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Hildegard of Bingen



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Communion beyond the human

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Many dioceses evade pandemic year cash crunch—

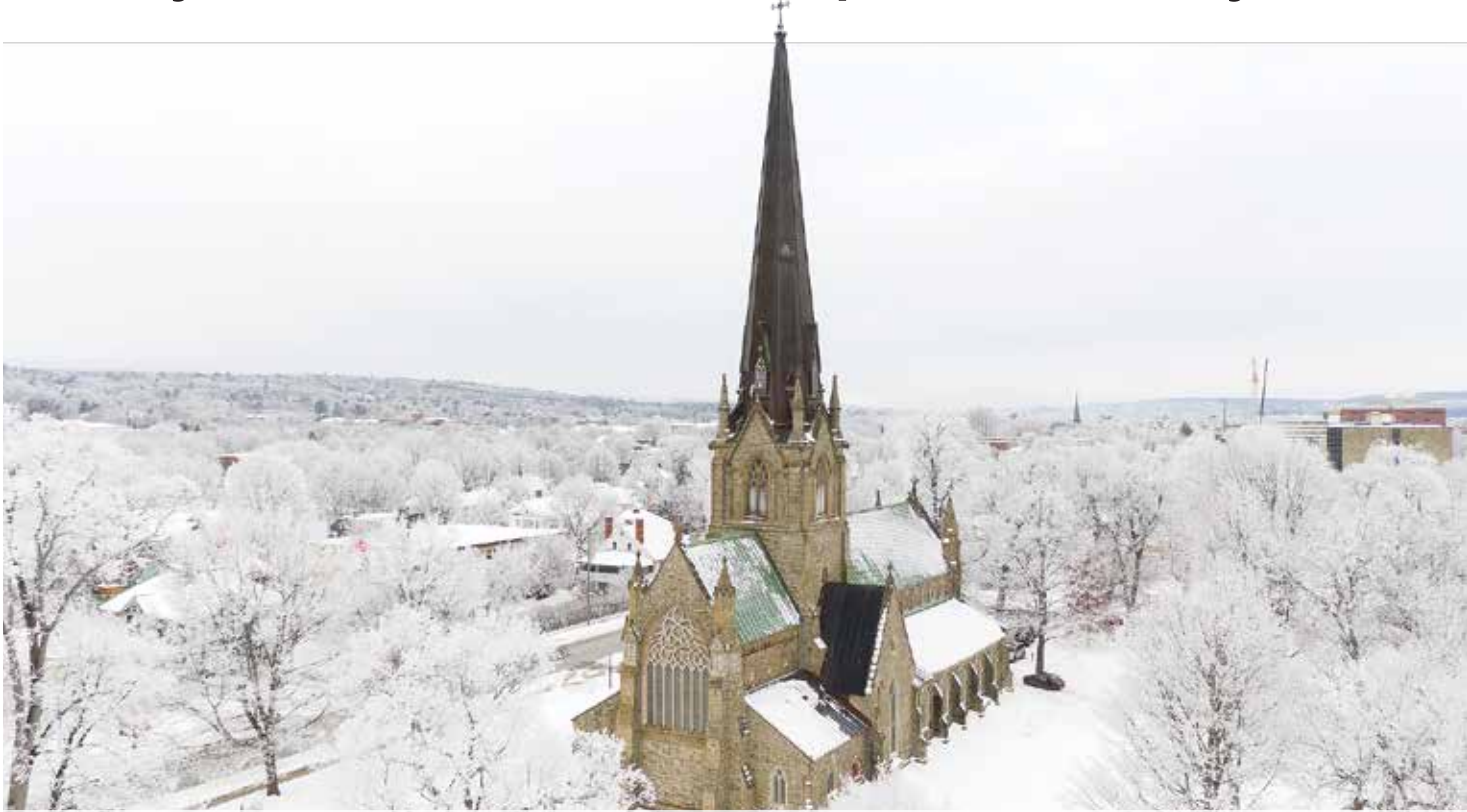


PHOTO: MORRIS PHOTOGRAPHICS

In October and as part of a years-long plan, the diocese of Fredericton sold some underused property near its cathedral. Property sales—some planned, others in response to financial pressures—have helped some dioceses fill budgetary gaps.

at least for now

Matthew Townsend, Tali Folkins, Matt Gardner and Joelle Kidd
ANGLICAN JOURNAL STAFF

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a public health crisis. But its economic effects have also been profound—have prompted varied responses from dioceses across the Anglican Church of Canada seeking to maintain their financial health.

To get a better sense of how dioceses are weathering the financial storm of the pandemic, the *Anglican Journal* reached out to executive staff members of Anglican dioceses across Canada. The resulting feedback offered a diverse picture. Some dioceses were able to provide more detailed responses to our inquiries, and not all were able to contribute to this report. But from the information the *Journal* received, a number of common trends emerged.

Perhaps the most universal trend was the cost savings incurred from reduced travel

See WAGE SUBSIDY, p. 12

COUNCIL OF
GENERAL
SYNOD ▶



PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

CoGS hears of ‘transformative change’ across church

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

A first round of strategic planning consultation sessions with Canadian Anglicans has revealed a sense of profound change at hand in the church, the Council of General Synod (CoGS) heard at an online meeting Nov. 6-8.

The Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) was formed in the fall of 2019 to put together a new long-term plan for the church. Since the summer—with the assistance of Janet Marshall, director of congregational development for the diocese of

Toronto—it has been holding “listening groups” to invite thought on the church’s future and strategic direction, and hear how Anglicans are coping with the unusual times brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. On Nov. 6, Marshall and members of the working group presented some of the themes that had emerged from the first round of 11 of these listening groups.

The coronavirus pandemic, Marshall told CoGS, appears to be revealing the church’s values but also its areas of weakness, “helping us see the ways that we’re fragile in new and different ways.” One theme that had emerged, she said, is the sense of

a “seismic shift” underway—a perception that the Anglican Church of Canada is “increasingly seeing the inevitability of large, transformative change, Pentecost change, on every level and in every way.”

The sense of change does not seem to equate with crisis, she added; there was an understanding that the change could be for the better.

“We know we’re still in that very in-between moment, that liminal moment ... and so this also means we have the opportunity to make things new, as scary or as exciting as that may feel,” Marshall said.

See DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, p. 7

ANGLICAN
VOICES ▶

‘Be still and know that I am God’: Hope in the year ahead, no matter what

By Naomi Beaver

ASK GOD TO give me the words he wants me to speak for him.

How can we come to know God? As I prayed and meditated on this reflection on a late November morning, I thought about the approach of the Advent season. It’s always been a big part of my life. Advent, for me, is hope—something that brings and gives hope. With the

year we’ve had, it hasn’t been easy to hope. We hear stories, we read the news, we know people who have been affected by COVID-19. I know there are a lot of different questions people have: “When is this virus going to end?” “Will it ever end?” “Is the world ending?”

In the midst of these questions, I have seen people rely on God now more than ever. There are times, in our own community, when there are families in need. In this past year,

one of the things I’ve noticed is that so many people give. For a while, we had donation requests within our community two or three times per week, and all of those times people didn’t hesitate. Different people all came together and gave what they could. I notice that people pay attention to each other more, too, acknowledging each other more. Here, we’re not allowed to travel in and out as we please (we are told to stay in the community for

precautionary measures), but people approach me, and I talk with them. I find I make more time to do things that I don’t normally do every day—because we can, for the moment.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, one of the verses that has stayed with me is Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.” That verse is powerful, when you think about it. No matter what’s happening in the world and no matter what’s

See ‘BE PATIENT’ p. 4

Sask. bishops recovering from COVID-19

Joelle Kidd
STAFF WRITER

Bishop of the diocese of Saskatchewan Michael Hawkins is thankful for the prayers and support he's received while in the hospital with COVID-19, and is encouraging people to be careful as the pandemic continues.

Hawkins contracted COVID-19 in mid-November and was admitted to the ICU. When he spoke with the *Anglican Journal* Nov. 24, he had been in the hospital for eight days and said there were no plans yet for his discharge. (He was released from hospital in late November.)

Hawkins said his experience of the virus was sobering. "Having been in the ICU for two days, the seriousness and the lethal nature of COVID has been impressed upon me—and in my own case, because I'm not getting better very fast. That's despite having taken all the precautions with hand-washing and mask-wearing, in public and my own office alike."

Hawkins wrote in a Facebook post Nov. 21 that the complications from the virus included "some heart effect/damage that does not appear to be worsening," and that his doctor "is very hopeful the worst is over."

Hawkins appointed Archdeacon Andrew Hoskin as commissary and they



▲ Bishops Adam Halkett (left) and Michael Hawkins (right) both tested positive for the coronavirus in mid-November. Photo: Diocese of Saskatchewan

PHOTO: DIOCESE OF SASKATCHEWAN

have suspended in-person public worship in the diocese. In a post to the diocesan Facebook page, Hawkins noted, "The Province may announce new regulations next week but I do not suspect that they will be robust enough to make a real difference."

Hawkins says his main appeal is for people to "take it seriously." He also wants to encourage prayer for those affected by the virus. "In the hospital at this time, there are a lot of elders, there are a lot of people who are alone, apart from their family and scared and quite sick."

In his case, he says, he has been "completely overwhelmed and uplifted by the prayer and care of the church across the country."

"It's been one of the most moving things of my whole life. I just feel people with me."

Diocesan Indigenous Bishop Adam Halkett was also diagnosed with COVID-19 around the same time. While he had been concerned about a potential diocesan outbreak, Hawkins said he was relieved to hear that the timing of the two diagnoses was a coincidence: "It appears that the transmission in our two cases were completely independent." As of writing there seems to be no community or church spread of the virus through the diocese.

National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop Mark MacDonald, who spoke with Halkett Nov. 24, reported that the bishop was "doing much better, and his symptoms have lessened." Halkett was at home in isolation at that time, and his daughter Katrina, who also tested positive, was feeling better.

"He is extremely grateful for the prayers of everyone. It means a lot to him and his family," said MacDonald.

Hawkins and Halkett have also been in touch. "I spoke with [Halkett] on Sunday and he seemed to be doing well.... I joked, because we have this term 'māmawi,' which is Cree for 'together.' I said, 'I think, buddy, we're taking this a little too far,'" said Hawkins. ■

Edmonton church avoids COVID-19 outbreak after presence of infected person at service

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

The associate priest of an Edmonton church says her church is grateful for having strictly followed COVID-19 protocols after a close brush with the disease.

On Oct. 19, someone who had been present during an in-person service the previous day at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Edmonton learned that they had tested positive for COVID-19, associate priest the Rev. Danielle Key wrote in an Oct. 27 update posted to the church's Facebook page.

"No matter the setting it is scary to hear of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 having been in the same room as you—or worse, within close proximity to you," she says.

The church followed the protocols not only of AHS but also those of the diocese and of its own corporation and vestry. This stringency reassured parishioners to the point where they were more concerned about the person who had tested positive and those who had to take COVID-19 tests than they were about the risks they faced, Key says.

The person contacted the church as soon as they found out they had tested positive. They also provided to AHS a complete account of where they had been and who they had been near, after which AHS contacted the church and investigated the person's potential contacts there—speaking with people, going through the worship service step-by-step and asking questions about the configuration of the chancel and nave and other details pertinent to the service.

As per instructions given to the

“This is... perhaps one of the only times we ALL wanted to FAIL a test.”

—The Rev. Danielle Key, associate priest

church by AHS, Key, the church's musical director and five choristers all self-isolated for 14 days, and then got tested for COVID-19. The person who had tested positive also followed all AHS's protocols. By Oct. 27, all the tests had come back negative.

"This is wonderful news and is perhaps one of the only times we ALL wanted to FAIL a test (though we are all still required to isolate until November 2nd)," Key wrote in her Facebook update.

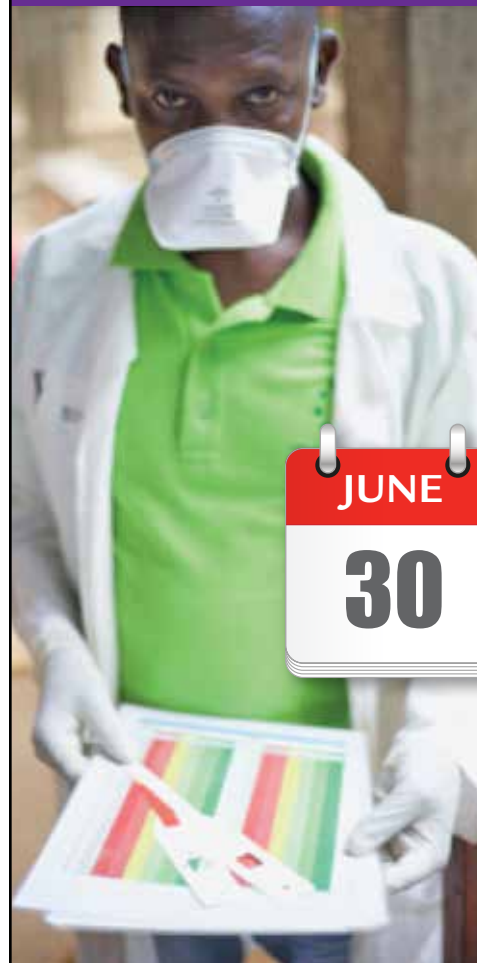
AHS had advised the church, Key added, that no one besides these people were considered to have been in close contact with the person who tested positive, so that there was no need for the rest of the congregation to self-isolate.

"We would like to assure all of our parishioners and community that should a case ever involve our congregation needing to take precautions we would reach out immediately to keep all informed," she wrote in her update. She also thanked everyone for following the church's protocols, including wearing masks at all times, sanitizing their hands and keeping physically distant.

"AHS has stated that it is because of our advanced safety protocols and strict adherence to these rules that we were able to isolate this case of COVID-19 and avoid any spread within our community," Key wrote.

She advises churches concerned about COVID-19 infections to plan well. ■

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Hildegard of Bingen

Renowned as polymath, pastor—and prophet

Matt Gardner
STAFF WRITER

FOR A WOMAN in medieval Europe, the Benedictine abbess later known as St. Hildegard occupied a relatively privileged position.

In part, this was due to privilege of birth: as the child of a noble family who possessed the clout to get her into a monastery, she could learn to read, to sing and perform music. In part, it was due to her own formidable talents: an autodidact gifted with innate genius and intellectual curiosity, she was self-taught in a range of disciplines and produced numerous scientific writings.

But in the view of Barbara Newman, a medieval scholar and religious historian at Northwestern University who has written three books on Hildegard, one factor above all facilitated the immense authority and renown Hildegard garnered in her time.

“She was a prophet,” Newman says of Hildegard. “She heard the voice of God. She literally saw visions. She had unshakeable conviction that God was calling her to do what she did, to say what she said, to write what she wrote.... She was tremendously charismatic. The force of that conviction made her ... kind of irresistible.”

Born in 1098 in what was then the Holy Roman Empire, Hildegard joined the Benedictine monastery at the Disibodenberg as a child oblate. Under the careful training of mentor Jutta of Sponheim, she was able to nurture her nascent abilities in music and the study of scripture and theology.

From an early age, Hildegard saw visions. Newman compares her to the anchoress Julian of Norwich; Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook, a priest of the Episcopal diocese of Los Angeles and scholar at Claremont School of Theology, calls Hildegard “the precursor to the great women medieval mystics.” But where Julian had one vision of Christ’s Passion at age 30 and spent the rest of her days pondering it, Hildegard experienced visions throughout her life.

Newman describes many medieval visions as relatively simple, serving essentially as an “excuse for discourse”: for example, Jesus or the Virgin Mary might appear to say something to the visionary. Hildegard, in contrast, “had a very painterly imagination.... She would see a whole scenario, sometimes like a moving picture, sometimes a kind of tableau in full colour, and she would actually describe each thing that she saw.”

During these visions, Newman says, Hildegard did not experience ecstasy or go into a trance or rapture. Rather, she would see them in a waking state with eyes wide open, observing both the ordinary world and the visionary world “on two planes at once”—a unique experience in the annals of visionaries.

“For her, visions were a teaching technique ... a way of visualizing the doctrine that God was calling her to teach to the church,” Newman says.

Though famed as a mystic, Hildegard also excelled in practical leadership. After Jutta died, Hildegard was



▲ “For her, visions were a teaching technique ... a way of visualizing the doctrine that God was calling her to teach to the church,” says medieval scholar Barbara Newman.

PHOTO: ZVONIMIR
ATHLETIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

unanimously elected as the *magistra* or leader of the small group of nuns at the Disibodenberg, which at the time was attached to a male monastery.

Eventually, Hildegard desired independence for the nuns. Her powerful connections enabled her to purchase land elsewhere and lead a secession of her group from the Disibodenberg.

The new community, called the Rupertsberg, would include 50 nuns, with Hildegard as their undisputed leader. Hildegard exercised judicial authority over the nuns, served as their spiritual teacher and composed music for the liturgy. She also took charge of the herb garden, enabling the community to provide medical care for locals.

Kujawa-Holbrook notes that Hildegard’s superiors permitted her to write about her visions, which gained her some renown: “Though she had some detractors—mostly those who opted for a more traditional version of the religious life than she did—there is evidence that she was known by religious and secular leaders throughout Europe, as evidenced by her letters,” Kujawa-Holbrook says.

By the time she was about 50, Hildegard had gained a reputation as a visionary, prophet and healer. She became the only woman of the Middle Ages authorized by ecclesiastical leaders to go on preaching tours. Her extensive correspondence led her to become what Newman describes as the “Ask Amy of her day,” responding to clergy who sought her advice on questions from how to resist sin to the best ways of managing monastic communities.

A keen observer of the natural

world, Hildegard wrote about animals, birds and minerals in a desire to learn more about their medicinal properties. She eventually produced a compendium of medicine that, although not especially influential in her own time, has shaped many modern holistic health practices.

Her writings on the interaction between human beings and the environment have also been influential through her concept of *viriditas* or “greenness,” which Kujawa-Holbrook describes as “the life-giving power that animates all of creation—the greening power of God.”

After her death in 1179, Hildegard became predominantly known as an apocalyptic prophet due to her writings on the End Times and the Second Coming, which would end up being widely circulated among both Catholics and Protestants. Later, she gained new popularity in the wake of 20th century feminism, which found inspiration in her work from a time when opportunities for women were severely limited. In 2012, the Roman Catholic Church canonized her as a saint and Doctor of the Church. Only four women hold this title, and Hildegard is the earliest of them, Newman says.

Perhaps the most enduring aspect of Hildegard’s legacy is her impact on music and the arts. There are approximately 75 musical pieces known to have been composed by Hildegard. She wrote a “sacred music drama,” akin to an oratorio, entitled *Play of the Virtues* and likely designed or sketched images in one manuscript of her writings.

Today, Hildegard maintains a strong following in the Anglican tradition, where her feast day is celebrated on Sept. 17. Choirs, study groups and religious communities have all been named after her, and many Anglicans participate in an annual Hildegard pilgrimage in Germany.

Within the Anglican Church of Canada, Hildegard was the inspiration for St. Hildegard’s Sanctuary, an “inclusive, arts-based, contemplative Christian community” in the parish of St. Faith’s in the diocese of New Westminster. The Rev. Melanie Calabrigo, who serves as visionary and gathering priest for St. Hildegard’s, says the community chose Hildegard as its patron saint due to her diverse spiritual practices.

Members of St. Hildegard’s Sanctuary, Calabrigo says, “resonate with Hildegard’s sense of connection between creativity and the Holy and the ways in which the work of our hands connects us to the Divine. The community is rooted in a theology of aesthetics and the notion of encountering the Holy in the experience of beauty, which results in hope and healing.”

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hildegard has stayed relevant. Calabrigo quotes one community member, who called Hildegard “a healer of body, soul, and spirit” and noted, “We certainly need healers in these times. And to learn from them as we navigate this pandemic, as well as the pain and grief caused by deep systemic brokenness.” ■

**ANGLICAN
VOICES ▶**


Communion beyond the human

By Susan Alexander

*If God were a tree, this page
would be a sacred thing,
oblation in cellulose.*

Dear Reader, I imagine you thinking right now—*preposterous!* Yet the Bible invites us to think of God as bread, breath, light, rock and a mother eagle, among other things. We read that God was manifest as pillars of cloud and fire, as whirlwind, and, of course, as burning bush. “I am the vine, you are the branches,” Jesus famously says to his friends. So is God as tree such a stretch? We may agree that God created the tree and so perhaps within its treeness is something of God.

I wonder if you, like me, had a strange and lonely Christmas—for the best of

▲ **“My first thought on the subject of how to know God in 2021 is GET OUTSIDE.”**

PHOTO: AERIA/
SHUTTERSTOCK

reasons. You want to slow down the spread of COVID-19. You care for your loved ones, neighbours and frontline workers. One safe way I navigate the necessary isolation is by finding companionship among the trees; I am privileged to live on an island near Vancouver.

The coronavirus has expanded my idea of communion beyond the human. I am not alone in this. Consider the joyous outpouring of photos and posts from around the world during the 2020 lockdowns: penguins parading down Cape Town’s empty streets, a rare civet cat on a Kerala crosswalk, wild boars in Haifa. Consider the surge in backyard birdwatching. In the absence of pre-COVID’s relentless pace, people are paying great attention to the natural world. As

the mystic Simone Weil said, “Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer.”

My first thought on the subject of how to know God in 2021 is *GET OUTSIDE*. If you can (and you live below the tree line), spend your attention on trees. If you live in the city, find your companions in parks or along boulevards. Listen to their winter silence; watch how their branches generously hold the lives of birds, insects, squirrels and, sometimes, our children. Watch spring bring out mists of buds that unfurl into green gold. Watch them turn scarlet in the fall. Trees share their knowledge, like Solomon, of seasons. Fruit trees and sugar maples teach sweetness. Trees spin sunlight into energy, creating oxygen as a gift to all living creatures.

See **KNOWING GOD**, p. 15

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‘Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord’

Continued from p. 1

happening in a person’s life, God is always there with you. It’s one of the verses that I have always reflected on.

I think God is speaking to everyone and wants us to turn to him and rely on him—even with everything that’s going on right now. No matter who they are or where they come from, “Be still and know me” is what I believe he is saying to everyone. I believe he will show us what he can do—the amazing things he can do.

A lot of people I know sometimes feel hopeless and helpless. I believe God is telling us to calm down. “Be still. I will show you. You will see what I can do for you. Allow me.”

My husband passed away back in 2014. During our time together, we led very different lifestyles, destructive lifestyles. Both of us lived with addiction. He had his own addiction, and I had mine—from unresolved trauma that he went through as child, and unresolved trauma that I went through as a child. My husband was one of the victims of Ralph Rowe, a pedophile priest, when he was about six years old. I knew he was always carrying something but that he couldn’t say what it was. I didn’t know until maybe three years before he passed away, when he disclosed it to me.

I suffered through sexual abuse, myself, as a child. Most of our lives, I lived with addiction and so did he. When he passed away, I knew if I continued to live the way I was living, I wouldn’t make it. I knew—something told me that I needed to make a decision, and not just for me. We have a daughter who’s 23 now. I had to make a decision.

And I did. I made a choice. Along the way, I started communicating and praying



▲ **“I believe God is telling us to calm down,” writes the author.**

PHOTO: NAOMI BEAVER

with God. I got up and made the choice to follow and to serve him, to rely on him. It’s amazing. It’s overwhelming when you give him access to your life, to your heart. He has shown me blessing after blessing. With the lifestyle I led, and to be where I’m at now—he deserves all the praise and all the glory. I am alive today on this earth because of God, because of Jesus, because of what he has done for me. I can’t say enough about all the things that he has shown me and the blessings he gives me. It’s unending. I can’t say enough of this.

We come to know God because he reveals himself in these ways. I love the part of Exodus where Moses leads the people through the Red Sea, with the pharaoh and his army behind them. They came up to the Red Sea, and they didn’t know where to go. There was no way out, nowhere to run. Nowhere. It looked so impossible, seen with human eyes. And right there, God showed them: “Look what I can do. I will take care of you.” And there, God revealed himself, and that he can do the impossible. Amen.

And that’s what he has done for me, too. He reveals and shows me that he can remove the bondage of addiction, no

matter how deep. No matter how hopeless and helpless you feel, he can change you if you allow him. He has the power to remove the bondage, the pain, the suffering you carry in your heart. He can restore anything—no matter how big, no matter how painful it is.

If you are in any kind of pain, bondage or suffering as this year begins, know this: you’re never alone, no matter what you’re going through in your life. Jesus is always there, waiting and willing to help you. His timing is always right. When you give him access to your life and your heart, he will guide you and show you the way to where he wants you to be. He knows our every need. He knows even before we ask.

I leave you with two verses that speak to me about knowing God.

The first is James 5:8:

“Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.”

This touches me and makes me want to be ready, even in the midst of all the chaos that’s going on around us or just daily life. Sometimes my work can be hard, dealing with families and children in crisis, and sometimes I need to be still, sit down and pray.

The second is from Psalm 121:6:

“The Lord will keep you from all harm. He will watch over your life.”

And he does. I believe he does. For everyone. ■

Naomi Beaver lives in Big Beaverhouse, Ont., and is a server at St. Matthew’s Anglican Church in Kingfisher Lake.

SINGING WITH JOY ▶



Finding God in unsettling times

By Linda Nicholls

WHEN I LIVED in the Himalayas, we had occasional earthquakes. During a Bible study I wondered who was shaking the bench I was sitting on only to realize we were experiencing an earthquake. As we leapt to our feet I realized there was nowhere to go to escape—the very earth under our feet was rumbling, and running away would not change that. It was profoundly unsettling. Where do you seek safety when everything around you is unstable?

We begin a new calendar year with no end of the pandemic in sight, though news of vaccines is encouraging. Every benchmark we have set for gathering for family celebrations has been cancelled: Easter—Thanksgiving—Christmas. Just when things begin to look hopeful, we are plunged back into uncertainty. Where do we find stability?

The only place of stability I know, for this or any other upheaval in our lives, is in God. The Creator of all is our refuge. Psalm 121 records that, though we may look to the solidity of the mountains, when we ask, “Where is my help to come from?” the answer is, “My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” I have a sense that we are being pruned of our reliance on anything or anyone else through the COVID-19 pandemic.



IMAGE: WINUI/SHUTTERSTOCK

We are being invited to ensure that our foundation is in God first. We hold all else lightly, so that if it is taken away we are not discouraged or defeated, and if we retain it we enjoy it with delight and gratitude.

The practice of this kind of stability is at the core of the monastic life and is central to a grounded, hopeful joy that cannot be destroyed by the ups and downs of daily experiences. It is also a stability that is practiced through prayer and intentional immersion in God. I suspect that is why the opportunities for daily morning or evening prayer or compline have attracted many people during the pandemic.

The dean of Canterbury Cathedral, Robert Willis, spoke to the Anglican Church of Canada’s House of Bishops in October about his experience of moving the daily offices online when the cathedral

was locked down. Those daily offices were initially intended for those who lived nearby but could no longer attend services in person. As cathedral staff prayed them online, however, they discovered thousands of people worldwide who were hungry to be in touch with God in the midst of daily life. The ordinariness of praying in the garden with the cat, or while standing in the drizzle, reminded those watching that God is here in the messiness of now. Stability was found in offering each day to God through worship, Scripture reading and prayer.

This is not new. It is foundational to the Anglican understanding of community life: parishes that pray daily and offer to God praise, intercessions, confession, hopes and agonies in the certainty that in God—the stable heartbeat of our lives—these prayers will be sorted and answered as God wills, in God’s time.

We may be weary of the ongoing struggle of COVID-19, tired of remaining isolated, longing for what we have lost. For now, look to the source of stability that will carry us through. Be in touch with God daily. “From where is our help to come? From the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.... The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in forever more.” (Ps. 121). ■

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

WALKING TOGETHER ▶



Knowing God in four directions

By Mark MacDonald

FOUR-DIRECTIONAL THINKING is quite widespread among Indigenous elders. There are many ways of identifying this pattern of thought and life across the Land. The term “four-directional thinking” is not always used. This is, however, something that you can recognize in elders, even though they might use quite different words to describe it. Based on observations of the sacred way in which God has ordered Creation, it applies the sacred motions of life to the way human beings encounter humanity, Creation, and truth.

The basic idea is that anything we encounter must be seen from a minimum of four directions in order for it to be perceived in anything close to its fullness. All beings—and the motions and forces of their lives—have many sides and levels. We must walk around the truth of what we encounter with humility and respect. The truth of life is pervasive and undeniable, but it can never be owned or captured by human intellect. It can be known in such a way that we would die for it. It can never be known enough that we can kill for it. This

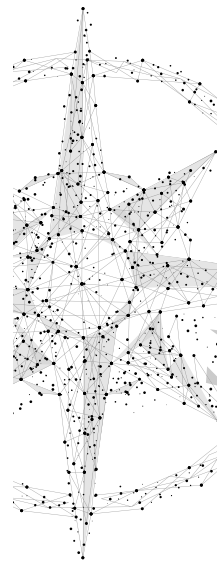


IMAGE: ANTONIART/SHUTTERSTOCK

is the balance, beauty and harmony of life.

Above all else, the truth of God requires a special measure of humility and reverence. God cannot be surrounded by the words or intellect of human beings. A perception of God’s presence finds us. This is what it means to know God. It is an intimate knowing, but it is not an encounter with the essence of God. God is not known from one direction. Using a four-directional approach, we can discern four ways that God approaches us in promises offered in mercy and love. Held together, they give light to each other and show the good way of living. Experienced together, they heal us.

God is present and perceived in the human heart. If we open our hearts, God promises that he will enter in and have communion with us. We believe, however, that the divine life is already deep within us and our opening reveals something precious that was always there. The Good News that Jesus shared points to this encounter with God in us.

God is present and perceived in human community. God promises the divine presence wherever two or three are gathered in the Name of Jesus. God

promises the divine presence in the poor, the sick and the prisoner. The Good News that Jesus shared urges us to encounter him, the living Word of God, in each other.

God is present and perceived in Creation. The intricate beauty and pattern of God’s Creation reveals the glory, wonder and love of the divine presence. This has, in many moments of human history, been hidden by human greed, laziness, waste and ingratitude. The Good News that Jesus shared reveals our encounter with God in every particle and moment of Creation.

God is present and perceived in the future, a future that meets us in Baptism, in Eucharist and in human acts of love, justice and peace. All of these are artifacts of a future that God promises will bring us a new heaven and a new earth. The Good News that Jesus shared, in his teaching and proclamation and in his death and resurrection, point us towards his second coming, carrying the new life that will transform a humanity and Creation that has been defaced by sin. ■

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

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Orthodox school finds 'natural home' at Trinity

Matt Gardner
STAFF WRITER

The only Orthodox theological programs in Canada accredited by the Association of Theological Schools are offered at a historically Anglican college—a fact that may seem counterintuitive. But as Fr. Geoffrey Ready, an Orthodox priest and co-director of the Orthodox School of Theology (OST) at Trinity College says, it is also “far from accidental.”

Ready was the chief driving force behind the creation of the OST in 2015, when Trinity College extended the Orthodox and Eastern Christian studies program it had offered since 2006 to include an MDiv degree. Canon David Neelands, former dean of divinity at Trinity College, says that before Trinity offered its Orthodox and Eastern Christian studies program, the Orthodox church had no real presence at the University of Toronto.

“We had a long relationship with Orthodox figures, so we thought we’d give it a try,” Neelands says. “We’ve always been hospitable to other denominations that didn’t have a college at the University of Toronto.”

Trinity’s Anglican heritage, Ready says, actually makes the college a more welcoming space for an Orthodox program.

“The Anglican and Orthodox churches have a lot in common,” he notes. “Both are communions of local churches with no centralized global hierarchy. Rather, their unity is based on shared communion in faith and sacrament.... That’s important on many levels, and it means there’s an instinctive bond and familiarity between Anglicans and Orthodox.”

Ready describes both Anglican and Orthodox as “big tent” churches, centred on a common faith that still allows for a wide variety of approaches and theologies. Anglicanism, for example, historically



▲ **“There’s an instinctive bond and familiarity between Anglicans and Orthodox,” says Fr. Geoffrey Ready.**

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

encompassed both “high” (Anglo-Catholic) and “low” (evangelical) church traditions. Meanwhile, Orthodox traditions—having never experienced a schism on the same scale as the Protestant Reformation—arguably housed all their dissenters in one tent, Ready says.

He also cites the example of the late Canadian Anglican bishop Henry Hill, who spread awareness of Eastern traditions and fostered good relations between Anglican and Orthodox Christians. The OST has hosted a conference dedicated in Hill’s honour.

For these reasons, Ready says, an Anglican faculty of divinity as at Trinity College is in fact “the natural home for an Orthodox school of theology. It offers the catholic breadth in which we are most comfortable to gather, learn and share our Orthodox theology and practice.... It’s precisely the Anglican heritage and theological spirit that assures our Orthodox students that they are welcome now, and in the years to come.”

Since it began offering the MDiv program, the OST has experienced steady growth in student numbers. While most students are part-time, an increasing number study at the school full-time.

Having offered online courses since the beginning, the OST was well-situated to shift towards remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ready says. In part due to its early move into online distance education, up to two-thirds of OST students live outside the Greater Toronto Area.

Canon Philip Hobson OGS, ecumenical officer for the diocese of Toronto and Anglican Communion representative on the Anglican/Orthodox International Theological Dialogue, notes that the Orthodox presence in Canada has been growing for years because of immigration. Newly arrived Christians from countries such as Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Ethiopia often belonged to Orthodox churches in their native lands.

As ecumenical officer, Hobson has seen Orthodox churches being built across Toronto and the denomination becoming a larger presence within the city and Christian community. Together with Ready, Hobson in 2018 helped revive the local chapter of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, an informal fellowship designed to foster ecumenical dialogue, particularly between Anglican and Orthodox Christians.

Hobson calls the OST at Trinity College “a very hopeful sign” in the larger context of ongoing Anglican-Orthodox dialogue. Besides providing an MDiv to Orthodox students, Hobson says, the OST has “broadened and enriched” programs offered at Trinity and allowed Orthodox students to take courses elsewhere through the Toronto School of Theology.

“It allows for that richness and breadth of theology and churchmanship, which I think is really quite wonderful.” ■

Helping subscribers and donors understand how Anglican fundraising organizations distribute donations

PWRDF helps displaced Iraqi families come home

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

Members of 1,500 displaced families in northern Iraq were more safely able to return to their homes this year as the result of a project funded partly by the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF).

Since last June, thousands of families have been returning home to Sinjar—a mostly Yazidi city not far from the Syrian border—from the autonomous Kurdish area of northern Iraq. The families had fled Sinjar in the wake of massacres and other atrocities during its occupation by ISIS in 2014.

The Yazidis, a religious minority living mostly in northern Iraq, were the victims of massacres, sexual assault and sexual slavery during the occupation. An estimated half-million were displaced, fleeing to Kurdistan.

Political instability, a lack of basic infrastructure and services—including security services—has made it difficult for them to return, says Prabin Manandhar, country representative with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), PWRDF’s partner in the project.

Returning families also face an additional threat—the COVID-19 pandemic—and the situation is more critical because they don’t have access to clean water, soap and other materials necessary for hygiene. Much of



▲ **“The protracted humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the largest and most volatile in the world,” says Naba Gurung, humanitarian response coordinator for PWRDF.**

FILE PHOTO: A WOMAN IN NORTHERN IRAQ RECEIVES HELP FROM LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION: ACT ALLIANCE/SAAD GEDEON

the city is now in ruins, and many wells in the area were destroyed by ISIS. Women and girls are facing a number of “secondary effects” of the pandemic, Manandhar says, as a result of the closure of schools, loss of livelihood, family stress and the lack of safe spaces. “This has caused domestic and gender-based violence, increased early marriage, unwanted pregnancies and school dropouts. Life-saving care and psychosocial support have been disrupted while the health service providers are overburdened and preoccupied in handling COVID-19 cases,” he says.

In response, LWF launched a project to aid their return. Through ACT Alliance, a humanitarian coalition of which PWRDF and LWF are members, PWRDF

contributed \$30,000 to the project, which has a total budget of \$80,000. The project began Oct. 25 and will have ended in late December, Manandhar says.

Under the project, 1,500 hygiene kits—containing soap, sanitary pads, hand sanitizer and other items—will have been distributed to families. The project also involved repairing wells and renovating water treatment facilities, including implementing tests to make sure water is safe, and the distribution of information on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Naba Gurung, humanitarian response coordinator for PWRDF, says the agency chose to support this project partly because of the massive need.

“The protracted humanitarian crisis in Iraq remains one of the largest and most volatile in the world,” he says. “The COVID-19 outbreak hit a country already facing a humanitarian crisis, further deepening vulnerabilities and disrupting ongoing efforts to deliver aid to the most vulnerable people in acute need of humanitarian assistance.”

Another reason is the in-country experience of LWF, he says, which has been involved in relief and recovery efforts in Iraq since 2014.

Manandhar says the work is important, and hopes LWF is able to continue it in 2021 after the current project ends. ■

NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD 1

Pandemic year ends with surplus—but cuts likely at national office from 2022, CoGS hears

Joelle Kidd
STAFF WRITER

Despite the difficulties and uncertainties brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, General Synod is projected to end the year with a substantial surplus, Council of General Synod (CoGS) heard Nov. 7. However, proportional giving from dioceses—General Synod’s largest source of revenue—is expected to continue declining, and program cuts will likely be necessary between 2022-2025.

CoGS voted to pass the 2021 operational and capital budgets after a presentation by General Synod treasurer Hanna Goschy during the council’s virtual meeting.

Goschy noted that the 2020 surplus is due almost entirely to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Virtually all travel in 2020 has been suspended. This results in some significant expense savings,” she told the council, noting that along with an absence of staff, committee and governance-related travel, meetings of CoGS and the House of Bishops had both been held virtually this year.

“What we’ve seen in the past two years was a really significant drop in proportional giving.”

—General Synod Treasurer Hanna Goschy.

Along with travel savings, General Synod received two months of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and had “some savings in staff costs.”

For 2020, proportional giving from dioceses “is expected to lag budget, but not by much,” Goschy said. “The primate was in conversation with many diocesan bishops earlier during the year, I’ve been in conversation with many diocesan finance officers..., and many of the dioceses affirmed their commitments for 2020. So I think that speaks incredibly to the commitment and support of General Synod ministries by dioceses across the country. It’s just amazing.”

Looking forward to 2021, however, a different picture emerges. “Total revenues [for the 2021 budget] are planned at \$8.7 million, expenses at \$9.4 [million]. There is a deficit of \$622,000 before transfers, and then transfers from reserves and appreciation of \$643,000, with a very, very small surplus planned at \$21,000. So there’s quite a big transfer from reserve,” Goschy told CoGS.

The decline in revenue reflects expectations of a decrease in proportional giving from dioceses, contributions that account for 88% of General Synod’s net revenue in the 2020 budget.

Ongoing decline in proportional giving has been raised at previous meetings of CoGS, and a continuing decrease was expected even before the pandemic.

“What we’ve seen in the past two years was a really significant drop in proportional giving. As certain dioceses have faced some challenges in their own finances, they have not been able to contribute to a level, perhaps, that they have in the past,” Goschy said. The forecast for diocesan contributions in 2020 is \$7.4 million dollars, which falls \$119,000 short of the budget.

Proportional giving in 2021 is budgeted for about \$6.4 million, a 15% decrease from 2020. However, this also includes a \$1 million contingency. “That contingency is really large, and hopefully it’ll be large enough. The [amount of] proportional

See **UNCERTAINTY**, p. 10



PHOTO: DANITA DELIMONT/SHUTTERSTOCK



PHOTO: HAROLD STIVER/SHUTTERSTOCK

Digital technology ‘mixed blessing’ for church, CoGS hears

Continued from p. 1

Alongside this perception of change in many areas of the church, SPWG also heard of a certain sense of normalcy prevailing amongst many Indigenous communities amidst the pandemic, “because it feels like just one more crisis amongst the multitude of crises that their communities face all the time,” she said.

The topic that came up the most often, and in the most groups, was online church, SPWG member Canon (lay) Ian Alexander said. There seemed to be a realization that the future of the church was to have a hybrid presence—that providing online worship and ministry alongside in-person church was not just a response to the temporary challenge posed by the pandemic. But the groups also revealed, he said, a sense that digital technology was a “mixed blessing” for the church.

“It has helped us maintain community, it has helped us offer pastoral care, it has helped us reach out to new people, it has helped bring people back who may have felt nervous or concerned about walking in the door but who can kind of look in—but at the same time it’s placing real demands on staff and volunteer time, on energy and capacity,” he said. The mushrooming of online church was also raising questions, he added, about Canadians’ unequal access to digital technology for economic and geographic reasons.

SPWG also heard listening groups ask basic questions about the identity and purpose of the church. “We heard things

about how the institutional church seems less important than the community of the church—the gathered people, the relationships,” Marshall said. It also heard, she said, many affirmations of Anglicanism, especially its “capacity to connect over multiple layers and cultures and geographies and languages.”

Listening group members spoke about new ways of being church emerging—in many different ways, Marshall said. Among these were a transition from parish-based to regional approaches; a questioning of clericalism and a growing appreciation of lay ministry; a realization of how much is possible in terms of discipleship in small groups and online prayer, as well as new missional communities. There was also much talk, she said, about property—both, on the one hand, a sense that buildings are not a high priority for the church and on the other, a recognition of the importance of sacred space. SPWG also heard that the church has “a renewed focus on the basic mission of serving those in need,” Marshall said, with a need for new relationships to better engage in anti-racism and ecumenism. It heard that the Indigenous church is moving toward increased self-determination.

There was much discussion about leadership and governance, Alexander said. Anglicans appreciated the “grounding” role of the bishops and primate, he said, but were also wondering whether the pandemic might serve as a kind of spur for structural change: participants, he said expressed “a sense that we have been forced in this time to make

decisions more quickly, more nimbly, with a lighter structure—and that perhaps there are lessons to be learned about what we could do going forward to permanently lighten, and speed up, and simplify some of our ways of going about doing business.”

Participants also wanted to talk about sustainability, Alexander said, and in this area there seemed to be a wide variety of experiences across the country. Some areas, he said, did not seem to be doing badly financially; others were “in great crisis”—but generally, he said, there was a sense that the pandemic had placed a greater sense of urgency on achieving financial stability.

“One person put it, ‘Many parishes have been one or two giving families away from insolvency, and this crisis may have tipped them over that balance,’” he said. As a result, many group participants expressed a need to look at different ways of using church real estate and finding ways to deal with financial challenges generally.

SPWG chair Judith Moses said one theme she had heard the listening groups clearly express was a sense that injustices in society had been both revealed and worsened by the pandemic. Street ministry, she said, was facing “huge challenges” dealing with heightened levels of domestic distress and violence, addictions, suicide and homelessness. Participants, she said, recognized that the church is valued by community groups as a partner in addressing this suffering; at the same time, she said, listening group members voiced a perceived “hunger” among various social

service groups for the church to call out for better protection for the vulnerable in society through universal basic income, prison reform and other policy changes. They also felt that “enormous pressures” were being placed on the front-line people in the church—clergy and volunteers—and that these people were experiencing considerable fatigue.

After the session, CoGS members were surveyed on 29 areas of interest that had emerged from the listening groups, and were asked to rank the five they considered most and least important.

Two days later, on Nov. 8, Alexander presented some very preliminary findings from this survey. The top five areas of interest, according to these findings, were:

- Communication with and among Canadian Anglicans;
- Dismantling racism and colonialism;
- The self-determining Indigenous church;
- The national church’s convening, connecting role; and
- Youth ministry.

The five areas of least interest for CoGS members were:

- Real estate management—best practices;
- Structural change and reconfiguration (provinces, dioceses);
- Partnerships with secular organizations;
- Liturgical resources; and
- Management structure, processes and accountability—alternative models.

—with files from Matt Gardner

NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD 2

‘The Spirit has been present in new and exciting ways’

Planning, disruption and hope in a pandemic year

By Monique Stone

“The best-laid schemes of Mice and Men go oft awry.”

—Robert Burns, “To a Mouse”

WHAT DO YOU DO when you’re trying to come up with a plan, and a pandemic hits and stops everything in its tracks?

This is a question none of us probably asked ourselves before March 2020, and a question no one had in mind when the work that emerged from General Synod 2019 began to be tackled by the Council of General Synod (CoGS), supported by the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG).

It’s a question, however, that the SPWG had to ask itself this year. When we reflected on the new realities that COVID-19 was placing on our church and the anxiety, stress, lament and fear that we knew laity and clergy were feeling across the country, the group realized that even the term “strategic plan” seemed difficult to discuss. To continue our work the way we had envisioned seemed insensitive to the space that we found ourselves in. At the same time, we knew that profound creativity was at work and transformation was happening in parishes and communities across the country. We did not want to lose the opportunity to harvest the hope, excitement, and authentic realities that have the potential to sit at the foundation of our future plans and directions in the years ahead.

And so, we stopped what we were doing and decided to listen—to the lament and worry AND to the hope and faith. We recognized that we had entered a kind of “liminal space”: a space of in-between.

Last April, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, wrote, in a statement on the church’s strategic planning process:

No part of the church’s life and work could or should proceed according to “business as usual” – including our strategic planning process. I suggested, and the working group quickly agreed, that we would form a series of “listening groups” to listen actively and openly, attentively and carefully, appreciatively and respectfully, to what Canadian Anglicans are saying, thinking and feeling at this unique time about their church, at the local, diocesan and national levels.

One of the unique roles of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada is to act as a conduit of connection between Anglicans from across the country. Through it we are able to foster learning about what is happening in different dioceses and communities and to strengthen connections that can add capacity to the church as a whole. As the primate reminded us in her paper, “On Being Church,” “[The Anglican Communion is] an international family of juridically independent but recognizably connected churches, in which each part assists the other.” In a nutshell: we are in this together, and by connecting and listening to each other we may be able to glean more than we could apart.

Over the past seven months the SPWG, guided by the theme, “A Changing Church. A Searching World. A Faithful God,” has left the normal planning processes behind and instead invited small groups of laity and clergy from across the country to come together (over Zoom, of course!) to listen and learn. Groups have been led by teams consisting of members of CoGS and the SPWG, and have been organized according to particular areas of interest and responsibility. There are listening groups of bishops, synod staff, diocesan councils, financial officers, young clergy, Indigenous community leaders, Anglicans focused on social justice and community ministries, communications officers and congregational development leaders, and others. In all, more than 125 individuals have met—some of them up to three times—to share their experiences, to support each other, to build relationships and to foster hope for the future.

Using a gospel-based approach of group conversation and discernment, participants have reflected on the road that we are on (Luke 24.13-21); the transformation the church is in the midst of (Ezra 3.8-13), and the unity of who we are as the Anglican Church of Canada at this time and into the future (1 Corinthians 12.12-27).

Through these conversations we have shared joy and laughter. We have honoured worries and fears. We have shared concerns about dwindling finances and the need for structural change. We have discussed mental health and systemic injustices. We have shared ideas and creative solutions. Told stories of hope and new life. Taught each other about what is going on in our neck of the woods. Found comfort in knowing that we are all together on a pandemic-fueled roller-coaster that has us feeling both hope and concern—sometimes at exactly the same time.

The strategic plan work of CoGS over the last seven months looks nothing like what was envisioned—yet the Spirit has been present in new and exciting ways. Canadian Anglicans have adapted and listened. Perspectives and insights that would never have been given the opportunity to emerge through traditional methods have flourished. And in the midst of a time in history that told us to stop what we are doing, we have listened to each other and strengthened relationships across the country and across our church. In this liminal moment that is both disruptive and profoundly Spirit-filled, space has been created that will undoubtedly inform who we are called to be in the future.

As dangerous as liminal seasons can be, they can also be transformative. A malleable situation invites experimentation and risk-taking. We are free to question tradition, which can make space for originality, generativity, and creativity. All truly great innovations are incubated in liminality. God’s greatest works occur in liminal space.

—Susan Beaumont, *How to Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going*

The Rev. Monique Stone is rector of Julian of Norwich Anglican Church in Ottawa and a member of the national church’s Strategic Planning Working Group.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD 3

‘New ways of being church are emerging’

CoGS members share some thoughts on the strategic planning process

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

As the tumultuous year 2020 drew to a close, and as Canadian Anglicans looked towards another year of uncertainty, the *Anglican Journal* informally surveyed members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) about the presentation on the national church’s strategic planning process they’d heard Nov. 6. What had stood out for them, and what were they taking away? What do they think the church needs to know about the planning process? Here’s what a few of them told us. Their responses have been lightly edited.



▶ **Canon Paulette Bugden, Clergy, Ecclesiastical Province of Canada**

Community: Deer Lake, N.L.
Parish: Parish of Deer Lake
Diocese: Western Newfoundland
Member of CoGS since: 2019

1. *What do you make of this presentation, from your place of prayer back home?*

The information which was shared from the listening groups is very encouraging because it shows we have a shared interest with some of the same difficulties and same joys as the rest of our Anglican Church of Canada. Seeing the priorities of mission, anti-racism, the self-determining Indigenous church and, on the flip side, buildings not being such a high priority gives me a lot of hope for our Anglican Church and the work of the SPWG.

2. *What will you, as a CoGS member back in your home parish and diocese, do with this information?*

I will share with my fellow Anglicans how the whole church in Canada is going through the same thoughts and feelings that we are here in a small corner of the country.

New ways of being church are emerging and I believe that is good. As a church leader, I feel it is necessary to help parishioners realize that being church is not just about gathering for worship in a building. The third Mark of Mission says, “To respond to human need by loving service” and to do this we have to be outside the building. The thoughts and ideas from these listening groups have also brought this to light along with many other ideas which I will, hopefully, share with the parish and diocese through information sessions and synod executive meetings.

3. *Is there anything else you’d like to share with Canadian Anglicans about the national church’s strategic planning process so far?*

The fact that the theme for this triennium, “A Changing Church, A Searching World, A Faithful God” was set before the onset of COVID-19 seems to me to have been a foreshadowing of what was to come. The church, as we know, is very slow to change; however, now change has been thrust on us and the SPWG has shifted its focus to deal with the current situation, and also to continue beyond the pandemic. The church’s issues before the pandemic still exist, along with all the new issues; therefore, it is a bonus to have listening groups from all over this country from different age groups and from many slices of our lives, languages and culture.



▶ **Dale Drozda, Youth, Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon**

Community: Kamloops, B.C.
Parish: St. Paul’s Cathedral
Diocese: Territory of the People
Member of CoGS since: Previous and current triennium

1. *What do you make of this presentation, from your place of prayer back home?*

It is great to see that, despite all of the changes we have been experiencing with the shift to online church and rapidly changing regulations, key themes still emerged in the listening groups. It is an interesting and important time to be strategic planning because of the idea that there is a will for us to not just return to “normal,” so it is good to think about what this will mean for the years ahead. I am glad to see dismantling racism and supporting the self-determining Indigenous Church are emerging as key areas of focus for the plan.

2. *What will you, as a CoGS member back in your home parish and diocese, do with this information?*

I will be sharing information about the listening group processes and the information shared by the listening groups with my parish and dioceses; there are a lot of shared themes, despite the fact that locally many places are facing different challenges right now. I will also share that the SPWG will be looking at international models of strategic planning, diocesan strategic plans and will be considering resources while planning.

3. *Is there anything else you’d like to share with Canadian Anglicans about the national church’s strategic planning process so far?*

We have been surrounded by constant and necessary change for the safety of our communities. Whereas normally strategic planning is done with a lot of flipcharts, hands-on workshoping, and other methods that require more face-to-face

interaction, just like so many other areas of the church, the Strategic Planning Working Group has needed to adapt. The resulting process of connecting with listening groups has had a beautiful outcome. I would encourage Canadian Anglicans to check out <https://www.anglican.ca/changingchurch/> to get an idea of the work being done for the strategic plan.



▶ **Archdeacon Val Kerr, Clergy, Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario**

Community: Niagara, Ont.
Parish: N/A
Diocese: Niagara
Member of CoGS since: 2019

1. *What do you make of this presentation, from your place of prayer back home?*

It was a great presentation which highlighted our goal of inclusion in a very important process of the direction of the church.

2. *What will you, as a CoGS member back in your home parish and diocese, do with this information?*

I share whatever I can with our bishop and fellow archdeacons at our twice-a-month meetings.

3. *Is there anything else you’d like to share with Canadian Anglicans about the national church’s strategic planning process so far?*

While we were well into a strategic planning process, this pandemic had us having to rethink what we had been working on to come up with a method of connecting with the wider church. The listening groups were well thought out and actually came as mixed blessings. While it was impossible for us to meet in person, using Zoom enabled us to meet with people virtually to hear what was important to them as we journey forward with our planning.

To me this process was a way of the Spirit working among us to help us refocus on where it is God is calling us at this time. We are in the midst of exciting changes in the church and listening to the whole body of Christ, to me, is a great way to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.



▶ **Canon Murray Still, Anglican Council of Indigenous People**

Community: Winnipeg, Man.
Parish: St. James Anglican, St. Stephen and St. Bede
Diocese: Rupert’s Land
Member of CoGS since: 2018

1. *What do you make of this presentation, from your place of prayer back home?*

I like the focus on Indigenous ministry and mission. It is heartwarming to know a

good portion of the Church sees this as a high priority. This fits with the self-determination work now underway in the Indigenous community. Despite the current pandemic, the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACIP) has been meeting online. A big piece of the work involves the drafting and approval of a constitution for a fifth Anglican province in Canada. This work is shepherded by the national Indigenous archbishop, ACIP and the Indigenous House of Bishops Leadership Circle. National programs and partnerships are also continuing.

2. *What will you, as a CoGS member back in your home parish and diocese, do with this information?*

The self-determination of Indigenous Anglicans is of importance in all dioceses where Indigenous people are present. Rupert’s Land has one of the highest populations of Indigenous people. Within the diocese, we have hosted many Sacred Circles and our current B15 Resolution allows for exploration of ways to include Indigenous ways of life into our governance. So far, we have seen this in the appointment of a male and female elder to advise the bishop of Indigenous matters at Synod.

3. *Is there anything else you’d like to share with Canadian Anglicans about the national church’s strategic planning process so far?*

For me, partners shared with other denominations are beneficial, and I value the voice at our meetings. At ACIP, we have explored a partnership with the Red Cross, who will assist us in crisis training and suicide prevention, for example. Are there ways to partner with Indigenous communities in assisting with the many challenges faced today? Can we learn from other dioceses and other denominations what works and what resources can be shared? Are we sharing the national resources? What can we learn from partnering?



▶ **Scott Potter, Youth, Ecclesiastical Province of Canada**

Community: Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Que.
Parish: St. John the Evangelist
Diocese: Montreal
Member of CoGS since: 2019

I suppose that what I took from the SPWG presentation was that Christianity, if it is to begin turning back the tide in Canada, will do it ad hoc and contextually, with dioceses, communities, and individual Christians working to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love their neighbours as themselves. ■

NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD 4

Church eyes possible full communion with Moravians in 2022



PHOTO: MORAVIAN CHURCH IN CANADA

The Moravian Church, which has 19 congregations in Canada, is present in 38 countries.

Tali Folkins
STAFF WRITER

The Anglican Church of Canada's Faith, Worship and Ministry (FWM) Committee is hoping the next General Synod will see a full communion agreement with another denomination: the Moravians, Council of General Synod (CoGS) heard Nov. 8.

Since 2001, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) have been in full communion, allowing clergy of each church to serve congregations of the other. In 2019, General Synod passed a resolution expanding this, recognizing full communion among all four major Anglican and Lutheran churches in Canada and the U.S.

One of the "bonus effects" of this agreement is that it raised the possibility of exploring relationships with the counterparts

in Canada of the U.S. Anglican and Lutheran churches' other communion partners, the Rev. Scott Sharman, the Anglican Church of Canada's animator for ecumenical and interfaith relations, told CoGS. Among these partners is the Moravian Unity, an international denomination with three jurisdictions in Canada. Both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church are in full communion with the Moravian Church.

FWM, Sharman said, has approved initial steps toward creating a task group for exploring a relationship with the Moravians in Canada—possibly culminating in full communion at the next General Synod, which will be a joint assembly with the ELCIC.

"If things go well in those conversations, our hope is that this task group would have a proposal to come back to CoGS

for some further review, with a view that perhaps at Assembly 2022, when we gather with the ELCIC in common council, and as part of marking the end of the 20th anniversary celebrations of full communion between those two churches, we might discern together stepping into a third decade of full communion—by taking action to ... extend the circle of full communion to another Christian community," he said.

Like the Anglican Communion, the Moravian Church was born out of the reforming movements of the early modern era, and like it—but unlike many Protestant churches—it has an episcopal structure, with bishops, deacons and presbyters. It has congregations in 38 countries, including 19 congregations in Canada, Sharman said. ■

Uncertainty built into budget

Continued from p. 7

gifts by dioceses is less certain for 2021 than it has been in the past, and that's just because I haven't received proportional giving reports from everyone," said Goschy.

Typically, Goschy said, dioceses send General Synod a proportional giving report outlining their commitment for the following year. This creates a lag of two years, so that the 2021 budget would be based on 2019 financial results. "But the reality is that many dioceses don't know what's going to happen in 2021, so I did not receive many reports," said Goschy. "The best that I could do was look at past history, estimate some dioceses based on what I know is going on in their area locally, make some estimates based on what certain dioceses have told me."

Goschy said General Synod has so far been managing the decrease in proportional giving by decreasing its salaries and benefits expenses, and by not replacing staff who have retired or resigned their positions. She noted that General Synod had gone from a head count of 50 full-time staff in 2019 to 43 full-time positions in the 2021 budget.

Assuming a 2% decrease annually in proportional giving, the budget for diocesan contributions would total just \$5.9 million in 2025.

During a response time, Canon David Harrison raised the question of whether 2021 would be the last year "that we will be able to have a net benefit from reserves, and in fact...program cuts starting [in] 2022 and getting deeper are in fact the reality we're facing?"

The presumption that proportional giving would continue to decline indicates that cuts will be necessary in 2022-2025, Goschy said, adding that "that was the case even a year ago before COVID hit." Goschy said she hoped to see the Strategic Planning Working Group and Proportional

Giving Task Force—which will be charged with assessing the system for diocesan contributions—working together to answer that question.

Goschy pointed out that General Synod "doesn't have a whole lot of levers to pull in response to decreases in revenues," and noted that the three main areas of expense that could be reduced are staff salaries, travel and funding for the Council of the North. Salaries and benefits make up 44% of General Synod's expenses. Council of the North grants account for 23% of expenses, and travel accounts for 11%.

"Where are you going to cut if you have to cut? I can't say that today. There's going to have to be a lot of work done and some careful thinking before we have to decide on that. We're going to have to be very responsible, and obviously the budgeting has to be in line with the work of the strategic planning group."

Goschy also noted during her presentation that the overall travel budget had been decreased for 2021, both to reduce costs and due to the uncertainty of when travel can resume because of COVID-19.

In addition to diocesan contributions, General Synod's net revenue comes from Resources for Mission (2%) and other sources (10%)—such as rent for shared space in the church's national office, investments and revenue from ABC Publishing.

In addition to passing the budget, CoGS also voted to sign a non-binding memorandum of understanding with an ecumenical partner to look into relocating into a shared work space. The memorandum opens up the future possibility for the church's national office to move from its current location at 80 Hayden St., Toronto, to a new location, which would be leased from and shared with an ecumenical partner. ■



PHOTO: AFRICANSTAR

Dismantling Racism Task Force appointed

Matt Gardner
STAFF WRITER

Council of General Synod (CoGS) appointed seven members to the Dismantling Racism Task Force at its November meeting.

Members of the task force include Dale Drozda from the Territory of the People, Brittany Hudson and Aleshia Johnson from the diocese of Toronto, the Rev. Vivian Lam from the diocese of New Westminster, Irene Moore-Davis from the diocese of Huron, Catherine Pate from the diocese of British Columbia and the Rev. Canon Norm Wesley from the diocese of Moosonee.

CoGS established the Dismantling Racism Task Force in June following a wave of protests around the world against anti-Black racism. Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, had made anti-racism a focus for CoGS in fall 2019, noting widespread systemic racism against Black, Asian and Indigenous people in Canada.

Also at CoGS in November, the Strategic Planning Working Group announced results of its survey to council members asking them to outline the areas they saw as most important to strategic development work. CoGS members identified "Dismantling racism and colonialism" as one of their top priorities. ■

[General Synod] doesn't have a whole lot of levers to pull in response to decreases in revenues.

— General Synod Treasurer Hanna Goschy

NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD 5

‘Overwhelmed with weariness’: Concerns about societal stress grow as pandemic lingers

Tali Folkins and Matt Gardner
STAFF WRITERS

Worries about mental health are growing as the church settles into an often-stressful “semi-permanent pattern of living and working” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Archbishop Linda Nicholls, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, told the Council of General Synod (CoGS) which met online Nov. 6-8.

In her opening remarks on the first day of the meeting, Nicholls said she was often being struck, seven and a half months into the pandemic, by the creative ways people are addressing the challenges it poses. The online services being offered by many churches, even after the resumption of in-person services, have benefited people unable to leave their homes as well as many who would not have entered a church, she said. And, she added, she sensed continuing hope and faithfulness in the church.

At the same time, she said, it’s clear the pandemic has been taking a toll on many people.

“There remains a concern for mental health, as the isolation and loneliness are weighing heavily on families, grandparents, single people and any for whom physical connection is essential. I think particularly of families with children with special needs,” she said.

Clergy and bishops are feeling stress also, Nicholls said. Work takes longer with staff working remotely, and many clergy often feel pressure from not being able to deal as readily with pastoral concerns. Some church leaders, she said, “are, frankly, just overwhelmed with weariness and exhaustion.”

The national office is trying to offer what help it can, Nicholls said, citing, for example, a video message of hope for All Saints’ Day her office had released the previous week. The national office is also preparing a service of lessons and carols drawing on contributions from cathedrals in each of the church’s four ecclesiastical provinces, for use by parishes.

Increasingly, the primate said, Anglicans recognized that the “either/or” dichotomy of in-person worship vs. online worship would likely not fully return, as the church had discovered new opportunities to connect online locally and globally. The previous



▲ **“The isolation and loneliness are weighing heavily on families, grandparents, single people and any for whom physical connection is essential,” Nicholls told CoGS.**

PHOTO: MIRIAM DOERR
MARTIN FROMMHERZ

night’s evening worship service and installation of Archdeacon Alan Perry as the new general secretary, for example, had been watched by people across Canada and in New Zealand, Hawaii and Wales.

The primate reported that Anglican churches had been faithful in following the advice of medical professionals. To date, she was not aware of any COVID-19 outbreak traced to an Anglican gathering.

In October, Nicholls had visited Sault Ste. Marie and the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School, now the location of Algoma University. She had also visited the former Church of St. John the Evangelist, now home of the local Métis Cultural Centre, where she heard the Métis story of that area and was encouraged by the deep partnership between the Anglican diocese of Algoma and Indigenous needs and concerns in that area and community.

The House of Bishops had met over Zoom for five days in the fall, she said. Including four elected since Sept. 1, the house counted 19 bishops elected and consecrated since January 2018. At this meeting it had discussed the work of the Governance Working Group (GWG), the role of the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination, and ongoing dialogue with the United Church of Canada.

Also in the fall, the primate had met with her counterparts from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and the Episcopal Church. The four church leaders committed to deepening and sharing their learning and ministry, she said.

The previous day, Nicholls and primates around the world had met online with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. They spent the morning talking about the pandemic and how churches are struggling with COVID-19 and its economic impact. Several provinces shared difficulties with paying clergy stipends and spoke about retiring clergy who have no pensions or support, she said.

The primates also met with representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) to hear the latest updates on COVID-19, and their view (at the time) that a vaccine would likely not be available until April 2021 at the very earliest. They shared what Nicholls described as the “disturbing” news that strains of COVID-19 had mutated, jumping from humans to animals and back, necessitating the culling of 17 million mink in Denmark.

The WHO made clear it saw faith communities as critical partners, Nicholls said, and were eager to meet with the primates as representatives of the Anglican Communion. WHO officials asked the primates to be “encouragers of shared values and working partnerships” with the medical community to keep the virus as controlled as possible so as not to overwhelm health-care systems.

Closer to home, Nicholls asked council members to remember the diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, which had been hit by the unexpected death of Bishop Geoffrey Peddle while he was on a short leave. The death of the bishop—who had been intending to retire on Dec. 31—had “shaken the diocese,” Nicholls said. The vote for his successor took place at the sixth electoral synod for the diocese on Nov. 28. She asked the council to pray for the Peddle family.

The primate concluded by putting forward a motion to appoint a new vice-chancellor. With the retirement of Ann Bourke in that role at the end of August, Nicholls had decided to recommend the appointment of a successor. The primate put forward a motion for the appointment of Canon Clare Burns as vice-chancellor, describing her as “a faithful Anglican with extensive legal experience.” The motion carried. ■

“There remains a concern for mental health.”

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

Episcopal Church pushes triennial meeting to 2022

Joelle Kidd
STAFF WRITER

The U.S.-based Episcopal Church has postponed its 80th General Convention by a year, the church’s presiding officers announced Nov. 20.

In a letter to bishops and deputies, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and president of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings wrote that they had “spent the last several months riding waves of pandemic news,” Episcopal News Service reported.

Despite the news that vaccines might be approved in the near future, “it is unlikely



▲ **Despite the arrival of vaccines, gathering is unlikely to be safe, leaders say.**

PHOTO:
EPISCOPALCHURCH.ORG

that even highly effective vaccines and robust federal intervention would permit us to gather as many as 10,000 people safely by next summer, as we had originally planned,” the letter stated.

The convention was originally set to take place in July 2021. It has been rescheduled for July 7-14, 2022 and will

be held in Baltimore, Maryland. With this rescheduling, the meeting will conclude two weeks before the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in Canterbury, U.K., which was rescheduled for July 27-Aug. 8, 2022.

General Convention is the triennial meeting of the church’s primary, bicameral governing body. Among its responsibilities is the approval of a three-year budget plan for the national church as well as a host of liturgical and public policy resolutions. Planning for each General Convention begins seven years in advance, and the churchwide budget includes \$750,000 for holding each General Convention. ■

Wage subsidy keeps many afloat

Continued from p. 1

and the shift of church activities online. Many dioceses invested in technology for their parishes, such as purchasing Zoom accounts. However, these expenses were generally less than the cost of travel and accommodations prior to the pandemic.

Another common trend was the key role played by the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) in helping sustain diocesan finances. Many dioceses cited the federal wage subsidy as helping maintain their financial health during the pandemic. However, not all dioceses qualified for CEWS. In such cases, dioceses found alternative ways to live within their means. The diocese of Caledonia, for example, moved its offices from rented space in Terrace, B.C., to the cathedral in Prince Rupert. (Indeed, diocesan real estate transactions have made some headlines during the pandemic. The diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador announced the sale of its office to close budget gaps [*Anglican Journal*, Dec. 2020, p. 11], while the diocese of Fredericton listed its office and unused bishop's residence as part of a long-term plan.)

Dioceses based in large urban centres generally had greater resources to respond to the pandemic. The diocese of New Westminster, based in Vancouver, was able to provide \$1.73 million in financial support to parishes, as well as technology grants. However, even in dioceses with more resources to draw upon, smaller parishes and those in more remote areas often found it more difficult to cover their expenses in the wake of the pandemic, with fundraising and rental income out of the picture.

While the overall impact of the pandemic on finances varied greatly, a majority suggested that they had been able to maintain financial health through a combination of the CEWS, reduced travel expenses and the benefits of previous stewardship efforts. Uncertainty remains, particularly after the scheduled end of the CEWS in December.

"This pandemic has brought its share of suffering," Archdeacon Alan Perry, general secretary of General Synod, told the *Journal*. "Obviously our first thoughts are with those who have suffered illness and those who have died or have lost friends and family to COVID-19. But even those of us fortunate enough to have escaped the disease have faced uncertainty, anxiety and stress."

Perry noted, though, that crisis is sometimes an opportunity in disguise. "Clergy, and bishops and volunteers, and staff in parishes, dioceses and the national office, have worked hard—often heroically—to find and learn new ways of continuing to do God's work throughout these uncertain times. Those new skills are helping us to navigate the pandemic, but will also serve us well in the future. This time of uncertainty has been an opportunity for us to discover afresh God's grace, our resilience and the strength that comes from working together and supporting each other.

"In addition, we have been greatly blessed by people's generosity. We're very grateful for individual donors who have maintained or even increased their support for God's mission in parishes, dioceses and at the national level. And we're grateful for dioceses that have continued to support the work of the General Synod through their proportional giving."

Read on for more detailed responses from the dioceses.

“We're very grateful for individual donors who have maintained or even increased their support for God's mission in parishes, dioceses and at the national level.”

—Archdeacon Alan Perry, general secretary of General Synod

“The giving situation has been a mixed picture—some parishes have seen decline, others have held their own, and a few have seen an increase.”

—Archdeacon Pilar Gateman, executive officer of the diocese of Calgary



Algoma

Archbishop Anne Germond says that the diocese of Algoma has been “working diligently to communicate well with the parishes of the diocese

throughout the pandemic, encouraging them to do what they can in submitting their monies for apportionment and stipend.” Regular meetings were held with parish leaders “keeping them apprised of the wage subsidy program and [assuring] them that we would do everything to pay everyone on the payroll.”

Germond says these meetings have been very beneficial and will continue. Being able to meet online has also benefited lay members who previously took vacation days or struggled with travel. The diocese has seen cost savings from the move to virtual meetings, and it expects the same in 2021.

Parishes have seen some income drop because of COVID, especially those that depend on fundraising, but open talk of stewardship has resulted in increased giving.



British Columbia

Gail Gauthier, director of finance for the diocese, says the synod office administers an electronic giving plan in which many parishes started

participating before the pandemic. After in-person services were suspended, more joined, “while others arranged to drop off their monthly envelope givings at parish offices under safe protocol procedures.”

While electronic giving has flowed, most rental income ceased and fundraising efforts like fairs were put to a halt. However, food assistance programs brought in donations from the community. Similarly, costs of hosting a virtual synod were offset by savings on catering.

A diocesan fund for parish emergency relief, along with the CEWS, has helped churches, Gauthier says. The diocese has also supported parishes by providing Zoom and Vimeo licenses.



Caledonia

The diocese of Caledonia has been working on “our ongoing desire to live within our means,” says Bishop David Lehmann. This has included a recent

move from rented office space into offices inside the cathedral in Prince Rupert, B.C.

Lehmann says the diocese did not qualify for the CEWS. “We're limping along,” he says, noting that parishes were only closed two and a half months to in-person worship. Diocesan worship was held online before in-person worship returned in mid-June.



Calgary

“The diocese set apart several hundred thousand in funds for parishes who [requested] help with the finances; and we looked after the paperwork to ensure that our parishes received the CEWS and other government funding that was appropriate,” Archdeacon Pilar Gateman says. “The giving situation has been a mixed

picture—some parishes have seen decline, others have held their own, and a few have seen an increase.”

In its own budget, Calgary has seen savings from reduced travel and a shift to virtual meetings. As the pandemic continues, Gateman says, the diocese is considering “what lessons we are learning about what ... ways of doing things might be jettisoned, or at least modified, and what new things we have taken on (e.g. electronic meetings) might become part of our new way of operating.”



Edmonton

The diocese remains on budget due to the generosity of congregations as well as the CEWS, says John Gee, secretary-treasurer. It has

not been able to provide direct subsidies to parishes, but Gee says “almost all of our parishes have been able to cope.”

Increases in direct-debit giving have helped parishes maintain revenue, with some able to share funds with less fortunate parishes. The diocese has saved on travel costs, though Gee says they don't constitute a large part of the budget.

“Our limited re-opening of worship has been successful so far and is financially sustainable,” Gee says.

Gee says his concerns about sustainability haven't grown beyond “those I already had before the pandemic, which are basically confined to certain rural areas.”

The diocese has been able to continue with existing priorities in the 2021 draft budget.



Fredericton

The diocese helped parishes address short-term financial issues and deferred collecting shared ministry assessments until the impact of

the pandemic was known, says the Rev. David Peer, executive officer of synod and secretary. The diocese then reduced shared ministry requests—most parishes saw reductions in giving—and the treasurer centralized submission for the CEWS. “As we look back on the year, with the assistance of the wage subsidy and the reduced demand on diocesan resources our financial position is sound,” Peer says.

The diocese also recently saw the sale of some key properties. Archbishop David Edwards tells the *Journal* that the recent sale of the diocesan office and the unused bishop's rectory had been discussed for at least a decade. He cites Peer's work towards the sale, which began before the pandemic.

Reduced travel, curtailed programs and virtual meetings led to a 5.5% reduction in expenses. The diocese plans on keeping expenses reduced by 5% next year, with those savings offered back to parishes as reduced assessments, Peer says. The draft budget will hold contributions to General Synod “at historic levels.”

On the parish level, Edwards has seen “some parishes where giving is up year-over-year. There's some where it's pretty stable, and there are others where it's down.” He says this “mixed picture” would likely hold true for most dioceses.

Edwards also noted that there has been a great deal of variation in how dioceses in the ecclesiastical province of Canada have fared, given disparities in infection counts and government response. In New Brunswick, he says, the government communicated openly with the church.

Giving eclipses fundraising

Continued from p. 12



Huron

After the March shutdown, “the diocese of Huron assured all parishes and clergy that ministry would continue, that leadership was needed more than ever, and that it was a great time to invest in our common life—that the church would be needed to lead during this time,” says Bishop Todd Townshend.

The bishop says members responded generously and losses were primarily felt around now-impossible activities like rentals and fundraising. “A healthy uptick in automatic pre-authorized givings to our churches has been experienced,” he says. Townshend also cites the CEWS as sustaining the pastoral workforce, in combination with gifts received.

The diocese has seen savings from travel and meeting costs, as well as slight hydro savings. A virtual synod was held in September “at a greatly reduced cost.”



Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh (Northern Manitoba Area Mission)

The pandemic has not significantly affected sources of funding for 2020, says Bishop Larry Beardy, suffragan bishop of Northern Manitoba Area Mission. Among these sources Beardy counts the national church, the Council of the North, donations from the parishes and communities in Northern Manitoba, and the diocese of Brandon, which is in the third year of a four-year funding commitment.

Beardy says it is unclear what will happen in the future. “I’ve been in consultation with ... an elders advisory group. Basically what we said was, during COVID, parishes cannot provide any funding towards any of the work for Northern Manitoba.” Instead Beardy says they hope to work with local leadership to open up communication with the federal government.

Further uncertainty comes from the Indigenous church’s vision for self-determination, which may include the creation of a fifth province in the Anglican Church of Canada.



Montreal

“Early on in March, we decided to give the parishes a six-month break from diocesan assessments,” Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson tells the *Journal*. “We also paid for one month of payroll for the clergy” before becoming eligible for the CEWS.

The bottom line, she says, is that churches have all had respite. Assessments were further suspended through the end of the year, to resume in January.

“Some parishes have really been propelled into a much more efficient means of being in touch with their parishioners,” Irwin-Gibson says. One parish, St. Barnabas in Pierrefonds, even got itself out of debt during the pandemic. Others may not be able to adapt—and survive—“because they were just too tired or too few on the ground.”

She says parishes that did not have pre-authorized or online giving struggled more than others. Parishes that close, though, will need to make that decision on their own.

“Parishes who had previously worked at faithful stewardship are well placed with comparative or even slight increases in financial contributions.”

—Patricia Dorland, chief financial officer of the diocese of Moosonee



Moosonee

The diocese has experienced “a full range of situations” during the pandemic, says Patricia Dorland, chief financial officer. Parishes that depended on fundraising efforts for revenues have been “heavily affected,” while those that quickly enacted alternate means of collecting donations have remained steady, she says. “Parishes who had previously worked at faithful stewardship are well placed with comparative or even slight increases in financial contributions.”

While the diocese has not offered any kind of jubilee, no clerics have been laid off due to suspension of worship. Along with the CEWS, she notes that travel costs—for meetings, episcopal visitations and clergy with multi-point parishes—have decreased, at the price of greater isolation.

The diocese plans to remit the full assessable amount to the national church in 2021. It will also need to determine, she says, whether virtual gatherings are effective for intimate sharing and compassionate listening.



New Westminster

The diocese has been able to provide \$1.73 million in financial support to its parishes, says Shailene Caparas, director of finance. Assessments were cancelled for five months, while the diocese paid salaries of priests in parishes with less than \$750,000 in consolidated trust. Parishes were also authorized to draw up to 20% of their funds out of the trust. In the fall, the diocese added \$132,000 of support for technology grants for livestreaming needs, and it underwrote the cost of Zoom licenses for the pandemic’s first six months.

“We also initiated appeals and offered recommendations to the federal government to ensure our parishes would be eligible for the available government subsidies,” Caparas says.

The pandemic has moved the diocese into exploring how to “to serve God’s mission with our finances—in lieu of envelope giving, almost all parishes now have the online giving option.”

In 2021, salaries for clergy and lay staff will be kept at the current level. Before the pandemic, the diocese decided to increase its commitment to the national church and has maintained that through 2020, despite the financial challenges it is facing.



Niagara

At the fall synod, Budget Chair Gerry Anthony said that in recent years, the diocese had managed its resources well, according to a news update posted Nov. 9 on the diocese’s website. As a result, he said “we are heading into the next year in a relatively good position, all things considered.” The \$3.6-million 2021 budget forecasts a deficit of \$473,000, he said, though the diocese plans to cover it by drawing on its investments and selling property in 2020.

The budget sets aside \$250,000 for parishes unable to meet their usual contributions toward diocesan mission and ministry and \$30,000 in grants to help them with new technologies; it also

eliminates interest on receivables to help cash-strapped parishes.

Canon Jody Beck, the diocese’s treasurer and director of finance, said employment expenses would decrease in the 2021 budget, which would not include a cost-of-living increase. The diocese is cutting expenses in travel, in-person programs and other ways, and is planning a targeted stewardship campaign.



Ontario

A surplus for diocesan operations is forecast for the end of the year due to reduced expenditures, executive officer and financial officer Alex

Pierson says.

The CEWS played a major role in reducing the impact of lower income within churches. The diocese of Ontario has created a “Pandemic Church Support Fund,” generated mostly by CEWS contributions. It has provided a grant program to assist churches with technology to support online worship, and forgiven interest on insurance invoices that were billed to church accounts in February.

The move to online worship has resulted in financial giving from people not normally part of a congregation. In general, Pierson says, churches with pre-authorized giving programs saw less of a decline in income due to the pandemic. COVID-19 will likely “accelerate the end of life” for some congregations and buildings that were already facing challenges.



Ottawa

Parishes in the diocese of Ottawa have felt varied financial impacts from COVID-19, according to Canon Linda Hill, executive archdeacon.

“Some smaller parishes that have been financially struggling for years are finding that COVID is bringing them into a crisis situation,” she says. “Our bishop is committed to being personally engaged in talking with them about what the future holds, but it can be a difficult time for those involved.”

One parish saw its decision to close accelerated by the pandemic, she says. “But many parishes have received amazingly steady and generous financial support from their parishioners, and that, along with government wage subsidies, has allowed them to maintain their ministry commitments including outreach to those in need.”

Hill says support offered to parishes came from collective diocesan resources.

TERRITORY OF THE PEOPLE

Territory of the People

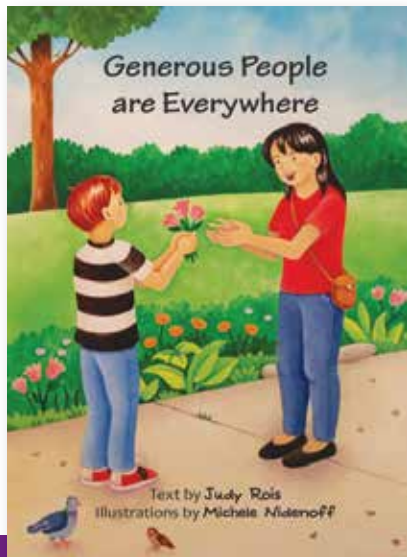
The Territory of the People, like other parts of the church, applied for and received the CEWS when it qualified for it, says Bishop Lincoln McKoen. While the church “is facing basic questions around financial sustainability,” McKoen says the more existential questions concern the church’s nature and its future need for buildings.

McKoen says the diocese has budgeted accordingly for 2021. “While we are presenting a negative budget for approval, excellent financial stewardship over the past years has allowed the Territory to be able to weather this crisis.”

See **VIRTUAL MEETINGS**, p. 15

“A healthy uptick in automatic pre-authorized givings to our churches has been experienced.”

—Todd Townshend, bishop of Huron



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Virtual meetings cut costs

Continued from p. 13



Qu'Appelle

Bishop Robert Hardwick launched an Easter appeal at the online diocesan Easter service, but money collected was to be

used for community outreach rather than church expenses. The diocese promised to match funds raised, which totaled \$42,947.

"In most cases, the generosity of the faithful continues" within the diocese, Archdeacon Catherine Harper says. "The diocese has been blessed during this time by the receipt of bequests," she adds.

Reduced travel has meant savings, as Harper notes that investments in Zoom accounts are less expensive than travel.

Some parish support staff have been laid off, while parishes have lost rental income. The diocese has asked parishes to submit yearly comparison figures in order to determine its eligibility for government benefits.



Quebec

The diocese of Quebec has not modified its 2020 budget, according to Marie-Sol Gaudreau, director general. While it has not offered any specific

aid to parishes in 2021, it is planning a relief package for 2021, she says.

The diocese has seen reduced travel and meeting costs, but no synod-related savings as it had not planned on meeting in 2020. For 2021, the diocese has approved a deficit budget, "therefore sustainability issues are certainly a concern," Gaudreau says.

"For the moment, since a deficit budget was approved, the diocese will have to rely on its investment strategy to be able to meet its cash flow requirements" in 2021, she says.



Toronto

At the start of the pandemic, the diocese of Toronto provided a three-month jubilee for payments

related to clergy remuneration and diocesan allotment, says Rob Saffrey, executive director. "The cost of this was approximately \$4.5 million dollars and will be covered from the sale of some vacant land owned by the diocese. Our parishes have indicated that this has helped them significantly and many of them are approaching the end of the year in reasonable financial condition given the overall state of uncertainty."

Saffrey notes that the suspension of in-person services has led to changes that could not have been foreseen in 2019. "Many of our churches are livestreaming their services and have enhanced their ability to receive donations from various online platforms. We anticipate that many of these changes will continue."

Synod will move online for 2021.



Western Newfoundland

"We will finish 2020 with a balanced budget," Bishop John Organ says, expressing gratitude for parishioners' generosity.

Organ says the CEWS "significantly bridged the gap of lost income due to COVID-19" and "made a huge and positive difference for us financially." He

says the diocese is in a better position to cope with challenges that come in 2021.

Digital technology has helped save 50% of travel and hotel costs, the bishop says. "We have become more adept and comfortable with technology and it will remain in use on a diocesan level and also, I suspect, at the ecclesiastical province and national levels."



Yukon

The diocese has not adjusted its budget during the pandemic, Bishop Lesley Wheeler-Dame says. None of the parishes of the diocese

are self-supporting, the bishop adds, so the diocese hasn't put in place additional financial aid for parishes but has focused on the shift to virtual meetings. While budgets for meetings have gone unspent, she says, donations were below normal year-to-date.

Wheeler-Dame says the technological changes have also raised questions around bandwidth and isolation.

An advisory committee will explore how to plan for the years ahead, with a report expected at the end of March. In the meantime, Wheeler-Dame says, "I don't think all is doom and gloom. I think that we need to be cautious." ■

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Knowing God 'beyond human-made constructs'

Continued from p. 4

I am aware I am pushing this metaphor of God as tree a bit hard, but in 2021 I need to know God beyond human-made constructs and contexts. Our brilliant faculties have led us humans into dark places. We are watching unprecedented numbers of citizens die from opioid poisoning, the other epidemic alongside the coronavirus. Our COVID isolation has driven us deeper into our socially acceptable dependency on the *smart* devices we keep close, which daily dole out their tiny doses of dopamine. All the while the surveillance capitalists grow richer as they sell us and our attention to the highest bidder. If attention is prayer, as Weil suggests, *who are we praying to?*

Summer temperatures are soaring dangerously in many cities throughout the world. Trees are part of the solution. Our urban heat islands cool down marvelously under the shade umbrellas of these leafy citizens, who filter air and water, reduce noise, while gracing busy streets. B.C.'s official tree is

the western red cedar, also called *Arborvitae* ("Tree of Life"). It can live over a thousand years. For the Coast Salish peoples, it carries profound cultural importance. At the rate the climate is changing, these beloved giants will be gone locally within 100 years. Already I see the young ones dying. Storms in B.C. have more than doubled in just three years and are increasingly severe. The volatile climate is a result of fossil fuel extraction and consumption. Following Paul's lead, I admit that *of sinners, I am chief*, being a beneficiary, user and victim of the oil and gas enterprise.

My second thought on spiritual practices in 2021 is *GO INSIDE: be still and know that I am God*. Trees teach stillness and stability. I am learning to ask what are the deeper longings below my compulsion and consumption? Am I rooted in love, for God, for self and for my neighbours, who include all creation? When despair over existential threats whispers *it is too late*, this is the heartwood where I find strength. I am not a good

student, but my teachers are patient.

Dear Reader, my hope is that prayerful attention can build within us the collective will to restore our living world, its health and balance, and thereby save ourselves. So I pay attention to the teachings of my COVID companions, the trees: how they silently commune, how they share resources through interconnected root networks, how even in death, they give.

*If God were a tree,
we'd study Botany
to grow closer to
Divinity.
Our third eye
would be a leaf.*

"Theophany"

Susan Alexander's poetry has received multiple awards including the 2019 Mitchell Prize for Faith and Poetry; Nothing You Can Carry is the title of her most recent collection. She lives on Nexwléxw/Bowen Island, the traditional and unceded territory of the Squamish people.

February 2021 Bible Readings	
DAY READING	DAY READING
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 Exodus 13:1-16	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 1 Cor. 10:14-11:1
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 Luke 2.22-40	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 2 Cor. 4:1-12
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 Isaiah 40:21-31	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 2 Cor. 4:13-5:10
<input type="checkbox"/> 04 Psalm 147	<input type="checkbox"/> 13 Mark 1:40-45
<input type="checkbox"/> 05 1 Cor. 9:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 Mark 9:2-13
<input type="checkbox"/> 06 1 Cor. 9:15-27	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 Mark 9:14-29
<input type="checkbox"/> 07 Mark 1:29-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 2 Cor. 5:11-6:10
<input type="checkbox"/> 08 2 Kings 2:1-14	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 Psalm 51
<input type="checkbox"/> 09 2 Kings 5:1-15	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Joel 1:1-15
	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 Joel 1:16-2:11
	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 Joel 2:12-32
	<input type="checkbox"/> 21 Joel 3:1-21
	<input type="checkbox"/> 22 Genesis 9:1-17
	<input type="checkbox"/> 23 Genesis 17:1-16
	<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Genesis 17:17-27
	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Psalm 22:1-15
	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Psalm 22:16-31
	<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Romans 4:1-12
	<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Romans 4:13-25

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