

On Saturday, Jan. 30, Anna Greenwood-Lee became the 14th bishop of the Diocese of British Columbia, the first woman to hold that position. Greenwood-Lee, a native of Edmonton, was ordained in Calgary in 2000. In 2006, after serving in Toronto, she returned to Calgary to become incumbent at St. Laurence, where she strengthened the parish and its outreach activities. She was elected on the seventh ballot at a livestreamed episcopal synod in September, 2020. She succeeds Bishop Logan McMenamie, who retired in May 2020.

The consecration and installation ceremony was unlike any other in this diocese due to the major impact of



*Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee will preach for the first time in her new role on Sunday, Feb. 7 to the diocese.*

COVID-19 restrictions. Canada's Anglican primate, Linda Nicholls, was not able to travel from locked-down Toronto to attend, instead sending a video blessing. Greenwood-Lee's family from Calgary had to stay away as well. The diocese obtained a special variance from provincial public health officials to hold the event. A group of 30 people in total (readers, clergy, musicians and technicians) was needed to produce the livestreamed video, and the ceremony was carefully choreographed to allow only 10 people in the sanctuary at a time. This same space – during Christmases before the pandemic – would have been packed at times with close to 1000 worshippers.

Yet the new ceremony format was successful in many ways. As Ansley Tucker, dean of Christ Church Cathedral, said in her introductory remarks, we are as much a church when we are apart as when we are gathered. More than 1300

people from across Canada and the UK watched the event online as it was held at Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria. One viewer in the livestream chat forum expressed her gratitude, saying "Thanks for the great seat!" Indeed, everyone watching had a soaring, choir-loft view of the majestic space as well as important zoomed-in close-ups unobstructed by other audience members. Greenwood-Lee reported that her son, Fin, told her later that he was happy because he got to watch the ceremony and eat lunch at the same time at home in Calgary.

There were only four choir members, but less quantity didn't mean less quality in the musical program. Mark McDonald, assistant director of music at the cathedral, played both the massive Hellmuth Wolff organ and the smaller chapel organ as well as the grand piano.

In the Anglican Church of Canada,

*Continued on page 7*

# Welcoming a stranger



FROM THE BISHOP'S CHAIR

THE RIGHT REVEREND  
ANNA GREENWOOD-LEE

Remember to be kind  
To those who work for you,  
Endeavor to remain aware  
Of the quiet world  
That lives behind each face.  
Be fair in your expectations,  
Compassionate in your criticism.  
May you have the grace  
of encouragement  
To awaken the gift in  
the other's heart,  
Building in them the confidence  
To follow the call of the gift.

May you come to know that work  
Which emerges from  
the mind of love  
Will have beauty and form.  
Excerpt from John O'Donohue,  
"Blessings for a New Position," *To  
Bless the Space Between Us: A Book of  
Blessings* (2008) Used by permission.

As we begin this new stage of our  
shared journey, I ask for your prayers  
as you are in mine. Since my election,  
I have been on the receiving end of the  
ministry of hospitality and welcoming of  
a stranger, and I am so grateful. I have  
much to learn and my focus for the first  
months of my episcopacy will be nothing  
more and nothing less than building  
relationships of trust.

As much as possible, I'm also trying  
to schedule meetings with other church  
and community leaders to get my feet  
under me in this new place. While COVID  
makes this challenging, technology is  
a help. I look forward to meeting the  
active clergy of the diocese in a series of  
virtual regional meetings throughout the  
month of February and to attending other  
distanced meetings and gatherings when  
they become possible. Please have patience  
with me as I am very clear that, at this  
point, I don't know what I don't know!

## Bishop's Calendar February

- 3 Nimpkish Regional Clergy Meet-and-Greet  
Selkirk Regional Clergy Meet-and-Greet
- 7 Preaching at Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria (pre-recorded)
- 9 Educational Trusts Board Meeting  
Christ Church Cathedral Buildings Ltd. Board Meeting
- 10 Cowichan/Malaspina Regional Clergy Meet-and-Greet
- 18 Finance Committee
- 24 Tolmie Regional Clergy Meet-and-Greet  
Haro Regional Clergy Meet-and-Greet
- 25 Diocesan Council

In these next months I will also be focusing on sustaining the clergy and laity of the diocese through the challenges of COVID-19. We are all tired and long to be back together. However, COVID-19 is still very much with us and we must remain vigilant in keeping one another safe. The diocese of Calgary lost one of its beloved clergy, the Rev. Margaret Waterchief, to

*Continued on page 3*

## Diocesan Post

Published by the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia ten times a year from September to June as a section of the *Anglican Journal*.

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**Online:** bc.anglican.ca/the-diocesan-post

*The Post* is printed and mailed by Webnews Printing Inc., North York, ON

### New Submission Deadlines

- Jan issue - Nov 25
- Feb issue - Dec 25
- March issue - Jan 25
- April issue - Feb 25
- May issue - March 25
- June issue - April 25
- Sept issue - July 25
- Oct issue - Aug 25
- Nov issue - Sept 25
- Dec issue - Oct 25

**All material is subject to editing.**

### Subscription Changes

To subscribe please email circulation@national.anglican.ca or write to Diocesan Post c/o Anglican Journal, 80 Hayden Street, Toronto ON M4Y 3G2 or phone 416-924-9199 ext 241 or complete the online form at [anglicanjournal.com](http://anglicanjournal.com) and click "Subscribe"

### Submissions

News, letters and other articles are welcome. Please limit articles to 500 words and letters to 200 words. Submissions must include name and contact information of the author.

Pictures must be a resolution of 300 DPI and in sharp focus. Clearly and accurately identify the name of all subjects as well as the person who took the picture.

*Some costs associated with the production of the Anglican Journal and the Diocesan Post are offset by parish contributions to the diocese. In return, parishioners receive a copy of the Anglican Journal, including the Diocesan Post at no cost. Other subscriptions: \$20/10 issues or \$2/issue. The Anglican Journal and Diocesan Post do not share subscription lists with outside organizations or businesses.*

**Volume 55, No 2**



# Constance Isherwood remembered

When she entered law school at the University of British Columbia in 1948, Constance Isherwood (then Holmes) was one of only eight women in a class of 208. Graduating at the top of the class in 1951, she was the first woman to win the law society's gold medal. She set up a law practice with her husband Foster Isherwood in 1963 and continued to work until just hours before her death.

On January 26, 2021, just over a week after her 101st birthday, the long-serving former chancellor of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, Dr. Constance Isherwood, Q.C., died peacefully, surrounded by her family.

Connie, as she was known to many in the diocese, was an active

and valued member of Holy Trinity, Sooke. As chancellor for the diocese for more than 30 years, she acted as legal advisor on controversial issues such as the ordination of women, equal marriage and the legacy of residential schools.

In 2016, Isherwood became the first woman to receive the Law Society of B.C.'s highest honour for lifetime achievement. She was also the province's oldest practicing lawyer.

"While we did not meet, she was clearly a faithful servant and tireless worker, serving the church and the world in so many ways, not the least of which was as chancellor of the diocese," said Bishop Anna Greenwood-Lee. ■



Constance Isherwood holds the honorary lay canon commission presented to her by Bishop Logan McMenamie in 2017. Photo by Christine Langerak

# Welcoming a stranger

*Continued from page 2*

the virus in July. A Blackfoot elder and member of the Siksika Nation, Waterchief was the first Indigenous woman and among the first women to be ordained in the diocese. Her death was an immense loss to so many, and a reminder of why it is more important for us to stay distanced

and stay safe, even if it curtails our ability to gather.

Please watch the diocesan website beginning Wednesday, February 17 for short video reflections that I will be offering throughout Lent in a series we are calling "Renew." While I won't be able to travel throughout the diocese in person for a while, I look forward to being present by a variety of other means including videos like these.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Ansley Tucker, Barry Foster and all the synod staff, officers and other synod leaders who have clearly done a remarkable job of shepherding the diocese through both the episcopal transition and the pandemic. The depths of talent and dedication within this diocese are obvious to me and I feel blessed to be joining such a remarkable team. ■

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## Consecration and Installation



(clockwise from top left) The production team turned the cathedral library into the tech nerve centre; Greenwood-Lee is presented to the archbishop as Chancellor Robert Gill reads the testimonials; predecessor Bishop Logan passes on an eagle feather; the episcopal ring features a dragonfly design; Bishop Anna at the deanery after the service. Photos by Jeannine Friesen



# Consecration and Installation



(clockwise from top right) Dean Ansley Tucker answers Bishop Anna's knock at the front door to begin the installation ceremony; presiding archbishop, Melissa Skelton with the new bishop; Dawna Wall, archdeacon, reads the litany; guest readers Megumi Matsuo Saunders, minister emerita at First Metropolitn United Church; and William Pike, retired minister. Photos by Jeannine Friesen



## Consecration and Installation

### Episcopal trousseau

A modern bishop's attire and accoutrements, such as the crozier, pectoral cross and ring, are the traditional symbols of episcopal office.

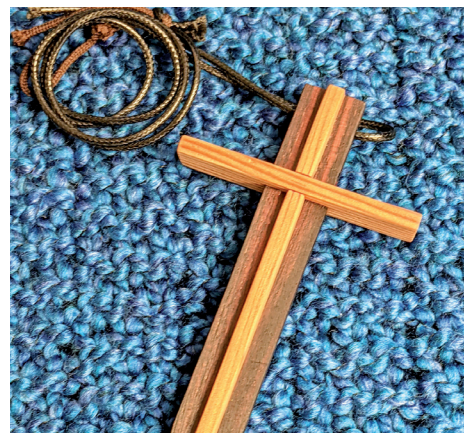
The pectoral cross, made by Anna's husband, James Greenwood-Lee, is constructed of Douglas fir and ebony. That combination of the BC wood (fir) and the Asian ebony mentioned in the book of Ezekiel speak to the depth and breadth of the Church around the world.

The ring is a gift from the people of St. Laurence Anglican Church, Calgary and was custom-made by a Calgary goldsmith. The design incorporates the cross from the Diocese of British Columbia's coat of arms, as well as four dragonflies, the diocesan symbol of transformation and our logo. It is worn on the fourth finger of the right hand, the hand used for blessings.

A bishop's garb is mostly dictated by tradition, but there is some room to customize the look. The red-violet cassock, her robe at the beginning of the ceremony, is a gift from Christ Church, Calgary, where Anna served as curate when she was first ordained. As part of the consecration, she dons a rochet (a billowy white robe) followed by a chimere (a long red vest), both gifts from the diocese.

Topping it all off is the cope, a cape whose fabrics and patterns are not prescribed but can be chosen to suit its wearer. The trick is to choose tones that are non-liturgical to make it wearable at any time. Leighton Lee, dean of Calgary, picked out the gold and blue cope and plain white mitre (hat), made by Watts and Company in London, a company known for its archive of church designs, spanning over 400 years of fabric history. Some patterns are still produced by a traditional mill in the English countryside. The mitre and cope were gifts from Bishop Anna's parents, Paul and Winnifred Greenwood.

The bishop immigrated to Canada from the UK as a young child.



*Pectoral cross constructed by the bishop's husband.*



*The new bishop proceeds down the cathedral aisle at the end of the ceremony. Photo by Jeannine Friesen*



# Consecration and Installation

## New bishop leads the diocese

*Continued from cover*

the first female priests were ordained in 1976, with the first female bishop consecrated more than 20 years later, in 1997. Greenwood-Lee is the first female priest to fill the role in this diocese, and the service celebrated women in several ways. The presiding celebrant was Melissa Skelton, archbishop of the Diocese of New Westminster and metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of BC and Yukon. The ceremony was one of her last before she retires in February. Cathedral Director of Music Donald Hunt included works by female composers in the program, such as an anthem honouring the 20th anniversary of the ordination of women in the UK, written by Victoria composer Sarah MacDonald (now working in the UK). Hunt also chose four female voices since he couldn't have the whole choir present for the event.

Even the Gospel reading (Luke 2.22-40) was tailor-made for the occasion. It was the story of Simeon and Anna, who were the first to recognize Jesus as the Messiah when he was brought to the temple as an infant.

Participants and readers at the service had strong connections to the new bishop: Megumi Matsuo Saunders, minister emerita at First Metropolitan United Church in Victoria, who served with Greenwood-Lee on the board of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada; and William and Mary Pike, who know her from Christ Church, Calgary, where Greenwood-Lee had her first posting after ordination and William was the rector. Mary Pike acted as the lay presenter at the ceremony.

Leighton Lee, dean of the Cathedral Church of the Redeemer in Calgary, gave the homily via prerecorded video from Alberta, picking up on the theme of the Gospel reading. Simeon has gone down in history for his beautiful statement of

faith, but the actual prophet was Anna, he said. "Today it's appropriate to focus on Anna, the habitué of the temple. Hers is a silent witness which for a long time was the fate of women in the church and still is in many ways."

Citing church decline and the ravages of a pandemic, Lee suggested a task for the new bishop. "Your most effective witness will be to be a non-anxious presence in the institution which is going through a dark period," he said. "Waiting and watching is a large part of what you are called to do."

He offered a warning as well. "You may discover that the adulation and deference and ceremonial pomp are almost too much to resist. But those trappings are also a trap," he said.

Quoting a 4th-century cleric, Lee said bishops come in two varieties: shepherds and fishers. "Shepherds tend the flock, but fishers push the boat out into the unexplored depths." He said church leaders have been shepherds for too long, waiting for people outside to come to them and creating an "echo chamber of familiar bromides."

Lee (no relation to the new bishop) ended with the words of young poet, Amanda Gorman, who read at US President Joe Biden's inauguration earlier this month. "For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it."

The ceremony traditionally has two parts. The consecration included Greenwood-Lee's presentation to the archbishop, the examination, whereby she answers a series of questions and pledges her commitment, and finally, the laying on of hands by the archbishop and other clergy. Two visiting bishops participated: Lesley Wheeler-Dame, bishop of Yukon; and Lincoln McKoen, bishop of the Territory of the People. At this point, the new bishop received the symbols of office: a traditional ring, staff and pectoral cross (see page 6 for more details), and new robes such as a rochet and chimere.

The second part of the ceremony was the seating and installation, officially

acknowledging the bishop's jurisdiction with a few ritual theatrics.

Greenwood-Lee left the building with her chaplain, Barry Foster, executive archdeacon of the diocese and her sponsor as a candidate in the episcopal synod. Dressed in her new golden yellow and blue cope and white mitre, she walked around to the front entrance. "Give it a two-hander. Leave your mark on the door," Foster jokingly urged her as she pounds on the door with the butt end of the staff. "Open for me the gates of righteousness," she said, and the dean let her in. She is then seated on the cathedra (bishop's chair) and receives another symbol of office, the bishop's crozier, from Bishop Logan as a symbol of the transfer of power. He added another new and truly west coast symbol as well: an eagle feather received at the demolition of St. Michael's residential school in Alert Bay in 2015.

For the next few months, Greenwood-Lee said her intention is to develop relationships with the people of this diocese through Zoom meetings with councils and church groups. She wants to continue to speak out about and get involved in issues that impact the most vulnerable. "For all sorts of reasons, many people these days say that they 'don't believe in organized religion.' The flip side of that, however, is that no one is looking for disorganized religion," she said. "The reality is that we are living at a juncture in history when the church needs to organize itself to bring more love, more justice, more compassion and more understanding to our communities."

After the event, she said a phrase from the liturgy referring to the work of the bishop stuck in her mind. "Work – that's what begins tomorrow," she said.

*On Sunday, February 7, in her first liturgical act as bishop, Bishop Anna will preach at a Service of the Word livestreamed from Christ Church Cathedral at 10:30 am, and invites the entire diocese to join in.*

*Susan Down is editor of the Diocesan Post.*



# Messy Church now offers takeout



If restaurants can switch to takeout service, so can church programs. Due to COVID-19, when the Messy Church program couldn't be offered in person anymore at St. Peter, Quamichan in Duncan, leaders Mark and Jane Hird-Rutter rebranded, and now offer Messy Church in a Bag monthly. It means there are no shared meals anymore, but bags of supplies for the day's theme are available for pick up at the church on the designated Saturday. Each bag has three crafts, some goodies, the Bible reading, opening and closing prayers, links to the video, and reminders for the next pick-up

date. So far, about 30 bags are ordered each month.

Upcoming Messy Church: Feb. 20, March 20, April 17, May 15 and June 19.

Messy Church, a program intended as a new way for churches to reach busy families, was started in the UK in 2004. The idea caught on and now there are similar program across Canada and the world. The Hird-Rutters have been Messy Church leaders since 2009 and BC regional coordinators since 2014.

For more information, contact [messychurch@stpeterduncan.ca](mailto:messychurch@stpeterduncan.ca) ■



Mark and Jane Hird-Rutter

# Journey with my father



## Reflections

BY HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Herbert O'Driscoll's latest book – and perhaps his most eagerly anticipated after more than 50 previous volumes – is a collection of autobiographical reminiscences, entitled *I Will Arise and Go Now*. The subtitle is *Reflections on the Meaning of Places and People*. Altogether, there are almost 100 short memory pieces, organized roughly chronologically, but ranging widely across both time and space. They cover his youth in Ireland, his student days at Trinity College Dublin, his four-decade ministry in Canada, his extensive experiences in the United States, and his later years of pilgrimage, especially in Holy and Celtic Lands.

The official publication date is February 17. The book (with a Canadian price of \$26.99) will be available in local bookshops and online. It's published by Morehouse Publishing of New York, an imprint of Church Publishing Inc. If your preferred bookseller doesn't have it in stock, encourage them to order it from the Canadian distributors, Parasource.

– Canon Ian Alexander

\* \* \* \* \*

### Journey With My Father May 1937

One day in the spring of my ninth year, my father tells me that he has a free Saturday, and we will take the train to Cobh to see the harbour. It's a journey of about 15 miles. Many years experiencing the vastness of Canada make me realize how short a journey that is in comparison to how magically huge it seemed then.

When the big day comes, we go to the small window in the station ticket booth to purchase our return tickets to what my father still calls Queenstown. Only recently has it been changed to Cobh (pronounced Cove), since the new republic has come into being.

The harbour, my father tells me, is so large that it could at one time contain the whole British fleet. He tells me of the occasion when he and a friend, both then

16, made this same train journey in January 1901, on the occasion of the death of Queen Victoria. A flotilla of British naval vessels was in the harbour, with flags flying at half-mast, all solemnly draped in black bunting.

Much of that wonderful day is forgotten, save for isolated moments that remain like old sepia-toned prints. My father is pointing to the mouth of the harbour, where two great forts guard the entrance. He explains that just beyond the entrance is the open ocean, and only a few miles along the coast is the sunken wreck of the *Lusitania*, torpedoed by a German submarine with great loss of life. The awe and mystery of such an event reverberate in my young mind. I am far away in the heaving ocean, the outline of the great wreck looming in the depths.

Sitting on a bench, still looking out across the harbour, we share the lunch packed for us by my mother. My father jumps up, points out to sea and cries "Look! Out there! As far as you can see!" On the very edge of our vision, we could just make out a grey shape moving westward above the ocean. "It's the *Hindenburg!*" my father cries. "The big new German airship. It's sailing to America!" We stand together, transfixed with excitement. My father acquires a new aura of high achievement in my eyes, as if he has personally arranged this amazing conjunction of the great airship and our

*Continued on page 8*

## Journey with my father

Continued from page 8

train journey. All at once, we are in touch with the great world usually experienced only through our evening paper and the crackling voices of our home radio. Little did I realize that in a few days' time we would be sitting by that radio, listening to the terror of the same proud airship exploding and crashing, sending its crew and passengers to their deaths.

There were, of course, many other memorable times with my father, like the first movies I saw with him. The very first was *The Texas Rangers*. I recall both my parents taking me to see *Sanders of the River*, the now politically so incorrect film starring Paul Robeson as the Nigerian leader Bosambo. A third—they are coming to mind thick and fast—was the utterly thrilling *King Solomon's Mines*, Rider Haggard's wonderful story. We went to an early Tarzan movie, from which I came home attempting to imitate the great Ape Man's hunting call. My efforts were not met with appreciation! I realize now that my parents were very much

into the then new world of movies or, as they were called, "the pictures." They certainly ensured that I would become a film buff and remain so for the rest of my life.

I recollect most vividly those moments when my father pointed me far beyond my immediate world. Three times a week, the big blue and white ferry, the *Innisfallen*, would come from Fishguard in Wales. My father knew the captain, so we would sometimes go aboard. I learned of the train that met the ferry in Wales, waiting to take people further on to a shining, infinitely distant London.

Nowadays we speak of someone being a "techie," able to do endlessly clever things on their iPhone and iPad. In those days, being a techie meant being adept in the still-new world of radio. At times, I would share my father's forays into the exciting world of shortwave broadcasting. Voices came to us from some infinitely far-off part of the world, sounding tantalizingly near for a fleeting moment or two, only to be swept away in the whistling and shrieking of what we vaguely referred to as the ether, notwithstanding our frantic searches on the twisting dial.

Suddenly memory brings back the sight of something that was almost

always on the wide kitchen window sill. There, close to the radio and Dad's pipe and tobacco pouch (filled with Murray's Mellow Mixture) and his chair, was the current copy of a magazine of that time, *The Wide World*. As that title suggests, it specialized in articles from exotic places combined with the adventures of explorers, mountain climbers, daredevil pilots, and the like.

I realize now that my father was expressing a longing to escape from the prison that his job had become. He lived with unrelenting stress, robbing him of his health and the energy to participate fully in the lives of his three boys. He loved his family deeply, which added to his sense of defeat and futility. I suspect that his great fear was that his sons would also become prisoners of a society that at that time held little opportunity for a new generation. I have always regretted that he did not live long enough to know that life became very fulfilling for all three of us. ■

*Herb O'Driscoll is a retired priest, conference leader and prolific author of books, hymns and radio scripts.*

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# Values for a new world

BY IAN ALEXANDER

## *The John Albert Hall Lectures reach new audiences online*

The story in last month's *Post* about a generous bequest to the Lay Training Funds, administered by the diocesan Educational Trusts Board (ETB), prompted several people to ask, "What are these funds and this board all about, anyway?" Clearly the ETB, if not exactly a well-kept secret, has been flying somewhat under the radar, so over the next several editions, we're going to do what we can to make it more widely known among Anglicans on these islands and inlets. This month and next, we'll focus on one particular aspect of the board's work: the John Albert Hall Lectures, a joint initiative of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria and the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia.

It's a timely subject, because the lectures are currently in the midst of a major six-part series entitled "Values for a New World." So much is changing in our world right now – from the pandemic through systemic racism and socio-economic inequality to environmental collapse – that many people are saying we need fundamentally new and different shared values and assumptions to face the future. If that's true, what might those values be, and how do we go about articulating them? What role, if any, can religion play in helping to inform this conversation?

Big questions! And thanks to one of those so-called "pandemic silver linings," while the lecture series couldn't function in the usual way, by bringing a scholar or two to Victoria to address these questions, we were able instead, due to digital technology and reallocation of funds, to recruit half a dozen world-class thinkers from our own community and around the world, to speak on various aspects of this vast topic.

We began in December, with Victoria-based, two-time Giller Prize-winning novelist Esi Edugyan, in conversation with poet, essayist and UVic professor Tim Lilburn, on the role of the writer in a time of great change. In January,

and religion at Lancaster University in England, whose thesis is that "values are the new religion" (Thursday, March 4 at 5:00 pm PST). On March 16 at 11:00 am PST, all the speakers will come together for what promises to be a wide-ranging and stimulating closing panel discussion.

All these events take place online as Zoom webinars, and include an opportunity for attendees to pose questions to the lecturers. Advance registration is free, and required. The sessions are also recorded and made available for later viewing. To watch past programs, or register for future ones, visit: [www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/events/john-albert-hall/index.php](http://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/csrs/events/john-albert-hall/index.php).



Noam Chomsky



Linda Woodhead



Thomas Homer-Dixon

Yale University theologian Miroslav Volf gave a thought-provoking and inspiring reflection on the challenges and rewards of being "at home in the world." Just as this online issue of the *Post* is appearing, we are preparing to welcome the distinguished MIT linguist, philosopher and political activist Noam Chomsky, speaking on a "Confluence of Challenges: The Fate of the Human Experiment" (Tuesday, February 2 at 11:00 am PST).

Future installments in the series will feature Thomas Homer-Dixon, founder and director of the Cascade Institute at Royal Roads University, talking about the importance of hope (Tuesday, February 23 at 5:00 pm PST) and Linda Woodhead, distinguished professor of politics, philosophy

and religion at Lancaster University in England, whose thesis is that "values are the new religion" (Thursday, March 4 at 5:00 pm PST). On March 16 at 11:00 am PST, all the speakers will come together for what promises to be a wide-ranging and stimulating closing panel discussion.

One happy result of the online format is that these enriching experiences are being seen and heard by many more people, from much farther afield, than could ever attend in person. (We've made provision for up to a thousand people to attend Noam Chomsky's presentation.) As the John Albert Hall "brand" reaches new audiences within and beyond the diocese during this unique time, we look forward to it going on from strength to strength.

Next month: more about the historical background to the series. ■

*Ian Alexander is a member of the Educational Trusts Board, and co-chair for the diocese of the John Albert Hall Lectures Committee.*

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## Finding the middle way



### My Journey

BY ADELA TORCHIA

### *My Journey is a regular feature profiling clergy in the diocese*

As the child of Italian immigrants in Winnipeg, I was raised Roman Catholic and did not really foresee the possibility of becoming a priest. But when I was 19 years old, after casually telling the priest at the Catholic parish I'd attended since early childhood that I liked his sermon, he thanked me, and asked when I was going to give preaching a try. So I did, and it was fun – scary, but fun. Over the next two or three decades I had a few more opportunities to preach, and usually got good feedback. I also loved liturgy and pastoral care, but the post-Vatican II church became more conservative, with no room for women in ordained ministry; and after the papal Dominus Iesus declaration in the year 2000, with its message of Catholicism being the only truly valid Christian church, I began to look for the opportunity to become Anglican – something I'd been thinking about for 30 years.

Prior to becoming Anglican, I finished a master's degree and a PhD in religion at the University of Manitoba

and did some post-secondary teaching, followed by work as a lay ministries program director at Newman Theological College in Edmonton from 1999 to 2004. Once I became Anglican and my discernment process for ordination began, I did a year of Anglican Studies at the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad in Saskatoon. I was ordained deacon in Edmonton in 2005, and priest in 2006.

What is the greatest challenge in the Anglican Church? That's a difficult and often subjective question. Having come to Anglicanism at about age 50, I see more of its benefits than its shortcomings – benefits such as taking the middle path between Catholicism and Protestantism; and gender-equal ordination; as well as the relative autonomy of national churches, their rediscovery of some Celtic roots, and their strong foundation in literature, music and the arts. My main essay in seminary was on "adiaphora," as promoted by Richard Hooker in the 16th century, which is a way of seeing various Christian practices and doctrines as "matters indifferent." The practice of communion, for example, could be used in some Anglican churches, but not others, without causing schisms, divisions, conflicts and burnings at the stake. It was a gentle but brilliant approach originally designed to mollify Anglicans coming from Catholic and Puritan roots. I loved how this approach made people more tolerant and cooperative than other Reformation approaches. I think this approach (by different names, or none) remains intrinsic to best Anglican practice today.

It's unusual to come from Italian ethnicity in the Anglican priesthood, although it comes in handy to blame for an occasional lack of subtlety and other personality quirks. I think many children of immigrants have a greater appreciation for their privileges as

Canadians, when compared with what was available in the "old country." Typical of immigrants, my parents were frugal and hard working – traits that I came to appreciate more as I got older, although I wasn't too thrilled with old-country teenager restrictions, especially for girls.

Since house prices and education were much cheaper in my early adult decades, I was privileged to further my studies while working part time and raising children. I often worry that today's young and middle-aged adults are too debt-laden and stressed, and I wish they could have the options that I did at that age. As a senior now, I enjoy living with my canine companion in a mobile home park in Langford, in Greater Victoria – surrounded by trees. I feel grateful for some family here, and others in Winnipeg, and for many friends, along with an expanding spiritual family. I love many features of interim ministry and feel privileged to be in it post-retirement.

My graduate studies focused mainly on Franciscan love of creation and liberation theology, and on ecology and world religions. I've also done community fellowships at UVic's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS), most recently on spirituality and addictions.

Upon reflection, I feel that my journey was one in which doors opened, and I "simply" walked through them. I may have wanted different doors to open at times, but in retrospect I can see that the Holy Spirit, in her wisdom, was always my GPS, whether I knew it or not. She loves to surprise us, and my life has been rich with such surprises. ■

*Adela Torchia is interim priest-in-charge at Two Saints Ministry, and an honorary assistant at Christ Church Cathedral.*

RENEWED **HEARTS** RENEWED **SPIRITS** RENEWED **PEOPLE**





## Terry Mikkonen retires

A longtime finance employee at the synod office has put down her spreadsheets and retired after more than 30 years in the job. Terry Mikkonen, who worked in the finance and payroll department, officially retired in December. Born in Saskatchewan and raised in Surrey, BC, she worked briefly for the federal tax department and the provincial government after studying finance at BCIT. She had switched to a job at the Okanagan retreat, Sorrento Centre,

when a chance meeting with Bishop Shepherd, then head of our diocese, led to a job in Victoria.

During her tenure, she has served four bishops and admired Bishop Logan's vision for reconciliation. As the office grew, she handled many of the administrative roles. "I like the flexibility of a small office and working for the church," she said. "They treat people with dignity." Terry will be guiding new staffer Gillian Astbury until the end of March. After that, she hopes to pursue her interests in music (she's been active in church choirs all her life) and travel, although both options may continue to be curtailed due to the pandemic. She is a member of the Church of the Advent in Colwood. ■



Terry Mikkonen

## Gabriola Island: getting through together

BY KAREN HOLLIS

On March 13, 2020, the council of Christ Church Gabriola (CCG) exchanged a flurry of emails in support of closing the church building prior to that Sunday's worship service. We responded to the voices of wisdom in our midst that said we are a small island with an aging population and a limited capacity to respond to a COVID outbreak; we knew we needed to lead the effort to protect our wider community by moving our services online and our pastoral care to an elaborate phone tree and socially distanced visits. It took a few weeks to sort out the basics of what online worship would look like, but it was well worth the time and energy.

Because we have a weekly attendance of around 40 people, Zoom was our best option. It's not the same as in-person worship, but we are able to see each other's faces and interact as a community on Sunday mornings. People invite friends and family from around the world and connections are made in ways we never imagined! It was a big help early on to have tech-savvy people help get the congregation onto Zoom; about two

months in, everyone who wanted to Zoom could.

Keeping congregants engaged in worship has been an intentional effort. I constantly keep this mantra in mind: the more that people personally invest in worship, the more they commit to being a part of it. From the beginning of online worship, we've had two readers every Sunday, an intercessor, a "voice of the people" who speaks "unmuted" the bolded words in the bulletin that everyone else is saying with the mute switch on. And we have someone helping to host the Zoom call.

Because we are not taking an offering each Sunday by passing the plate, I first make sure people know how to send a cheque into the church, then I talk about our human urge to be of service in the face of hardship in our midst, always ending with a blessing of the gifts we send to the church and the acts of service we are doing in Christ's name.

I soon grow tired of my own voice and start asking congregation members to share something during the offering. I ask them to share either about why they offer their time, talent, and resources to CCG,

how are they seeing the (CCG or Gabriola) community come together during this time, or what they have received during the pandemic and what it meant to them. The responses have been extraordinary. In all my years of ministry, I've never seen so much willingness to publicly share one's story. Our practice of offering time sharing has blossomed and blessed us richly!

As September turned to October, our worship numbers increased again, and we did another thing to help people invest in the worship service. Throughout the pandemic we have been recording hymns and other pieces of music for use in worship, and in preparation for Advent we recruited a few more musicians to help. We were able to set up a few socially-distanced recording sessions to capture the rich sounds of Advent and Christmas to lead the congregation in song. We were even able to video record families lighting the Advent wreath, which brought in even more participation and warm feelings from the congregation on Sunday mornings. We all long to be back in our beautiful little sanctuary, but for now we offer what we can and walk through this season together. ■

*Karen Hollis is the incumbent at Christ Church, Gabriola Island, a shared Anglican-United Church ministry.*



# Black pioneers in the church

*In honour of Black History Month, the Diocesan Post offers this excerpt from Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia, Third Edition, by Crawford Kilian, 2020, Harbour Publishing, www.harbourpublishing.com. Printed with permission from the publisher.*

In 1858, Bill 339 was introduced in the California legislature – “an Act to restrict and prevent the immigration to and residence in the State of negroes and mulattoes.” While the bill never became law, its intent caused Black citizens to consider emigration. After hearing about the virtues of Vancouver Island – and rumours of the gold rush – from the captain of the Commodore, a ship making a regular run between San Francisco and Victoria, a group known as the Pioneer Committee agreed to move.

As many of the Black pioneers were deeply religious, church was an important part of their lives. The Reverend Edward Cridge had invited the Pioneer Committee to attend his services, and many did so. Not all the White parishioners welcomed them, however. One, an American named Sharpstone, published a protest in the Gazette... Sharpstone urged that a section be set aside for the Black churchgoers, “as is done in respectable churches in the world.”

Cridge himself wrote to the Gazette, reproving his congregation for its intolerance. Some White parishioners thereupon left the church, while others resorted to awkward stratagems to put distance between themselves and the Black churchgoers...

The issue erupted in another church – the mission established by Rev. William F. Clarke. Early in 1859, the Congregational Unions of England and Canada had appointed Clarke to undertake the mission to Vancouver Island... In his last appointment in Wisconsin, Clarke had

been an outspoken opponent of slavery, and his reputation had preceded him to Victoria. Perhaps for this reason, he soon attracted a sizable number of Black attendees to his services. But his very first congregation also included some White participants who, the following day, asked him what he intended to do about the fact that Black people had sat intermingled with others. “Nothing,” Clarke retorted. Indignant, the White churchgoers told him they would have nothing more to do with his mission... Clarke brought the matter up before the whole congregation, telling them he would have nothing to do with a “negro corner.”

At this point Rev. Matthew Macfie arrived in Victoria. He had been expected to cooperate with Clarke; instead he broke almost at once with him over the segregation issue and began holding separate services. The Canadian Congregationalists, upon hearing of Macfie’s move, were scandalized...

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*As many of the Black pioneers were deeply religious, church was an important part of their lives. The Reverend Edward Cridge had invited the Pioneer Committee to attend his services, and many did so.*

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This was now more than a minor sectarian squabble. By now the young colony had a new Anglican bishop, the Right Reverend George Hills, who supported integrated congregations... Hills himself became increasingly involved in the issue. An American Episcopalian woman told him she opposed segregation, but most Americans in Victoria refused to attend Christ Church because it was integrated. She also shocked him with the news that the wife of the bishop of Oregon owned slaves. “Just the thought sickens me,” Hills wrote. He began to fear that the Black settlers would not be free “even on British soil.”

Meanwhile Clarke faced growing difficulties. His children were harassed for having a “[Black] preacher” for a father, and for having to sit with Black people in church... Bishop Hills tried and failed to recruit Clarke into the Church of England, and then faced increasing race problems. A Roman Catholic school had recently bowed to parental pressure for segregation of Black and Indigenous children from White children. The non-White parents had understandably pulled their children from the school. Hills saw this as another good reason to open an unsegregated Anglican school and told his congregation he would work to create such a school. This caused him to be ostracized by some residents.

With the benefit of historical hindsight, we can see that the passengers on the Commodore in April 1858 foreshadowed the experience of future immigrants. They would come in hope of economic success and political equality; they would encounter political corruption and incompetence, demagoguery and stereotyping. Their adversaries would claim that they couldn’t assimilate, when the newcomers demonstrated again and again that they could adopt the competitive, free enterprise democratic values of Canada and prosper under them. ■

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