

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in the Diocese of Montreal

CHRIS BELLE

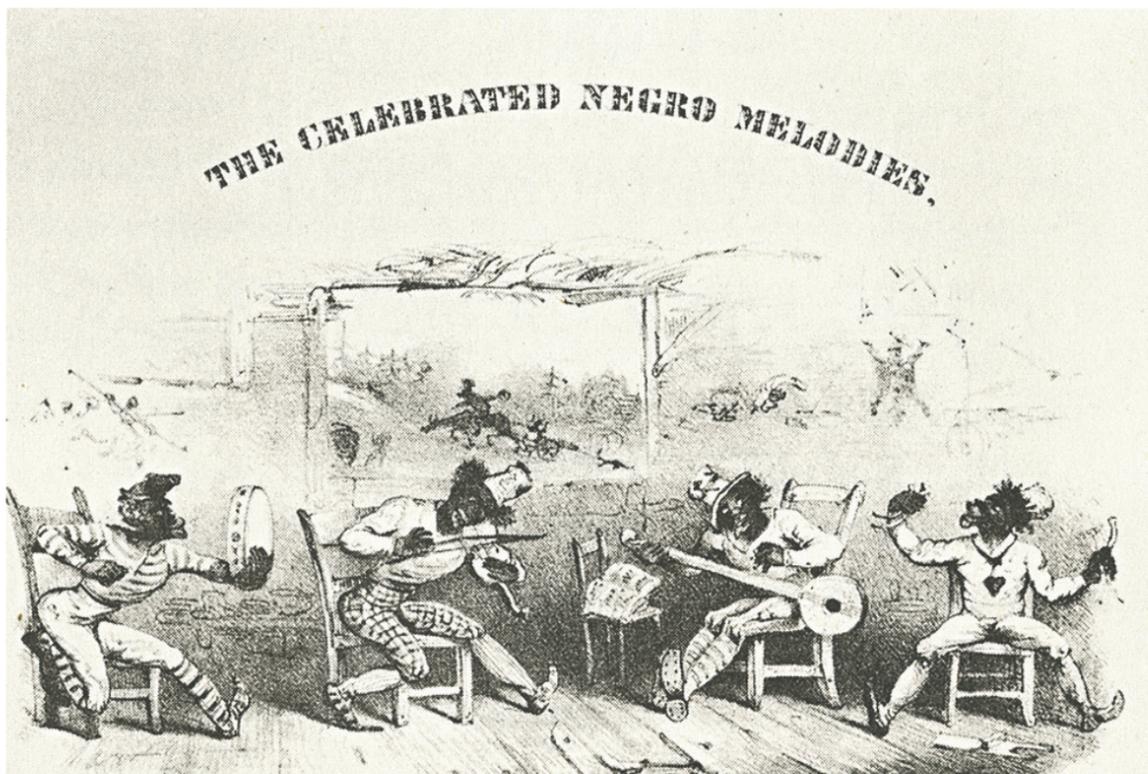
the Rev'd Christopher Belle is the Incumbent of St Joseph of Nazareth, Assistant Priest at St Margaret of Antioch and Regional Dean of the South Shore Deanery

*Jimmy Crack corn and I don't care
Jimmy Crack corn and I don't care
Jimmy Crack corn and I don't care,
Ole Massa gone away.*
—from "The Blue-Tail Fly" by
Virginia Minstrels (1946)

Our television screens have been inundated with images of racial discord as thousands upon thousands band together to speak out against police brutality aimed at people of colour. There have been cries for justice, racial equality, defunding the police, 'Enough is enough!', and so on. For a while, it felt like there was a new instance of racial discrimination, perpetrated in a violent and, all too often, fatal manner, every other week.

The rallying cry "BLACK LIVES MATTER" has been heard loud and clear for years now, as people all over the world stand in solidarity with Black people who have had to suffer life-threatening injustice for way too long. Enough is enough, indeed.

Now, it should be noted that many of the cases that have really sparked recent public outrage (George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, etc.) have occurred in the United States of America. We can certainly see the need



Detail from cover of *The Celebrated Negro Melodies*, as Sung by the Virginia Minstrels, arranged by Th. Comer, Boston, 1843. Scanned from *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy* by Hans Nathan.

to dismantle anti-Black racism in that country. As with many things (other than shopping and gas), we Canadians tend to comfort ourselves with the blessed assurance that at least we are not on par with the United States. We are not as bad as they are.

Sooo...why do we need to worry ourselves with dismantling racism in the Diocese of Montreal? We're a bunch of God-fearing people, who love the Lord, and love each other. So many of us

"Clearly, teaching is needed. People need to be made aware of how their words and actions affect others."

would insist that we don't have a racist bone in our bodies. Surely there's no anti-Black racism to dismantle here.

Hang on.

The lyrics printed at the beginning of this article come from a little ditty called 'The Blue-Tail Fly', a song performed during those delightful minstrel

shows from the mid-Nineteenth century. (Minstrel shows consisted of white men performing in 'Blackface', doing their best impression of what they thought Black people sounded like). This song is about a slave lamenting his master's tragic death, after being thrown from a horse. It seems the horse was bitten by the dreaded Blue-tail fly, sending the beast into a frenzy. Sadly, it was the job of the slave to brush away these flies, a job he was only too happy to do. That's the impression

I get from the song, anyway. Here now is a sample of one of the verses:

*When I was young I us'd to wait
On Massa and hand him de plate;
Pass down de bottle when he git dry
And bresh away de blue tail fly.
Jimmy Crack corn...*

What an eye-opener for me. I did not know this was what the song meant. I discovered this song's meaning in the Diocese of Montreal. These were the lyrics on the song sheet that was handed out to everybody in attendance (including me) at the 'Welcome Back' Sunday School picnic on my first Sunday as a priest for the parish. "It's also a chance to welcome Father Chris on his first Sunday with us!" Smiles everywhere. These people like me; they really, really like me!

When it was time, I took my song sheet. I looked it over. I heard somebody say, "Let's sing Jimmy Crack Corn". I was on board. I knew this one. I did not know it was a full song. I scanned the page until I found the lyrics. I started to sing.

And then I stopped. Mid-line. Hang on. What is this I'm singing? Does anyone else hear this? Does anyone see MY face?!

I look around. People are singing lustily, just leaning into this song about a black slave whose job was to make sure the 'massa' (and his HORSE!!!!) were not bitten by flies. A job he

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Bishop's Action Appeal Responds to Needs at Home and Abroad

NICKI HRONJAK

When you opened up your paper this month, something should have fallen out - an envelope with the message "Urgent Appeal". Instead of recycling this piece of mail, I encourage you to open it! It contains information about this year's Bishop Action Appeal, which asks for your support for ministries that our bishop holds dear to her heart.

This year Bishop Mary has chosen several recipients to

benefit from her annual appeal:

Local Missions

As you may know, each November, our bishop typically hosts an annual dinner to raise funds for the diocese to help us keep our financial commitment to the Mile End Mission, Tyndale St Georges Community Center and Action Réfugiés. Of course, due to the pandemic, this year's dinner was cancelled.

Yet the need for our support has persisted. All three of these

ministries are stretched for funds as they have had to adapt the services they provide to the vulnerable, the isolated and the newly arrived in our midst. I hope you will take the time to read about these ministries in the aforementioned letter or visit our website, www.montreal.anglican.ca.

Disabled Palestinian Children

The other beneficiary of this year's appeal is the Princess Basma Hospital in Jerusalem. A

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Ahmad with his therapist (pre-Covid) at the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre.

Bishop's Message Advent 2020

It's Advent already and the pandemic is not over yet!! In most years the season of Advent is filled with mounting pressure: things to do, people to see, and places to go! There is shopping, baking, cooking—perhaps gifts to be wrapped, decorating to do, parties to host or attend, and extra church services as well!

This year, while some of our congregations have opened up for in-person services with restricted numbers of people, many have chosen to continue to meet online. Either way, we are a long way away from getting back to 'normal'. So, what will this year's celebration of Advent and Christmas look like in 'Covid-tide'?

I know that many of us are tired and discouraged, missing our loved ones and our freedom to move around. I am, too. Some of us have been bereaved, become ill ourselves, or lost jobs. Many people struggle with loneliness or are afraid of the danger this virus brings to themselves or others. After eight months of special measures to keep one another safe, I am so impatient! I know that you must be too.

Here then are some things to think about: How do I live now, while I wait for the pandemic to end? What do Advent and Christmas teach me about what the world is going through now?

The Sunday scriptures during Advent have to do with the end times and the return of Christ: we need to be ready and patient at the same time! They encourage us to hold fast to our hope. They tell about people who listen to God and respond faithfully when they do. They remind us that "nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37) and that God's Holy Spirit in us transforms ruins, brings about justice and righteousness, comforts those who mourn, makes us "the planting of the Lord, to display his glory" (Isaiah 61). "He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep" (Isaiah 40: 11). I find these passages sharper and more exciting this year; they seem to speak to us in our distress, and they give me hope. Perhaps it is because we have fewer distractions and activities.

Recently, I've been reading Bishop Michael Curry's latest book "Love is the Way; Holding onto Hope in Troubling Times". He reminds us that letting God be in charge of our traditions and our imaginations and our wills makes all the difference; that God's Agape love is the engine for all Christians and the way to transform the world.

While I wonder (and sometimes worry a bit) about what things will be like afterwards, I am also hopeful that God will use this time when we can't follow our usual routines. In fact, I feel positively excited when I see how the church is growing and changing. We will have been strengthened because of what we are going through! People tell me about the signs of the Kingdom of God in their lives – and I rejoice with them. Something good is coming out of all this and we will never be the same. The Body of Christ is fueled by God's Holy Spirit working in us. And the work that we are called to is love – God's love in action. We can be doing that work even while we wait as patiently and courageously as we know how.

This is a blessing which nourished me as a young Christian and which continues to inspire me.

Go forth into the world in peace;
Be of good courage;
Hold fast that which is good;
Give to no one evil for evil;
Strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
Help the afflicted; honour everyone;
Love and serve the Lord,
Rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
And the blessing of God almighty,
The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.



Message de l'évêque Avent 2020

C'est déjà l'Avent et la pandémie n'est pas encore terminée ! La plupart des années, la saison de l'Avent est remplie d'une pression croissante : des choses à faire, des gens à voir et des endroits à visiter ! Il y a des achats, de la pâtisserie, de la cuisine - peut-être des cadeaux à emballer, de la décoration à faire, des fêtes à organiser ou auxquelles assister, ainsi que des services religieux supplémentaires!

Cette année, si certaines de nos congrégations ont ouvert leurs portes pour des services en personne avec un nombre restreint de personnes, beaucoup ont choisi de continuer à se réunir en ligne. Quoi qu'il en soit, nous sommes loin de revenir à la "normale". Alors, à quoi ressemblera la célébration de l'Avent et de Noël de cette année sous la "vague Covid" ?

Je sais que beaucoup d'entre nous sont fatigués et découragés, que nos proches nous manquent et que notre liberté de mouvement est menacée. Moi aussi, je le suis. Certains d'entre nous ont été endeuillés, sont tombés malades ou ont perdu leur emploi. Beaucoup de gens luttent contre la solitude ou ont peur du danger que ce virus représente pour eux-mêmes ou pour les

autres. Après huit mois de mesures spéciales pour assurer la sécurité des uns et des autres, je suis si impatiente ! Je sais que vous devez l'être aussi.

Voici donc quelques éléments de réflexion : Comment puis-je vivre maintenant, en attendant la fin de la pandémie ? Qu'est-ce que l'Avent et Noël m'apprennent sur ce que le monde traverse actuellement ?

Les écritures du dimanche pendant l'Avent ont trait à la fin des temps et au retour du Christ : nous devons être prêts et patients en même temps ! Elles nous encouragent à nous accrocher à notre espérance. Elles parlent des personnes qui écoutent Dieu et lui répondent fidèlement quand elles le font. Elles nous rappellent que « rien ne sera impossible avec Dieu ». (Luc 1:37) et que le Saint-Esprit de Dieu en nous transforme les ruines, apporte la justice et la droiture, reconforte les endeuillés, fait de nous « une plantation du Seigneur, pour manifester sa gloire » (Esaïe 61). « Il paîtra son troupeau comme un berger ; il prendra les agneaux dans ses bras, les portera dans son sein, et conduira avec douceur la brebis mère » (Esaïe 40, 11). Je trouve ces passages plus tranchants et plus passionnants cette année ; ils semblent nous parler dans notre détresse, et ils me donnent de l'espoir. C'est peut-être parce que nous avons moins de distractions et d'activités.

Récemment, j'ai lu le dernier livre de l'évêque Michael Curry « Love is the Way; Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times ». Il nous rappelle que laisser Dieu prendre en charge nos traditions, notre imagination et notre volonté fait toute la différence; que l'amour Agapè de Dieu est le moteur de tous les chrétiens et le moyen de transformer le monde.

Si je me demande (et parfois je m'inquiète un peu) comment les choses se passeront par la suite, j'espère aussi que Dieu utilisera ce temps où nous ne pouvons pas suivre nos routines habituelles. En fait, je me sens positivement motivée quand je vois comment l'église grandit et change. Nous aurons été renforcés grâce à ce que nous vivons ! Les gens me parlent des signes du Royaume de Dieu dans leur vie - et je me réjouis avec eux. Quelque chose de bien sort de tout cela et nous ne serons plus jamais les mêmes. Le Corps du Christ est alimenté par l'Esprit Saint de Dieu qui agit en nous. Et l'œuvre à laquelle nous sommes appelés est l'amour - l'amour de Dieu en action. Nous pouvons faire ce travail même si nous attendons avec autant de patience et de courage comme nous savons le faire.

Voici une bénédiction qui m'a nourrie en tant que jeune chrétienne et qui continue à m'inspirer.

Allez en paix dans le monde.
Soyez courageux.
Accrochez-vous à ce qui est bon.
Ne rendez à personne le mal pour le mal.
Fortifiez les plus timides.
Soutenez les faibles. Aidez les affligés.
Témoignez de l'amour à tout le monde.
Aimez et servez le Seigneur,
vous réjouissant de la puissance du Saint-Esprit;
et que la bénédiction du Dieu tout-puissant,
Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit,
Descende sur vous et y demeure à jamais. Amen.

+ Mary

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The Class of 2020 - Revive Group Celebrates the Journey

NEIL MANCOR

The Rev Canon Dr Neil Mancor is Congregational Development Officer for the Diocese.

I give you the Class of 2020! Members of our Revive groups came together recently for a class photo. What an impressive group they are!

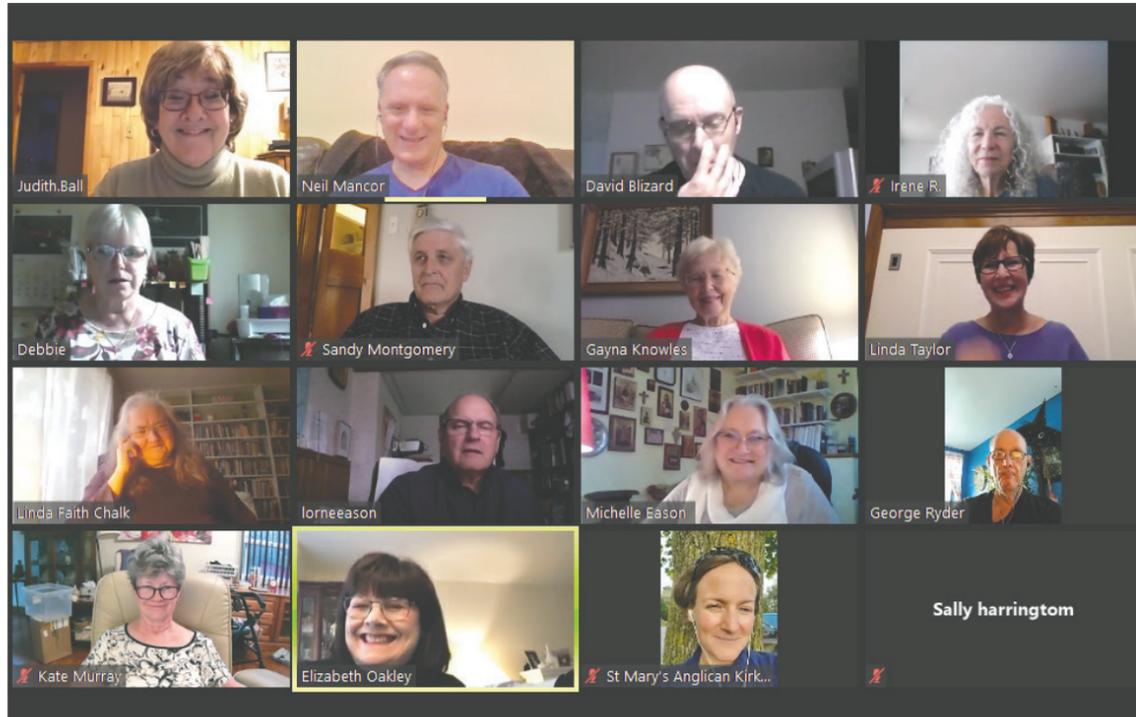
We've covered a lot of territory since COVID-19 first burst upon the scene and upended all our lives. Churches closed, events were cancelled, and we all had to adjust to new ways of communicating and remaining in contact with one another.

Most of us couldn't tell the difference between a Zoom call and a Zumba class before March. Now most of us are not only producing online worship, we are becoming experts in directing and starring in our own videos.

Social media, once the dominion of a few, has become a vital part of communicating our presence to the world.

I know how hard many of you have worked and what a great learning curve it has been. Congratulations to everyone for doing so much to keep the show on the road.

Back in March, we had only just launched a Revive group on the West Island. Very quickly we adjusted to the new



The West Island revive group "together" for a group picture.

online environment and the group carried on. We prayed together, read the Scriptures together and found the freedom to share from our hearts with one another. Though I look forward to the day when we can meet in person again, we found that meeting online still offered us a way to be together with Christ amongst us and it was enough.

Since then we have

launched two more Revive groups: one for the South Shore and another for the Eastern Townships.

The purpose of Revive is to turn church leaders into spiritual leaders. It is not so much a programme as a movement which is helping restore spiritual vitality to the Church in the only way possible: to pray, study Scripture and share together.

Spread out over three six-week modules, Revive explores different styles of prayer, Bible study and vocation. But it is so much more than a course or a programme. It is a way for us to renew and restore spiritual community, to grow closer together as disciples, to pray and pray deeply. I believe that this is vital for all our communities of faith. Think about whether it might be right for your Church

to take some time to work on prayer, Bible study and vocation together. Because we know that flourishing churches tend to have discipleship at their core.

It's not about constantly having to improve everything, but about finding the freedom and intimacy to pray together, to feed on the Scriptures together, to be heartfelt community. Because people beyond our communities are more spiritually attuned than ever before.

There are many options available for people to explore how they want to express their own spiritual identities. People are looking for that authentic community, a place where they can be known, a place to call home. This should be in our DNA as Christians. Before thinking about reaching out into mission, it might be the first step to reach deeply within and renew, indeed revive, the spiritual life of your church. That is what Revive is all about.

So congratulations to the class of 2020 - Revive Montreal. Thank you, bless you all for being part of this journey.

To learn more about Revive, contact Neil at nmancor@montreal.anglican.ca.



Online Prayer Group Starts this Month

Starting December 15th, the Cathedral will be starting a new, online contemplative prayer group, meeting the second Tuesday of each month from 6pm-7pm, on Zoom.

The format will be simple: a time of gathering, some shared time in silence to be held in God's love, then a time of sharing any insights which may have emerged. All are welcome to join us! If you would like to "try on" this kind of prayer, but have not experienced it before, please e-mail Deborah.meister@montrealcathedral.ca, who will pull together a brief time of instruction for beginners.

Zoom Meeting ID: 840 3498 9612 Passcode 905425.

Correction

In his article about how Afro-Canadians, particularly West Indians, were integrated into white parishes in the 1960s the name of the priest of St Matthias' Church in Westmount at the time was misstated. He actually was Archdeacon Jack Doidge who had come to Montreal from Winnipeg to lead this Westmount parish. Jack was major advisor to several bishops and also developed the par-

ish's strength in music. While he was in office the church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1973 by installing a new organ. He was also a fine trainer of newly-minted deacons, two of whom went on to be elected Bishop of our diocese, Reginald Hollis (1975-1990) and Barry Clarke (2004-2015). Jack and his wife, Betty, retired to London, Ontario, in 1984 where he died at age 99 in 2015.

Congratulations to Debrah Galt and Susan Searle



The Rev. Debrah Galt (left) was ordained to the vocational diaconate on October 2, 2020 in St Barnabas Church, Pierrefonds where she will continue to serve. The Rev. Susan Searle (right, pictured with Bishop Mary) was ordained to the transitional diaconate at St. John the Evangelist Church on the Feast of St Michael and all Angels, Sept 29, 2020. She will serve as assistant curate at that parish. Photos by Janet Best.

Bishop's Action Appeal *continued from p. 1*

project of the anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, and supported by the Compass Rose Society, the Hospital provides rehabilitation and educational assistance for Palestinian children with disabilities.

We are urgently appealing for your help to continue these vital ministries during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you prefer to see a video about the appeal, there is one available on our website in which Bishop Mary

talks about past and current projects that have been funded by your generosity.

I hope you are motivated to learn more about the needs of people here and in Palestine - and to help. Please take a minute to respond to the letter in this paper or visit us at www.montreal.angican.ca and click the *Donate Now* button to give. It is quick and easy and will make a difference in the lives of so many!



ANGLICAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA



imagine more



JUDY ROIS

The Rev'd Canon Dr. Judy Rois is the Executive Director of the Anglican Foundation of Canada.

At the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) we love, more than anything, to say Yes! and to help our parishes imagine more. The Foundation has been saying yes steadily and unflinching—through good times and bad—for more than sixty years.

In the Diocese of Montreal, since 2010, we have said Yes! to more than \$310,000 in grants and loans for your parishes. The vast majority has been invested in buildings and programs, including projects that reduce barriers and make it possible for those with mobility issues to continue to participate in church life. AFC's commitment to theological education has resulted in \$38,000 in student bursaries and \$23,000 to Montreal Diocesan Theologi-

cal College.

This past May, in spite of the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis and the impact on AFC's investment portfolio, we said Yes! to the parish of St. Philip, West Montreal, and their Edible Forest / Community Orchard project.

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

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

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Taking Church Services Online During COVID-19

JEFF ALEXANDER

Mr. Jeff Alexander is a member of All Saints, Deux-Montagnes.

An evening in late January 2020 was the first time I had ever heard of a computer program called WeVideo. My daughter needed to work on a video-editing assignment for her high school media class, so she asked if we could get a one-month subscription. It was about \$20, which didn't seem too bad for a single month's use.

Two months later, WeVideo became my constant companion.

When the directive came from the Diocese to discontinue in-person worship, we scrambled for alternative ways to continue providing weekly services for our parishioners. With my daughter's patient assistance, I learned the basics of how this program functioned: upload our content (videos, pictures, and audio), plopp them into timeline tracks, snip off the unnecessary parts at the beginning and end, and create a finished video product. It was straightforward, versatile, and pretty fun. We also decided to create a YouTube channel to host our videos. Another steep learning curve on the rules of YouTube!

The first-ever virtual service in our church, on March 22, was simply ... simple. Our minister, Reverend David Hart, led a basic Morning Prayer liturgy, recorded with just an iPad, that lasted 27 minutes and 15 seconds (thanks, YouTube!). Between our own parishioners and the church Facebook page link, this modest offering received 242 views. I was thrilled. For context, though, the average viewing time was 4 minutes, 57 seconds, so some watched all the way through, some checked out a bit, and several probably realized immediately that they hadn't selected the funny cats videos they had intended.

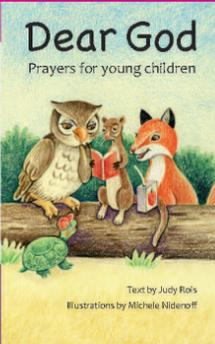
The week after, we added music and figured out how to superimpose images of our

liturgy and song lyric slides onto the video. Then we were into Holy Week; we were very pleased that area churches came together and contributed videos that were edited together for a virtual version of our traditional ecumenical observance of Good Friday.

Throughout these weeks, we started getting fancier, adding transitions between videos, aligning audio recordings with video to enhance the overall quality, and introducing other elements. We tried to embrace the opportunities for creativity that weren't available for in-person worship. My daughter, wife, and I recorded a manna "commercial" for a family service using a rudimentary green screen (2 lime green tablecloths thumbtacked to our family-room wall). It was great fun exploring how we could use these new media while still reaching our church family for weekly worship. We were even blessed to welcome our Primate, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Linda Nicholls, to be our Gospel reader for one service!

A fellow parishioner named Leif Bedard, who works in computers, became a member of the weekly film crew; he set up and monitored the video as it was recording, and would "direct" Rev. David through the segments of the liturgy. Parishioners graciously learned to prepare at-home videos of them reading the lessons or the Prayers of the People. My fellow lay reader, Anne-Claude Geoffrion, led several virtual services and was a natural at being in front of the camera. Saturdays became completely devoted to recording, editing, and uploading the service.

As of September 13, we reopened to in-person services and are now livestreaming through Facebook Live. Yet another learning! Amid the uncertainty and restrictions to our regular church life, however, a part of me is grateful to have been pushed into something creative and new that stretched what we call "church."



Dear God
Prayers for young children

Text by Judy Rois
Illustrations by Michèle Niderhoff



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

anglicanfoundation.org

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism

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wishes he had been better at.

In the September 2020 issue of the Anglican Montreal, Ms Aylene Sutherland contributed an article in which she writes,

"The goal of Black Lives Matter and anti-racism learning is to try to mend the fractured human family – in order to understand and internalize what it really means to be "Children of God." To attempt to reach this goal, clergy and lay people as individuals need to address their own prejudices, and racist attitudes, although they may not be aware of them."

I am sure the parish in-question did not mean to not only perpetuate, but celebrate (and pass on; Sunday School, remember?) racial stereotypes. However, I was very uncomfortable. Clearly, teaching is

needed. People need to be made aware of how their words and actions affect others.

Since July, a number of clergy and lay people have been meeting virtually to "...discuss the possibility of inviting the Diocese to engage in anti-racism work, and to discuss proposals on how this anti-racism work may be formally carried out." The quotation comes from a document outlining a proposal for an anti-Black racism task force in our Diocese. We seek "...to enable a task force ratified by (Diocesan) Synod, to engage the Diocese in a formal process to address anti-Black racism in the Diocese of Montreal. Our stated objective is "To equip the clergy and (lay) people of the

Diocese of Montreal with the skills and awareness necessary to create and foster healthy, vibrant multicultural, multi-ethnic parishes which can support the spiritual growth of all God's people."

A motion to this effect will be presented at Diocesan Synod this year. If passed, it could be the start of mending our fractured human family. We must admit that systemic racism exists in our very church, and this racism must be dismantled. Together, we can make the Diocese of Montreal great ag...

Hmmm. We still have some time to flesh out this proposal. We will work on it.



**STANDING
COMMITTEE
ON MISSION**



ANGLICAN DIØCESE MONTREAL

To learn about the impact of Covid-19 on services for the homeless (and how you can help), go to www.montreal.anglican.ca/mission-standing-committee.

Deck the Halls: Tips for a Successful Digital Advent & Christmas 2020

LEE-ANN MATTHEWS

Lee-Ann Matthews is the diocesan Web/Social Media Coordinator and MTL Youth Project Coordinator

Here is a checklist to help make sure that your church is ready for this uniquely digital season...

- **Create a unique Holiday invitation/online event** to create some curiosity and encourage new guests. For example, consider creating a FB event for Lessons and Carols that emphasizes festive, holiday music.

- **Banner/Cover Photo** on social platforms and website: Must be seasonal, festive for Christmas or somber for Advent. Choose a theme and image that best reflects the flavour of your approach to the season. Consider using this image on your bulletins as well. This will create a more consistent, reliable experience for your guests and let them know that someone is tending to details and someone cares.

- **All Information must be accurate** Include links to websites or other digi-



Photo by Bruce Mars, Unsplash.

tal platforms. Verify all details. This can seem obvious but can make or break your credibility for visitors who are getting to know you for the first time or who are deciding if they wish to continue supporting you. Remember, you are building trust and this means being accurate, transparent and reliable.

- **What is in it for them?** If someone is visiting your page, they are seeking something. Perhaps they are seeking comfort or community. Create content that has value to the seeker. Make it easy for them to access you and your

offerings.

- **Keep it Fresh!** Clearly indicate the most relevant and seasonal event that you hope to welcome guests to be a part of. Update regularly! Guests will be encouraged if they visit your page and notice that you have recently updated your content. It's as though they knocked and somebody answered the door. Reply promptly to any inquiries. Be as interactive as possible.

- **Aesthetics Matter** When communicating events or services, consider including

an image or graphic. It is best to use pictures from your own church that reflect your identity as a community.

Photos should be good quality, bright, colourful etc. Consider using the same image on the bulletin of the service. This will create a sense of familiarity, cohesiveness and brand recognition. ie. graphics for Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve service, Christmas Pageant, or a listing of all your services on one graphic.

Choose colours and fonts that will reflect your brand, personality and aesthetic as a church. Once you have done this, be intentional and consistent with your communications. For example, you may choose three colours and one font for your Advent/Christmas offerings and this could serve as your template throughout. You may use a free graphic design program such as Canva for ideas, templates, colour schemes etc.

- **Make all information clear, readable, relevant** and provide helpful details to encourage and assist those who are considering visiting. For example, Covid-19 protocol? Parking? Wheelchair access? Donations? How? What

to wear? Come early? Coffee afterwards? Which door? What to expect... etc.

Open the Presents: Prepare easy online giving options and speak openly about the importance of giving.

- **Donation Buttons** are easy to install. Canada Helps already has every charity in Canada registered on their site. Contact them and follow the steps to upload the link. People are carrying less cash and are enjoying the convenience of online giving now more than ever. Without online giving options you are at risk of losing those who may feel called to contribute. It is free and safe.

- **Be specific and identify a ministry.** Over the holidays, when you are welcoming new guests either in person or online, find creative ways to request financial support for a specific ministry (such as a children's program, washroom reno, website cost, etc.) Encourage monthly giving and remind patrons of the benefits of giving especially during these trying pandemic times.

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The Work of PWRDF - More Important Than Ever

ANN CUMYNN

Mrs. Ann Cumynn is Co-chair of the Montreal Unit of PWRDF

When the March PWRDF meeting was cancelled we had no idea that cessation of meetings would last so long! After a long hot, lazy (for some) summer it was evident that we needed to meet. Covid 19 may rage on, but this only increases the needs around the world. The work of PWRDF is more important than ever.

Inspiring speakers energize online meetings

Our current challenge, common to many events, is how to make yet another online meeting attractive. Zoom was chosen as the medium for several reasons: a member had a zoom licence; one could attend either by computer or by phone; most of the people attending could see one another; and discussion among the attendees was relatively easy.

The zoom meetings began in September. We welcomed Zaida Bastos, who had been the speaker at the event last year at the Glen, MUHC Birthing centre. Zaida gave us a refresher on the PWRDF program, All Mothers and Children Count. This program is continuing with the help of current government funding which will assure the sustainability of the benefits. We hope that this will become

\$1.9 million from the Government of Canada to support AMCC countries with:

- Personal protective equipment
- Handwashing and hygiene
- Access to reliable health information

Every dollar donated will be matched **6:1** by the Government of Canada

the focus of our Advent fundraiser, which will be described more fully below.

With the knowledge that things happening at home often draw greater interest, our October session focussed on a problem that is both local and word wide; Human Trafficking. The talk, which was given by Penny Rankin, explored one of the more heinous crimes committed by and against humankind - that of benefiting from the degradation of fellow human beings. We learned that human trafficking is far more than just the sex trade. There are many ways of using people's hopes to entrap them into a bondage that supplies the perpetrators with a steady

and often exorbitant income - a bondage from which it is difficult to escape.

Responding to covid worldwide

It is time now to move forward into the future; a future in which Covid will be an inevitable, although unwelcome, partner. Although we naturally focus on our own state of health and safety, it is important to realise that Covid is a worldwide problem and that some countries are better equipped to deal with it than others.

The Federal Government is donating \$20 million in total to help countries deal with

Covid. Eleven NGOs have been selected to raise money on a 6:1 basis; for every dollar that is donated the government will give \$6. PWRDF has access to \$1.98 million and will use these funds to extend their work in Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania - the countries helped through the All Mother and Children Count. While the program has set up and equipped birthing clinics, because of Covid mothers are afraid to go to them. This new funding will help equip countries with the necessary tools to enhance the safety of all. Montreal PWRDF is hoping that our churches will take this project on as an Advent project. More

information can be found at: <https://pwrdf.org/govt-of-canada-grants-pwrdf-1-9m-for-amcc-partners-covid-19-response/>

Recognizing systemic racism

There is another topic that is in the forefront of many discussions and that is systemic racism. There is a groundswell to try deal with this, especially as it affects people of colour. PWRDF is planning to be part of this discussion. There is a poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.' Without negating any part of her life and poetry we could use this form of expression to ask ourselves, 'How am I racist? Let me count the ways.' Once we start counting we will be surprised by the number of ways.

Looking Forward

As we wrap up the current year and look forward to 2021, PWRDF hopes to rekindle its project to raise funds for Indigenous Midwifery. We look forward to 2021, a year when we can use the new skills that we have acquired and eventually meet in person. May God use our creativity to inspire us all to rejoice in the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Black Lives Matter

Waking up White - Understanding Black Lives Matter

BILL & DOROTHY WILSON

Bill and Dorothy Wilson are active members of All Saints by the Lake, Dorval.

Dorothy and I are both white seniors. We grew up in white society in the West Island living lives we thought were normal, average, mainstream. We always thought that racism was wrong and tried to treat all people we met through life with the same respect.

Our awakening began with a family conflict; for the first time we had been called racist and were confronted with a list of micro aggressions committed by us and the family - an event that left us hurt, confused and needing to understand. With many apologies and letters our emotional journey ended in detaching with love while leaving the door open.

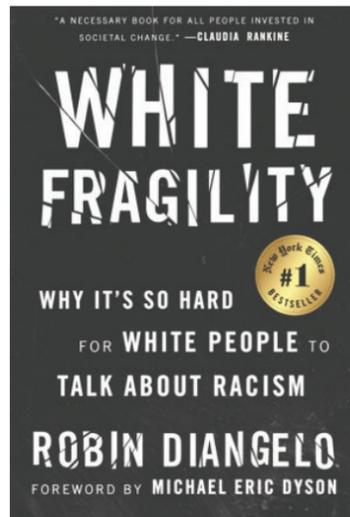
Our learning began as we started reading *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo; it was a difficult read and it took time

to absorb the ideas, the consequences of racism, and the profound impacts on the lives of people of colour. We began to understand what systemic racism is and - how even though we were ignorant of it (the best way to sustain it) - we have continued to participate in it and perpetuate it.

Slowly we found ourselves changing, becoming aware that white is a colour; the colour of superiority, with many advantages in life, freeing people from suspicious and accusing looks from people and police and opening doors to education, employment and justice denied people of colour. We became aware it was a white world that was presented to us.

We followed the 400 year / 12 million slave European, North American history and learned how white people created the vocabulary of racism embraced by both politicians and church. It is true that, at the time, some pushed against the slave trade but no white

person was willing to give up their immense power and money, high on the trip of self-conceived superiority. This history ripples through our society, families, institutions; laws that guarantee equality that are not equally applied.



The couple learned about systemic racism and its impact by reading *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo.

Will you let yourself be still, to feel the pain, agony of lives ravaged by racism? Families destroyed, children dying, lives lived in hopelessness with no future. It is hard to live in a province whose leaders will not recognize the reality and ever-present systematic racism. We must support changes in how policing is performed, and realize guns are not required for a family disturbance or a health check.

We white people stand on the shoulders of those white people who have benefited from the history of systemic racism. We must take responsibility for the state of this world and realize that power and money still influence the direction of our society.

Our personal journey has just begun - there is much work to be done within ourselves and our society and the world. We have taken our first steps to educate ourselves and share what we've learned, by:

- Suggesting our family and friends read *White Fragility*.

- Reading *How to be an Antiracist* with the All Saints by the Lake reading group.

- Donating to Black Lives Matter and local Black Organizations to ensure their ongoing work.

- Learning with Black Anglicans of Canada and West Island Black Community Association through Zoom presentations.

- Listening to Chenjerai Kumanyika podcast, Scene On Radio (Seeing White).

We think of the pool Siloam, a place of healing. We have a sense, we are the water, when God does not trouble the water everything looks peaceful and the all the hopes of human equality drown. We must be troubled, feel uncomfortable allowing the truth to be revealed and healing to take place. We are all God's people equal in his sight, this world and all its benefits are to be shared equally.

Anti-Black Racism and Womanist Theology - Some Living Questions



ROS MACGREGOR

The Rev'd Roslyn Macgregor is a retired priest of the diocese, Chaplain of Mile End Community Mission and long-time member of the former Race Relations Committee.

I'm a feminist. Feminism at its best is a struggle for equality. Many Black women feel left out of the feminist movement largely made up of white women addressing white women's issues. While many white women are still marginalized (unequal pay for equal work, for instance), Black women are doubly marginalized in a patriarchal, colonial society: because they are women and because of the colour of their skin.

In a Black Theology online course this summer, I discovered womanist theology. Forever waking up. Wham! How can I not have known about womanist theology? So much to learn.

I thought I could write an article about womanist theology, but I can't. My

own African slave history notwithstanding, from my grandmother passing for white down to me perceived by the world as white, I am white. Not only do I not know enough yet about womanist theology; do I have a right to speak for Black women? Anti-black racism is the experience of my Bermuda cousins. It is not my experience. Yet, I can live in the questions Black liberation theology and womanist theology raise as they/we revisit the Bible and the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in the light of the Black experience.

Delores Williams, the founder of Womanist theology believes the paradigm of Hagar, Egyptian surrogate slave of Abraham and Sarah, is more appropriate to Black women than Sarah's story. Hagar survives in the wilderness. Black women, she says, have fought for survival and quality of life. Black women survive on their own wit and creativity.... And so much more.

Black liberation theology begins with the Biblical premise that God is always with the oppressed. Jesus was not only with the marginalized; he was a man marginalized in Roman society and by the religious authorities of the day.

One of the most powerful books I have ever read is James H. Cone's *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. The cross was a symbol of oppression as was the lynching tree. The 'lynching' of Black people continues.

We are challenged, in opening ourselves to Black theology

and the meaning of Jesus' suffering today, to ask ourselves individually and as church community:

- *What is the meaning of the cross to white supremacist colonizers?*
- *What is the meaning of the cross to those whose ancestors enslaved and lynched?*
- *What is the meaning of the cross to us in a church that enslaved and colonized people of colour?*
- *What is the meaning of the cross to those who are lynched and oppressed today?*

One womanist theologian refuses to wear a cross, seeing it as a symbol of oppression when it was meant to be a symbol of liberation.

James H. Cone, was a founder of Black Liberation theology. He gave a lecture entitled "The Cry of Black Blood - The Rise of Black Liberation Theology" at Yale Divinity School on April 17, 2017, not long before he died.

Dr. Cone says the rise of Black Liberation Theology was born out of nearly 400 years of resistance to the terrors of white supremacy. "How can we trust," he asks, "a religion that denies the humanity of some people by defining them as evil because of the colour of their skin?" He uses the story of Cain and Abel as a metaphor for our present struggles:

The Lord asks Cain, "Where is your brother, Abel?"

Cain replies, "I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

The Lord asks, "What have you done? Your brother's blood

is crying out to me from the ground."

Dr. Cone challenges us: "The Lord is asking us today, 'Where are your Black brothers and sisters?' And many of us reply, 'We don't know. Are we our brothers' keepers?'"

This is the you tube link to the lecture of James H. Cone <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyP7BrmII9U>

Those present at the lecture posed some pertinent questions for all of us:

- *Why are there no Black theologians amongst the white (mostly male) theologians taught in systematic theology?*
- *Why is Black Theology an elective rather than a requirement for theology students? (If there is a Black Theology course at all.)*

I add my own questions:

- *What would it mean to de-colonize the Church?*
- *Who is God for us? We, who grew up with a white God and a white Jesus in our stained glass windows, our Sunday school materials, our teachings.*
- *What would it mean to de-colonize the Church?*
- *What does God require of us? "To love mercy. To act justly. To walk humbly with our God?"*
- *Can we move away from the white supremacy embedded in our colonial church to hear God's spirit anew?*
- *Are there small ways with great meaning to move forward? (such as using Jesus Mafa African Gospel and other*

images?)

- *Can we ask ourselves about the words we use in prayers and hymns?*

- *What does God require of us? "To love mercy. To act justly. To walk humbly with our God." Micah 6.8*

I love the hymn, "Lift High the Cross." The music is powerful; the words are beautiful. Except I find it difficult to sing the refrain - "Till all the world adore his sacred name." 'Lift high the cross' was written in 1877 by George Kitchin at the height of the Victorian colonizing era. It's triumphalist. Is this the message for today? It's hard. I was a missionary. A missionary that needed to be - and is still being - converted.

Recommended Books on Womanist Theology:

By the Rev'd Dr. Kelly Brown: *The Black Christ Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*

By the Rev'd Dr. Katie Cannon: *Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*

By Mercy Amba Oduyoye: *Beads and Strands: Reflections of an African Woman on Christianity in Africa*

All available on Amazon.ca

Equipping the Saints

LINDA MOORE

Linda Moore is a third-year student in the Master of Divinity program at Montreal Diocesan Theological College. She is preparing for ordination in the Diocese of Vermont. Before coming to Dio, she had a career as a lab tech at a hospital. This summer, in the midst of a global pandemic, she returned to that work on a part-time basis. She writes about what she is learning from combining her studies, her parish placement, and her work in a hospital.

I live in northern Vermont and work per diem in a local hospital laboratory. At the church where I am doing my field placement, one of the parishioners asked me how I measure my success as a lab tech. I answered that I see every aspect of my lab work as a ministry to the patients, to give each of them the best patient care possible. This includes training new lab techs to see the big picture of patient care, that those aren't merely speci-

mens they're testing; lab techs should treat each specimen as if it's a valued friend or family member. The parishioner replied, "I see the connection between your lab career and your future career as a priest. It's your vision of ministry in treating people the best you can, your mission of compassionate care of people and your concern that those working with you have that same vision and mission; have you seen this connection before?"

This connection was definitely an epiphany for me. I had thought lab work and ministry are vastly different from one another. Lab work can be stressful with emergency stat work and the constant pressure for a quicker turnaround time for all test results; it doesn't leave a lot of time for reflection of any sort. Life as a priest will have its own stressors with pastoral care, teaching and administrative duties in addition to what most people perceive as our Sunday ministry. Does God want me to keep my



"Another coworker told me that he is a nihilist and will never believe in God, yet he sits with me at the end of shift almost every evening and wants to talk about the Bible and God."

"secular" career as well as my new career as a priest? I felt that when I left my full-time lab tech job in 2018 to study at Montreal Dio that God was calling me to leave that lab job behind, that He had "bigger" plans for me.

I chose to get back into the lab work this summer for income to pay tuition for my third year. I also saw it as a ministry to enable the lab techs there who I knew had been under a lot of stress due to the pandemic to take some much-needed vacation time. It was tough adjusting to the fast pace of an eight-hour workday in a hospital lab after two years as a student. I found myself soon in various discussions with my coworkers that I view as ministry opportunities. On my first day in the lab, one told me he didn't want to ever hear me talk about God and religion. After assuring him that I was only there to do lab work, he has recently begun to ask me questions about God and religion. Another tech

tearfully poured her heart out to me about how overworked she is, that she is on the verge of burnout; just me taking the time to sit and really listen to her was what she needed that day. Another coworker told me that he is a nihilist and will never believe in God, yet he sits with me at the end of shift almost every evening and wants to talk about the Bible and God. It's as if God has opened my eyes to see these ministry opportunities even in my secular career.

I now feel that that the various aspects of my life are becoming integrated. The coursework I'm doing at the college is flowing into the work I'm doing at my field placement and also into my hospital lab tech work. This more integrated approach to life allows me to be less anxious and more open to God's plan for my future bivocational career. My mantra this year is "Just breathe and do what you can do; God's got this."

St Mark & St Peter Renovations Nearly Completed



Church interior demolition (removing the old concrete floor in preparation for pouring a new concrete floor).



New sanctuary with the Rev'd Chris Barrigar hosting Sunday Zoom service; both in-person worshippers and Zoom worshippers in the same service via the new wifi and projection technology.

CHRIS BARRIGAR

The Rev'd Chris Barrigar is the incumbent of St Mark & St Peter.

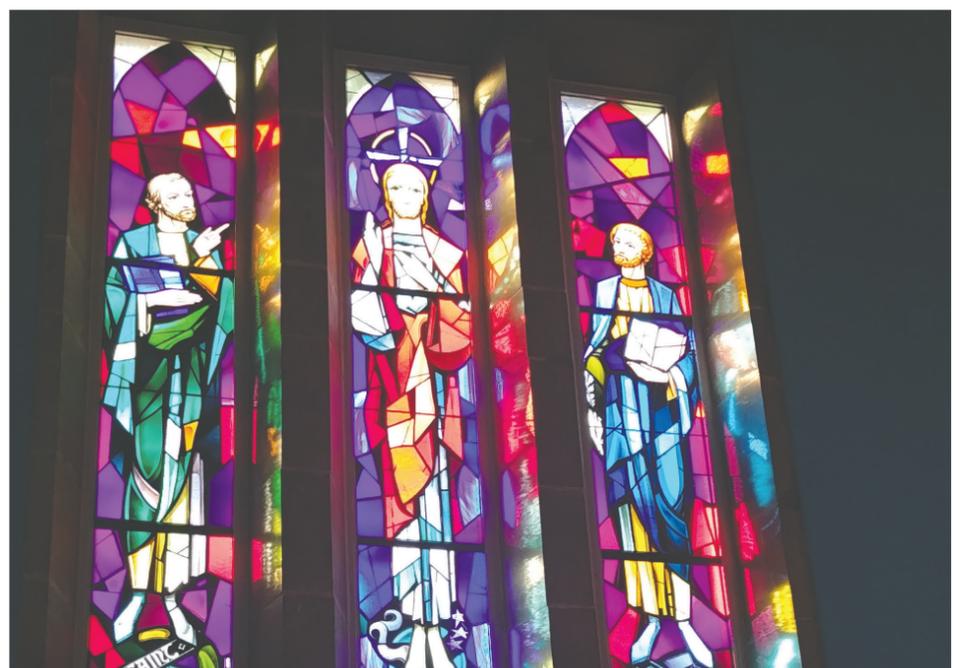
The former churches of St Mark's, Ville St Laurent, and St Peter's, TMR, began worshipping together as the new Church of St Mark & St Peter (CMP) in June 2019. As part of the merger, major renovations were undertaken of the former St Mark's building to provide a renewed space for the new congregation.

The interior of the whole building was renovated in two stages. For the first stage the old hall and kitchen were gutted and the interior completely re-built from the ground up. The offices and meeting rooms were also renovated, and a new lounge built in the space previously occupied by the organ pipes. When these renovations were completed Sunday worship moved into the renovated hall so that the church itself could then

be renovated, which is now completed.

A guiding principle in the renovations was to make the hall and church into flexible multi-use spaces; another principle was to reverse the interior direction of the church, so that the new sanctuary would be at the opposite end of the nave. This allows easier access for young families sitting at the rear easier access to classrooms and washroom facilities; it also opens up the front for easier administration of communion, and provides opportunity for more flexible use of the front.

Another principle was to update the technology with new sound, wifi, and projection systems. The new sanctuary uses furnishings from both former churches, including the altar from St Mark's and the altar rail from St. Peter's. (The altar has been put on wheels and the rail is removable, so that the front can be used for different types of events.)



The beautiful original St Mark's windows restored.

A Prayer from the Diocesan Representatives The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer - Canada



Loving God, we are grateful to you for your protection during this difficult time of COVID-19. We know that you did not impose this virus on your cherished people. We know also that you are working hard to inspire scientists to create a vaccine, to sustain all health care workers in their struggles, and to guide decision-makers on the right path with wisdom and authority. Through you, our Lord, all things are possible.

We thank you Gracious God for helping us to realize just how much we were taking for granted. We lament the loss of personal contact, but know that social distancing will keep us safe. We miss our wonderful church services, our gatherings with loved ones, and all the spontaneous hugs and kisses that demonstrate our deep affection for our family and friends.

We pray that you will help us to uphold your commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves. We express this love by wearing our

masks to prevent a spread of the virus. God of reason and truth, help us to rid the world of conspiracy theories and to instill your wisdom and understanding in all naysayers. Be with us when situations arise where there is resistance and provide us with the appropriate words to defuse this confrontation.

Lord, we long to get back to some semblance of normalcy. God of miracles and restoration we sincerely pray that we will soon see an end to this pandemic. We also pray that there won't be any lasting negative effects on our children and young adults who are seriously affected by this change in routine and this interruption in schooling and work.

We thank you for hearing and answering our prayers. Help us continue to faithfully serve you in every circumstance. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Valerie and Stacey

For more information on AFP-C, contact Valerie Bennett and Stacey Neale at valstacey@bell-net

Deck the Halls: Digital Advent / Christmas 2020 *continued from page 5*

• **Giving as a spiritual practice:** When donors contribute to your charity, this opens a reciprocal relationship and deepens your connection. Emphasize the importance of this relationship and find ways of cherishing and honouring givers. How can you do this? Use social media to express words of gratitude, notes of thanks, be transparent and open in terms of your budget and spending habits, Write blogs, sermons and create a series of posts about the importance of your donors. Invite donors to share their thoughts about giving online, etc.

Tree Topper: How to build and maintain a digital community

• **Capture email addresses** of guests to follow up, thank, invite, encourage and inquire about them and their faith journey. Build relationships with a solid email correspondence. Use Mailchimp or other email platforms to keep your lists organized and provide beautiful email templates.

• **Speak to your existing community** about the importance of digital en-

agement. Encourage members to go on social and "check in" and "like" the parish FB page, rate the church, invite their friends to like/follow as well.

• When your church is empty, this does not mean that your job is over. You may **continue to connect** with existing and potential parishioners via email, website, blogs, video and social media posts. "The service has ended, but the worship has begun..."

Questions to wonder about

- How can you interact meaningfully with your digital community?
- What does your community seek?
- What is meaningful in your context?
- Have you considered a digital survey to get feedback?

Remember that it is possible to pray, inspire, worship, ask questions, inquire, dialogue, reflect and more. A digital community is a real community and can be infused with the Holy Spirit, therefore capable of connecting in wonderful and surprising ways!

Be ready! People are seeking meaningful, spiritual connections more than ever.

The Anglican Foundation *continued from page 4*

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

want to respond as generously as possible.

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

To donate to the Anglican Foundation of Canada visit anglicanfoundation.org.



Thanks to Gisele McKnight, Communications Officer for the Diocese of Fredericton, for providing this Advent activity graphic.



Christmas at the Mile End Community Mission

The Mile End Community Mission is calling upon your generosity to help make Christmas a greater joy for the individuals, families and children who suffer the daily effects of poverty in our neighbourhood and surrounding areas.

This year will be particularly difficult for many as a result of the pandemic. While we will be unable to break bread with our members at our annual Christmas dinner, we will be working hard to fill 150 Christmas baskets with food, provide toys for 100 children, and prepare special Christmas stockings with much needed personal items for 40 of our most vulnerable members.

Sadly, without these supports, many of our members would have very little joy during the holiday season. In the Spirit of Christmas, we encourage you to make a donation of non-perishable food, or of funds to make these events possible. Thank you so much, and Merry Christmas!

