

# ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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Patients observe physical distancing while waiting for medical appointments at a clinic in Burundi operated by Village Health Works, a partner with PWRDF in the All Mothers and Children Count program.

PHOTO: VILLAGE HEALTH WORKS

## Federal grant extends PWRDF maternal and child health program for pandemic

**Matt Gardner**  
STAFF WRITER

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) has received major support from the Government of Canada, allowing it to extend its maternal and child health program to protect against COVID-19.

PWRDF announced in June that it had received a nearly \$2-million grant from the federal government to extend the work of its partners in the All Mothers and Children Count (AMCC) program by implementing health and safety measures for the pandemic. The

budget totals an estimated \$2.3 million, and PWRDF has committed to fundraise \$313,000, or 15% of that amount. A designated box on the organization's online giving page is accepting donations to the AMCC COVID-19 Extension that will be matched six-to-one by the federal government, PWRDF says.

AMCC seeks to lower mortality rates for both mothers and children under five years old. It operates with partners in four African countries: Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. Some are facility-based, operating hospitals and clinics in rural settings.

See HOSPITALS, p. 11

## Children's, youth ministry shifts online



▲ The Anglican Foundation of Canada shared online *Dear God: Prayers for Young Children* in book form and as a set of videos.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

**Joelle Kidd**  
STAFF WRITER

Since mid-March, churches have been grappling with how to connect when in-person meetings are no longer possible. This year, as spring turned to summer, children's and youth ministry programs that would typically provide camps, gatherings and other activities faced the same predicament: how to adapt an in-person ministry to an online format?

Several Anglican organizations have released youth-centred resources online during the pandemic. The World Council of Churches (of which the Anglican Church of Canada is a member) put out a toolkit for congregations wanting to engage with youth mental health. The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) released a day camp program developed using stories from PWRDF partners around the world. The Anglican Foundation of Canada shared online *Dear God: Prayers for Young Children* in book form and as a set of videos.

For local ministries, summer 2020 was a time for getting creative.

Yvonne Kern, who serves as children's pastor at St. James Anglican Church in Calgary, is in her 12th year of running children's ministry, and her 12th vacation Bible school (VBS). This year, it looked a little different: from Aug. 10-14, Kern ran a "virtual VBS."

"We're using material [from a] company that I've been using for years," says Kern. The program, called "Rocky Railway," fit nicely with the context of the church, situated an hour's drive from the Rocky Mountains. "The theme this year is 'Jesus's power pulls us through,' which of course is so

See VBS, p. 8

## 'We continue to love God and love each other'

### New clergy on being ordained during the pandemic

**Tali Folkins**  
STAFF WRITER

Entering the priesthood was said to be fraught with uncertainty by some recently ordained Anglicans even before the COVID-19 pandemic ("God just places the call on your heart": Theology students aspire to an uncertain

future," April 2019). Since mid-March, however, Anglicans seeking ordination have faced a new set of challenges: moving worship online while struggling with delivering pastoral care and other forms of ministry traditionally done in person, all amidst economic turbulence—not to mention difficulties of performing the ordination ceremony without violating distancing and hygiene protocols.

This summer, as Canadians braced for a continuation of the

pandemic, the *Journal* spoke with three recently ordained Canadians about their ordination services, and how they see the prospects for themselves and the church in this uncertain time.

### 'The pandemic has shaped our minds about what it means to live in community'

On July 25, the Rev. Tyson Røsborg, who first came to Anglicanism as a member of

Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, B.C., entered into his new life as a priest in the diocese of Montreal. But the day didn't start out feeling holy.

For one thing, St. James the Apostle Anglican Church, in Stanbridge East, Que., doesn't have an internet connection. For about two hours before the ordination service, he and other participants busied themselves with technical feats: running 200 feet of internet cable up the church driveway and into the

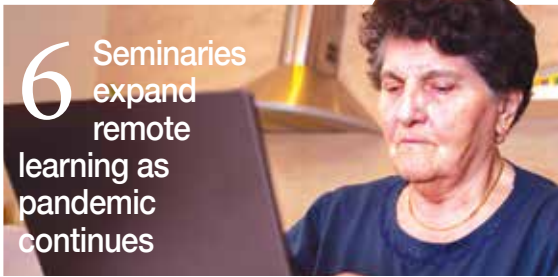
church, doing traffic control, climbing on ladders, adjusting cameras and taking care of all the other details needed to livestream a service. It was only a few minutes before the service was about to start, Røsborg says, that all the glitches were finally resolved.

"It felt more like being on a movie scene or TV set than it did anything kind of prayerful, to be honest," he says.

And yet the service itself

See PANDEMIC, p. 9

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RESOURCES ▶

# Church launches new online bookstore

## New e-store expected to mean better service for Canadian Anglicans

Tali Folkins  
STAFF WRITER

The Anglican Church of Canada has a new online bookstore—and ordering books and other resources should be faster and easier as a result, the church staffer tasked with managing the switch to the new e-store says.

On Aug. 4, the church switched from its previous distributor, Paris, Ont.-based Parasource, to a new partner, Gilmore Global, based in Kanata, Ont.

The church's arrangement with Gilmore will see it more involved in customer service than it was with Parasource—which should mean a more seamless ordering experience, says Alicia Brown, the Anglican Church of Canada's lead for social media and projects.

"Our new vendor puts us in a position to work ... much more closely with their customer service team to make sure that everyone's happy," she says. "General Synod will have the opportunity to directly reach out to Anglicans who have purchased resources on a regular basis to just check in and see that everything's going OK,



▲ **"Our new vendor puts us in a position to work ... much more closely with their customer service team to make sure that everyone's happy," says Alicia Brown, the church's lead for social media and projects.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

whereas we didn't have access to do that before. "We're just trying to be a little bit closer in resourcing Anglicans effectively, having that direct communication with them," she says. "I think that was sort of a disconnect for us in the past."

The church's switch to Gilmore should also mean that people receive their orders faster, Brown says, because the company will print materials in addition to distributing them.

"Turnaround times are a little bit quicker for getting something from inventory if they just have to push it across their warehouse, from the printing side to the distributor side" rather than having

these materials first shipped to them from a third-party printer, she says. Having a printer and distributor in one, Brown adds, will also allow more flexibility in the size of print jobs—something like a print-on-demand model—and therefore less waste.

"When we have a new resource ... we just give it to this printer, and if they have an order for 10 or if they have an order for 100, they'll just print what they need," she says.

Anglicans may also appreciate the fact that with Gilmore handling its e-store, the Anglican Church of Canada now has a website dedicated to Anglican resources, so that they don't have to search the site of an online retailer offering a wide range of products intended for many different Christian denominations.

"We now have a website that is dedicated only to our resources, and we can put front and centre the materials that Anglicans are looking for," she says. "I'm really excited about that."

The church began looking into switching distributors in 2018 in response to feedback from Canadian Anglicans, Brown says.

The Anglican Book Centre, the former brick-and-mortar book retailer to the church, closed its doors a few years ago after more than a century in operation. ■



## This Christmas, give the gift of Climate Action

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### NEWS IN BRIEF ▶



#### ▲ Archdeacon Alan Perry

PHOTO: MARGARET GLIDDEN/DIOCESE OF EDMONTON

## CoGS appoints new general secretary of General Synod

Joelle Kidd  
STAFF WRITER

The Anglican Church of Canada has a new chief operating officer. On Sept. 1, Archdeacon Alan Perry began as general secretary of General Synod, tasked with managing the day-to-day operations of Church House and overseeing the work of General Synod and its committees.

Perry succeeds Archdeacon Michael Thompson, who had served as general secretary since 2011. Thompson was originally set to retire June 30, but stayed on until Aug. 31 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council of General Synod (CoGS) confirmed Perry's appointment during its virtual meeting July 25.

Reached by phone, Perry told the *Journal* he was feeling

"excited, terrified and really, really happy" to have been appointed. He described himself as "a bit of a policy nerd and a canonical geek," having attended every General Synod since 1998, and was looking forward to being involved in the church at the national level.

Perry was serving previously as executive archdeacon in the diocese of Edmonton. He has been a member of General Synod's Resolutions Committee, the Governance Working Group and the Handbook Committee. He has also served variously as a member, clerical secretary and prolocutor of the provincial synod of the ecclesiastical province of Canada. He was a member of CoGS from 2001 to 2004 and has been a member of the General Synod Pension Committee since 2007. ■

## Lambeth Conference postponed to 2022

Matt Gardner  
STAFF WRITER

The next Lambeth Conference has officially been rescheduled to summer 2022—the same season as the 43rd General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada—as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference, originally set to take place in July 2020, had already been postponed in March to 2021.

Bishop William Cliff, secretary of the House of Bishops, said the postponement is part of a larger pattern of meeting arrangements upturned by the pandemic.

"It's just one of many things that's been thrown into chaos," Cliff said.

While Anglican bishops worldwide remain in contact with one another using various means of communication, Cliff said social media and Zoom are no substitute for the fellowship, conversation and joint prayer at gatherings such as Lambeth. ■



## ANTI-RACISM ►

# CoGS forms new anti-racism group

Joelle Kidd  
STAFF WRITER

In a virtual meeting held July 25, the Council of General Synod (CoGS) voted to approve the creation of a task force charged with dismantling racism within the Anglican Church of Canada.

The vote took place in a session led by Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, who shared that she had asked a small group of staff in the church's national office—including Reconciliation Animator Melanie Delva, Lead Animator for Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice Ryan Weston and Indigenous Ministries Coordinator Canon Ginny Doctor—to address racism, an issue that Nicholls has said she wants to focus on as primate.

“We began to realize ... in light of the significance of this topic and the depth we were seeing of what needs to be looked at, that a staff group was not the most appropriate way to go about this—that what we needed was a body that was empowered by the Council of General Synod to help us as a whole church,” Nicholls said. “So we thought that maybe the way forward was to think about reinvigorating the Anti-Racism Working Group from the past, giving it a new name as the Dismantling Racism Task Force.”

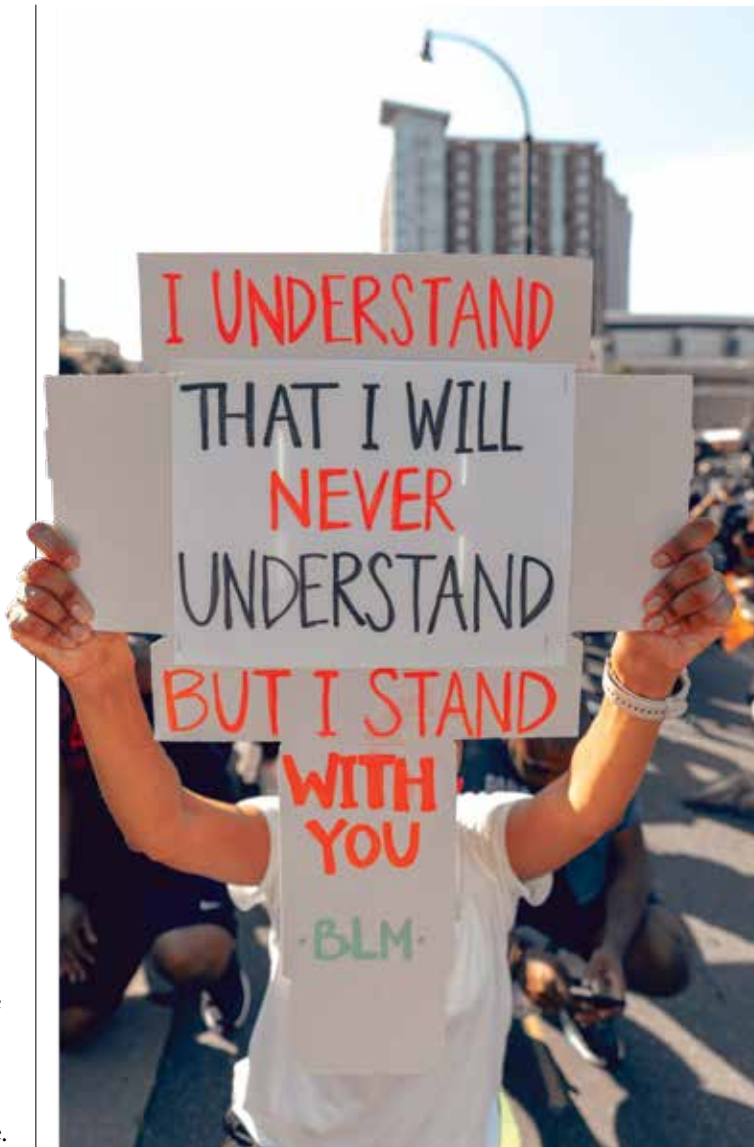
The Anti-Racism Working Group was active between 2001 and 2007, according to the Anglican Church of Canada website. That group's work culminated in the church's Charter for Racial Justice, which was adopted in 2007.

Delva told CoGS that the staff group had looked into the work that group had done when crafting the motion.

The motion called for CoGS to establish a dismantling racism task force that would:

- “Review policies and processes to identify systemic barriers to full participation for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) in the structures and governance of General Synod and make recommendations for redress”;
- Update and promote the Anglican Church of Canada's Charter for Racial Justice;
- “Recommend a process of anti-racism education and training for the Council of General Synod as well as Coordinating Committees, Councils, Commissions and employees of General Synod”;
- Develop “a plan to engage the whole church in the work of dismantling racism, including identifying and/or developing resources and training to be offered to Provinces and dioceses”; and
- Report the results of its work, at the latest, to the meeting of General Synod in 2022, “including recommendations for ongoing work to dismantle racism within the Church.”

The motion also indicated the breakdown of the membership of this task force, which will include six to eight members and “should reflect the communities of the Church most impacted by racism, and so should be composed primarily of BIPOC members and members with experience in anti-racism ministry and leadership, including young people.” The motion specified that the task force should include members recommended by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), Black Anglicans of Canada (BIAC), members of “other racialized communities (e.g. Asian,



▲ The wave of Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, Nicholls said, has “broken open a crack—well, many cracks—in our institutions and in our lives generally,” raising questions “about the institution, the effects and power of racism.”

PHOTO: CLAY BANKS/UNSPASH

South Asian, Latinx, and others),” one member of CoGS and “relevant staff for input and support.”

Members are to be appointed by CoGS following a call for nominations to the identified groups and the wider church.

During a period of discussion before voting on the motion, CoGS member Michael Siebert (province of Rupert's Land) raised concerns about the “theoretical approach” that would be used in the dismantling racism work. “As many people know, there are several theoretical approaches that one can take in order to oppose racism.... One of them that I've been learning about and studying... [that] I have some reservations about is called critical race theory,” Siebert expressed worry that such an approach would be informing the work of the task force.

Critical race theory views racism as inherent to society. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, proponents hold that racism is ingrained in the law and legal institutions, and that race itself is a social construction.

In response, Delva stated that the task force did not have a specific theory or method in mind “except for the fact that we are doing this out of our baptismal covenant of seeking justice for all and seeing the face of Christ in everyone.”

Delva added, “Certainly we have witnessed—myself, I have witnessed—certainly online, especially, unhelpful ways of having conversations about race and identity, so I hear you that there are helpful and unhelpful ways to go about this work.”

National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Mark MacDonald also addressed the concern, saying, “I've been at this a very long time, and I would have to say that the only theoretical approach that I've found that I don't have reservations about is in the Bible.

“But having said that, I think an ideological rejection of a particular point of view would be as damaging as adopting that as the only framework. I am aware of the objections to what you call critical race theory, and the objections that I've heard I would share. But I have found it, like a whole number of other theoretical approaches, to be very helpful—and I have found, like most things in the church, our approach is pluralistic and pragmatic.... I find an ideological rejection of it as problematic as an ideological acceptance of it. So I hope it will be part of the conversation. I certainly would object to it being the only part of the conversation.”

In response to another question, Nicholls clarified that the work of the task force would not preclude CoGS from doing any anti-racism training or education before the group made its recommendations to General Synod.

The subject of membership in the task force was also raised. Ann Cumyn (province of Canada) suggested that there should be at least one member who is not part of a racialized or targeted group.

In response, Nicholls stated, “I think it was understood that if there was a member of the Council of General Synod, given the composition of the Council of General Synod, it was highly likely to be somebody white ... the majority of the council is white, and I think a key part of dealing with dismantling racism is conversations with the white community.”

While the council deemed it unnecessary to amend the motion to mandate the task force include a white member, it was noted in the meeting's minutes.

Nicholls said that racism has been a focus of public conversation in recent weeks, after the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers ignited Black Lives Matter protests across the United States and around the world. The wave of protests, she said, has “broken open a crack—well, many cracks—in our institutions and in our lives generally,” raising questions “about the institution, the effects and power of racism.”

She also noted the work of Black Anglicans of Canada, an organization formed in 2018, which has been hosting weekly webinars on the topic of anti-Black racism in the Canadian context.

“I do think that part of this is learning how we as a Christian community bring a theological critique to what's happening in the world, and that that includes critiquing things that are happening around us as well as affirming that which is consistent with Christian values and principles and understanding,” Nicholls told CoGS. In the area of dismantling racism, “the learning curve is pretty steep for all of us,” she added.

“I think it's going to be particularly critical to listen to the voices that we have not always heard from.” She noted that the House of Bishops had recently, in a Zoom videoconferencing session, asked two bishops of colour to speak about their experiences of racism in the church. “It was, frankly, an extremely painful conversation for their colleagues to listen to.... Until we start to hear those voices and work at that together, I think that's going to be part of the learning as well. And that takes some time, for us to sit with being uncomfortable.” ■

“I think it's going to be particularly critical to listen to the voices that we have not always heard from.”

—Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada





## But a sore throat doesn't always mean what you think it does

By Martha Tatarnic

*Our bodies are transitory vessels built from recycled carbon like every other living being on this planet. Bits and parts of you have probably been a cricket or a dinosaur or a single blade of grass on the prairies.*

—Eden Robinson, Son of a Trickster

**M**Y BODY HAS been shooting me a lot of false signals during this pandemic. I have had a sore throat for roughly 60% of the last five months, which means that I have spent at least that amount of time fretting that I might have COVID. Pre-lockdown I would have actively discounted mild bodily discomfort, worked through sniffles and chalked up headaches and tiredness to seasonal allergies and too much stress, but we are suddenly living in a world that encourages mild hypochondria in all of us. It used to be the case that I could rarely turn on the radio or open the pages of a magazine without the discussion turning to the newest diet and weight loss advice, but now not a day goes by that I'm not exposed to analyses of the whole host of symptoms that might play out in a person's body when this dreaded virus has infiltrated it. It's not that my sore throat is imagined; rather, I see it as a manifestation of the crazy-making times we are living in, where an obsessive focus on our body's aches and pains is suddenly part of how we show our care for one another. It's our job right now to worry that we might have the coronavirus.

That mind-body connection can result in some skewed information at the best of times. I can think I'm hungry, when really I'm bored. I can feel exhausted, when actually I'm sad. I have run 28 km on an injured hip and had no idea because the endorphins have been pumping so hard that I didn't feel the pain. But this mind-body connection also relays knowledge that is spot-on. I know exactly the part of my stomach that suddenly feels like it has a ball of lead sitting in it when I am confronted with a word that God is asking me to hear when I would rather not. Shocking occurrences ripple through my body like a web of electricity. My breath catches in my throat in one particular spot when I am in the presence of the holy.

In an oft-quoted passage from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, the saint asks this fledgling Christian community whether or not they remember that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). Paul asks this question of his fellow Christians within a conversation that warns against adultery, fornication, drunkenness and a number of other popular sins (popular in the sense of both how much people like to commit them and how much people like to condemn them). This is why this verse usually gets quoted as a threat. Don't swear, get tattoos, have the wrong kind of sex or eat too much sugar, because doing so dishonours God. What is missed in this easy read are the radical promises of the gospel. We are promised that in our body we can



▲ **"We'll smile at one another with our eyes because our mouths are covered. In doing so, we'll live in our bodies a truth that our rampant individualism would often rather ignore: there is no physical or spiritual way of living merely for ourselves."**

PHOTO: AGUSTIN  
PAGLIORITI/  
SHUTTERSTOCK

share in Jesus's resurrection and be raised as he is. We are promised that in our body we are woven into the life of community, that our body is part of Christ's Body. We are promised that God honours, blesses, draws near and is revealed, incarnate, in our biological, flesh-and-blood reality.

This isn't just a promise; it's also an invitation to knowledge. The body knows. Our living, breathing bodies, temples of the Holy Spirit, have information to impart, information that we ignore at our own peril. And that information also needs to be filtered through the communal reality of how one body exists within our collective body, how the living God who comes close to me must be discerned and loved within the context of community.

This communal, relational body has been shouting knowledge at us for a very long time now. It's not just the rising sea levels, the extreme weather patterns, the escalating temperatures and the wave of mass extinction through which we have currently been living that has been shouting. It's also that our rising rates of depression and mental illness, our collective obesity and our need for an increasing variety of substances to numb and loosen us also have important messages to convey. In response to these various iterations of crisis, we have tended to double down on the questions of individual need and personal salvation—*What do I need? Desire? What fulfills me? What inadequacies are holding me back? What can fill me and my void?*—and what we have failed to hear in all of our relentless focus on weight, diet, exercise, mental well-being and physical wellness is this similarly relentless calling back to the truth of who we really are. I am not an individual. I am a relationship. Biologically, not to mention spiritually, I am intricately and intimately connected to the carbon, oxygen, water and energy being recycled among all living beings. I, and several billion other "I"s, are all trying to live on this planet as if these bodies are just about us. But that core spiritual knowledge was offered to us so long ago, and we have continually failed to hear it: that body, that temple, isn't just about you; this body is part of A Body; and in that Body, God is at work.

In these horrifying, terrifying days of COVID-19 is a calling back to what the body knows. Physical distance, lockdown and quarantine are part of our current daily realities now because of the truth that we are so freaking connected. Lockdown doesn't change the truth that all of that carbon, oxygen, water and energy is still being exchanged between my body and the whole pattern of water, air, earth and fellow living beings across the planet; two metres between you and me, a mask and frequent hand washing has a chance of

allowing that exchange to happen without also exchanging this unseen and all-too-deadly virus. When we're in our churches this fall, we'll rely on our shared space-and-time-bending prayer and ritual to connect us, even as our bodies will resolutely not touch. We'll receive blessed bread through contactless delivery, and we'll smile at one another with our eyes because our mouths are covered. In doing so, there will live in our bodies a truth that our rampant individualism would often rather ignore: there is no physical or spiritual way of living merely for ourselves. Each of our choices affects our whole planet's well-being.

My constant sore throat hasn't (yet) been my body's way of telling me I have COVID. What it might be telling me is that there is something I need to know, something we need to know. Maybe my body, and maybe our Body, isn't going to let us ignore the truth any longer. Like it or not, this—all of this—is my concern too. There is no "opt-out" option in COVID, and there really never has been an opt-out option in the other spheres of our collective life either, much as we have liked to pretend otherwise. Just as we all have a job to do in how we navigate this pandemic, so too we all share in a responsibility to consider carefully how we treat the vulnerable among us, because how we treat the vulnerable affects us all. And by the way, there is no separate reality called "the environment" of whose care we choose (or not) as some left-leaning political agenda item. The environment is us and in us, and no one gets to be physically well without attending to the physical wellness of the whole planet.

More hopefully, maybe my sore throat is serving me up a reminder that there is power, and that power is found only and always in how we care for one another. *I* can cover my mouth, wash my hands, keep my distance and stay home. *We* can distribute wealth more justly, reduce our carbon footprint, guarantee a living wage, house the homeless, affirm labour that we have too often overlooked, and upend entrenched routines and systems of our collective life when it becomes clear that we have an emergency on our hands.

The body knows, but the body knows within the context of how my living, breathing cells connect me to the whole world around me. My anxious mind is manifesting this physical symptom in my throat, and maybe what this persistent, niggling, bodily pain is really trying to tell me is that this isn't just about me. Thank God it's never just about me. ■

**Canon Martha Tatarnic** serves as the rector of St. George's Anglican Church in St. Catharines, Ontario. Her book, *The Living Diet*, is available on Amazon.



# SINGING WITH JOY ▶



By Linda Nicholls

**H**UMAN BEINGS find infinite ways to establish groups within which to feel safe. Anyone who is different from these groups is kept out, called names, bullied, ignored, attacked or even killed. Early in our lives we experience being on the “outside” because we are too slow; unathletic; too tall, too thin, too fat, too short; too smart; have a different accent; wear glasses; have a disability—the list is endless! As we grow into adulthood, we find the world has other ways to exclude based on race, ability or disability, gender, sexual orientation and cultural or linguistic difference. We adjust to some of those exclusions—and rise to challenge others.

One of the most comforting aspects of reading the life of Jesus in the Scriptures is his frequent breaking of such boundaries of exclusion. Jesus does not accept the social norms and speaks to Samaritans, women, Gentiles, tax collectors and sinners. He heals the sick and reaches out to the most vulnerable. He challenges attempts to establish status among the disciples (James and John) and reminds them that the first shall be last and the last first. In shaking up expectations and norms, Jesus invites his disciples—and us—to think about building community based on mutual love and respect and the overriding concept of servanthood.

In 1963 an Anglican congress of lay people, clergy and bishops gathered in Toronto. It is remembered in Anglican history for expressing a definition of the Anglican Communion based on “mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ.” That was the era when



▲ “Christ and the Samaritan Woman” (1890), by Henryk Siemiradzki

IMAGE: LVIV NATIONAL ART GALLERY/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

many former colonies were ending their dependence on the U.K. New relationships were emerging, and the foundations for our relationships as churches within the communion were articulated. We are to mutually receive and give, in relationships of learning, sharing and respect. It is a commitment we are still trying to live into fully as a church.

In the midst of COVID-19, we have seen the cracks in our care for one another, where our mutual responsibility and interdependence as communities have broken down. We discovered that long-term care facilities have not been adequately monitored and that our seniors are vulnerable. Migrant workers, who are essential to the production of our food, live in conditions that are problematic for their safety and well-being. We began to see that those most essential to our needs are valued the least in our economy: grocery store workers; cleaners; and personal

support workers, to name a few. The often invisible lines of systemic racism revealed themselves as the well-being of many white people was bought with risks required by racialized people who clean and serve and care.

The same is true in the church. We recognized that we have always had shut-ins and those unable to gather with us for worship. Now we have developed ways to connect with them online. Will we continue to stay connected? We have recognized again that racism lives in our society and institutions. Will we look inside the church and be willing to make changes so that our leadership and structures embody the diversity of our whole church?

As our world opens up again, will we simply try to go back to the way things were before the pandemic? Or will we pay attention to what we have seen and commit to new ways of mutual care and responsibility within the church and in the world around us? Will we ensure that the cracks, gaps, exclusions and discrimination are not just papered over with good intentions but are addressed with action?

This will be the critical test of our faithfulness to God’s vision and call. The discomfort of making changes will tempt us to paper over the cracks, or ignore them and seek comfort again in the familiar. Making changes will ask us to remain uncomfortable as we seek different solutions for equity and mutual responsibility. Are we willing to be uncomfortable long enough to be transformed? I pray our answer resounds, “Yes—with God’s help!” ■

**Archbishop Linda Nicholls** is the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

# WALKING TOGETHER ▶



## Looking around

By Mark MacDonald

*I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting.*  
—John 4:35

**J**ESUS SAID these words in the context of his encounter with a Samaritan woman. To his followers this was shocking. She was incompatible with their understanding of the fellowship of the Messiah; she was not fit: not by religion, not by ancestry and not by morality. But he, prophetically looking through the lens of this improbable relationship, saw a multitude of people made whole, reconciled, and, as a family, living the life of the World to Come.

These words and this approach have echoes in the other gospels. The approach clearly frames the early church’s vision of its future work. It isn’t based on the



▲ “Let us shape our fellowship and the various structures of our communal life for a people who are called to be the dawning of God’s new World.”

PHOTO: CREATIVE TRAVEL PROJECTS

capacity of available resources or the possibility of desirable recruits. It appears to be based on nothing more than a confidence in the prophetic word. The prophets indicated that God would raise up a people who embodied a redeemed diversity, a communal redemption that would confound human expectation and prefigure the World to Come.

All the work of the early church was directed towards this redeemed fellowship. Its movement toward that goal was not shaped by the church’s in-hand resources or the members that were presently a part of their fellowship. They built their communal structure for a future that went beyond who they were in their present circumstances. Their church was designed for who they were to become, a people gathered by God toward a world that was to come. The work of the early church was enchanted by a vision of the future that God was calling them to. From the teaching of Jesus the members of the early church derived the primary elements of that future: rather

than being built on assumptions of human strength, they would grow by compassion for those in pain, need and strife. Their great harvest would be the poor and the outcast. They would embody the reconciling forgiveness of the World to Come in the makeup of their common life. They would build their life on the morality and vision of God’s future.

The goal of our work in this age is not to be designed by our perceptions of the present reality of who we are. We are to look around and see a human need that God is calling to hope. Our church structures and life are not to be based on the past or present but on a future that God is calling us to. Let us shape our fellowship and the various structures of our communal life for a people who are called to be the dawning of God’s new World. ■

**Archbishop Mark MacDonald** is national Indigenous archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

## ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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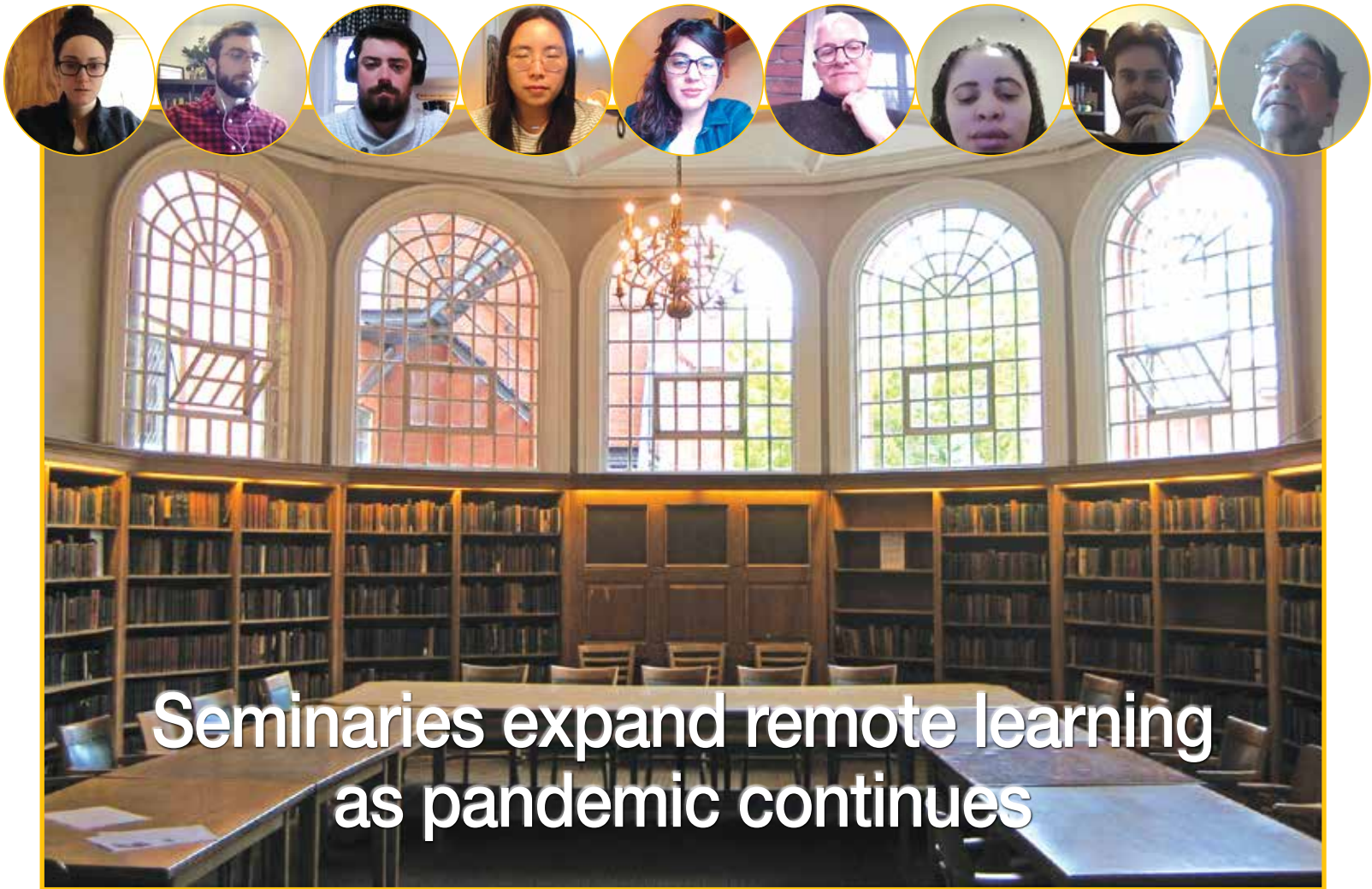
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“Students have really been very gracious and very positive in the midst of a difficult situation.”

—The Rev. Peter Robinson, academic dean of Wycliffe College

**Matt Gardner**  
STAFF WRITER

Theological colleges across Canada have adapted their teaching models to the COVID-19 pandemic, as online and remote learning become the new norm.

In seminaries that previously offered online programs, faculty and students were able to quickly make the shift to internet-based learning. An April survey by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS)—which, according to its website, has 270 member institutions in the U.S. and Canada—found that among 237 schools that responded, those offering online degrees beforehand were better able to make the shift to remote learning.

Among schools that did not offer online degrees, 68% said they had to develop training for under-prepared faculty to teach online. By comparison, only 44% of schools that already offered online degrees had to develop such training.

To examine the impact of COVID-19 on seminary education, the *Anglican Journal* spoke to representatives of three theological schools: Wycliffe College, the Atlantic School of Theology (AST) and the Vancouver School of Theology (VST).

Each of these institutions had previously offered online programs and reported being able to make the transition to remote learning quickly and successfully for summer courses. All courses this fall at each of the schools will also be online.

Interim dean Daniel Driver said AST has been offering online classes for 20 years. It also had a summer distance program as part of its M.Div curriculum, in which students learned remotely throughout the year and then came to campus for six weeks during the summer.

In the wake of COVID-19, the summer distance program had to be done entirely remotely.

“In a lot of ways, we’ve been fortunate, in that there’s capacity among the faculty already to teach online,” Driver said. “I have heard from colleagues in Toronto and elsewhere who kind of wouldn’t teach online—‘I won’t teach online; over my dead body’ sort of thing. We don’t have that with our faculty here.”

▲ Seminary classes and events, like this Zoom gathering of Wycliffe College faculty and students, have moved online this year to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

▶ COVID-19 has proved especially lethal for elderly people. Daniel Driver, interim dean of the Atlantic School of Theology, says seminarians in some at-risk demographics might not feel safe studying in person this year.

PHOTO: BOREVINA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Nova Scotia has been less affected than other parts of Canada by the pandemic. As of August 18, there were only four active cases in the province, following a three-week stretch of zero new cases.

However, the decision to hold all fall courses at AST online was made before that lull in new infections.

“I still think it makes sense for us because of the age of our student body,” Driver said, citing the school’s diploma program with the local Roman Catholic diocese as an example.

“There can be some younger people in that program, but often it’s retirees or active lay people who have other jobs or careers. I think a number of people would not feel comfortable participating, necessarily, if they’re [in] a higher-risk demographic if it was an on-ground class.

“I do think that the experience isn’t exactly the same,” he added. “So we’ll see. This’ll be a year that we look back on, I think, for a long time.”

Wycliffe College switched to remote classes in the third week of March, a process that academic dean the Rev. Peter Robinson said went “incredibly smoothly.”

While Wycliffe had offered online and remote learning for years, Robinson largely credited faculty, staff and students for the speed of the shift.

“I personally think that students have really been very gracious and very positive in the midst of a difficult situation,” Robinson said. “They’ve not been complaining or bemoaning the switch, but they’ve actually been very positive and very supportive in the recognition that everybody is really going the extra mile to make this work as best as possible.”

At VST, which has long offered “hybrid” classrooms combining in-person and online education, the switch to entirely remote learning was also largely successful. In some areas, attendance has actually increased from before the pandemic.

Ordinary enrollment in VST’s summer school, for example, is about 140 course registrations. This summer, by comparison, saw 200 registrations, which principal the Rev. Richard Topping called a “significant increase,” bolstered in part by improved ease and availability for international students.

“We had Indonesian students at our summer school because of the possibilities of online education; from across Canada and the United States and Hawaii too,” Topping said.

However, the shift to entirely remote learning has also forced the school to curtail some programs. The Teaching House That Moves, a joint program



► Daniel Driver, a professor and interim dean of the Atlantic School of Theology, recorded videos with his 12-year-old daughter Liviya for his summer Hebrew class. “I think a lot of the students connected,” Driver said. “It highlighted the unusual circumstances that we were under.”

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

“Hybrid [learning] really is the way to go. I think that in the future, that will continue to accelerate.

—The Rev. Ray Aldred, interim academic dean and Indigenous studies director at the Vancouver School of Theology



between VST and Henry Budd College for Ministry which brings theological education directly into Indigenous communities, has been postponed due to many of these communities being under lockdown.

Even those programs that have gone ahead face the challenge of how to compensate for the loss of in-person experiences. Since 1984, VST has hosted an Indigenous summer school, which this summer was held entirely online.

“The feedback from students was, they liked that they could still pick a course even though they couldn’t travel here,” interim academic dean and Indigenous studies director the Rev. Ray Aldred said. “But people missed the fact that the highlights were always the social gatherings. We had a salmon barbecue. We’d get together for ... Folklorama, when we’d share music and speeches and talents, and we couldn’t do that.”

The heavy use of technology such as Zoom for remote learning comes with its own problems.

“People have a hard time staying connected staring at a screen for that long of a period of time,” Aldred said. “One of the ways that I adapted was I give people a break every 45, 50 minutes, because you just can’t focus for that long.”

For many seminary teachers, the experience of leading classes during a pandemic has prompted re-evaluations of their teaching methods, with many trying out new strategies and approaches.

Driver, for example, was spurred to try something new with his summer intensive Hebrew course. With the closure of elementary schools in March, he started planning how his family would handle homeschooling for their three children. At this time, Driver was looking to demo a new textbook he thought might work for an online environment now that AST had switched to remote learning.

He started working through the textbook with his two older daughters, which became a 30-minute routine each day. After three months, Driver’s 12-year-old daughter Liviya had learned enough Hebrew that she could serve as a teaching assistant and provide extra support for his online class. The pair recorded a series of videos together on the contents of the textbook for the summer class.

“That was fun,” Driver recalled. “For me that was an unexpected turn that had some hidden benefits. I think a lot of the students connected.... It highlighted the unusual circumstances that we were under, right?”

“Everybody was home. Anybody living with family had their family in their classroom with them. That was true for me

► Top: The Rev. Ray Aldred, interim academic dean and Indigenous studies director at the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) Bottom: VST principal the Rev. Richard Topping

PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED



as well, and so I tried to make a virtue out of that. I think students appreciated that.... A mother in the class had her own two boys at home, and they saw their mom go to class every day and

had to give her space to do that.

“In the end, I think my teaching will be different as a result of this experience, and I think that’s true across the academy,” he added. “People who are conscientious teachers will look at this as an opportunity to learn things about how they teach, and students will hopefully be served by that.”

Asked whether COVID-19 had merely accelerated a trend already underway in seminary education towards more online and remote learning, representatives of all three schools suggested that it had. But they also maintained that internet-based learning could not replace the in-person student experience.

“Most people who go get a PhD don’t do it because they had a really great experience in online education,” Driver said. “It’s because they had an experience in a classroom somewhere, in a traditional format. That’s true with most people that I know.”

Aldred noted a recent ATS study suggesting that among African-American and Latino students, “online learning is not a favourite”—a response he surmised might be shared among many Indigenous students as well.

“It’s better than not having any education,” Aldred said. “But we’re social beings.... Hybrid [learning] really is the way to go. I think that in the future, that will continue to accelerate. But I don’t think it’s a replacement.”

Topping expressed similar concerns.

“The two things that are sort of warnings to me about strictly online education are how [students who use remote learning] technologies keep saying that, ‘Well, it’s like being in person,’ which says there’s a kind of standard at work,” Topping said. “Being in person would be better. The other thing during COVID-19 [is] the mental health issues that arise

out of a lack of human contact. That says something about how we’re constituted.”

He added, “Every school has some people who weather storms less easily, who are less resilient ... and our attention was drawn to how we help them. In community you have a certain kind of resilience when you’re in each other’s company.... When they’re a little bit more isolated and only virtual, it’s harder to get a read and to be helpful.”

The trend towards online education, Robinson said, “is something that everyone has noted and seminaries have been really trying to adapt to.” An example is the proliferation of fully online M.Div programs, which he said “until recently, no one was at all in favour of.”

Yet Robinson suggested that in-person learning remains vital to the seminary experience, particularly for the M.Div program.

“We’re not talking about just the transfer of information,” he said. “We’re actually talking about people’s formation as Christian leaders. The idea that that could happen in an environment where you actually never came in contact with people is something [about which] people were saying, ‘Wait a minute, this can’t happen.’”

For that reason, Wycliffe has continued to maintain the basic principle that any M.Div student, even if they do many of their courses online, must also have one year of in-person education.

A potential solution that Wycliffe has been developing is the creation of “distance learning hubs,” in which the college works with local churches across Canada to engage in Christian formation through on-the-ground relationships.

“One of the results of COVID, I think, is many people are more aware than they previously were of how vital being able to get together with other people is,” Robinson said. “When you don’t have a choice about actually meeting in person, then online or remote learning suddenly doesn’t become as ... exciting an option.”

“Part of that is the conversations that happen in hallways, the time when people sit down and have lunch together, the informal coffee breaks that we have in the middle of a class. That’s all part of learning, and sometimes you have pretty amazing conversations that happen in those contexts that all are part of the formation of someone in their understanding of theology and understanding of ministry. That is more difficult to have happen in remote learning.”

In light of the need to approximate that in-person experience, those at Wycliffe were hoping, as this story was being written, that faculty, students and staff would work together in the fall on what kind of options might be available. While the school might be able to begin some in-person learning again in January, all fall courses will be online only.

At the same time, Wycliffe was planning morning in-person chapel services each day from Monday to Friday starting in autumn, open to anyone living in residence and also accessible online.

In addition, rather than evening prayer services, the seminary was planning afternoon group sessions on Zoom in which students can meet together and engage in that format.

“I don’t think there’s a kind of easy answer to that question [of approximating the in-person experience],” Robinson said.

“I think that it’s a learning curve for us. We’re trying to figure it out. But we absolutely take seriously the importance of that.” ■



# VBS went digital—and attendance jumped

Continued from p. 1

appropriate for this pandemic time,” she says.

The in-person VBS program is typically made up of daily three-hour sessions. In its virtual format, Kern has adapted the content into one-hour, pre-recorded sessions that include instructions for kids to pause the program to complete certain tasks. “So it would take a family about an hour and a quarter, hour and a half to go through it. But they can pause, go do something else, go play a game or have a snack—we set it up that way.”

The company that created the program sent out some information on how to change up the program at the beginning of the pandemic, says Kern, but “we still had to modify it from there to make it fit our context.”

One of the challenges in translating the program to video is finding ways to make it interactive. “You’ve got to keep [kids] moving,” says Kern. During the different sections of the video, kids are instructed to press pause and complete a task—find something from in their house, for instance, or discuss a question with their parents. “The biggest challenge is how to make it [so that] it’s not just *sit and watch a show for thirty minutes, an hour*. We want them to get up and move and do things and try things out and play things and dance to the music.”

The decision to run a virtual VBS came out of a brainstorm group Kern pulled together that met over the Zoom videoconferencing platform. They surveyed the parents in the church and found about half the families wanted to participate in the idea—the other half felt “Zoomed out,” Kern says, after months of distance learning. “We forged ahead, and what’s really interesting to me is we typically average around 70 kids at our VBS in the summertime ... and we have 80 children participating in our virtual VBS this year.”

Pre-pandemic, St. James averaged around 30-35 kids every Sunday, with 60-65 on her register, Kern says.

The virtual format has allowed some families in other provinces—even other countries—to participate, and the VBS videos remained on the St. James website until the end of September. For families who registered to participate, Kern and her team put together supply kits with everything kids need to engage in the VBS activities.

Kern says she usually has about 40 volunteers during VBS week, but this year, she’s mostly had the help of her family—her daughter leads music segments in the videos, her son-in-law leads the Bible section, and her husband has done all the video editing. “I’ve been blessed with a great family who have really helped pull it together.”

In addition to the VBS, Kern has been recording a 10-15 minute video lesson to release every Sunday and a video bedtime story every week. While the diocese is beginning to look at re-opening plans for churches, she says she expects she’ll keep making the videos into the fall, as some families might not feel ready to come back to in-person services yet.

“I’m a former teacher, and I’m a mother and grandmother, so I just love reading stories.... So I just kind of raided my shelf. I read one or two stories, and then we post it to the church website and families can watch it whenever.”

Talking to a camera rather than a group of kids, and releasing videos onto a website, can feel like sending things out into the void, Kern says. But she has heard from parents and grandparents who say their kids ask to watch a bedtime story from “Mrs. Yvonne” before bed.

She’s had positive feedback about the virtual VBS, too. “I’ve been getting some wonderful little texts and emails and pictures,” says Kern. “Somebody said, ‘This camp has shook us out of our pandemic fatigue.’”

## Camp Facebook

Last year around 150 kids attended Camp Brookwood, an Anglican camp in the diocese of Fredericton, over the course of the summer, camp



director Ally Green says.

For Green, however, this year has been a little quieter: she and a groundskeeper are the only two staff members at the camp for the summer of 2020.

It became apparent at the end of May, Green says, that the camp wouldn’t be able to open for the summer; even as Green continued to plan the summer, she says, the board was debating whether to close. In the end, she says, “we figured, OK, this isn’t going to work.... The average age of a person who works here is 17. That’s a lot of responsibility for a 17-year-old, to manage a cabin of three to seven kids and to keep them all socially distanced during the day and at night—it would be exhausting for the staff members.”

Instead, Green began posting on Facebook. Once per day, she uploads a post to the Camp Brookwood page, following daily themes: Monday is “Music Monday,” featuring a song the kids would have sung in chapel; on Tuesdays, a craft that would align with one of the camp’s themed weeks; on Wednesday, a nature activity; Thursday alternates between crafts and activities, sometimes centred around Bible stories; and finally “Food Friday”—“little snacks that are important to the camp diet.”

Green says Music Monday posts, in which she posts a video of herself singing and playing a camp song, are usually the most popular. But her posts have ranged from recipes for burgers and chocolate chip cookies, to instructions for making and racing paper boats, to scavenger hunts and a Camp Brookwood-themed *Jeopardy!* quiz.

Like Kern, Green says posting to Facebook can sometimes feel like talking to no one. “The first week of posts was kind of disheartening, because there weren’t many comments and it didn’t seem like it was making that much of a difference. But there have been people who contacted me outside of Facebook to say, ‘These posts are great, thank you for doing them.’” She laughs and adds, “It just takes one person to validate my feelings.”

This is Green’s eighth year on staff at the camp—and her third and final summer as camp director. Green, who recently graduated from St. Thomas University, is moving and won’t be able to return to the camp next year.

“It is sad,” she says.

“It’s fun to watch [the campers] grow up, because some of the kids during my first year that would have been five years old, they’re in the teen camps now. I’ve been watching them get a little older, a little funnier, their personalities developing, every single year—I just get to see a little week of their lives every single year, and it’s fun to be able to watch them grow up like that.”

## CLAY goes online

In March, the planning team for the biennial Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth Gathering (CLAY) was ready to go. “We were at the stage of the planning where the national planning

committee had had their last in-person meeting,” says Sheilagh McGlynn, General Synod’s animator for youth ministries, faith, worship and ministry. Everything was ready for the gathering to take place in Calgary in August 2020.

Then came the pandemic. “It became pretty evident pretty soon that we needed to cancel or postpone.” The team decided to push the gathering back to 2021—then, in August, they announced that the 2021 event would be virtual.

It was a hard decision, and disappointing that the event couldn’t simply go on as planned. “Young people are dealing with disappointments everywhere, like not being able to go to their graduations, not being able to go to summer camp ... or summer jobs, or vacations or whatever it is. It was such a hard decision to make, but I know that it was the right decision to make, because we couldn’t do it this summer.”

The team will now spend the year “sort of pivoting and figuring out how to do everything we have online,” she says.

In the meantime, CLAY held an online event August 22, a way to connect the youth that would have been worshipping and learning together in Calgary this summer.

“We just wanted to give a little bit of something for young people to look forward to, to have, to be able to watch,” she says. Youth groups in provinces that are relaxing social distancing measures may be able to watch it together; in other areas, she hopes youth groups will watch individually and have a Zoom conversation about it afterwards.

“We picked a theme based on our original theme,” McGlynn says. “Our original theme was ‘En Route’: It’s our journey, where does God lead us on our path?” Organizers went with the theme “Journey Interrupted” for the August 22 event, McGlynn says, with a new set of questions in mind: “What happens when our journeys aren’t going quite as planned? And where is God in that?”

The video event featured an address from General Synod Reconciliation Animator Melanie Delva—who was booked as the keynote speaker for the gathering—songs from the CLAY band and a recorded drama skit from the last CLAY event.

Turning a large-scale youth event into a livestream requires some creative thinking, but McGlynn says the CLAY volunteers are “absolutely the right people to be doing this kind of work.”

“They get youth ministry. They get that what you plan and what happens may not be exactly the same thing. In some ways, I think youth leaders are in a position—probably way better than the church in general—to adapt to what we need to do.”

Connecting online is important for youth right now, says McGlynn. “I do think that doing things [online] is still providing young people something they need right now. They need to not feel so disconnected, and this is one way that they can be connected. Even if they have their camera off, they can still be part of something that is bigger and meaningful for them.” ■



## VOCATIONS ▶



▲ The Rev.  
Amanda Ruston

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

# Pandemic ‘opening up discussion for growth’

Continued from p. 1

proved otherwise. Including Røsborg himself and his bishop, Mary Irwin-Gibson, there were only five people in attendance—but it didn’t feel lonely. Loved ones from across Canada and the world tuned in, or viewed the service afterward on YouTube. A friend living in Paris preached the sermon, standing on a bridge in front of the Eiffel Tower.

“It was very strange and surreal, and on one level a bit of a disappointment ... but at the same time it was kind of special and beautiful in its own simple way,” Røsborg says.

The pandemic also required a different kind of ministry from what he anticipated.

“If someone had said to me five years ago that priesthood would mean sitting in front of the computer, I probably would have said I didn’t want that kind of job—I wanted to be with the people in the community,” he says. “So I struggle a bit with that.... It seems a very strange thing to be ordained a priest and then not actually be able to gather the community, not actually be able to celebrate Eucharist.”

And yet the changes aren’t all bad. By cutting out the need for transportation, moving services online has resulted in much larger congregations. It’s also served as a great encouragement to many parishioners.

“A number of the churchgoers have said to me that they really appreciate Zoom, because it’s managed to keep the community cohesive and together at a time when we might otherwise just disappear off the face of the earth to each other,” he says.

As for the prospects of the church, Røsborg says that, at least on the parish level, things don’t currently seem as dire as they were in April, when finances seemed especially uncertain. But circumstances beyond this initial stage of the pandemic feel harder to predict, he says.

“The major concern for me is what happens afterwards,” he says. “I suspect that even when things go back to the ‘new normal’ there will be some people who don’t feel comfortable going back to church for whatever reason. The pandemic has shaped our minds about what it means to live in community, and there will be people who say, ‘I don’t want to do crowds, I would rather stay at home and have my groceries sent to me and not do church, especially if church is served to me on a computer screen.’”

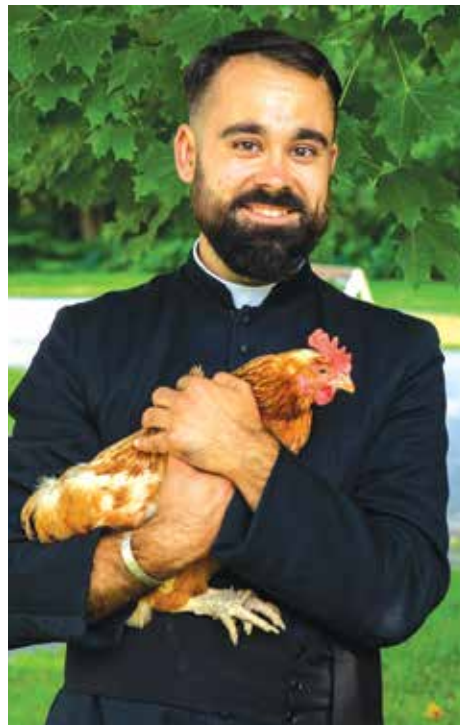
“I suspect we’ll have to have some sort of hybrid worship in which, I don’t know, from our chancels we’re livestreaming a lot more to those [who] couldn’t otherwise join us, or so that those who no longer feel safe to can still participate in the community.”

## ‘Still a sense of community and joy’

The Rev. Brennan McCurry grew up in the diocese of Brandon, in western Manitoba. He completed his M.Div at Huron University College in London, Ont., in May, and is now working toward an M.A. in biblical studies there—studying remotely, like many other post-secondary students. McCurry was ordained a priest in St. Matthew’s Cathedral, Brandon, on July 22, in a ceremony limited to 50 people, spaced among the pews in their family groups.

“It was a really good service,” McCurry says. “It had a nice monastic tone to it that worked really well with the reduced amount of people.... You could feel the distance, but it wasn’t necessarily a bad thing.

“People were still coming and gathering,



▲ Left: The Rev. Tyson Røsborg and Henrietta, one of three laying hens he owns, on the day of his ordination.

PHOTO: ARCHDEACON  
TIM SMART/DIOCESE OF  
MONTREAL

Right: The Rev. Brennan McCurry is ordained by William Cliff, bishop of the diocese of Brandon.

PHOTO: C. PILON

and excited, but respectfully distant for safety. There was still a sense of community and joy in the room.”

Protocols didn’t require masks to be worn throughout the service—only when people were unable to socially distance (during the procession, communion and the recession, for example). It meant a certain amount of putting on and removal of masks among those present, but this, McCurry says, ended up coinciding well with the transitional music. For the laying on of hands, Bishop of Brandon William Cliff and all the other clergy put on masks and one at a time laid their hands on McCurry, sanitized them and returned to their places.

McCurry had been serving as a transitional deacon at St. George’s Anglican Church in London and was hoping to continue doing ministry there as this article was being written. It’s hard to say, McCurry says, whether his ministry in the near term will be mostly online, although as of this writing, he notes, the diocese of Huron is moving toward re-opening for live worship.

To be entering the priesthood now, he says, feels daunting—but also like an interesting challenge. The changes set in motion for the church by the pandemic have been all-encompassing, and that has been stressful, he says—yet these changes could be for the better. Keeping online ministry going even after the pandemic, McCurry says, could be one important way for the church to continue to reach disabled people and others for whom getting to a church is difficult.

“Very quickly when the closures started, churches and dioceses had to immediately reconsider everything,” he says. “That’s daunting—the sheer amount of change and the different areas that had to change so quickly. But it’s a positive challenge in that it’s opening up discussion for growth, and to reconsider what has worked in the past.... How can we make it better, not only while we’re closed but after? How can we consider online and in-person ministry work in a blended format, that can reach more people?”

## ‘As day by day things are changing, we’re moving with the Spirit’

June 20 saw three ordinations in Vancouver’s Christ Church Cathedral—including the ordination to the transitional diaconate of the Rev. Amanda Ruston, an M.Div student at the Vancouver School



of Theology and member of St. Andrew’s Anglican Church in Langley, B.C.

Ruston says she’d been missing the Eucharist during the months of suspension of in-person worship, and felt sad to know it wouldn’t be part of her ordination service either. And yet the service ended up being far from disappointing, she says. There was something about its pared-down nature, Ruston says, that seemed to make it all the holier, and the small size of the gathering—50 people—lent it intimacy.

“Being able to see only people that I knew and that cared for me that were there as my guests—there was something kind of special about that,” she says. “Being a bit introverted, I found actually that having less people there was a little bit comforting in a way, and it was very sacred and very holy.”

The pandemic necessitated certain precautions—sanitizing and masks, a two-metre distance between participants, and pre-determined spots for everyone—which felt awkward at times, but they also brought “nuggets of joy and humour” to the event as well, she says.

Ruston says she’s found much of church life can be adapted to the internet—but the difficulty of integrating music into online worship has been a special challenge. Preaching online is also different from in-person, she says, because it’s harder to gauge the congregation’s reaction to your words. And she hopes she will soon be able to resume doing in-person pastoral care. The need for this seems especially urgent now, she says, when many people—especially those who lack internet connections or are uncomfortable with technology—are feeling unusually isolated and cut off from their church. She also says she feels much uncertainty about the future—yet hopeful, and happy, at the same time.

“I’m very proud to be ordained in this church that is respectful of other human life and of being as safe as possible, and respecting governments and health authorities—but is also finding new and creative ways to continue to be church in times that are changing,” she says.

“I think that really speaks to the way that the spirit is moving in the Anglican church—how we continue to be present, we continue to be church, we continue to worship, we continue to love God and love each other. As day by day things are changing, we’re moving with the Spirit and we’re doing what we’re supposed to be doing.

“I’m hopeful, and I’m very proud.” ■

“If someone had said to me five years ago that priesthood would mean sitting in front of the computer, I probably would have said I didn’t want that kind of job—I wanted to be with the people in the community.”

—The Rev. Tyson Røsborg





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# Hospital staff needed masks, gowns

**Continued from p. 1**

The guiding focus of AMCC is preventive health education for pregnant women.

The \$20-million program began in 2016 and wrapped up at the end of 2019. But the additional funding will benefit health providers and patients at clinics supported by AMCC—paying for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and clothes for disposal, as well as establishing washing stations in clinics with soap, clean water and disinfectant.

Zaida Bastos, director of development partnership programs for PWRDF, designed the AMCC program along with external funding program manager Richard Libroch. She also led the effort to procure the extended grant for COVID-19 prevention measures.

“With COVID, one of the first reactions was for people to avoid health facilities,” Bastos says. “In countries where we work, one of the first problems faced by health-care givers was lack of PPE. They didn’t have the proper equipment to continue to provide health services in a safe way—safe for the patient and safe for the health providers.”

The additional funding by the Canadian government, she says, ensures that “all the gains that we made by lowering maternal and newborn child [mortality] indicators would not be lost by people no longer going to the clinics” out of a fear of being infected.

“This grant will allow us to continue to provide these maternal, newborn and child health services by equipping the health



▲ **A federal grant to extend the work of PWRDF's All Mothers and Children Count program has allowed health education and services—such as this prenatal weigh-in at Village Health Works in Burundi—to continue.**

PHOTO: VILLAGE HEALTH WORKS

practitioners with the necessary equipment to provide care in a safe way—but also to continue to educate the community on how to prevent contagion of COVID.”

One of the PWRDF partners for AMCC is Village Health Works, a non-profit organization which operates a medical clinic and school in rural Burundi and is currently constructing a hospital there. The majority of people in the area are subsistence farmers, few of whom have electricity. Ranking among the poorest countries in the world, Burundi faces high rates of maternal and infant mortality, malnutrition and malaria.

Throughout its first four years, AMCC supported Village Health Works initiatives such as a community health worker program as well as a model farmer program to improve food security. It also helped the organization obtain medicines, supplies and lab equipment for its clinic and pharmacy.

Wade Zamechek, director of development for Village Health Works, says that, although Burundi does not seem to have been overrun with COVID, there is also not a lot of capacity to test for it in the country. He believes the influx of funding from PWRDF and Global Affairs Canada (GAC) has played a vital role in reducing the spread of infection among health workers and patients at their clinic.

“We were prepared with some PPE,” Zamechek says. “We had I think several thousand N95 masks, some gowns and things like that, but not nearly enough. PWRDF and GAC are coming in to help with a lot more PPE, which will help us. They’re also helping us with procuring central equipment for the hospital that’ll help us fight COVID.”

“We’re super grateful for the partnership and the support we’ve had with PWRDF and GAC,” Zamechek says. “We’re thrilled that this is continuing, and especially helping us respond to COVID.”

Besides PPE and sanitation, the grant has also helped improve community outreach to protect against coronavirus. Village Health Works has approximately 200 community health workers and is working to ensure they are trained and equipped to track and confront COVID-19, from contact tracing to delivering essential medicines.

“The grant is helping us with a lot of the hygiene and cleaning supplies that go into COVID response, making sure that our campus [and] our clinic [are] fully sanitized,” senior program manager Sophie Matte says.

Matte describes PWRDF as “a key pillar for us to really grow and strengthen our activities. They’ve been our biggest institutional partner in terms of activity.” ■

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## November Bible Readings



### DAY READING

- ☐ 01 Revelation 7:1-17
- ☐ 02 Isaiah 26:1-19
- ☐ 03 Joshua 24:1-18
- ☐ 04 Joshua 24:19-33
- ☐ 05 Psalm 70:1-5
- ☐ 06 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13
- ☐ 07 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18
- ☐ 08 Matthew 25:1-13
- ☐ 09 Zephaniah 1:1-18
- ☐ 10 Zephaniah 2:1-15

### DAY READING

- ☐ 11 Zephaniah 3:1-20
- ☐ 12 Matthew 8:1-17
- ☐ 13 Matthew 8:18-34
- ☐ 14 Matthew 25:14-30
- ☐ 15 Judges 4:1-16
- ☐ 16 Judges 4:17-5:11a
- ☐ 17 Judges 5:11b-31
- ☐ 18 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
- ☐ 19 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28
- ☐ 20 Matthew 23:13-28

### DAY READING

- ☐ 21 Matthew 23:29-39
- ☐ 22 Matthew 25:31-46
- ☐ 23 Isaiah 64:1-12
- ☐ 24 Mark 13:24-37
- ☐ 25 Matthew 24:1-14
- ☐ 26 Matthew 24:15-28
- ☐ 27 Matthew 24:29-44
- ☐ 28 Matthew 24:45-51
- ☐ 29 John 12:12-26
- ☐ 30 John 12:27-43

SOURCE: CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY. USED WITH PERMISSION. PHOTO: KEEP SMILING PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK



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