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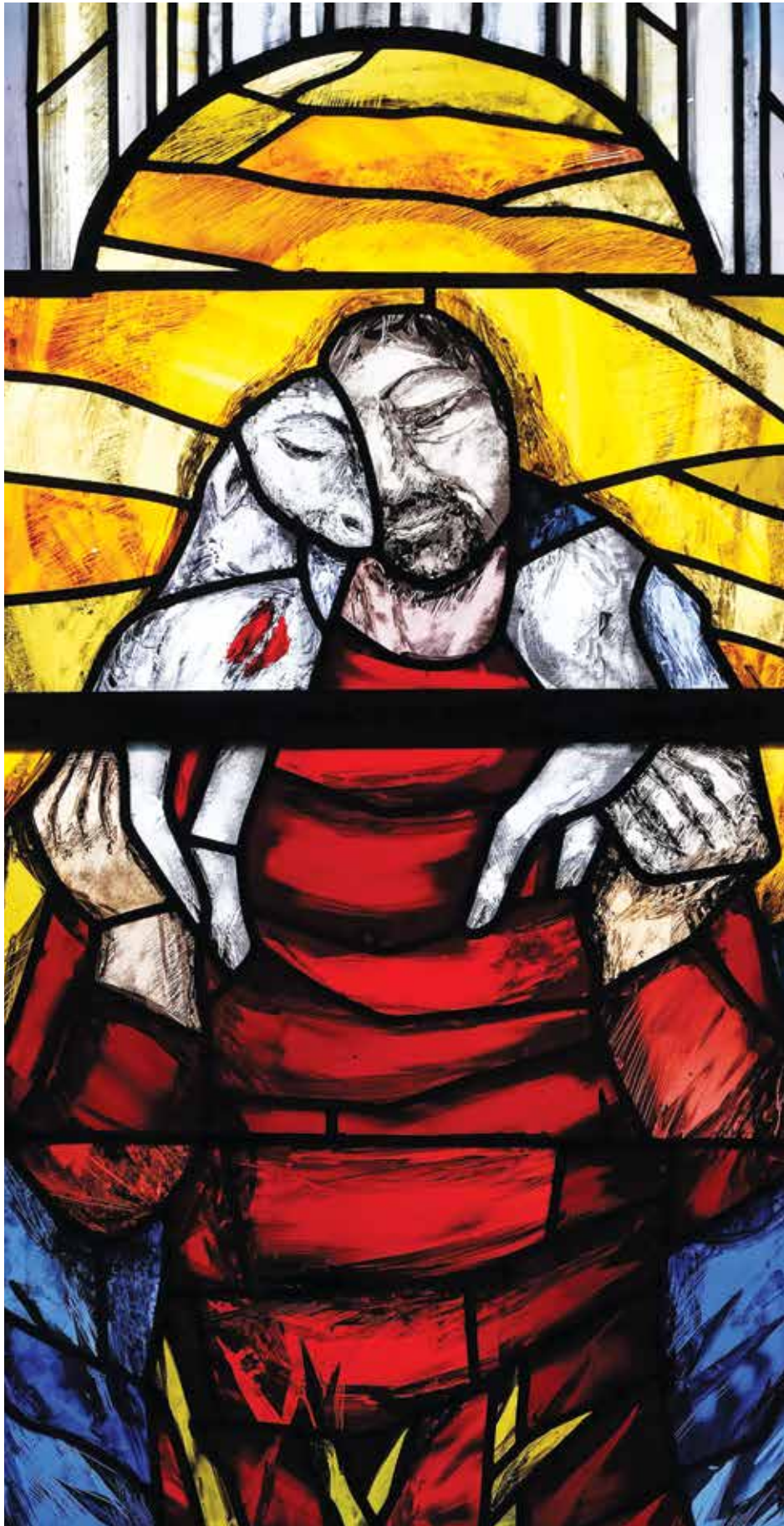


PHOTO: ZVONIMIR ATLETIC

Abundant life

This photograph by Zvonimir Athletic captures a stained-glass window in a chapel in Ursberg, Germany depicting Jesus the Good Shepherd. In John 10, read at Eastertide, Jesus uses the metaphor of a shepherd caring for his flock to illustrate his role as the self-sacrificing protector and sustainer of his followers who came “that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10, NRSVUE).” For Easter reflections by Primate Shane Parker and Archbishop Chris Harper, go to page 5.

Primate speaks out on plight of Palestinian Christians after Holy Land visit

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, visited the Anglican diocese of Jerusalem from Jan. 8 to 17. He attended the consecration and installation of the Rev. Imad Haddad as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

Parker also visited Anglican-run hospitals and schools and met with fellow Christian leaders, including Archbishop Hosam Naoum, president bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East; and Patriarch Theophilos III of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem.

The Anglican Journal’s Matthew Puddister spoke to the primate on Jan. 22 about his experience in Israel and Palestine. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What reflections would you like to share from your trip to the Holy Land?

We have been in a partnership with Jerusalem for well over half of their 50 years of being governed by indigenous leadership. The Anglican church there back in 1976 became independent of the Church of England with the first Arab bishop. We started connecting in a corporate sense going back to the ’90s, so it’s a longstanding relationship. My own personal relationship goes back 22 years now.

When the primate visits, the primate brings the Anglican Church of Canada with her or him. The significance of a visit from the primate of Canada to the folks there was very high. The Christian community is maybe only two per cent of the population at best. Most Christians are Arabs and identify as Palestinians. Being an Anglican Christian is to be a minority within a minority.

See **CHRISTIANS**, p. 2

Arctic cathedral’s tax bill paid, exemption restored

Sean Frankling
STAFF WRITER

St. Jude’s Cathedral in Iqaluit has paid a tax bill, which had previously threatened the cathedral’s financial stability, with the help of several parishes from across the diocese of the Arctic and elsewhere in Canada, diocesan bishop Alexander Pryor says.

The city of Iqaluit has also set the tax rate for places of worship to zero for 2026, reversing course on a bylaw that came into effect there in 2023 requiring places of worship to pay property taxes. The parish’s other buildings used for non-profit purposes—such as their soup kitchen and an Inuit wellness organization—have also been granted exemptions, Pryor says. The cathedral will still, as always, have to pay property tax on clergy residences, he says.

The *Anglican Journal* reported in November the cathedral was struggling under back taxes owed on the church after former Iqaluit mayor Kenny Hill introduced the unusual bylaw taxing places of worship.

In 2021, when Hill first announced the bylaw, he told CBC it was a response to the announcement ground-penetrating radar had found potential burial sites near the former Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan, which was run

by the Roman Catholic Church. “The Catholic Church needs to apologize. And I think this is the only way we can make them,” he was quoted as saying.

A spokesperson for Iqaluit’s municipal government declined to comment on the reinstated tax exemption for places of worship in the city.

Pryor previously told the *Journal* the diocese was seeking relief from the territorial legislature, which has the authority to cancel outstanding tax debts that for the cathedral then amounted to \$63,000.

Instead, the parish has paid its back taxes with the help of the Nunavut parishes of St. Timothy’s, Pond Inlet; St. Francis, Arviat; and St. Luke’s, Pangnirtung; the Quebec parish of St. Matthew’s, Puvirnituq; and the Ontario parishes of St. Margaret’s, Ottawa and St. Matthew – St. Aidan, Buckhorn, as well as the Iqaluit Pentecostal Church and the Iqaluit Women’s Auxiliary. Pryor’s understanding is that the worship space now has a permanent tax exemption in place, while the other non-profit spaces must reapply once every three years, he says.

Paying off the tax bill solves one of the several problems facing the cathedral, Pryor adds, but there are others

See **MORE**, p. 3

THE INTERVIEW ▶

For a fuller account of this interview, visit anglicanjournal.com

“There’s a moral imperative right now for the international community to recognize what is happening in Gaza, [which] is the squeezing out of a people, the crushing of a people. That is profoundly unacceptable.

— Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada

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Christians are threatened minority in land where Jesus walked, primate says

Continued from p. 1

I want people to remember, first of all, that there are Christians in the land where Christ walked. They live under oppressive, limiting circumstances, and they live in an environment that is decidedly unstable and even dangerous at times. While some of the Christians, our fellow Anglicans, live in the state of Israel and are Arabs with Israeli citizenship, other members of our church live in the West Bank. Not so much in Gaza, but we have a hospital in Gaza, the [Anglican-run] Al-Ahli Hospital.

The second thing is that the Anglican church runs hospitals and educational and rehabilitation centres throughout Israel and reaching into the West Bank. For example, St. Luke’s Hospital in Nablus is essentially a full-service hospital. In the midst of all the limitations and dangers, people are still having babies, they’re still having heart attacks, they’re still having all kinds of health issues. We have a hospital that serves people of a variety of means and backgrounds—Christian, Muslim, doesn’t matter. At St. Philip’s Church in Nablus, there’s a kindergarten that provides a safe place for Muslim and Christian kids who live with poverty in their own homes.

The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, on the Mount of Olives, offers rehabilitative services for kids with disabilities and their families in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. It has a program for kids with disabilities that works out of the Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza. This is our church in the middle of a highly conflicted area, offering practical support to people who live in the region.

The third point is the united resilience of the Christian community. I attended the consecration of the new Lutheran bishop, Bishop Imad Haddad at the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem. All Christian denominations were present. There are significant theological and liturgical differences between the churches. Nevertheless, they set aside those differences in order to stand together and be united as Christians in a context where they are a threatened minority. Seeing the capacity for joy, the capacity to celebrate, the capacity to assert together their presence as Arab Christians, as a Christian community in the land where Jesus walked, is quite inspiring.

Have you noticed any changes since your last visit to the Holy Land in 2023, which was only a few months before the Oct. 7 attack?

Definitely a change. Pilgrimages have almost dried up completely, which has an economic impact as much as anything. There are micro pressures and macro pressures being exerted on the Christian community and being exerted on Palestinians generally at this time—little things that could appear to be an inconvenience, and then larger things, like massive highways being built on Palestinian territory to service large, well-equipped settlements.

There’s been an intensification of what I observed 22 years ago: a kind of slow grasping of control of land, the ever[-increasing] limiting of the freedom of movement for Palestinians in the Palestinian territories, and of course, the omnipresent concern on both sides for violence. Jerusalem itself has to some extent a sense of being in the eye of the storm. I would say there’s an atmosphere of concern and worry, notwithstanding the resilience and the capacity for joy at gathering together to celebrate a new bishop.



▲ The primate holds a baby, part of a Bethlehem family, at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre.

PHOTO: DON BINDER

In a Dec. 4 open letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney, you and Bishop Larry Kochendorfer, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, spoke out on behalf of the people of Gaza and the West Bank. But to date there has been no indication the Canadian government will change its existing policies.

No. I think we advocate for our partners there. Neither they nor we want to be construed as being anti-Israel. Israel has a right to exist. Palestine has a right to exist. The citizens of Israel have a right to live without fear of acts of terrorism or acts of war against them. The people of Palestine have an equal right to live without fear, without acts of violence being visited upon them or being deprived of human rights.

My concern is not to say what I think, but to reflect what I have seen and heard from Archbishop Naoum and from the people there. We write our letters with sincerity reflecting the concerns of our partners there. It’s not a good situation for Christian Palestinians and for Palestinians generally. I’m talking about people who want to live their lives, who want their children to be safe, who want to be able to go to work, who want to be able to leave their town or village or city to travel, to visit relatives, to leave the country. Things we take for granted are severely compromised. In Gaza, the flow of aid is simply not happening.

When I was there, it was cold and wet and the nights were long and dark and [Gaza was] not too far away, because Israel and Palestine is not a large region. You could drop [the whole region] into Vancouver Island. To think that only an hour or so away, people were living in meagre tents and children were dying from exposure—it’s appalling. It is a true humanitarian crisis and the solution is within reach, but the forces at play are simply not engaging in the solution.

Last September, Italian workers held a general strike making demands similar to those in letters you’ve sent to the prime minister, including stopping weapons shipments to Israel. Do you think Anglicans should support such forms of direct action to effect change?

I think people need to inform themselves and follow their conscience. If people hearing the remarks I’m sharing with you are people who have connections or can make decisions that might effect [change], then they should make them. There are people within the Anglican Church of Canada who sit in positions of power and authority, and [to] the extent to which those positions can be used to make decisions that directly affect the well-being of people in Israel and Palestine, they should follow their consciences and do so.

I think there’s a moral imperative right now for the international community to recognize what is happening in Gaza, [which] is the squeezing out of a people, the crushing of a people. That is profoundly unacceptable, and that has to be said. It has to be said in a way that can be heard. I think that’s a concern for our partners who are literally right there. What leverage [do they have]? Well, their relationships with us, the international partnerships with the Christian community, are very important because that is noticed and observed and lifted up. It’s not a forgotten community. We see what is happening there because of those partnerships and connections.

Any other points from your trip that you’d like to highlight?

I went as the primate of Canada, so in a sense, I brought every Canadian Anglican with me. My greeting to people there was: “I come here as primate, and I bring the Anglican Church of Canada to you. You’re not forgotten, and I will bring back your stories.” Those are true words and they are very meaningful words for our siblings in Christ who live there. ■

REGIONAL NEWS ▶

Western Arctic replanting project seeks to rebuild congregations, strengthen local leaders

Building-focused mission trip planned to repair Ulukhaktok church

Matthew Puddister
STAFF WRITER

The Rev. Whitney DeWare's first mission trip to Ulukhaktok, N.W.T., drove home for her the sense felt by many Christians in the Western Arctic that the church has abandoned or forgotten about them, she says. But it also showed her the enthusiasm with which they responded when visiting clergy reached back out to them.

Currently priest-in-charge at Holy Trinity Church in Yellowknife, DeWare was still a deacon when she visited Ulukhaktok in July 2025 to help lead Caring for the Wounded Heart, a Bible-based trauma healing workshop facilitated by the Canadian Bible Society and the charity On Eagle's Wings Ecumenical Ministries.

A small, fly-in hamlet on the west coast of Victoria Island in the Arctic Ocean, Ulukhaktok has an estimated population of 461, according to the Northwest Territories government. It formerly had three churches: Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Anglican. Today only the Anglican church remains—and DeWare learned on her trip that it had not had a priest serving there in 15 years.



▲ **The Rev. Whitney DeWare visits Ulukhaktok in July 2025.**

PHOTO: WHITNEY DEWARE

"When people found out that there was a clergyperson [in Ulukhaktok], there were some people who had that cartoon reaction of their jaw dropping," she recalls. "They were so excited that somebody was here because they haven't had a minister in so long."

Residents asked DeWare to lead a worship service, which she called an "eye-opening" experience, "just hearing people's hearts about the need and the desire to have ministry." In October 2025

she returned and led a baptism service at the Church of the Resurrection, which was so full of parents seeking to baptize their children that organizers, who had expected 50 people, had to set up for 80 instead.

The diocese of the Arctic is now recruiting volunteers for a building-focused mission trip to Ulukhaktok in September 2026 to carry out badly needed repairs at the Church of the Resurrection

See **ARCTIC**, p. 6

▲ **The Church of the Resurrection in Ulukhaktok, N.W.T.**

PHOTO: WHITNEY DEWARE



PHOTO: MAJID KHODABANDEHLOO

With the cathedral's tax bill paid off, Pryor says work is in progress to more efficiently heat and insure its one-of-a-kind, high-ceilinged structure—and to deepen its relationships with parishioners.

More solutions in progress for Arctic cathedral

Continued from p. 1 remaining.

"The burning question [is], will this save the cathedral? This is one part of the cathedral's conundrum."

St. Jude's is also struggling with the rising costs of insurance and utilities, he says, as well as with an ongoing decrease in congregational attendance. But the cathedral and diocese have plans underway to address these, too.

The parish is in the process of negotiating a switch to insuring the cathedral for the cost to replace it with a new building to serve the same function in case it was destroyed, Pryor says—but not necessarily to rebuild the unique structure as it is now.

Likewise, he adds, the church has sought input from all the contractors in Iqaluit with experience in heating large spaces, looking for one who can help calculate the most efficient way to heat the cathedral's space. Once they find one, they will replace the heating system,

which Pryor says will go a long way toward reducing the utility bill.

Meanwhile, the cathedral's English-speaking congregation tends to be made up of people who come to work in Nunavut on a temporary basis and thus cycle in and out regularly. The vestry and wardens at the cathedral have a plan to increase outreach to that transient population, he says.

They also have a plan to increase the parish's follow-up with those in the Inuit congregation who often come for baptisms and weddings but do not maintain regular contact with the parish. It won't turn the church's attendance around overnight, Pryor says, but he believes these efforts to more actively reach out to the people of Iqaluit have the potential to begin a slow change for the better.

"I'm quite hopeful that working forward on all four of these parts of the equation, we will be able to save the cathedral." ■

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PEOPLE ▶

General Synod's new treasurer places accountability to God at core of role

Sean Frankling

STAFF WRITER

"The fear of the Lord is the root of all wisdom." That quotation, from Proverbs 9:10, marked the beginning of General Synod treasurer Beng Wee's relationship with Jesus Christ, he tells the *Anglican Journal*.

Wee was raised in a Christian family but did not take personal ownership of his faith until he was an adult, he says. He first formed his own belief in God on a student trip through North America, when a combination of the natural beauty of the Grand Canyon and the independence of distance from his parents prompted him to face for the first time the question of whether he personally believed, Wee says.

Then, while studying accounting at Manchester University, he found himself asking how someone who believed in God should live. The proverb gave him his answer, he says—that he should pursue in all things a course of action rooted in accountability to God.

Wee was elected treasurer by a unanimous vote at the November 2025 meeting of the Council of General Synod (CoGS). He took over from Amal Attia, who formerly held the post in addition to her role as chief financial officer (CFO) of General Synod.

Wee told the *Journal* it was standard practice in not-for-profit organizations for the treasurer and CFO to be separate



▲ **Beng Wee, treasurer of General Synod, met with the *Anglican Journal* at a pub near the national church's office, Church House, in Toronto**

PHOTO: SEAN FRANKLING

positions. The Anglican Church of Canada's constitution tasks the treasurer with receiving and disbursing all of General Synod's funds under the authority of General Synod and CoGS.

Separating the role of treasurer from that of the CFO, whose job is to oversee the management of the church's finances, allows an "outside eye" to give perspective on the national office's spending on behalf of Anglicans across the country, Wee says. He sees himself as accountable to God, he says, for ensuring the church's money is spent with a view to acting out God's mission.

"It is to see that it's being spent in a fruitful way," he says. "Are we being faithful to what God has called the church [to do]?"

Wee holds a bachelor's degree in management and chemical sciences from

Manchester University, is a fellow of the United Kingdom's Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and has a master's degree in theology from Vancouver's Regent College.

While living in England as a student, he also attended Capernwray Bible School and the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. There he met and studied under famous theologians and Christian figures including Alan Redpath, John Stott and Corrie ten Boom.

Wee says he is grateful for the doors God has opened for him, having lived in Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Singapore (where he moved to be closer to his future wife, then a singer in a touring evangelical singing group), Hong Kong, New York and Canada. He has worked in finance for companies including Prime Computer, Dow Jones and the missionary organization OMF International. He joined the latter after a different position he was pursuing fell through, he says—an event he now sees as providentially steering him toward serving God's mission.

"Those things aren't just coincidences, as we discern what God is wanting us to be doing," he says.

A father of two adult children, Wee today attends St. Paul's Bloor Street in Toronto, where he served as treasurer from 2023 to 2025. He serves as a board member for Wycliffe College, Community Bible Study Canada and Interserve Canada. ■

OBITUARY ▶

Paul Idlout: Hunter, bishop, brother

Sean Frankling

STAFF WRITER

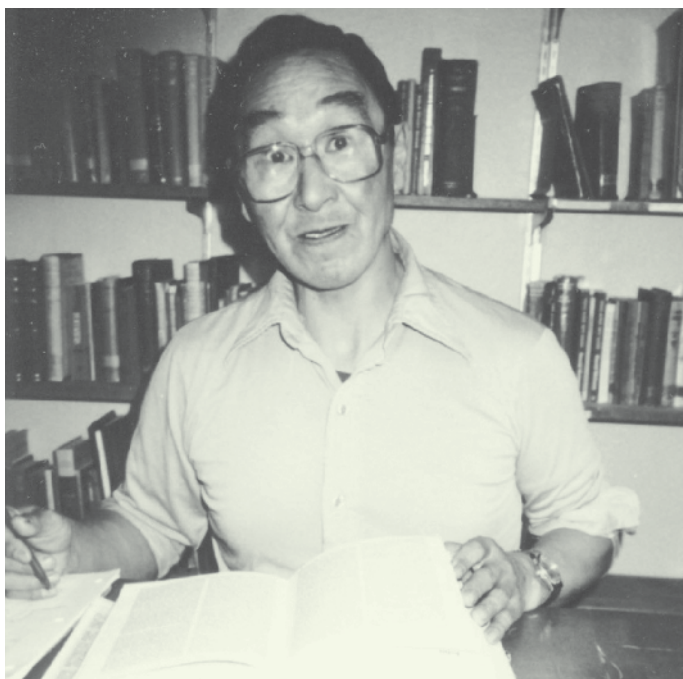
The Anglican Church of Canada's first Inuit bishop, Paul Idlout, lived through a period of massive change in the Arctic that affected his people's way of life, their relationship to the settler nation of Canada and their position within the Anglican Church of Canada. He died Dec. 31, 2025 at the age of 90. Family and colleagues remember him as a skilled survivalist, a humble pastor and an open-hearted friend.

Idlout's brother-in-law Titus Allooloo, former member of the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, says he first met Idlout at age 3 when Idlout, 20 years older, came to take care of Allooloo after the latter's mother was taken to a hospital in Hamilton, Ont. Growing up, he remembers Idlout being an excellent hunter, bagging seals, caribou and other game.

"He had to be observant, adaptable, know the environmental conditions, know the behaviour of the animals," says Allooloo.

Idlout grew up in a community that was nomadic, living in sod houses in the summer and igloos in the winter. In the 1950s, his family was moved from Pond Inlet on Baffin Island to Resolute, Nunavut in the federal government's High Arctic relocation—a policy of forced migration that caused extreme privation for Inuit. A 1980s claim filed by Inuit against the Canadian government said it was motivated by a desire to assert Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic.

In Nunavut, Allooloo says, Idlout helped Inuit families moved from Quebec, also as part of the High Arctic relocation, learn how to survive in the harsher, pitch-dark winters of their new home. During this time, he was also



▲ **Idlout's smile conveyed warmth, welcome and a sense of humility that made anyone feel like family, former Arctic diocesan bishop David Parsons says.**

PHOTO: GENERAL SYNOD ARCHIVES

filmed for the documentary *Land of the Long Day*, a still from which, showing Idlout, would later be printed on Canada's \$2 bill.

Idlout would go on to work for the RCMP as an interpreter and guard from 1963 to 1977 and after that as a kayak builder for Petro-Canada, which was doing oil exploration in the Arctic. During this time, Idlout began to drink too much and didn't like what that was doing to him, Allooloo says. Idlout eventually overcame his excessive alcohol use and in 1986 enrolled in the Arthur Turner Training School. He was ordained a priest in 1989 and elected suffragan bishop in 1996.

"I was very proud of him," Allooloo says. "And even though he was the first Inuk bishop in Anglican circles, he was very humble." Many people he knew in their majority Christian Inuit community were proud of Idlout, he adds. "They were

glad that they had a bishop able to speak in homily in their language [who] totally understood the lifestyle," he says.

Idlout never forgot the upbringing that taught him survival skills and a connection to the Arctic environment, Allooloo says. "Even when he was a bishop, anytime he had free time he would go ptarmigan hunting, rabbit hunting, caribou hunting."

Allooloo learned much from Idlout, he says, looking up to him from a young age. "I call him my brother."

Former diocesan bishop of the Arctic David Parsons did not know Idlout as well as Allooloo, he says, but similarly remembers him for his humility and kindness. Parsons was impressed by Idlout's ability to make even strangers feel welcome.

"The sparkle of his eyes and the smile of his face, [he] was just a loving, caring person to me," Parsons says. "He was always [one of the] people who don't stand up over you but look at you as a brother."

Archbishop Shane Parker, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, who travelled with Idlout in the Arctic for a week in 2003, likewise said he bonded quickly with the bishop. Parker first met Idlout when the former was serving as dean of Ottawa's Christ Church Cathedral.

"As I travelled with him and listened to his stories and watched his face and eyes as we travelled by boat on the sea near Iqaluit, I was aware of being with a man whose life reached far back into the traditional ways of his people," the primate says.

Idlout's funeral was held Jan. 6 at St. Jude's Cathedral in Iqaluit. Idlout is survived by his wife Abigail and their children and grandchildren. ■

ARCHBISHOP SHANE WRITES ▶



The hope we need can never be destroyed

By Shane Parker

IN JANUARY, I made a solidarity visit to our siblings in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, bringing with me the love and support of the Anglican Church of Canada. The situation faced by Palestinian Christians—and Palestinians in general—is extremely challenging. As I spoke about in my interview with the *Anglican Journal*, which you can read in this issue, evidence of the intention to occupy, inhabit and control Palestinian territory is everywhere. This is expressed in highly visible ways, like the devastation of Gaza and major roads dividing the West Bank, and in the less visible but perennial inconveniences faced by Palestinians across the region.

I have been privileged to lead several pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and, especially now, I encourage anyone who is able to sign up for one of the attractive pilgrimages offered by our partners at St. George's College Jerusalem (saintgeorgescollegejerusalem.com). Pilgrimages support our Palestinian siblings economically, socially, spiritually—and politically. My dear friend, Archbishop Hosam Naoum of Jerusalem, often says that “the population of Christians in the Holy Land increases every time a pilgrim group comes.” Engaging with local Christians—the “living stones” of Palestine and Israel—is an essential part of pilgrimages with St. George's College.

The spiritual centre of a pilgrimage is the opportunity to experience the “Fifth Gospel” as it is proclaimed by the sun, wind, water and stones of the places where the life, death and resurrection of



PHOTO: SHANE PARKER

The Aedicule, a chapel in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, holds the remnant of Jesus' tomb.

Jesus happened. Jerusalem is the core of this Fifth Gospel, as it is the historic and geographic centre of Easter. Jesus of Nazareth, who had been killed on a cross on a hill called Golgotha and laid in a nearby tomb, was somehow raised into an entirely new relationship with his disciples after his death. The rabbi from Galilee became the Risen Christ in Jerusalem, and the good news of God's indestructible hope and love for all people spread from Jerusalem to every corner of the earth.

The emotional climax of a pilgrimage is a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where generations of pilgrims have remembered the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. It takes a moment to realize that this large, complex building sits on what was once an abandoned stone quarry, with a rocky rise—Golgotha—and many tombs. Over the years, almost everything was carted away, and chapels were built around the top of Golgotha and the tomb where Jesus was buried—the places where Jesus died on a cross and rose from the dead.

A massive rotunda is in the middle of this sprawling church, and beneath it is a chapel called the Aedicule,

which contains the remnant of the tomb where the resurrection of Jesus is believed to have happened. It is all larger than life, swarming with Christians from all over the world, and it communicates a kind of robust sacredness: whatever happened there speaks to some power, some creative force that is beyond anything we can comprehend, yet just beneath the surface of what we can see and know. A kind of ancient and eternal strength.

The resurrection of Jesus tells us that the hope we need to sustain us in this life can never be destroyed. The resurrection is the most profound statement of God's abundant, gracious love: there is always more than we can see, there are always more possibilities for life, there is always hope—for everyone.

May you always be aware of that robust love and indestructible hope, may it abide deeply in the hearts and minds of our beloved siblings in the Holy Land, and may it inform the consciences and decisions of leaders who can bring lasting and just peace to all who dwell there. ■

Archbishop Shane Parker is the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Beauty heralds the new season

By Chris Harper

FEATHER AND SAGE



FEATHER: Almighty, we, the children of your creation, invite you into our circles. May your light and peace fill our lives, driving away the darkness of distraction and despair. May your truth flood our thoughts and actions, and in so doing, may we forever walk with you in the journey of life and faith. Almighty, especially in these days that are so difficult to comprehend, humble our hearts that we may always reach out to you, that your strength and love may bless us to be a blessing to those who journey with us in our circle of life and ministry. This we pray through your Son, the Peacemaker Jesus Christ. Amen.

SAGE: To me, April has always meant the threshold of change and new life in season and ministry. As the land warms under the face of the sun, we see the green of leaf and blade return. In these moments, I remember seeking out the first crocus flower when I was young, and my heart warms as I remember my grandmother's smile as I held out for her the simple purple flower, my offering of beauty for beauty. Those in our journey of life and ministry are held in memory and heart, lifted up in the promise of new life through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Lenten journey has led us to this moment, wherein we hear and see the return of life—wondrous, mysterious and promised in the Easter message. This revealing spotlights the foretelling and promise made through Christ, that He would truly rise, from death to life anew. Though the disciples struggled to comprehend and accept His message, the Lord in patience and love smiled and continued the ministry journey in obedience, knowing that they would fully understand in the revealing.

For those of faith, the Easter message is heralded in the church with the return of beauty. White cloths and frontals again adorn altars, veils are lifted from crosses, and joyous alleluias rise up from congregations. Flowers embraced in vases draw the eyes to the invitation of the Eucharist, and messages of hope and love are proclaimed.

It has been a glorious journey, Lent to Easter—the revealing, promise and invitation given and fulfilled. Life and love begin the circle again, as we step forward together in one more season. Easter is a beautiful time, for some simple as a crocus pushing its petals out to greet the sun, or complex as continuing in faith, heeding the call and ministry of Jesus Christ, waiting for the day when we, too, will see face to face our Lord and Saviour, who has defeated death and broken the chains of sin. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. ■

Archbishop Chris Harper is national Indigenous archbishop of the Anglican Church of Canada.

ANGLICAN JOURNAL

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PHOTOS: ELI MACDONALD

ABOVE: Ulukhaktok residents attend a baptism service at the Church of the Resurrection in October 2025.
LEFT: The Rev. Whitney DeWare (far right) and lay reader Pat Klengenber (second from right) baptize a woman.

Arctic bishop: ‘It’s time to be part of the solution’

Continued from p. 3

and its mission house. The trip is part of a larger diocesan-led initiative, the Western Arctic Church Replanting Project.

Bishop Alexander Pryor, diocesan bishop of the Arctic, says the goal of the project is to focus on the western part of the diocese for the next couple of years, with diocesan leaders praying daily for communities and “looking for the opportunities that the Lord might provide for us to strengthen the local leaders who are there; to fix up the buildings that have been neglected; and to get into these communities and send in mission teams from across the diocese and beyond to go in and just to rebuild the congregations.”

Overcoming challenges in the region

The Western Arctic Church Replanting Project began in March 2025, Pryor says, when in the span of three days he received phone calls from three separate people who said the diocese should reopen the Church of the Ascension in Inuvik, N.W.T.

The Inuvik church had closed in December 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic due to high costs, debts and a lack of volunteers. After the congregation and vestry officially dissolved in 2023, the diocese held on to the building, paying its property tax and bills, and put out an ad for a church planter. In April 2025, the first service inside the church since COVID took place, and by June lay leaders from the congregation had begun holding weekly services there again.

Reopening the church in Inuvik, Pryor says, helped inspire the diocesan project



MAP: AMING DESIGN

Barge route to Ulukhaktok, setting out from the Hay River to the Arctic Ocean. The annual barge is the only way to transport materials in.

to revitalize other congregations in the Western Arctic.

“Churches in the western part of our diocese are very weak,” the bishop says. “A number of them have functionally shut down, where the only Anglican ministry really happening in some of these communities is funerals being done when an elder dies.”

A major challenge in the Western Arctic has been a shortage of clergy, and particularly Indigenous clergy, Pryor says. Lay leaders head congregations in many communities. The Eastern Arctic has always been stronger in terms of clergy, the bishop says—with the Arthur Turner Training School in Iqaluit, Nunavut having trained Inuit clergy there since the 1970s.

Another challenge has been burnout of lay leaders, many of whom are residential school survivors. Anglicans ran several residential schools in the Arctic, including All Saints School in Aklavik, N.W.T. During the government-led truth and reconciliation process concerning residential schools, many lay leaders found it difficult to continue as representatives of the Anglican Church of Canada in their communities, Pryor says.

The result was a shortage of lay leaders.

But with communities gradually coming to terms with the revelations of the truth and reconciliation process, he adds, “there’s healing that has come now where people are able to look to the church once more and say, ‘It’s time to be part of the solution.’ And it’s something that we want to be involved in building back up in our community.”

Diocese fundraising for Ulukhaktok materials and transport

In the case of Ulukhaktok, the church is engaged in literal building. DeWare is leading the church’s mission to Ulukhaktok, which she calls the start of the broader Western Arctic Church Replanting Project.

The diocese of the Arctic serves 49 communities, DeWare says, but many have church buildings in disrepair, with local residents unable to do the regular work necessary to maintain them. In the case of Ulukhaktok, people who would otherwise be able to help carry out that work are out on the land during the brief construction season. They need that time for hunting and fishing to prepare their food for winter, which arrives earlier than in other parts of Canada.

Two lay leaders who organize the small worship services that occasionally take place in the Church of the Resurrection pointed to the need for repairs, DeWare says. The property includes an old church building which still stands but is full of mould; a newer church building that requires siding, roofs, new windows, floor work, and improved insulation; and a mission house vacant for more than a decade.

Due to limited accommodations, the September mission trip aims for a team of no more than 12 who will camp in the church building and carry out repairs, including door and window replacements and installing foam insulation and new vinyl siding.

Obstacles include transportation and the cost of getting the mission team and

their materials to Ulukhaktok. The only way to get materials there is on a barge that arrives in the community just once a year in late August—which means all cargo must be on board before June, when the barge sets out from the Hay River up through the Mackenzie River into the Arctic Ocean.

The cost of buying all the materials needed for repairs is \$85,000. The diocese of the Arctic has launched a fundraising campaign to help cover the costs, which as of Feb. 18 had raised just over \$7,235 towards a \$16,000 goal.

Meanwhile, the building team will likely meet in Inuvik and take a charter plane to Ulukhaktok, which costs roughly \$5,000 per person. The diocese is encouraging team members to work together with their local parishes or church groups to raise funds for their travel.

At the time this article was written in early February, DeWare was planning further trips to Ulukhaktok in 2026 before the building-focused mission trip, in February and June, to help train local leaders to run worship services. She says the goal is to have a minister at the Church of the Resurrection, and in the meantime to do repairs and have frequent visits for training and to identify leaders.

Pryor—who will travel to Ulukhaktok to participate in the repairs—says a ministry team that includes Inuit clergy from the Eastern Arctic also went to Inuvik and Aklavik in February as part of the diocese’s focus on rebuilding congregations in the region.

He calls the Western Arctic Church Replanting Project “an exciting thing, a challenging thing as we look at these churches that were functionally closed—no active vestry, no regular worship—and instead of saying, ‘Let’s sell it and see what we can get for the land,’ saying, ‘No, let’s say our prayers. Let’s see what the Lord is doing. Let’s see if we can reopen these churches and bring the gospel to a new generation that’s asking to hear it, who want to know who Jesus is.’ I just find that so exciting.” ■

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May BIBLE READINGS

DAY READING

- 01 John 8:48-59
- 02 Mark 12:13-17
- 03 1 Peter 2:2-10
- 04 Psalm 102
- 05 Proverbs 3:5-12
- 06 John 8:31-38
- 07 John 3:31-36
- 08 Luke 3:15-17

DAY READING

- 09 Mark 13:9-13
- 10 John 14:1-14
- 11 John 14:15-21
- 12 John 16:12-15
- 13 John 16:16-24
- 14 Acts 1:1-11*
- 15 Ephesians 2:1-7
- 16 John 8:21-30

DAY READING

- 17 John 17:1-11
- 18 1 Peter 4:1-6
- 19 1 Peter 4:7-11
- 20 Psalm 99
- 21 Acts 2:1-13
- 22 Luke 11:9-13
- 23 Luke 12:8-12
- 24 Numbers 11:24-30*

DAY READING

- 25 Joel 2:18-29
- 26 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
- 27 Acts 2:14-42
- 28 Ezekiel 39:7-29
- 29 2 Timothy 1:12b-14
- 30 John 14:15-26
- 31 Matthew 28:16-20*

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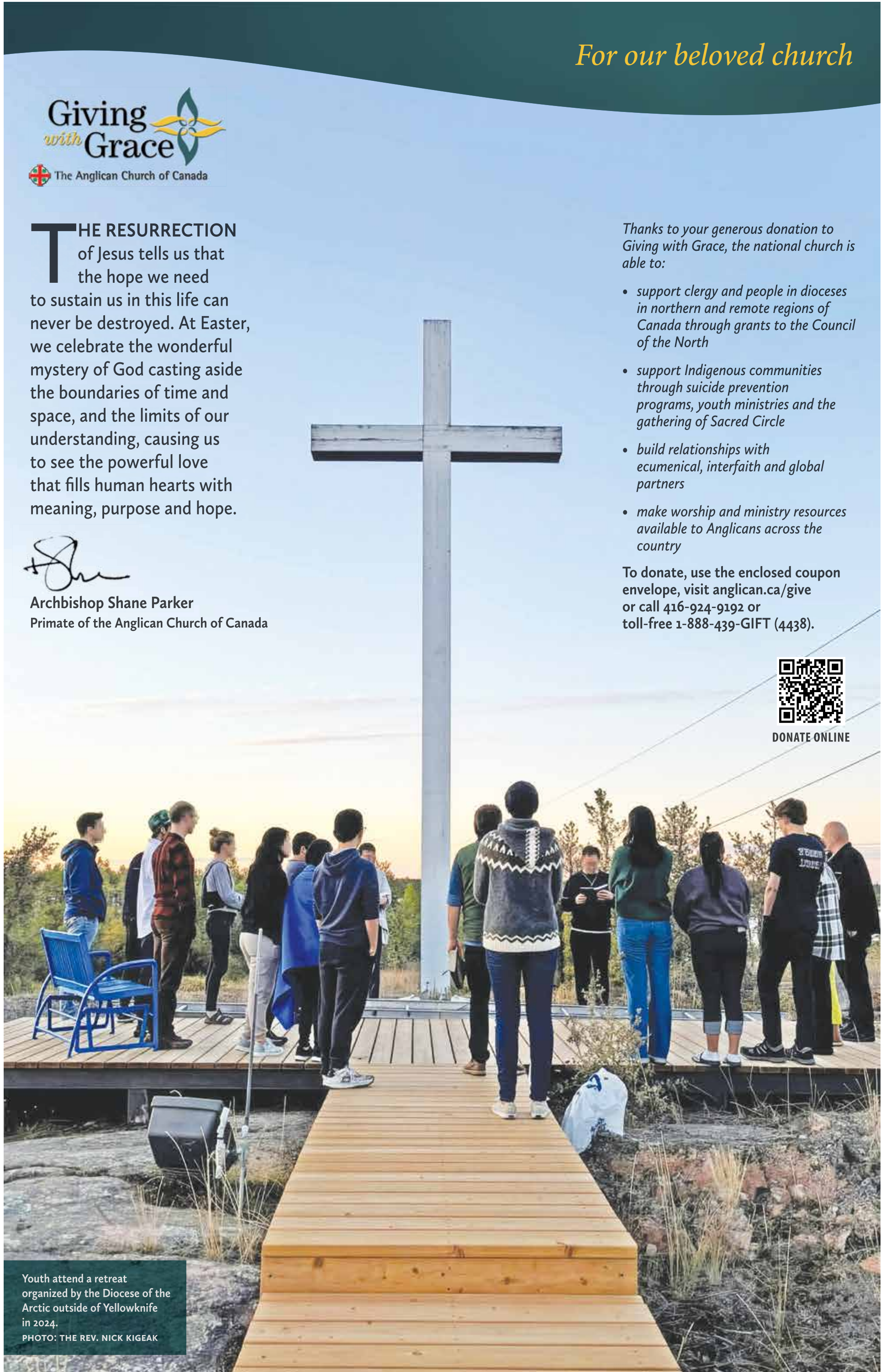
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