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Will We Have a Bishop?

Article by the Right Reverend Thomas Corston, Bishop of Moosonee

THROUGHOUT THE restructuring transition plans moving our Diocese toward that day when we become a “Mission Area”, I have been asked a number of times, “Will we have a Bishop?” Some people have even been a little more definite and have told me that they don’t look forward to being a part of the new “mission area” because when it happens, “we won’t have a Bishop”.

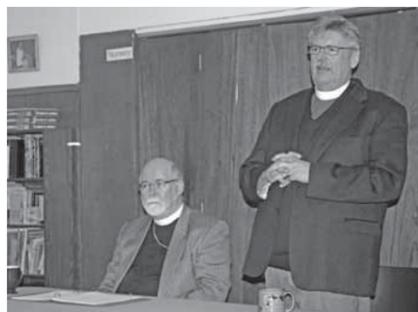
We Anglicans can’t really be Anglican without a Bishop! We are, after all, an Episcopal church. From the Archbishop of Canterbury, our spiritual head, to the Bishop of Moosonee, the workings and functions of our Anglican structure have always been under the spiritual and temporal direction of a Bishop. Some Bishops are well respected and loved. The opposite is true, however, in that some of our Bishops have been tyrants. All are human and yet chosen by God to their role of leadership among the people of God.

In this vast land of Moosonee, in our remoteness and isolation from much of the world, we have shared in a vibrant history. Since the days of John Horden and those early holders of this Episcopal office who paddled through the miles of northern rivers and trudged on shoeshoe across miles of frozen muskeg to those of us in our modern day who drive and fly across our 350,000 square mile territory, the Diocese of Moosonee has had nine Bishops. All of us, and I include myself, have experienced the love and support of our people.

To many of you the upcoming changes to become a “Mission Area” seem to suggest that we will no longer have a Bishop. Yes, it is true that the new entity is scheduled to begin when the present Bishop steps into retirement. When



Bishop Thomas Corston greeted parishioners at Wemindji.



Bishop Thomas Corston & the Venerable Harry Huskins brought truth and hope during their tour of the diocese.

that happens, though, it does not mean that we will slip into a void and have no Episcopal presence. Our decision made at Synod in June, 2011, was that the area of the present Diocese of Moosonee would come under the spiritual direction and care of the Archbish-

op of the province. To all intents and purposes, the Archbishop will act as the Bishop of Moosonee in all matters of our church life and governance. In those times when the Archbishop cannot be present himself in the Diocese for a scheduled event, he will guarantee that another Bishop will represent him and be answerable to him and thus provide that Episcopal presence.

So, when we become the “Moosonee Mission Area”, while you might not have the presence of the present Bishop in the Diocese, you will always have a Bishop. We will remain as Anglicans once the change happens, and Anglicans cannot be Anglicans without their Bishop!

Lay Readers' Weekend

Article by Susan Villeneuve, Layreaders' Warden

FOR THE SECOND TIME in as many years, I had the pleasure of attending the Diocese of Moosonee Lay Readers' Weekend which was held Feb. 24th, 25th, and 26th in Cochrane. The fellowship of the weekend was uplifting and the hospitality of Holy Trinity Church was outstanding. The event was attended by clergy and lay readers from around the diocese and provided a wonderful opportunity to talk about issues and to share stories with each other.

The Rev. Edna Murdy and Rev. Deborah Lonergan-Freake conducted informational sessions on topics, such as visiting the sick and shut-ins and prayer respectively. Bishop Tom led a workshop outlining the correct way in which to set up the altar for communion and took the time to explain why things are done the way they are. All of the workshops were greatly appreciated for the learning they provided. Despite the seriousness of some of the topics and the dryness of others, the workshops were never dull or disheartening. In fact, they were quite entertaining at times, like when Deborah and her husband James portrayed Peter and his wife in a skit which began one of Deborah's prayer workshops.

I had the opportunity to present the work I'd completed thus far on the Lay Readers' Training Manual. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to receive feedback on the contents as well as suggestions for improvement.

The weekend was highlighted by the three teaching sessions presented by Rev. Patrick McManus, a professor at the Thorneloe College School of Theology, who is currently residing in Sault Ste. Marie. Patrick's series of talks on the living tradition of Anglicanism called our attention to the fact that we are all written

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Bishop Tom Corston and the layreaders of the diocese gathered in Cochrane for the annual Layreaders' Conference.

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 into God's story. It is our job to tell this story to others and to use our preaching to draw our listeners into God's story as well because everyone has an important part to play. His sessions were informative and thought-provoking (and possibly inspired a few people to consider enrolling in one of his distance education courses).

An event such as this weekend is always a 'battery recharging' experience and is vitally necessary to the health and growth of our diocese. The weekend was a joyful experience that strengthened our feeling of 'family' and increased the feelings of resolve to stick together in the uncertain times that lie ahead.

Bishop's Letter

Article by the Right Reverend Thomas Corston, Bishop of Moosonee.

OUR PROPERTY AT home has a number of trees on it and they are all richly beautiful and provide us with pleasure and summer shade. I enjoy them. Each year I go around the property and check each tree and prune them where necessary, cutting off some dead branches. I like to think that my pruning efforts bring positive results.

We have one large silver birch tree that is my favourite. In the summer it provides shade over our back

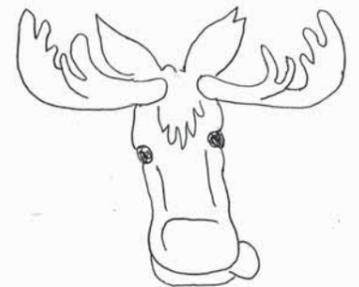
deck, thus allowing us to enjoy the afternoon. Every spring when new foliage sprouts in the tree there are always one or two branches that have not made it through the winter. They hang dead and are ugly in the midst of the richness of the new leaves. There is nothing to do but cut them off.

As I write we have just passed Easter and I am thinking about pruning the trees, especially as I read one of the Gospels found in the Easter season about the "true vine". We don't have many vines in the north, but the story can easily be adapted to any tree. Jesus says, "I am the true vine". He further says, "Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me... Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit... apart from me you can do nothing." (St. John 15)

Since returning to Moosonee after some years I have noticed that many of those I once knew as active members of the Church are not there anymore. The interesting thing is that I have run into many of them in my travels. Each time I meet up with a former member I wonder whatever happened that they are not part of the faith community anymore. They remind me of the branch that at one time was united with the vine...or like those branches on my birch tree that don't make it through the winter. They hang lifeless and empty of the life-giving sap that comes from the tree.

To lose a branch is to lose part of your very self. In the faith community, to lose someone is a loss to our very life. Be open to God and allow him to work in and through you. Stay connected. Let God nourish

you. Let God be God for you. Jesus' invitation to us is to live every day as the healthy branches on a tree. Without that we are lifeless and empty and ready to be pruned.



Reflective Moose

Telling Tales by Reverend Patrick McManus

AFTER VISITING THE IKEA a while ago, I had to ask, "What does IKEA have that we-the church-don't have?" This question is at once tongue-in-cheek and a sober one. On the tongue-in-cheek end of things, they've obviously got more comfortable seats, a great deal of marketing geniuses and a multi-million dollar advertising budget! On the sober end of things, IKEA, as a culture, represents a challenge to the church. This was made sharply apparent to me on this particular visit. On our way out I noticed an advertisement specifically targeting families to spend their Sunday mornings at IKEA.

Now the reason that IKEA represents a challenge to the church is because it's out-narrating the church; it's beating the church at its own game of telling a story about what life is all about. It's not IKEA alone that's successful here but it's a good representative of our wider culture. They tell a story about a way of life that you can't help but want to be a part of.

The reason IKEA is thriving is because it knows its story, it knows how to tell its story. It knows its end goal, its reason for being. In other words, IKEA knows how to do its IKEA thing, and it performs it well. In fact, walking the halls, you can read the

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The people of St. Paul's enthusiastically participated in the history of the Eucharist and took part in the Lord's supper - just as He did!

History of the Eucharist: an Experimental Lenten Study

Article by Dean Greg Gilson.

ALMOST TWO decades ago I was attempting to come up with a new and interesting Lenten study for a parish that resisted any form of bible or faith study during the week. As is often the case I ran across some stuff that I had kept from Seminary without any idea why I would even keep it, but I did and with each subsequent cleaning or move I still run across such treasures. In this particular case I discovered a long forgotten binder that I had to put together for my seminary liturgics class. As I read through the material I remembered being fascinated with the history of the actual Eucharistic rite, and I was struck with the idea that the average person in the pew had no idea how we got from the meal that Jesus had with the Disciples to the "Styrofoam" chip and sip of wine we now call the Eucharist. So armed with this insight I began a study of the History

of the Eucharist. I realized even with this fascinating topic not very many would come out on a week night so I developed the program for Sunday Mornings in the place of the usual worship services. After all, I reasoned, they are Eucharists. I began with a "Baracha" meal which is most likely the actual meal Jesus had with the Disciples with food that was common to the day. People are always surprised how good the food was, and I am usually inundated with requests for copies of the recipes after the meal! The next Sunday we jumped to the third century where we participate in the Hippolytus Rite which is the first Christian Eucharistic rite we have in completed form. The meal reflects the difference in both the food eaten and the fact that the faith community was not just a small gathering but could be a rather large gathering. A full meal would not have been a practical thing to do, but the table fellowship

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Great Chapter in Mistissini

Article by Marilyn van Duffelin

MOOSE NOTES



THE FIRST REAL feeling of being north was the squeaky snow. The Great Chapter meeting of James Bay Deanery, 2012, held in Mistissini, was surprising to me in many ways. Close to my heart were the wonderful times of song. We sang in celebration of new ministry, we sang in prayer, we sang to build fellowship and community, we sang to each other to share our wide range of traditions, we sang to make joyful noise together. We sang gospel and country and traditional and Taizé. I learned how to sing "Amazing Grace" in country. I learned how to draw a hymn out as slow as the heart beat, until you could almost see the prayer and hopes move out into the larger community and speak to those around us. The music seemed to return to a more elemental state, acquiring layers of praise and worship and prayer in addition to the words, joining with the music of the universe on its journey to God.

The meeting discussion sessions were challenging. The Diocese of Moosonee is on a journey of re-imagination, working with the people to build a healthy community and further God's mission in a time of austerity, enormous social problems, social injustice, and some degree of intra-community conflict. I was struck by the words of one of the People's Wardens, who said that they were worried and concerned about the church who had left them, like a child that leaves the family, and it saddened them that they did not know when it would return. Towards the end of our final day

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The Reverend Elizabeth Sipos, surrounded by presenters and Bishops Corston and Drainville, was inducted as Rector of Mistissini.

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story about how IKEA started written on its walls.

"Church" names a story. The church tells and lives out a story about what life is all about. It tells God's grand story of redemption and it's a different story than our world tells. This ought not come as a surprise, since the Jesus we follow embodied an immeasurably different story than did the world of his day.

But it's when the church forgets who she is—when she forgets what her story is—that the church misses the whole point of this following Jesus thing. It's then that the church

starts to listen and buy into the stories that are told around it; stories like the myth of redemptive violence, or the story of unlimited consumption of resources, or the story of self-concern over the concern of those on the edge of society. Maybe it's as simple as the story of "the best bang for your buck". The stories told around us are legion and often very attractive. When the church forgets to do its church thing, it loses its way.

Answers? Well, I get asked a lot, probably because I'm a young priest, about how the church is going to move forward into the future. And right now, in many places the church

as we've known it, is on life-support and the future looks pretty bleak. Let me add something that's seemingly obvious but that gets lost 'on the ground' as it were: no amount of strategic planning, no number of core values, no measure of problem solving will secure the future of the Anglican Church in Canada if we are not willing to radically re-think what it means to be a church in a culture that has by-and-large forgotten about the church!

Before we crunch the numbers, before we throw solutions at our problems we have to get back to the fundamentals of learning and know-

ing our story through the hearing and reading of the story of Scripture, of properly acting it out in our liturgy, and effectively telling this story in our preaching and witness.

Answers? I only have one. Only God rescues. Only God can rescue his people. I'm writing this during Eastertide. During this season we tell and embody the story of a God who rescues, and in the resurrection rescue of love that raised our Lord from the grave, rescues us as well. That's good news; and, it's incomparably better news—and a much better story—than Sunday mornings at IKEA.





Moose Gallery



St. Thomas Church, Moose Factory, has been a place of comfort to its people and its many visitors for many years.



The Rev. Patrick McManus drew his audience to God's story during the Layreaders' Conference in Cochrane



The Moose Factory Singers made a joyful noise at the Great Chapter meeting in Mistissini.

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together, we gathered in front of the Lord's Table and prayed for our Bishop. Led by Bishop Drainville, we prayed that God grant Bishop Tom discernment and wisdom and strength to guide us through these very challenging times, to proclaim the gospel, to teach us and guide us on the right path. Those prayers are being taken back to the communities and repeated. Like a stone

dropped into a lake, ripples of this prayer will be repeated by the communities, building and uniting to a common purpose, to proclaim the gospel together. How do I feel after my first trip into the north? I was blessed. I feel graciously welcomed by a close-knit community of families whose faith is humbling to observe. These are families that understand harsh realities and nurture each other, all accompanied by laughter.

Hopes for our First Cathedral

Article by the Right Reverend Thomas Corston, Bishop of Moosonee

OLD ST. THOMAS' Church, Moose Factory, built in the mid-nineteenth century, and later established as the first Pro-Cathedral of the new Diocese of Moosonee following the consecration of our first Bishop, John Horden in 1872, became too unsafe to continue as the place of worship by 2005. In 2006, Archbishop Caleb Lawrence officiated at its deconsecration, a sad moment in the life of Moose Factory and of the Diocese. It had had a long and significant history, had been the spiritual home of thousands of the faithful, had been the mentoring centre for numerous missionary clergy, and the Cathedral of Moosonee's first two bishops. It was a place filled with memories for so many who came through her doors.

Having been built from local timbers, it had to be shorn up a number of times in its history, when the beams would sag and walls would buckle. By the time the decision was made to close it, it had been declared unsafe. The congregation moved into their new church, thanks to an agreement with the Roman Catholic community. But old St. Thomas' has continued her silent vigil over the surrounding cemetery and her red-roofed tower, slightly leaning now, stands as a sentinel over the ancient Moose River. The doors, however, are locked with an ugly out-of-place lock and chain.

Since its closing, many locals and vacationers on the annual summer tourist trains have missed being able to enter its hallowed space and gaze

upon the old beauty of this house of God, and search for the old floor-plugs that were said to have been placed in the floors to allow the water from the river's spring flood to rise in the building rather than move it off its foundations. People have indicated that this focal point of spiritual life and Moose culture has been missing.

There have been a couple of efforts to try to raise funds to reopen the church, but they have sputtered out even before they got off the ground. In late February of this year, another effort has been started. Bishop Corston convened a meeting of the parish and interested community leaders to talk about the possibility. Representatives of the historic and cultural groups made presentations and many questions were asked and discussed. After a couple of hours, Mr. Thomas Joly agreed to work with the parish's Select Vestry in putting together a Fundraising Committee. It will be a project that will take time and require a great deal of money, but there is new hope that this special place might one day again open her doors as a place of spiritual, historical, and cultural focus.

This summer, one related project will commence in the removal of the church's stained glass windows, all of which are vintage McCausland windows. Mr. Andrew McCausland will come to Moose Factory to oversee the project with Thomas Joly. The windows will be crated and stored safely, awaiting the day when they will be re-installed in the restored "first Cathedral of Moosonee".

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was still a very important symbol. The meal became more symbolic than a full meal, with not only the bread and wine but also olives and goat cheese, staples of the Greek and Roman diet, and milk and honey as a reminder of the promise of God. The next Sunday we jumped ahead to the sixth century to experience the now empire sanctioned liturgy and the liturgy that was the foundation of the services we have today. This service includes the incense and Sanctus bells (smells and bells to those of us who actually attended high Anglican parishes in the distant past!) The next week we jumped to the first Anglican service of Holy Com-

munion, the Edwardian Rite of 1549. The service of Palm Sunday was the BCP rite and the Sunday of the Resurrection was out of the BAS. This experiential study of the historical development of the Eucharist was so well received in the parish so long ago that I have done this same study in each new parish I serve in. I cannot recommend highly enough this experience to you. The richness of our tradition, the fullness of our worship, and the connection to our Lord's last supper can only be more deeply understood and appreciated when our knowledge of how our celebration came to be what we do each Sunday is explored and experienced.

