



Marion Walters at the Confirmation service at St Lawrence, Lasalle on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Photo by Janet Best. More pictures pages 6-7.

Intimate-partner Violence and the Church in Quebec: *How we can begin a conversation*

JENNA SMITH

Ms Jenna Smith is the head of outreach and engagement at Christian Direction and a member of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal

On December 6, 2023, Christian Direction published its findings from the Rapha Study, a community-based participatory research on domestic violence and the church in Quebec.

The survey, with 503 church-going Québécois respondents, revealed some difficult statistics on the prevalence of domestic violence as experienced by Christians in this province.

Qualitative interviews were conducted with 13 female survivors of intimate partner violence. The women courageously detailed their experiences and how the church responded to their situations.

The reports are available at www.direction.ca/rapha. Below are some considerations as to how we - as a diocese and a body of Christ - can begin reflecting on this very important issue.



Photo by Lightstock.

1. "Domestic violence is blind to class, it cuts through creed."

Journalist and author Michael Lista said those words when discussing a femicide case he studied involving two highly educated married physicians.

It is important to remember-

and this is a highly studied and documented fact - that domestic violence can affect people of all backgrounds, socio-economic status, and religion.

In Anglican churches, we have female clergy, we have a "tent theology" that celebrates gender equality and

we aspire to make room in our communities for people of all backgrounds. We strive to live according to Christ-centred values, and we do so through inclusivity and equity.

These teachings do not immunize our churches from the phenomenon of intimate-partner violence. It would be naive to think that "this issue doesn't affect us", just because we are more "progressive".

People are shocked when they learn that educated women who promote feminist values could possibly ever have been caught in the cycle of domestic abuse. The same sense of bewilderment applies to Christian circles. I receive comments all the time along the lines of, "how can this be happening in Christian marriages when we preach a message of Christ's love?!?"

Sadly, this is an issue that is complex and layered and it happens in all sectors of life, including ours.

In our survey, 39% of the respondents are mainline protestants. And sadly, nearly 37% of all respondents self-identified as being victims of domestic

violence. To the question, "I know one person or several people in my community of faith who is a victim of domestic violence", 67.3% of respondents answered yes.

These numbers may seem shocking but they track well with statistics presented by Health Canada or the Canadian Women's Foundation in terms of the prevalence of intimate-partner violence within general society.

2. Christians in Québec want churches to speak publicly about domestic violence.

"We need to just start by looking very closely at our own relationships and figuring out what does violent-violence look like and sometimes it's, yeah just to stop normalizing anger as way of - yeah that's just, that's just boy's anger or rage, these are things that can be very dangerous and are killing people so. It's like a hard no, and, again, it's so complicated cause I think our relationship to anger and male anger and all that, like I think it needs to be, it just, we need to really, really stop the

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The Rev Holly Ratcliffe's *Pentimenti*; our common humanity is found in befriending grief and death

NICKI HRONJAK, EDITOR

This winter the Rev Holly Ratcliffe held an exhibition in the historic Maison des gouverneurs in Sorel-Tracy. Featured was her ceramic work that was completed while she was artist in residence at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at UVic in Victoria BC.

Entitled *Pentimenti*, her work, composed of urns and other funerary vessels, focuses on "restoring to the human experience of death to its contemplative dimension."

According to Ratcliffe "My pieces question the contemporary Western aversion to and discomfort in the face of death in order to open new avenues of perception around the human dignity of the person in this most vulnerable

condition. I believe our common humanity is found in befriending grief and death."

According to Sally Harrington Philippo, who visited the exhibit, "Spending time with the stories of such a variety of life experiences facing a common certainty of death, was a very fruitful meditation. One retains lingering reflections charged with the reality of one's own mortality."

Holly is grateful to the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society and to the Anglican Foundation for supporting the residency that made this exhibition possible, and to the Ville de Sorel-Tracy for help in mounting the show.

To learn more about Holly's work - and to see pictures - visit her website: www.hollyratcliffceramic.ca.



The exhibit was at the historic Maison des gouverneurs in Sorel-Tracy. Photo by Tim Smart.

Bishop's Message, March 2024

Lent is a 40-day spiritual journey of self-examination and prayer. It began on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. The Ash Wednesday service contains a Litany of Penitence on page 285 of The Book of Alternative Services. I always find it very moving and helpful in thinking about my desire to be more attentive to God. Where have I drifted away? Where have I willfully looked away? Where have I harboured unforgiveness even while I have asked God to forgive me? The Litany touches on so many ways in which we need to repent and return to God's love.

- *We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.*
- *We have been deaf to your call to serve as Christ served us. We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.*
- *We confess to you, Lord, all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,*
- *Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,*
- *Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,*
- *Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work*
- *Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,*
- *Accept our repentance, Lord, for the wrongs we have done: for our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,*
- *For all false judgements, for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours, and for our prejudice and contempt toward those who differ from us,*
- *For our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us,*

Some people use Lent to develop new holy habits and others to make necessary changes to old habits. May this Lent draw you into the love and purposes and grace of God.



Message de l'évêque, mars 2024

Le Carême s'agit d'un voyage spirituel de 40 jours d'examen de conscience et de prière. Il a commencé le 14 février, le mercredi des Cendres. Le service du mercredi des Cendres contient une litanie de pénitence à la page 242 du Livre de la Prière Commune (édition 2022). Je la trouve toujours très émouvante et utile pour réfléchir à mon désir d'être plus attentive à Dieu. Où suis-je égarée ? Où ai-je volontairement détourné le regard ? Où ai-je nourri de l'amertume alors que je demandais à Dieu de me pardonner ? La litanie aborde de nombreuses façons dont nous devons nous repentir et revenir à l'amour de Dieu.

- *Nous ne t'avons pas aimé de tout notre cœur, de toute notre pensée et de toute notre force. Nous n'avons pas aimé nos prochains comme nous-mêmes. Nous n'avons pas pardonné aux autres comme nous avons été pardonnés*
- *Nous n'avons pas prêté l'oreille à ton appel à servir comme le Christ nous a servis. Nous n'avons pas été fidèles à la pensée du Christ. Nous avons peiné ton Saint-Esprit*
- *Nous te confessons, Seigneur, toutes nos infidélités passées : l'orgueil, l'hypocrisie, l'impatience de nos vies,*
- *Nos manières et nos appétits complaisants, notre exploitation des autres,*
- *Notre colère face à nos frustrations, notre envie à l'égard des mieux lotis que nous,*
- *Notre amour immodéré des biens et du confort de ce monde, notre malhonnêteté dans la vie quotidienne et au travail,*
- *Notre négligence dans la prière et l'adoration, notre incapacité à prôner la foi qui est en nous,*
- *Accepte notre repentir, Seigneur, pour les torts que nous avons causés : pour notre aveuglement face aux besoins et aux souffrances de nos semblables, pour notre indifférence face à l'injustice et à la cruauté,*
- *Pour toutes nos erreurs de jugement, pour nos pensées peu charitables envers nos prochains, pour nos préjugés et notre mépris envers les personnes différentes de nous,*
- *Pour notre gaspillage et notre pollution de ta création, pour notre indifférence à l'égard des générations qui viendront après nous,*

Certaines personnes utilisent le carême pour développer de nouvelles habitudes saintes et d'autres pour apporter les changements nécessaires à leurs vieilles habitudes. Puisse ce carême vous attirer dans l'amour, les desseins et la grâce de Dieu.

+ Mary

+ Mary



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Dion Lewis Receives the Anglican Award of Merit, February 4, 2024



Dion Lewis conducts the choir at the church of All Saints by the Lake during a celebration where he received the Anglican Award of Merit, February 4, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.



Archbishop Linda Nicholls awards Dion Lewis the Anglican Award of Merit at All Saints by the Lake, Dorval, February 4, 2024. The award is the Anglican Church of Canada's highest honour for lay people who have given exemplary service to the church at the national level. Photo by Janet Best.



Photo by Janet Best.

Elizabeth Hutchinson (1933 - 2024)

A beloved member of our diocese and recent recipient of the Anglican Award of Merit and the Bishop's Award, Mrs Elizabeth Hutchinson (nee Fell) died on January 19, 2024 at the Centre d'hébergement Hubert-Maisonnette in Rosemère.

The Anglican Award of Merit is the Anglican Church of Canada's highest honour for lay people who have demonstrated exemplary service to the church at the national level. Elizabeth was "impressed and touched" to receive the award. "I feel definitely, really honoured by it." The award was presented to her by Primate Linda Nicholls on September 10, 2023 at Grace Church Arundel.

Elizabeth received the Bishop's Award in recognition of her dedicated service to the Anglican Church spanning over four decades. She was nominated by the Rector's

Warden and People's Warden of the Parish of Arundel and Weir, Grace Church Arundel, in the absence of a parish priest.

While Elizabeth was heavily involved in the national church and organizations, such as the ACW, National Council of Women, General Synod and Auberge Madeleine, to name a few - she remained devoted to her parish of Grace Church Arundel, serving as Rector's Warden for 15 years and leading morning prayer on a regular basis.

The nomination letter for her Bishop's award ended with "Elizabeth is an inspiration to us all of dedicated service to Christian values and community."

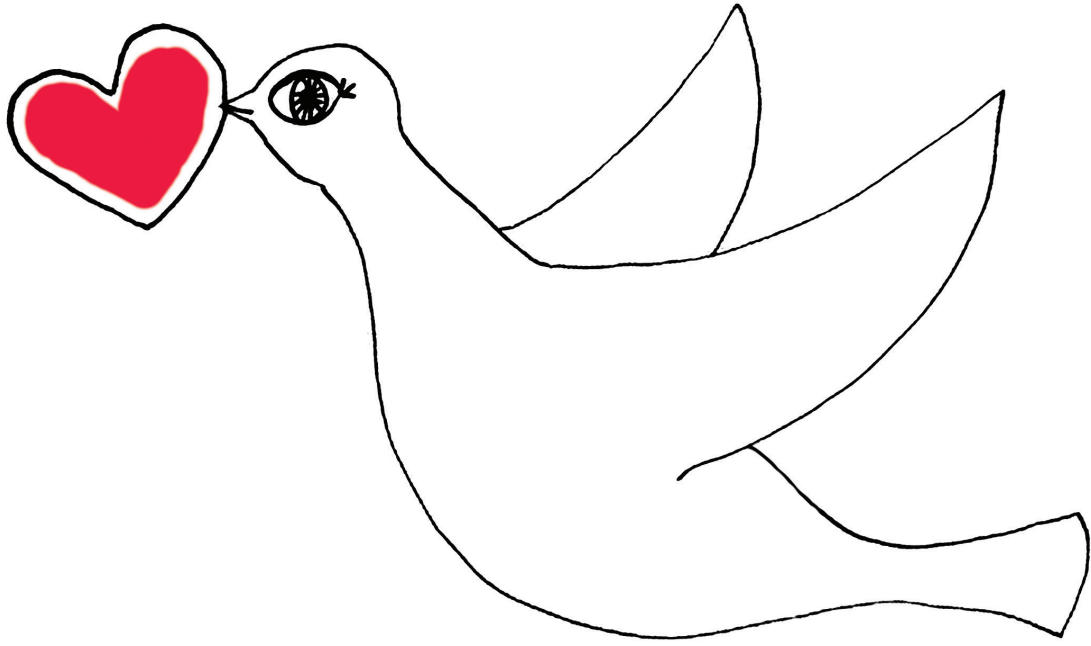
At the time of this publishing, the date of her Funeral Service (to be held at the Grace Anglican Church in Arundel) had yet to be established.

We would like to thank you for your donations to the 2023 *Bishop's Action Appeal* and the *Bishop's Dinner Appeal*.

Thanks to your generosity we raised over \$14,000 for *Home for the Heart*, nearly \$11,000 for the *Anglican Appeal* and over \$12,000 for the local missions fund.

Merci!





Art by Christine Mantzavarakos, member of the *Tri-Parish & Friends for Refugees*

The Biggest Obstacle to Private Refugee Sponsorship in Quebec

JODY MASON

Ms Jody Mason is a member of Tri-Parish & Friends for Refugees

Since 2015, *Tri-Parish + Friends for Refugees*, a group of parishioners from three west-end churches (the former Trinity Memorial, St. Thomas', and St. Philip's) as well as non-church community members, has been sponsoring refugee persons and raising awareness about the challenges they confront. An important challenge to document is the one that occurs in the sponsorship process itself.

Of course, there are many difficulties involved in private refugee sponsorship. These are well-known to those who have donated time or money to this work.

Refugee persons often en-

counter significant hurdles on arriving in Canada: they have difficulty finding decent, affordable housing; they encounter racism; they face linguistic challenges; they have often experienced trauma.

But there is a larger obstacle; it is the government. This particular obstacle is set up by the Government of Quebec before refugee persons even arrive in Canada.

In all other provinces and territories in Canada, the federal government runs the *Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PRS) Program*, which permits private groups to sponsor eligible refugee persons from outside of Canada. While wait times from application are long everywhere, it is only in Quebec that the government sets an annual limit on the number of applications accepted from

private sponsorship groups.

There are two categories of sponsoring group in Quebec. *Tri-Parish + Friends* is defined by the Government of Quebec as a Group of 2-5, a private group that is distinguished from larger sponsorship agreement holder charities.

Each year, the Government of Quebec runs a lottery to choose a determined number of applications. According to *Action Réfugiés*, in 2023, the government received 1,289 eligible applications from Groups of 2-5. Of these, it accepted only 425. This means that almost 70 percent of applications from Groups of 2-5 were rejected.

This is a very discouraging figure for those who put time and energy into the process.

While the application itself does not require much time,

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PWRDF

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

The Anglican Church of Canada

ANN CUMYNN

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

It was in late spring that our Montreal unit of PWRDF thought about organising a webinar featuring our new Indigenous Archbishop, Chris Harper. I had met archbishop Chris Harper at the last meeting of the 2019-2023 CoGs. What really impressed me was that he spoke of getting out of bed with his daily prayer, "Today help me to be better than yesterday and the day before".

Since Archbishop Chris had already been approached by the Diversity in Community group from St George's Place du Canada, the two groups decided to work together on the event, which was held in November.

This webinar, which was hosted by PWRDF's Janice Biehn, was a huge success. We learned some important things that we who live in Christian communities should focus on.

Being a Christian trumps everything else. Being a Christian means that we are all part of one family, the family of God. Being human means that we tend to do things that hurt others. Being Christian means acknowledging and accepting individual responsibility for the things we do wrong.

Being human often means that we are afraid of truth. Truth is important because it is a necessary part of the healing process. Archbishop Chris

spoke about forgiveness. True forgiveness comes from the heart. God forgives us because God loves us. When we love others we are accepting them as children of God.

Archbishop Chris also spoke about treaties that had been broken and that Canadians do not receive enough learning about our own history. He said we can all make a difference, and he had changed the role of the Indigenous Archbishop to helping the diocesan bishops to support indigenous people in their dioceses.

I hope that your appetite has been whetted to learn more of what Archbishop Chris told us. The recording of the webinar is posted on the PWRDF part of the Diocesan website.

I want as many people as possible to listen to Archbishop Chris' message. As a Lay Reader who had been assigned to lead a service of morning prayer at my home church, St George's Ste Anne de Bellevue, I found an opportunity. I was able to shorten the morning prayer service and show the Archbishop's part of the webinar instead of the usual homily.

We started in the church and during the gradual hymn proceeded to the hall where the gospel was read and the video played. When the talk had finished we continued morning prayer downstairs and sang our closing hymn.

If you have questions regarding this latter event, contact me at rhodesbartow@gmail.com.

Support Bill S-210 and Protect Children Online

PENNY RANKIN

Mrs. Penny Rankin is Convenor on Children and Youth for the National Council of Women in Canada and Chair of the Diocesan Standing Committee on Mission

Bill S-210: An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material.

Many of us are at least a bit addicted to our phones and ergo the internet. This is also true of children and youth who are using the internet for its benefits while increasing their risk of encountering its harms. Parents, teachers, and those familiar with sitting across from a group of kids on the Metro know this intuitively...

What many of us do not know is that parallel to all this scrolling is a significant surge in unrestricted access to pornographic content. Content, that is itself increasingly more violent.

In Canada, the average age of a child first stumbling upon pornography is 9-11 years old.

While parents are primarily responsible for shielding their children from exposure to adult content, their resources and ability to monitor and control potentially harmful content are limited. It is essential and urgent that the Canadian Government moves swiftly to support families in protecting their children and youth from internet-related harm, including inadvertent and premature exposure to pornography.

As a proud and committed member of our church and as VP of *Children and Youth with the National Council of Canada*, I am grateful for the support Bishop Mary and the Diocese have shown by signing our Open Letter in support of Bill S210. The bill calls for the government to implement 'age verification strategies' to help protect children from inadvertently and prematurely accessing adult content on the internet.

In sharing this, I encourage parishes and any and all members in your respective



Photo by Lightstock.

communities to review the letter and join in this important effort by encouraging other organizations, businesses, faith and social community groups to sign on. Please note that an online petition for individuals is in the works!

Three Heritage Ministers and three years of promises for action has not led to protection. Yes, it is complicated, but we

need to move forward on a Bill that is reaching its final voting point.

Despite support from the opposition parties, it is not clear that what seems a no-brainer will go through. "No-brainer" doesn't turn up in these articles often...but it is a no-brainer - we protect children in the "real world", why so slow to follow the direc-

tives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that specifically calls for age verification (notably not to be confused with identity verification)?

Please share this initiative broadly. More information is in the Open Letter itself...please go to www.montreal.anglican.ca/social-justice.



The Ven Robert Camara, Bishop Clara and Fr Tyson Rosberg. Photo by Philomena Hughes.



Robert and Tyson with Cathy Shelter, a member of St Paul's Cathedral, Kamloops. Photo supplied.



The group photo after the consecration – can you spot Robert and Tyson? Photo supplied.

Visitors From "the Far East": A Partnership Visit to the Territory of the People

TYSON ROSBERG

Fr Tyson Rosberg is a member of the Diocesan Partnership Committee.

The Diocese of Montreal has had a partnership with the Territory of the People (formerly known as the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior) since 2008. The Territory of the People is located in south central British Columbia, and spans some 166,500 square kilometres; roughly eight times the size of our own diocese.

This past January, the Vicar General, the Ven. Robert Camara, and myself had the honour of traveling to the Territory for the consecration of their new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Clara Plamondon. The consecration took place at St. Paul's Cathedral in Kamloops: Robert and I were welcomed as esteemed visitors from "the far east"!

Diocesan partners benefit from sharing their own experiences and by learning from each other. One of the invaluable things that we can learn from our relationship with the Territory is a greater awareness of the Residential School experience by Indigenous peoples;

a dark chapter in the Church's history.

The Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior was formed in 2002 after the Diocese of the Cariboo (founded in 1914) was forced into bankruptcy, resulting from litigation settlements to survivors of abuse in the Residential School system. As part of our time in Kamloops, Robert and I visited the former St. Louis Residential School.

The school opened in 1890. It soon became the largest Residential School in Canada, with enrolment peaking at 500 children in the 1950's. The school closed in 1978, and is now owned by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. The building houses a museum dedicated to the school's past. A monument stands at the entrance of the building, honouring "all the survivors" who attended the school. In 2021, ground-penetrating radar discovered over 200 potential unmarked graves around the school site.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada determined that Residential Schools were nothing short of "cultural genocide," intended

to destroy Indigenous communities and their ways of life. Indeed, the renaming of the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior as "the Territory of the People" in 2015 was a deliberate attempt to move away from the trauma still associated with words like "Church" or "Anglican." Standing in front of that red brick building, the awareness of the Residential School system became much more real.

Another learning that can be gained from our partnership with the Territory is the ability to do more with less. The Territory is considerably larger than our diocese, and its parishes are much more geographically isolated, often separated by hundreds of kilometres. Despite this, they function with fewer financial resources, very few clergy, and a streamlined administrative staff. They have a history of being creative and resilient about the ways in which they do ministry. The Territory also has a strong commitment to lay leadership.

Pastoral Elders provide important lay leadership within the Indigenous communities of the Territory, such as providing

prayer at funerals and feasts, and leading Sunday worship. They care for their communities. They hold their language and customs of their people in balance with the language and customs of the Christian faith. The consecration service included a drumming procession, and a traditional welcome to the Territory by some of these elders.

Partnership dioceses walk

together and share their experiences. They support each other, and rejoice in all that God has created. We met new friends in Kamloops, rekindled old relationships, shared our stories, and prayed together. We hope that Bishop Clara will be able to join us at our own synod this summer. The Diocese of Montreal is deeply enriched because of this ongoing partnership with the Territory of the People.



A monument stands at the entrance of the former Residential building, honouring "all the survivors" who attended the school.

Around the Diocese



Choir members at the induction of the Rev Deborah Noonan at St George's, Chateaugay, Sunday, November 26, 2023. Photo by Janet Best.



The Rev Deborah Noonan at her induction at St George's Chateaugay, Sunday, November 26, 2023. Photo by Janet Best.



Thomas Bate at All Souls, St John the Evangelist. Photo by Janet Best.



Derek MacLean at All Souls, St John the Evangelist. Photo by Janet Best.



From left to right: Emmanuel Williams, Caelan Williams, Averie Sawyers-Sandy, Ann-Lee K. Chery, Weeks Denzel, Osborne Matthew, Amani Sawyers-Sandy, Clarens G. Chery and (Khloe A. Chery was not confirmed) at the Confirmation service at St Lawrence, Lasalle on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.

Around the Diocese



The Ven Tim Smart presents Ernie Callender with his Lay Reader Emeritus Certificate & Medallion at the Lay Reader Commissioning Service, November 25, 2023. Photo by Janet Best.



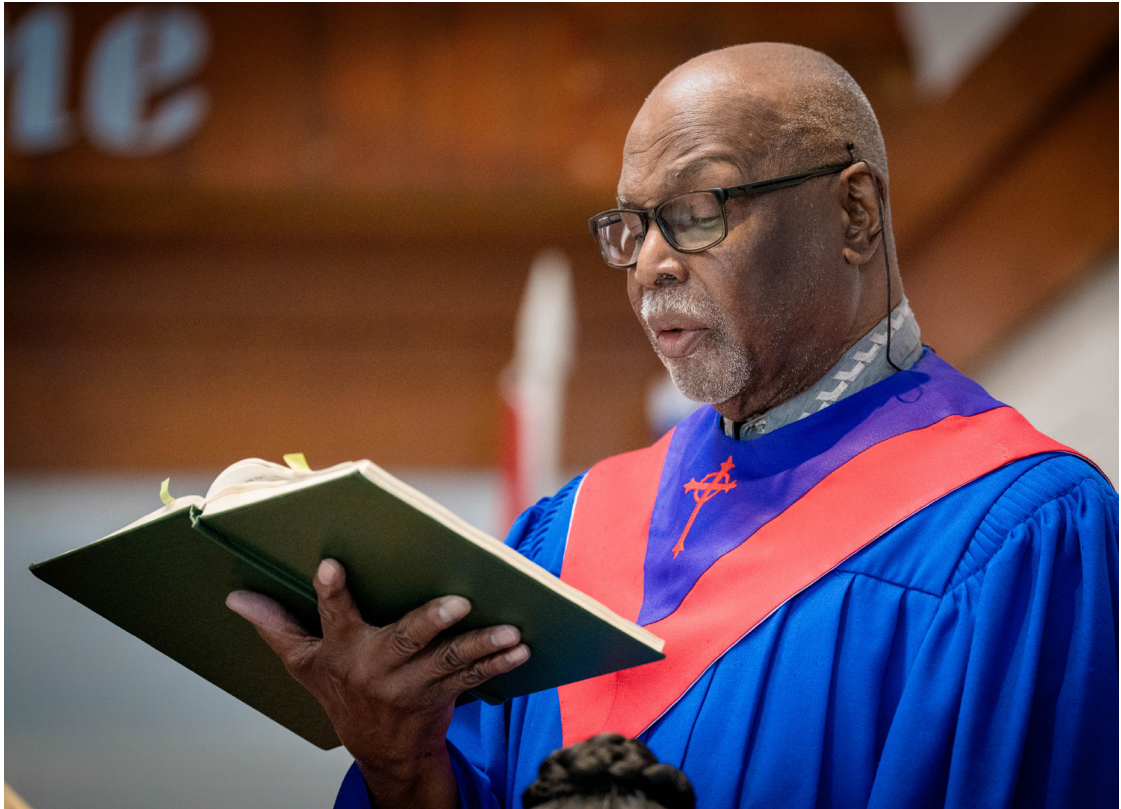
Robert McLachlan, President of the Lay Readers Association, participates in the Study Day, Saturday, November 25, 2023 at All Saints by the Lake, Dorval. Photo by Janet Best.



Lay Readers' Commissioning Service and Study Day, Saturday, November 25, 2023 at All Saints by the Lake, Dorval. Photo by Janet Best.



Amani Sawyers-Sandy and friend at the Confirmation service at St Lawrence, Lasalle on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.



Choir member Noel Maughn at the Confirmation service at St Lawrence, Lasalle on Sunday, January 28, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.

“Come and See”

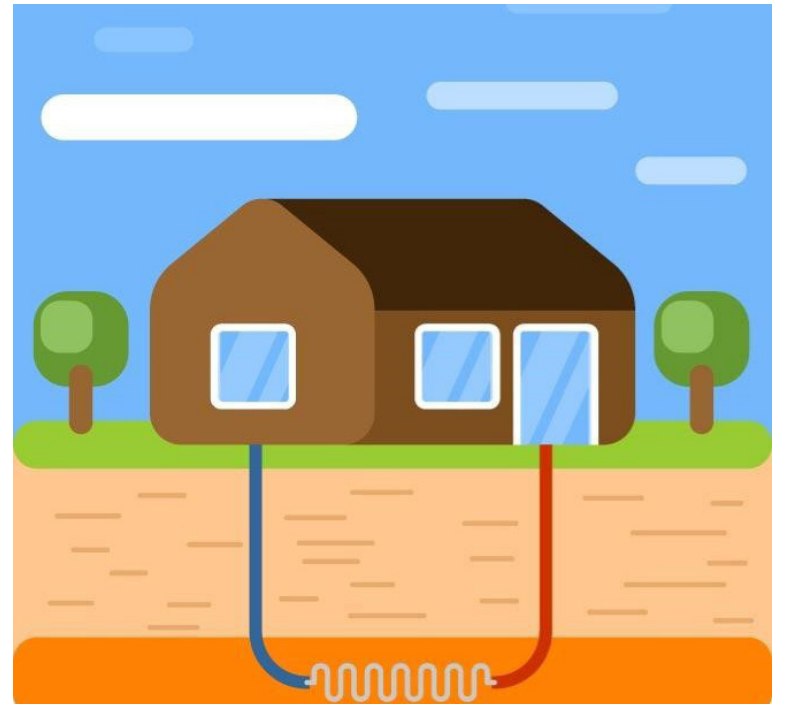
(John 1:39)

A Vocations Day for
the Diocese of Montreal

Do you feel called to ministry leadership in the church?

Come and See ... a day to hear about vocation and ministry (lay and ordained) in the Anglican Diocese of Montreal

April 27, 2024
Fulford Hall
1444 Union Avenue



Exciting news from the Ground Up

STEVE GILSON

Mr Steve Gilson is a member of the Diocesan Stewardship of the Environment Committee (SEC).

The Stewardship of the Environment Committee (SEC) has released an informational video with exciting news about Ground Sourced Heat Pumps - also known as Geothermal Energy - and how they could be installed in your church.

The SEC is recommending that all churches in the Diocese move to Geothermal energy sources to replace current fossil fuel heating systems (oil, natural gas) in order to meet the goal set at Diocesan Synod in June, 2023 – that all buildings have zero emissions by 2030 at the latest.

There are new grants available covering up to 75% of the costs for such projects, which can also apply to homes, making this type of conversion extremely attractive.

The presentation includes details about how the systems work, the potential costs and savings, plus other advantages, such as air conditioning and savings in domestic hot water heating. The SEC is offering this presentation to deaneries and interested parties within the Anglican Diocese of Montreal.

For more information, please visit <https://www.montreal.anglican.ca/stewardshipoftheenvironment> or contact the committee at sec@montreal.anglican.ca.

Intimate-partner violence and the Church in Quebec *continued from page 1*

presses and just be willing to have some good, hard conversations about that.”

Survivor’s testimony

In the Rapha survey, 84% of respondents agreed that issues concerning domestic violence and its prevention must be addressed publicly at church. However, only 17% of respondents agreed that their church had taken measures to inform its members about domestic abuse. The research team found that even simple initiatives such as putting up posters or having references on hand for local social services were not common practice at most churches. We must do better.

It can feel daunting for church volunteers or leaders to speak publicly on such a difficult topic. It is important, as well, to recognize one’s limitations; facilitating conversations and addressing the issue of domestic violence SHOULD NOT be confused with clinical expertise. Which is why it’s vital for churches to be well-connected with local social services.

A culture of honesty and transparency, where we can hold space for difficult truths - this is a valuable endeavour, and it isn’t done overnight.

There are wonderful resources - pastoral, theologi-

cal and psychological books, podcasts and videos - available to anyone wanting to better inform themselves or lead discussion groups on intimate-partner violence. The Rapha team has created a database of resources in French, English and Spanish to help clergy and the laity get informed.

The pulpit is not the only place we can address this. Some clergy may feel this is too big or or too sensitive an issue to include in sermons, so here are some ideas:

- Hold a round-table discussion over supper and invite a social worker, nurse or intervention worker to co-host the discussion.
- Invite a local women’s shelter to give a presentation of their work at church on a Sunday morning.
- Lead a Bible study on some of the more difficult passages in scripture that address gender-based violence, and ask thoughtful questions as to what is being revealed about God’s merciful character in these stories.
- Host a book club or podcast-listening group on the topic.
- Look up how to create safeguards and best practices for conversation groups

3. Creating spaces free of judgement and shaming is EVERYTHING.

“So I think there needs to be more support within the church for people who’ve decided to go through divorce, without the shame, with understanding and compassion and empathy”.

Survivor’s testimony

In almost every single qualitative interview, survivors named the importance of creating spaces where people can share their struggles, traumas and experiences without fear of judgement, gossip or shame. I have begun calling these spaces “communities of mercy”.

A community of mercy is comprised of people who are imperfect but who strive to be true companions in thought, word and deed to all whom are seeking healing and sanctification. To become a community of mercy, we need to commit to seeking healing in our lives. We need to avoid gossip. We need to be quick to listen, slow to judge. It’s not for the faint of heart.

But consider this: I collected many testimonies from women who considered that domestic violence was an initial trauma in their lives. The response from their churches was a secondary trauma. Spiritual

abuse was explicitly named. The actions and inactions of the local church were at times responsible for exacerbating the violence lived at home.

A number of survivors, in a courageous act of self-determination and agency, left those churches and found their way into communities of faith where they felt free to deconstruct messages they received as children or married women, where their security and well-being was treated with the utmost care and where their new spiritual directors or clergy were able to walk with them as they navigated divorce, child-rearing as single parents, PTSD, or financial difficulties. We have models of healthy communities of mercy.

In writing this article, I was filled with a sense of comfort. I knew that delivering news about intimate-partner violence in Christian faith communities is not necessarily a happy task, but that Anglican readership would be generally a receptive and open audience to this issue.

We have a desire in our diocese to be missional in our faith, social justice oriented and equity-minded towards all people, namely those who are marginalized. These are all strengths we can draw from in learning to be better and

do better when it comes to responding to domestic violence.

This doesn’t mean that we get it right all the time: the Rapha study reveals some hard truths about faith communities across our province, including mainline protestantism!

Churches and parishes have not properly educated their members on gender-based violence. They have been ill-equipped at responding to crisis involving domestic abuse, either by not recognizing it, minimizing it, or not wanting to “get involved in a private family matter”.

Toxic church cultures that include having taboos, spreading gossip, judging divorce without understanding the circumstances or being disconnected from societal issues that haunt fellow parishioners have all contributed to risk factors for Christians who are suffering domestic violence.

We should be slow to judge the mistakes made: clergy and churches desire, on the whole, to be places of safety, transparency and healing. If anything, it is our blind spots that have done us the most harm when it comes to equipping and responding to intimate-partner violence on our own pews.

Get to Know the New Director of Field Education at the Montreal School of Theology



Photo of the Rev Dr Marc Potvin by Joshua Del Rosario.

EMILY STUCHBERY

Ms Emily Stuchbery is the Communications Coordinator at Montreal Dio.

In January, the Rev. Dr. Marc Potvin began a new role as Director of Field Education in the Montreal School of Theology, the consortium of which Dio is a part. The position is part of a five-year grant to the MST from the Lilly Endowment in the United States that is allowing MST to revision and renew its programs, with a particular focus on identifying, preparing, and supporting pastoral leaders.

Marc was born and raised in Montreal but has lived and worked in about a dozen other places in Canada throughout his career.

His homecoming to Montreal is the first time living in the city since he was 17 years old when he left home to join the Regular Officer Training Plan of the Canadian Armed Forces.

At Dio's first Wednesday community lunch of the semester, Marc was asked to share a fun fact about himself by way of introduction. He shared that while he has flown in a Canadian Army helicopter many times, he has never landed in one. Instead, as a paratrooper, he was practiced in jumping out of and rappelling out of helicopters. During his military service, he was deployed with the Canadian Airborne Regiment to Somalia, and to Croatia, and Bosnia to prepare the troops to return home at the end of their tour.

When Marc left home to join the military, he had his sight set on becoming an air navigator, but he soon found himself called in another direction.

"Early one Friday morning in September, I clearly heard a voice calling me to vocational ministry as a chaplain to the military."

He described feeling an unmistakable presence of warmth and light that he still struggles to put into words. *"I kept that event*

to myself for one full year, unsure if anyone would believe me."

He ended up pursuing a Master of Divinity at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Prison Chaplaincy. *"Looking back, I think that God has had a grip on me from an early age,"* he says. *"I remember, as a young boy, after my First Communion as a Roman Catholic, pretending to be a priest and celebrating mass."*

During his time at the Royal Military College in Kingston, Ontario he had an encounter with Jesus that changed his faith expression, and he became Baptist. *"I accepted the fact that Jesus loved me as I was, that my sin did not have to keep me away from being loved by God. That moment began my life's transformation which continues to this day."*

He is an ordained Baptist minister and was most recently employed as the Pastoral Leaders Development Associate for the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec before joining

the faculty at MST.

After pursuing his M. Div. in his 20s, he continued to work in the military as a chaplain, and member of the Air Force and Army for nearly 20 years.

He eventually settled down in Nova Scotia to provide stability for his children and began working in congregational ministry where he remained for 18 years.

During this time, he went back to Acadia Divinity College for a Doctor of Ministry that focused on the supervision of seminary students in field education. He moved to Toronto in 2018 to begin his job at the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. *"I was not looking for a change,"* he says. *"I was very settled in my position. It was really by chance that I stumbled upon the position at MST."*

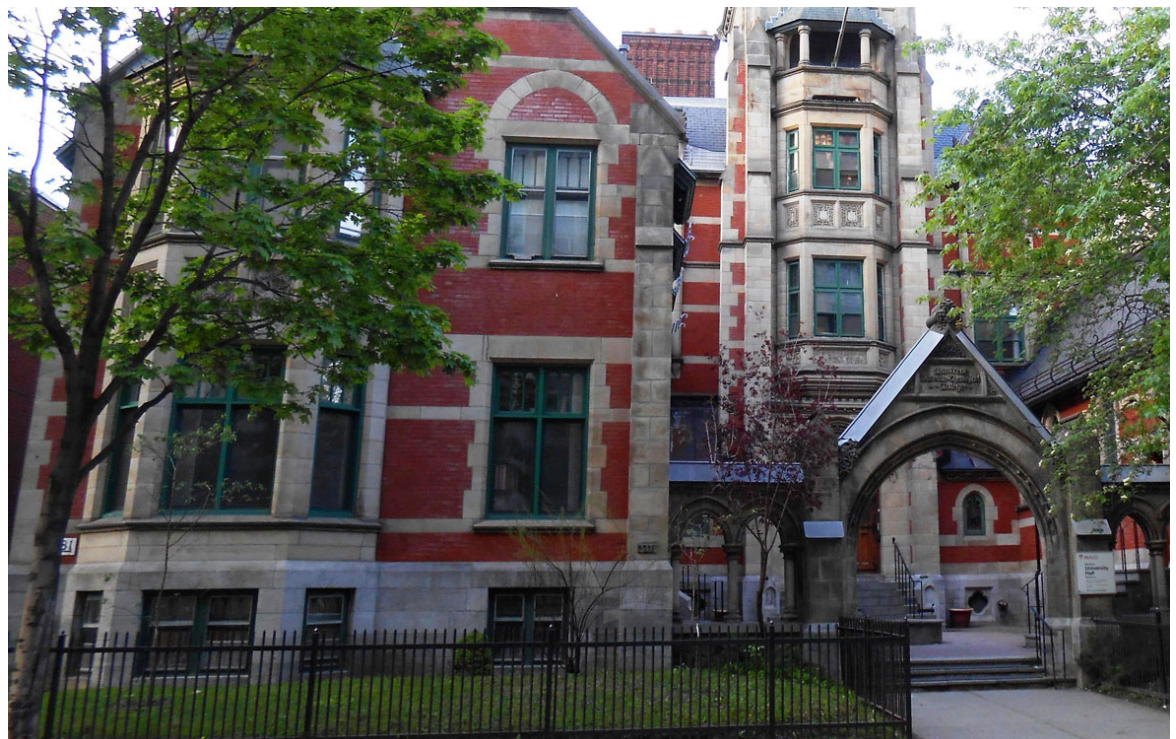
He was in Montreal, helping to look after his grandson, when he happened to skim the newsletter from the Association for Theological Field Education.

His curiosity was piqued

when he stumbled across an ad for the Director of Field Education job. He was attracted to the prospect of taking leadership in renewing the field education program and helping to shape future ministers, especially given the nature of his D. Min. research.

"The consortium that is MST was also attractive to me," he notes. *"I am ecumenically minded and strongly believe that the unity of the church is necessary to announce the Kingdom of God. As a military chaplain I had the opportunity to work with Anglican, United, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Roman Catholic colleagues. To me, it felt like church at its best."*

We are all eager to witness how Marc transforms the field education program at MST. The wisdom and guidance he will provide to our future ministers will be an asset to the Church. *"I do not take my responsibilities lightly,"* he says. *"I trust that God will lead the way as only the Holy Spirit can."*



The Montreal School of Theology is an ecumenical body consisting of two autonomous theological colleges and a theological program affiliated with McGill University.

French for Ministry Intensive

A Week-long Intensive Course at Montreal Dio

Monday, May 6th to Friday, May 10th, 2024



The French for Ministry Intensive is designed for clergy, lay leaders, and spiritual care professionals looking to improve their ability to work in French. Participants may take this course as part of the Certificate in Bilingual Ministry or as a stand-alone continuing education course. To register, go to www.montrealdio.ca.

Save the Date!



Montreal Dio CONVOCAATION

May 6th at 7:00 PM

A Still, Small Light



Photo by Janet Best.

A Personal Reflection; my experience at the Retreat for Exhausted People at All Saints by The Lake, Dorval

LEE-ANN MATTHEWS

Lee-Ann Matthews is the MTL Youth Project Coordinator and Web & Social Media Coordinator for the Diocese of Montreal.

I wasn't the only one who was drawn to a retreat for exhausted people. In fact, there were over 20 of us who made our way out on that cold January 20th morning to be welcomed by a hot breakfast prepared by the All Saints by the Lake's men's group.

Called *A Still Small Light*, this Epiphany Retreat's full itinerary was posted throughout the space at the church, giving us a chance to mentally prepare for

the rhythm of the day to come.

After breakfast, the Rev Grace Pritchard-Burson, our retreat leader, provided some words of welcome and orientation. This set the tone for a day of rest, reflection, meditation and restoration.

When we entered the chancel space and huddled together to sing hymns and say morning prayer I was curious about how things would unfold.

I confess that I appreciate the opportunity to sing in community. This is one of the unique and special offerings of the Church and I am always moved by this humble yet powerful experience. So, when

we joined together as a small but mighty chorus, accompanied by our friend and colleague, Neil Mancor on piano, I was officially in my element.

Following the chorus, Grace led an opening meditation, priming us for stillness. I started to notice how I was feeling, and it got me thinking - as we do when we are attempting to meditate, - that when things are too busy or we are too stressed or in our heads, we can find ourselves feeling isolated and alone. We feel stuck. At least, that is how I had been feeling.

To be honest, with everything going on in my life, the

last thing I had time for was a full day retreat - but - at the same time, it was exactly what I needed. There is an old Zen saying: "You should sit in meditation for 20 minutes a day. Unless you're too busy, then you should sit for an hour." Just by being there, I started to let go and I feel my soul relax. The truth is, sometimes all you need to do is show up.

During the break there were times of silence. Prayer stations had been laid out in the beautiful sanctuary, carefully prepared for us to engage with. Having this structured time to consider what I needed was a balm for my soul. I felt so soothed and cared for as I made my way around the spectacular stone-walled space without a care in the world. I moved slowly and breathed deeply.

Eventually, I climbed a flight of stairs and found a couch to slump into. The space was lit by some huge lead-paned windows. I picked up a Bible and opened it without much thought or effort, taking comfort, allowing myself to get lost in the words. The simple act of reading and being present was fortifying.

When the retreat bell sounded inviting us to return for another round of meditation, I was alert and prepared.

Meditation can reveal so much to us about the quality of our thoughts and our capacity for stillness and listening. It can sweep away cobwebs and invite us into deeper union with our Creator. I felt the tension in my neck melt and my heart soften. The meditations throughout the day provided the perfect balance of guidance and silence.

When we were invited to choose our own silent prayer time, I returned to the couch, let it hold me, and, covering my eyes with my hat, I fell into a gentle slumber. Breathing slowly and rhythmically, was both calming and restorative. My body and soul experienced a sense of deep rest that I hadn't realized I needed.

Soon, we returned to the chancel for midday prayer and more singing and this is where the floodgates opened. My heart and soul were moved and I felt the Holy Spirit. Tears flowed down my cheeks. I welcomed the release, trusting that when emotions surface, they deserve to be felt and expressed. And so, I did.

We left the inner landscape and returned to the space we started in where, we enjoyed some conversation, lunch and fellowship. I was delighted to meet an inspiring 93-year-old woman who shared pictures from her youth. We crafted together and closed the day with sharing.

I was moved by the depth and insights from the participants of all ages and by the impact that a day of retreat had on each of us.

I am so impressed and grateful to the Rev. Grace Pritchard-Burson and her team at All Saints by the Lake for delivering a retreat for tired people, to allow us to be spiritually fed, (the hot breakfast certainly didn't hurt either!) and to provide formal opportunities to enter into profound spaces of restoration and connection with ourselves, with God and with one another.

What I am trying to say is... thank you, I needed that!

One of the many ways in which God's blessing can come

JOSEE LEMOINE

The Rev Josée Lemoine is the Incumbent of Saint Hilda's.

I work with a small congregation in Montreal - less than 20 families - and have a quarter time charge. The church, in Eastern Montreal, is St Hilda's.

One might look at the little nondescript church and think it lacks interest; but you would be wrong to dismiss it so readily as the rich history of this little building is a story of survival and transformation.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Montreal needed workers in many trades and accepted immigrants from Great Britain and other European countries.

They were what we would call today blue-collar workers. Some worked at a railyard or a shipyard, others worked in factories, including the tobacco industry, sugar refinery and breweries.

They were people of faith. Some gathered in houses, but soon no house was big enough to hold them, so they built their own churches.

Over time, more than a dozen churches rose from the ground. Simple buildings,

nothing fancy, but places where people could gather, worship together, have a community life, get married and have their children baptized and confirmed.

After the 1950s-1960s, when factories started to close or move elsewhere, when the yards closed, these immigrants - or was it their children? - moved out of the area and went where jobs were.

Typically, the second generation of immigrants does better than their parents and just move on. As industries changed and people moved, churches started to be deserted and were closed one after another.

At least one building survived as a public library on Park Avenue. Today, only one of these small churches still exists in Eastern Montreal. It is called St. Hilda's.

Somehow, the community survived, possibly because it adapted itself to the changes in population. When it wasn't yet fashionable, they celebrated "Black History", and had occasional jazz music services. At the beginning of the 21st century there were a number of families with children that came.



After Sunday service at Saint Hilda's, January 28, 2024. Photo supplied.

When it became legal to do so, hens were invited to spend summer months in their own little "condo-coop" on the land; a small community garden was created. Back alley neighbours created a group that took care of the hens and garden.

After the pandemic, and after changing priest three times over the last two years, there were little more than a dozen faithful attending services,

all of whom were starting to worry about the future of their little community.

The premises were used by a Baptist congregation that had also dramatically shrank during the pandemic as well as some AA groups. Needless to say, the finances were a wreck.

Some members of the AA groups asked if I could organize meditation sessions, which I did; but then no one showed

up, except for one student from Dio!

Last year, we asked ourselves what it means to be a church.

There was a time when church meant worship, but also community life. There were potluck suppers, dances, scouts and brownies, movies in the hall for kids on Saturday afternoons, etc.

continued on page 12



On Saturday, January 27, CMP had its third annual ski, snowboarding, and tubing day. This is everyone together in the Lodge at Mont Avila (St. Sauveur). Photo supplied.

Happenings at CMP (aka Church of St Mark and St Peter)

CHRIS BARRIGAR

The Rev Chris Barrigar is the Incumbant of the Church of St Mark & St Peter.

“Quest” is the new name for the 20s group at CMP. A couple of Quest members recently launched a photo-essay project called “Humans of CMP,” inspired by the famous “Humans of New York” project.

Members of the congregation who wish to participate have an informal photo taken of them by a member of the project team, and then share important moments of their life-story to another member who writes up their story.

The photos and stories will be collected over the weeks and months ahead and then posted onto a special CMP website page.

Members of CMP will then be able to access the site and be surprised about the discoveries we make about each other’s lives! As CMP continues to grow, this will provide an important means for members to learn so much more about each other.

Several times through the year CMP hosts “Monday Night Discussions” by Zoom, to discuss issues of interest to our members. These have included such topics as residential schools, science and faith, medical assistance in dying, and, most recently, a discussion on “What to do with God and the Canaanites? The problem of God and violence in the OT.”

We typically have 20 or more participants for these discussions, which provide an important opportunity for us to work through challenging issues of faith and Christian discipleship. We also do book groups by Zoom. Currently one group is finishing Tom Wright’s *Surprised by Hope*, and another group will start up for Lent.

CMP member André Leitão has recently started a program at CMP called “Language Club,” in which immigrants to St Laurent have an opportunity to practice their English or French conversation with tutors from CMP.

Language Club is held

Thursday mornings and Thursday evenings at CMP, in eight-week sessions, for participants at varying levels of ability. Childcare is also provided for the morning sessions. We are currently in the midst of our second cohort, with about 18 participants. Tutors do not need to be CMP members, and more tutors are always welcome, especially in French but also in English. If you or someone you know might be interested in tutoring, please contact André at andre@stmarkstpeter.org. (All tutors have to be vetted for both aptitude and security.)

On Saturday, January 27, CMP had its third annual ski, snowboarding, and tubing day in St Sauveur. We had our best turnout ever, with 53 CMP members participating.

Each year there are immigrant members who join us for their first experience of this part of Canadian winter culture—it is wonderful seeing recent arrivals have so much fun discovering this part of life here!



Crosstalk Ministries Day Camp 2024

VALERIE TAYLOR

Ms Valerie Taylor is Director of Day Camps at Crosstalk Ministries and Lay Secretary of Synod

For more than 40 years, Crosstalk Ministries has been facilitating Day Camp programs for children ages 4-12 across Canada and beyond. Children in these communities spend a week learning about God and God’s place in their lives through music, games, audio-visuals, crafts, and other activities.

Lives are changed as campers and leaders come to know Jesus and experience God’s love.

For summer 2024 we are offering “Signposts” exploring passages from the Gospel of John. Each day the campers will experience one of these five exciting stories: “They Have no Wine,” “Your Son will Live,” “They Have Opened My Eyes!” “Lazarus Come Out!” and “I Have Seen the Lord!” Our program will unpack the stories through songs and games, small groups, crafts and liturgical dance all geared to children of 4-12 years.

Visit <https://crosstalkministries.ca/wordpress/> for further details and to access the fillable application form

Notable

In-person Conference Synod 2024
Thursday, June 6 - Saturday, June 8.
www.montreal.anglican.ca/synod

The Great Vigil of Easter

A West Island Celebration. March 30, 7:30 pm

All are warmly invited to this community celebration of the Resurrection

Holy Week Services at Christ Church Beaurepaire:

March 24, 10:00 am: Palm Sunday

March 24, 4:00 pm: Paws&Pray in Holy Week (dog friendly)

March 28, 7:00 pm: Maundy Thursday

March 29, 2:00 pm: Good Friday

March 30, 7:00 pm: Easter Vigil (joint service)

March 31, 10:00 am: Easter Sunday

455 Church Street, Beaconsfield | christchurchbeaurepaire.ca



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

Loving God, we thank you for this Lenten season when we have the opportunity to review all that you have done for us through your precious Son. We are grateful for your plan of salvation, as we accompany Jesus through His baptism, His temptation, His rejection, and, ultimately, His passion. We rejoice in this triumphant ending. Thank you for resurrecting our Lord Jesus Christ, so that we too can share in the victory over death and prosper from the forgiveness of sins.

Gracious God, sustain us in our Lenten practice when the goal of spiritual renewal through repentance, prayer, fasting and alms giving seems unattainable and burdensome. We pray that



this journey brings us into a deeper, more meaningful relationship with you. This preparation leads to the celebration of Christ's resurrection and the renewal of our baptismal vows. We pray you will sustain us as we live out this legacy, and make every effort to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ where ever we go.

We beseech you, Lord God, to help us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to always remember to love our neighbours as ourselves.

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

Refugee Sponsorship *continued from page 4*

the necessary fundraising does. Since 2022, *Tri-Parish + Friends for Refugees* group has made three applications in two separate lotteries to sponsor a family and two adults. Both times our applications have not been chosen in the lottery. We feel frustrated, to say the least.

The system that the Ministère de l'immigration, de la francisation, et de la diversité uses to administer private refugee sponsorship needlessly discourages private citizens who collectively organize to stand in solidarity with refugee persons.

Moreover, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that privately sponsored refugee persons have better outcomes than those who arrive without sponsorship.

A federal study published

in 2020 that examines employment and income rates for refugee persons arriving in Canada from 1980 to 2020, for instance, concludes that those who are privately sponsored have higher employment and income rates than government-assisted refugees, even after taking into account differences in education, official language ability, and other observed socio-demographic characteristics.

What can **you** do? Write a letter to your MNA. This concrete action is easy to undertake. You can write as an individual, a household, or, even better, as a group (a parish, a group of friends, etc.). Let your MNA know that the system that governs private refugee sponsorship in Quebec is unjust.

God's blessing *continued from page 10*

The neighbourhood is residential, though the main address of the church is on a large avenue, and the population around is mostly unchurched, French-speaking young professional adults. What if we could create a link between that community and the church community?

We reached out to the back-alley people— they have a Facebook page – and we soon found out that a number of musicians and artists were living nearby.

A string quartet contacted us. Music and church, why not? Then a new parishioner showed up one day in late summer and "music-church" discussions lead to the discovery that she had connections to an organization fostering a number of music groups.

Ensuing three-party discussions were so fruitful that in the fall, we undertook the renovation of the sanctuary, repainting the walls, removing the vinyl tile flooring and uncovering the old hardwood floor.

Amazingly, volunteers from one of the music groups and volunteers from the church community worked alongside one another. Relationships started to develop.

With the blessing of the diocese, this month we are signing a long-term contract with the two music groups. Because they have access to more grants than we do as a church community, they will handle all building-related expenses

(which is not a small amount!), and some more, so that our little church community can now start to develop ministry. The church will now be responsible only for ministry related expenses. The Diocese was adamant to keep this property which is now secured.

We are daydreaming: neighbours attending weekly concerts, school children coming to learn about music, musical residences, collaborations for Christian feasts.

Neighbours will continue to care for the hens and the garden, but now they will also venture in the building for non-religious activities. Who knows what the future holds for us.

All we did was to make a phone call to the association of the back-alley neighbours, which then cascaded.

Instead of worrying about the closing of a church building and dispersal of the church community - the last one in Eastern Montreal - our little community can continue to exist.

We do not know what God has planned for us in the coming year. By opening up to the neighbourhood people, a larger community has been created, a few young parishioners have joined us and we can contemplate doing new ministry. We are not turning rich, but we can stop worrying about our everyday survival and spend more time listening to God's calling and work doing His ministry.

We are immensely thankful for this. Blessed by God!

Confirmation, Christ Church Rawdon, February 5, 2024



Shari-Lei Gallagher, Victor Cornelius Craig, Netty Estella Michelle Stamper, Bishop Mary, Fr Rodney Clark, Anthony Jonathan Réjean Gérard Roy and Heidi Marie Cathie Judy Roy at the Confirmation service at Christ Church Rawdon, Sunday, February 4, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.



Judy Arsenault, Netty Estella Michelle Stamper, Bishop Mary and Anne Millar at the Confirmation service at Christ Church Rawdon, Sunday, February 4, 2024. Photo by Janet Best.

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