

OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Diocese of Moosonee – called by God to live and proclaim the Gospel



Choristers from St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins, and St. Paul's, South Porcupine, sang to the residents of St. Mary's Gardens.

Sing Tidings of Great Joy

Article by Valerie Gilson, St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins.

St. Matthew's Cathedral was delighted to receive an invitation from Unforgettables Home & Garden Decor to participate in their annual Holiday Home tour on Saturday, November 14th by singing carols at St. Mary's Gardens. Knowing 'the more the merrier', St. Matthew's quickly invited St. Paul's, South Porcupine, to join them and, along with other friends, more voices made a joy filled beginning to an early Advent season.

We had the St. Mary's residents listening and frequently joining in. Moreover, we had many visitors coming to view the beautiful decor and also taking time to listen and participate in the singing of many carols including, "O Come All Ye Faithful" to "Silent Night." We covered as many of the favourites as we could. We were blessed with a duet by Susanne Mavor and Peter Colbert; our hour went by too fast.



Peter Colbert and Susanne Mavor sang a lovely, seasonal duet.

The Holiday Home Tour opens a selection of homes and locations around Timmins whose interiors have all been beautifully decorated for the holidays by local businesses including Unforgettables. The annual open house event is a festive fund-raiser which raises money in support of the Timmins and Dis-

trict Humane Society with the proceeds going to Buddy's Fund.

The pictures accompanying this article don't even begin to do justice to the beautiful decorations. The colours! The sparkles! And the smiles and laughter! The impish elves peeking from the tree, from the top of the mantle, around every corner, and dropping from the ceiling, seemed to be waiting ... whether for the jolly man in red or another wondrous occasion we weren't sure.

We had a wonderful time sharing our love of music with the residents and guests. It was a heart filling hour watching the older members of our audience sing along and sit quietly in their memories of seasons past.

Thank you to Unforgettables for inviting us to bring an early beginning to the Advent season at St. Mary's Gardens.

What the Dickens!

Article by the Reverend Richard Moore, Cochrane.

On December 11th, a unique event took place at Archbishop Anderson Memorial Church in Cochrane. Seven amateur thespians, from three different faith congregations presented a dramatic reading of the play *Scrooge and Cratchit*.

Complete with music, appropriate accents, costuming, and a few props, the cast told the story of the events following Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. Some years after the conversion of Scrooge from miser to philanthropist, Scrooge endangers his business and the livelihood of faithful clerk, Bob Cratchit.

How does he do that? By giving away anything and everything he can! Scrooge is determined to repay society for the sins of his younger days. Faced with bankruptcy, this warrior of generosity must come up with a scheme to save his and Bob's business. And the business is Bob's because Scrooge has made him a full partner and Bob is the sober driving force in the firm.

Calling on the recipients of his generosity, Scrooge saves the day with his still sharp wits. Telling more of the story would spoil it for anyone wanting to see it next year when it will be presented again.

The story was adapted for telling by Anne Marie Law, a lay reader here and her son, who is a professional dramatist. It is a heart warming tale of redemption and repentance. In keeping with its theme, money and food were raised for the local food bank.



The cast of 'Scrooge and Cratchit' which played in Cochrane to rave reviews.





Scott McCord, Ava Miller, & Paige McCord took part in the parish's annual Poinsettia Tea and Bake Sale as representatives of the Sunday School.



Cheryl Shaw, The Reverend Deirdre Roach, and Christina Miller played their parts in the parish's annual Poinsettia Tea and Bake Sale.

Why the Poinsettia?

Article by Nicky Alexander, St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins.

Have you every wondered why the Poinsettia is also known as the Christmas Flower? The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th century Mexico, where legend tells of a girl, Pepita, who was too poor to provide a gift for Jesus on his birthday but was inspired by an angel to gather up weeds from the roadside. As she laid her bouquet down in front of the altar, crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and they were miraculously transformed into beautiful poinsettias. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem and the red colour represents the blood sacrifice through

the crucifixion of Jesus.

St. Matthew's Anglican Cathedral hosted their annual Poinsettia Tea and Bake Sale in November. The sun shone brightly on the day and the event was a success thanks to the individual efforts of each and everyone involved.

We were overwhelmed with donations of books, baking, crafts, and items for the Silent Auction. Even the Sunday School got in on the action with their own table selling crafts which would appeal to the younger crowd.

Local businesses were generous with their donations to the Silent Auction and we appreciate the support of

Christopher's Coffee House, Lemongrass, On-the-Go Fashions, and Thurston Stained Glass.

We welcomed a broad range of visitors both young and old which was good to see and the atmosphere was warm and jovial throughout. More than 100 lunch tickets were sold in the course of three hours and the ladies in the kitchen did a fantastic job of making sure everyone went home fed and happy.

Congratulations to June Deacon on winning the draw for the magnificent poinsettia door prize and hamper from Lemongrass! Two smaller poinsettia plants were awarded to Laurie Lindsay and Terry Scott as runners up.

Our Anglican Foundation Hope

Bear was also in attendance and dressed up smartly in his new vestments. We received lots of suggestions for his name and will be reviewing them soon to decide on a winner.

St. Matthew's takes this opportunity to thank the Anglican Community for their support and everyone who contributed their time and energy to ensure that everything ran smoothly and without a hitch - a warm thank you and well done!

The Watershed Clergy Gathering

Article by The Reverend Valerie Issac, Watershed Regional Dean and Rector of St. Mark's, Kaupskasing.

Clergy from the Watershed Deanery gathered in Cochrane on January 7th for a little 'down time'. The gathering was meant to be an informal time for clergy when they had the chance to just be ordinary men and women around the table. The opportunity was to get together to get to know one another. We began the day with an Ice Breaker game which gave us a chance to find out some details about one another and what we thought was our dream job. It turns out that most of us find that we are in our dream jobs, so we are where we are meant to be.

We had lunch together and then ended up sitting around the table with several conversations going on at the same time while at other times it was one huge conversation. Everyone agreed that it was something clergy needed - an opportunity to connect with one another as people

and get to know one another. It was also a chance to expand our connections with one another and make us feel not quite so isolated from one another. All agreed that while e-mail and phone calls are great to keep in touch, it's the in person connections that mattered the most.

While there were plans to separate into groups to play various card games, that's not what happened as we remained together at one table sharing. It ended up that we all got the giggles and had a hard time controlling the tears of laughter that streamed down our faces as we were supposed to be getting serious about getting back on the road home. I do believe this was a resounding success and that we need to do more for our clergy so that we can be 'regular folk' from time to time, given our devotion and dedications to our dream jobs.



Dean Greg Gilson, was given a wonderful hat - a real 'ice breaker'!



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Life in The LivingRoom

Article by Reverend Catherine Murkin, St. Peter's on-the-Rock, Kirkland Lake and The LivingRoom, Schumacher.

We have just celebrated our first anniversary, a day filled with Christmas tree decorating and the making of snow globes. A wide variety of people pass through the doors of The LivingRoom - moms with toddlers (we now have a baby gate at the door and have reconfigured our play area so that it is more contained), seniors who just drop in for tea and a chat, people interested in crafting, as well as those seeking companionship. We have some who come by for a quick prayer due to a need in their life. Our afternoon numbers swell once the school day ends - many children arrive shortly after three to spend the next two hours at The LivingRoom. Our numbers continue to increase. Lately, we have had more than forty people drop by, a good percentage of them being youth.

The LivingRoom is divided into several different areas. Many people enjoy the serenity that comes from the peaceful space of our puzzle area, and the satisfaction of fitting puzzle pieces together brings a sense of accomplishment. The mutual intent of solving the puzzle brings camaraderie, and the concentration required tends to still a fretful mind. Another table will find four people sequestered around the Labyrinth game board. This is quickly becoming a favourite with many. The youth, however, are all in agreement that their favourite game is "I've Never." It has quickly become the 'go to' game - it's definitely an icebreaker. An active participatory game, one roll of the dice might find one of us showing our break dance moves, doing jumping jacks, imitating our art teacher, mother, or best friend. We might be required to own up to some escapade we have been involved in, such as, "Have you ever pretended to be sick in order to get a day off school?" The resulting action required varies depending on the yes or no reply and, of course, we must be truthful! It is a noisy game,



Volunteer Jan Maloney enjoys playing games with people who enjoy being part of our Diocese's mission in Schumacher - The LivingRoom.

filled with laughter, and requires a lot of energy.

Does anyone remember Mr. Rogers wearing his comfortable cardigan, encouraging us to be good neighbours? and singing to us in his gentle voice, "It's a beautiful day in this neighbourhood, a beautiful day for a neighbour. Would you be mine? Could you be mine? Please, won't you be my neighbour?"

The LivingRoom is all about neighbourhoods. We want to live out Mr. Rogers' mandate. More importantly, we want to live out Christ's mandate - Love your neighbour as yourself. Honestly, how can we do this? Christ loves us no matter our state. Christ does not turn his nose in the other direction when we smell of unwashed body or urine. He doesn't give us the cold shoulder if alcohol is found on our breath, or act morally superior if we mention failings we have had. If we approach Christ while in this state, you can bet he will welcome and embrace us, enfold us and encourage us to live another way, His way. How difficult it is not to let our discrimination stand in the way of being an emissary of love. Often people have never been

shown this other way and they are stuck in the same patterns modeled for them as children or the patterns which they fell into when hopelessness took root in their heart. As Christians, we have a responsibility to model the love and acceptance Jesus offers people and extend hands offering not just love but also hope. Hope of another way - a new beginning.

Christ modeled leadership for us. At the Last Supper, he wrapped a cloth around his waist and washed the feet of not just his beloved disciples but also of the one who would betray him; he washed the dirt off the feet of his betrayer with cleansing water, and dried them with a towel held with love. All of us are on a journey to God though we might not articulate it in those words. Every person that enters The LivingRoom is seeking completion, wholeness, a wholeness found only through restoration with God. Both those that visit The LivingRoom and those that facilitate it are in transition. Whether they are aware of it or not, they seek to find wholeness by being transformed into the image of Christ.

At the LivingRoom, all types of people cross our threshold. We have our regulars, people who have found companionship and care in this little corner of Schumacher, as well as those dropping in on a casual basis. It is not always easy. We do have the normal friction that occurs in group dynamics. We are rubbing shoulders with each other and sometimes we rub just a little too hard! This does not happen very often but when it does, it provides an opportunity to be molded in Christ likeness. It is an opportunity to model another way, a Christ way, in stressful situations.

Our little guy, Kealin, who strug-

gles with autism, has been a regular since the very early days. Though he is eight years old, Kealin has just begun to manage a full day at school. He eagerly runs to The LivingRoom and we listen with anticipation for the patter of Kealin's shoes as he races down the hall. We know this little lad will come bounding in with a huge smile and brighten everyone's day. For a long time he was our main ray of sunshine but now there are others coming right after school. Kealin waits eagerly at the door, asking every few minutes, "What time is it? Is it 3 yet?" And some of those youths who stay from 3 to 5 come back to the evening Youth Drop In. And some of those youths just want to stay from 3 until 9. However, we insist on closing at 5 for two hours. We need a little break, and quiet time since our mornings start quite early. The Archdeacon and Jim drive in from Cochrane and I drive from Kirkland Lake.

I have heard one youth tell another, "You should come to that new club, The LivingRoom." The owner of the Trophy Shop, our landlady, told us that when we were closed some people came by and asked when "That Sofa Place" would be open.

Each week, the group of youths joining us after school grows - by word of mouth - and it all started with Kealin, one little boy, finding a place where he felt safe, a place full of fun toys and games to play with, and a wide array of craft supplies. One little boy inviting his classmates, and telling his teachers about this cool place he goes to after school with his mom.



The LivingRoom offers a place of peace and belonging in Schumacher.



PWRDF and “Rice Is Nice” in Moosonee

Article by the Reverends Valerie Isaac & Anne Stenabaugh, St. Mark's, Kapuskasing.



FIND OUT WHAT ARCHBISHOP FRED HILTZ MEANS AT FREDSAYS.CA

 The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund is one of the fund raisers that we as Anglicans can contribute to, if we choose to. Those who have church envelopes can use them for donations. Others can also contribute directly to PWRDF. It has been an honour to be asked to be the PWRDF Diocesan Representative for the Diocese of Moosonee and a joy to meet others from across the country who are also part of this great group. This year at the annual gathering in Toronto not only diocesan representatives gathered but also board members and the youth committee joined in the meetings.

One of the things that I had asked about last year was where the funding goes and the answer is all over the world - including here at home in Canada. It was nice to know that one of the funding projects for Canada is Pikangikum to help with water in the isolated community that has been under a boil water advisory for years.

This year one of the guest speakers came from the Philippines and is a poet and champion of indigenous rights. She is also on a government watch list which means that her life is in danger. She spoke powerfully about the people in her country who have been killed just because they don't agree with the government or ask for their autonomy to grow what they want to feed their families. Indeed it was an eye-opening as to the dangers that she and others face.

A youth group member also made a presentation regarding youth visiting Costa Rica. During their visit to the country this August, the youth

saw conditions that the indigenous people live in and how they are vilified for being different - including their sexuality. One of the challenges is the reduction of AIDS as part of their lives. We were also told that two of the hosts were murdered in September. How lucky are we to make the choices we do here in Canada.

Each parish representative helps to make a difference and it is appreciated. The staff at Church House are so supportive of all we do and can do so much to help us. This year at the conference, diocesan representatives finally had a 'Handbook' so we know what our roles and responsibilities are. We also have lots of information to share with parish representatives and we send quarterly reports to head office. So that's a challenge we have here in the north. I look forward to that challenge as the year continues. Thank you for the privilege to serve in this capacity and I look forward to working with all the parish representatives in our diocese.

On September 29th, St. Mark's hosted a 'Rice Is Nice' supper which was open to everyone. All the dishes that were prepared used rice in them. We had everything from a rice salad to 'lazy man' cabbage rolls to fried rice and saffron rice. The dessert was the hard one to come up with because the only dessert that I know of is rice pudding. We may have been few in number but everyone who came brought a good appetite. The cost of the supper was a free-will offering which went to PWRDF plus an item for the local food bank here in Kapuskasing. We hope to do it again next year but with better advertising and maybe we will get more people.



The Reverend Valerie Isaac took part in the Primate's World Relief and Development's annual gathering held in Toronto - pictured here at the rear right.



The Reverend Anne Stenabaugh and the Reverend Richard Moore sang for joy at the Ordination Service held in Kirkland Lake.



“All These Were Living by Faith When They Died” Hebrews 11:13

Article by the Reverend Canon Rod BrantFrancis, Regional Dean of James Bay, Wemindji, QC.

For the past few weeks as Lisa and I have been reading through Hebrews in our evening devotional time, I have been struck by the number of dedicated and hard working pillars of faith that parishes across the James Bay Deanery have lost in the last few years. Lay readers, Wardens, Elders - beloved church and community members. Each community has been struck by the loss of such individuals and the void that their going from us leaves. I have had the wonderful blessing of meeting all of these “Saints of God” and listening to their stories of faith and dedication to the Lord and to his church and people.

Some have shared with me the difficulty of being a lay reader in a remote parish where there was no priest and having to minister to one’s own family and bury one’s grandchild who had lost her life to suicide. Some spoke of the challenges of changing communities and church and how the younger generation did not seem to understand the importance of a relationship with the Creator as being the central need in life. In some parishes our lay readers have kept the doors open when only one or two others joined them for the hour of worship. Many of these individuals have carried on for long periods of time when there was no resident clergy person for many miles and they were looked upon by family and community as the ‘prayer boss’, the spiritual



Frank Visitor was a long time Lay Reader in Wemindji.

leader who cared for them, counseled them, acted as mediator in family struggles and from time to time baptized their children and prepared them for confirmation.

Some faithfully attended church in the days of their youth while the services were conducted entirely in English and they understood not a single word. Some of them loved to sing very slowly while others loved nothing more than a good old fashioned toe tapping gospel song. I’m told that some of them could do an amazing job when it came to singing the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and that the congregation really listened intently when the Gospel was read in a dialect of Cree that was not their own



Marion Maybe, Lay Reader, Moose Factory, and the Reverend Canon Rod BrantFrancis.

and the lay reader would then explain the story to them. All of them endured much personal hardship - the loss of family members, homes, and in some cases culture and language for a time. They saw their world and communities change more in the last fifty years than most of us will see in a lifetime. They have seen their beloved churches move from being full three times on Sunday to having only a small number in attendance once a week. All of them have known the joy and peace of living in the bush and relying each day on the Creator’s protection and provision for themselves and their families. In addition to this, they also have seen the more recent struggles of commu-

nity life: the rise in social issues, addictions, lack of proper housing, and health concerns which were not a part of life a number of years ago.

All this being said, the common thread which ran through all their lives was their faith in God. Their faith caused them to pray and rejoice at the beginning of each new day. It brought many of them together at the midnight hour on New Year’s Eve because they knew it was God who had brought them through the previous year and it was He who would keep them in the new year just beginning. Out of their faith came their dedication to church and community - so that no matter where they were on any given Sunday the hours of worship were marked and the services of the church were said. The hymns were sung and the prayers offered. When any of them packed for the bush they certainly made sure that their prayer and hymn books were included with the necessary supplies that would help them make it through the next season.

I am humbled by the faith and dedication of these wonderful saints and so I pay tribute to each of them this day: Annie Earless, Frank Visitor, May Voyageur, Ronnie Loon, Sinclair Williams. Now that their faith has been made sight, may God grant us all the grace to follow after their good examples and with them be partakers of the saints in light.



Mary Ruth Georgekish née Visitor, 1933-2015.

A Tribute to a Friend: Mary Ruth Georgekish née Visitor

Article by the Reverend Canon Rod BrantFrancis, Regional Dean of James Bay, Wemindji, QC.

These words, “You all know me!” were often repeated by Mary Ruth at many different church gatherings through the years. The funny thing about it was the truth behind the words. ‘Little Mary’, through the years endeared herself to Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, Clergy and lay people across the Anglican Church of Canada. She travelled to many different places and met people from all walks of life all the while proudly representing her beloved Diocese of Moosonee and her strong Cree heritage.

Mary was born of February 24, 1933 to John Visitor and Hattie Gilpin. Her life began on the trap line and would continue to be that way for years to come. It was from her late parents that Mary learned the importance of daily prayer and trust in God. Those values stayed with her through her eighty years plus and in the darkest moments of her life were her sustaining force. During the years of residential school

and her extended stay in a sanatorium as she battle tuberculosis. During her early days of returning to live with her parents she neither understood nor spoke a word of Cree and they spoke no English. In later years, during her late husband’s stroke and months of rehabilitation and then during the days of loneliness after his passing, Mary’s faith in God, her prayer and devotional life, and her dedication to her church were all keys in helping her to overcome the hardships of her life and remain such a positive force in our community, deanery, and diocese.

On behalf of the Diocese of Moosonee, Mary was a part of the Anglican Council of Indigenous People in its early days, Council of General Synod, attended the very first Native Convocations and later many Sacred Circles. Within the diocese, Mary was a long time member of Executive Council, Diocesan Council of Indigenous People, Synod, and the James Bay

Chapter.

Within the parish, Mary was a very dedicated and active warden, vestry, choir, and ACW member, translator, and hard worker. Mary’s role as translator was a fascinating journey of endurance and faith. Upon returning to her parents after years away at residential school, Mary spoke no Cree. She said that she longed to return to school where she could understand the language being spoken but she was determined to regain that which she had lost. So with perseverance and prayer she learned not only the Cree of her mother and father but went on to learn two other dialects and became a much sought after translator in our diocese. It was hard to find a word or image in English that Mary couldn’t translate into Cree. She told me that she always prayed for help from God. I am better for having known her and I am most thankful for her love and friendship through the years!





The Reverend Larry Armstrong, Legion Chaplain for Hearst & Hornpayne visited a senior at the Hearst Seniors Facility on Remembrance Day.

Four Point Parish Afternoon

Article by the Reverend Larry Armstrong, St. James, Geraldton, St. Luke's, Hornepayne, St. Stephen's, Constance Lake, and St. Matthew's / St. Paul's, Hearst, Ontario.

Everybody thinks I'm nuts. Who in their right mind would ever agree to do the job that I am doing? My nephew Jim, who attended my ordination to the priesthood along with his wife Denise, wondered about my sanity. From other priests outside of our diocese the response is usually the same, "Are you nuts?" Sometimes, I think this is not the possibility but the reality.

Years ago, having made the commit-

ment to return to full time publicly recognized ministry, I dreamed of a quiet, leisurely life in a rural situation. I got the rural situation in spades but it's anything but quiet or leisurely. At an age when one reasonably expects things to be slowing down, instead life is speeding up.

This ministry with four parishes involves over two thousand kilometers of travel each month. When I lived in Kashechewan and Moose Facto-

ry, travel was limited to about three miles in any direction. My cup certainly runneth over. Further, when I thought it was difficult organizing one AGM, now I have four. Advent and Easter are just a bit of a challenge. Keeping a regular routine ... gave up on that some time ago; today is a good example while trying to finish this article.

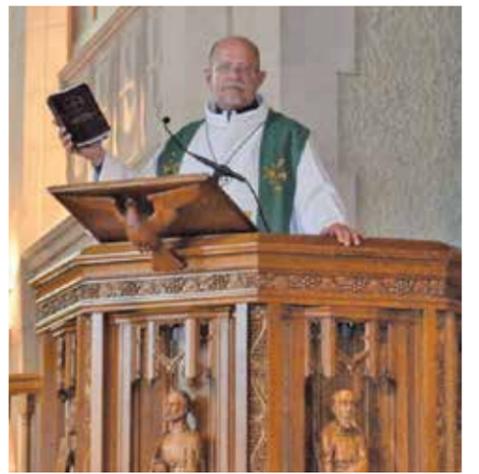
Wednesday afternoon: call from Hearst Hospital for a parishioner in palliative care, can you come? ... at the hospital, two others ask for visits and prayers ... Parish dinner, Saturday evening in Hearst, then go to Geraldton ... bad weather alert, may have to cancel Geraldton, reschedule AGM ... maybe switch with Constance Lake ... rats! and just when I had all those AGMs worked out ... guess I won't have to eat and run in Hearst ... did I have lunch? ... Reschedule bible study in Hornepayne on Thursday to meet with grieving family in Hearst and make funeral plans ... brief prayer about the weather for the family travelling to Hearst ... hmmm for the weekend as well.

That all happened over the last two hours - to my leisurely day to finish my profound article for the *Northland* then to relax in preparation for

a busy weekend.

And I dreamed of a quiet, leisurely rural ministry. To my own astonishment I love my life, especially all the busy crazy parts. God is so good and so wise! He needed a crazy person for a crazy job and I was crazy enough to say yes!

To all my friends, and especially to all my parishioners: we may feel that what we are trying to do is impossible; we may think that this four point parish ministry is impossible. When I feel that way, and I know that many of you do too, remember this: "He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.'"



The Reverend Larry Armstrong preached at St. Matthew's in the Glebe in Ottawa last August.

Our Québec Roots Article by Bishop Tom Corston



Bishop Tom Corston and The Reverend Larry Armstrong have both worked unstintingly for the people of the diocese.

In the January edition of the *Anglican Journal*, Fr. Daniel Graves wrote about visiting his father's church near Orangeville which had been closed for many years. He observed that there is a certain sadness in realizing that a closed church no longer serves its intended purpose, that the life of its worshipping community has ended. It was a bit like visiting the grave of a loved one in a well tended cemetery; even amidst the beauty of the place, there is a profound and enduring sense of grief and loss.

That is certainly true of many corners of the Diocese of Moosonee. As

communities were established across the north and industries flourished, the church soon followed and provided for the spiritual life of her people. Then as industries changed, the local church struggled to carry on with dwindling attendance and money and, eventually, they closed. It is a moving tribute to the faith and people in most of our Indigenous communities that every summer there is a pilgrimage back to their old sites. Days are spent celebrating, worshipping, and remembering so that that which was once important is not lost.

In almost all of the communities of

the southeastern portion of the Diocese of Moosonee the Anglican presence has disappeared. Yet, at one time, the church in our Quebec side of the diocese was alive and strong. Anglican churches once graced the communities of: Cadillac, Farmborough, Malartic, Duparquet, Normetal, and Bourlamaque (now Val dor), Chapais, and Chibougamau.

One such parish was St. Bede's Church in Rouyn which for its 40 year history ministered faithfully to the English speaking residents of the Rouyn-Noranda area. Today in the city, there are a few remnant families but no real Anglican presence.

In 1925, the Bishop of Montreal was petitioned to establish an English mission in the community and the first Anglican and Protestant service was held in the Regal Theatre which also provided time for: Roman Catholic masses, town council meetings, Anglican services, and an evening movie. Soon, however, monies were raised and a new church building was opened for its first service on Easter Sunday, 1926. This was the first church of any denomination established in the area. In 1926, there were 200 Protestants and 3,000 Roman Catholics residing in the community. All the Protestants supported the new St. Bede's. The

building was divided into a church, a hall, and a residence. Through the following years it was a beehive of activity and lovingly cared for by the English community.

St. Bede's continued a busy ministry under various clergy and was especially noted as a centre of youth activities in the city. The congregation boasted: an active Servers' Guild, a Girls' Auxiliary, regular boys and girls Bible study groups, Boy Scouts Troop, an Anglican Young People's Association Group and a Junior Brotherhood of St. Andrew's Group - all active at the same time.

By 1966, only nine families were still supporting St. Bede's with an average attendance dropping to ten and less. The last recorded service held at St. Bede's Church was on March 27th, 1966 - thus ending a once thriving and historic presence in the city and the area, almost forty years to the day when it was established.

In 1986, former member, Richard Loughheed, wrote that St. Bede's was part of the body of Christ whose ministry at work touched the lives of many people as it spread the good news of Jesus Christ in Rouyn.

St. Bede's is just one of a number of churches whose ministry across the diocese was instrumental in sharing the Gospel in the lives of the people.



Archbishop in the Galapagos

Article by Archbishop Colin Johnson, Bishop of Moosonee

My wife and I recently took a mid-winter break and travelled to the Galapagos Islands. It was fascinating to see the islands and their unique animal species that promoted for an earlier visitor, Charles Darwin, a string of questions that led to an exploration of origins. This later developed into the theory of evolution, itself one of the causes leading to the rise of Christian fundamentalism in the early 20th Century. That's for another column, though!

Near the end of our trip, I took some time to offer a prayer of gratitude for all who made the trip possible. It was our decision to go. We thought through the plan. We joined some cousins who came along. We saved up the money. We ordered the tickets. We went. It was 'our' trip, 'our' holiday.

But as I thought about it, I began to realize how many people made it possible for us to take 'our' holiday: the travel agent, the airport staff, the flight attendants, the pilots, the traffic controllers, the restaurant cooks, and servers, the hotel staff, the drivers, the guides, the border control agents, and the shop venders. The list goes on and on and on, both the obvious front-line people who provide the direct service as well as all the people you never see (or think of) who provide: the food, the fuel, the documents, the currency exchanges, and the infrastructure that makes it all possible to travel. 'My' trip became 'our' trip. I literally depended on thousands of unnamed people in



order to enjoy the trip I thought of as 'mine'.

My prayer of thanksgiving became much longer than I had planned.

We live in a web of relationships which make living possible. In an age which has increasingly become focused on the individual, it is so easy to forget how interconnected we are. My decisions, my actions, my well being, my happiness are not anywhere nearly as autonomous as I might like to think they are.

There is a night prayer in the *American Book of Common Prayer* office of Compline (p. 134). "O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live: Watch over those both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

This time of year brings this interconnectedness to particular focus. It is the time of annual meetings where new officers of the parish are elected or appointed. On any particular Sunday, or weekday, perhaps, we might decide to go to church or not. We can frame it as "It is between me and God." But the parish church is there because of the countless hours of dedication of: churchwardens and clergy, chancel guilds, and servers, treasurers, and diocesan officials, Sunday school teachers, and catechists, pastoral care visitors, and financial contributions. I thank God for all who contribute: their time and talent, wisdom, and money, prayers, and presence to the mission of Christ in our parishes and communities. It makes a difference. Our common

life [as a church] depends on each other's toil.

We are also entering an unusually early season of Lent. Lent is a time for reflection, prayer, giving, and confession. The Ash Wednesday liturgy in the *Book of Alternative Services* includes a Litany of Penitence, pp. 283-285. One parishioner objected to praying it because, "I haven't done most of those things!" That's hopefully true of most of us as individuals but we all participate in a society where someone else has, whether on our behalf, in our name, or by our indifference. My sin, as well as my virtue, has impact and influence on those around me. 'My' actions or inactions affect not only me but also 'us'. And so my repentance is important not only about confessing a sin and establishing a right relationship between me and God, but equally importantly between me and my neighbour, even those I might not know very well or even at all. And this corporate dimension of our faith - it's 'political' aspect is also why prayer (including thanksgiving and intercession) and almsgiving are also central to a good Lenten discipline.

May you have a gracious Lent. As St. Paul writes in Philippians, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

A Traditional Christmas

Article by the Reverend George Westgate, St. John the Evangelist, Mistissini, QC.

A long time ago in Bethlehem ... Yes that is what the scriptures say. However, my wife, Ann Westgate, asked me what if we do something different that includes the people's native traditions. She talked with the elders and wardens and they said yes it sounds good.

So what if Jesus was born in Mistissini? Well instead of Mary and Joseph being in Nazareth they were in OJ. It was not Caesar Augustus who ordered the census but the Prime Minister of Canada. When they got to Mistissini there was no room for them at the inn. So Mary and Joseph found a teepee where they could stay. The Angels did not appear to shepherds but to certain poor hunters looking for signs of Moose and Caribou. From the East

came not Magi but Elders with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They did not go to King Herod but they went to Chief Richard. Where is the king to be born?

"In the town of Mistissini in Northern Quebec on the shores of Lac Mistissini", for this is what the prophet wrote:

"Mistissini in the Province of Quebec, you are by no means the least of the leading cities of Quebec; for from you will come a leader who will guide my people Canada."

They came to the place where the star stopped and they found the mother and child in the teepee.

Children and adults all took part in the Christmas Pageant. The angels were in white but they wore mocca-



Jerri Lynn Matoush and Reshawn Matoush were wonderful Mary and Joseph in their community's Nativity Play.

sins or mukluks. The hunters wore camouflage coats. The elders wore traditional clothes for going into the bush. They pulled the gifts on the sled.

The story may look and sound different but the message is the same.

Jesus Christ was born the light of the world. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life. Jesus came into this world to save everyone.



What Will Make Your Heart Sing?



When the Reverend Bryce Johnson of White Bear, Minnesota was asked this question on a study grant application, he knew immediately it was 'bread making.' From that insight and subsequent study opportunity came a community oven outside the United Methodist Church in that community.

Since 2010, when 40 volunteers

built the handsome and functional 6 foot wide, 8 foot deep, and 10 foot high structure, it has been used at least twice a month for community baking, breaking and distribution. Living out their call to be bread for the world continues to be a joyous and central part of the ministry of the congregation. And all of this in response to one little question: "What will make your heart sing?"

Article by the Reverend Lynn Uzans, retired Archdeacon of Annapolis Valley, NS.

A few months ago, I was honoured to be among the clergy and lay readers of the Diocese of Moosonee at their annual clergy gathering. Asked to speak about the marks of a healthy church, I learned firsthand about some of the varied ministries that make the hearts of people in your diocese sing and thereby lead to greater health and vitality for the area. I learned about: outreach projects, creative worship, deep listening, and faithful stewardship that go into the daily life of Moosonee parishes. My heart sang as I heard the clear 'amen' from the loon still braving the waters beside Camp Bickell in September and as we joined our voices to sing in English, Cree and Oji-Cree. So how does the question, "What will make your heart sing?" tie in with the marks of a healthy church you well may ask. My sense is that identifying your joy is, in fact one of the best indicators that you are doing what God calls you to do in your place and time. Discerning the will of God is a mark of a healthy, vital parish as well as being energized by faith. What might happen, I wonder, if we regularly asked our fellow parishioners, our neighbours, those

whom we encounter in our daily life, and others: "What makes your heart sing?" we might learn more than we could ever hope. I believe that if we ask this question and truly, deeply, listen to the answer, we will, in fact, naturally live into some other marks of a healthy parish: to look outward, truly function as a community, include diverse people in our parish life, and do a few things and do them well. I further believe that living these marks will naturally, and fairly painlessly, lead us to a willingness to make changes in our life together that might be necessary - which is possibly the most difficult mark of health.

As these days slowly lengthen, as we travel this ancient journey to Easter in yet another year, I encourage you then to ask yourself and each other, "What, my friend, will make your heart sing?" and then go and do something beautiful for the God who sings with you.

If you would like to know more about the marks of a healthy church, please ask your clergy. Background material, study guides, and suggestions were given to each of them at the clergy gathering.



Right: Parishioners and Christmas Pageant Players in St. John the Evangelist, Mistissini, proudly presented their version of the Christmas story.

Left: Paul, a Hope Bear, could not find an inn in South Porcupine, so he tried a manger in St. Paul's.



Bricks were flying off the chimney of St. Paul's, South Porcupine, as the old roof was replaced with a metal one.



The traditional service of 'Nine Lessons and Carols' was held during Advent at St. Paul's in South Porcupine. This joyous occasion was brought about through the combination of choirs from: St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins, Covenant United Church, Timmins, and Porcupine United Church as well as St. John's Lutheran, South Porcupine, and St. Paul's itself.

