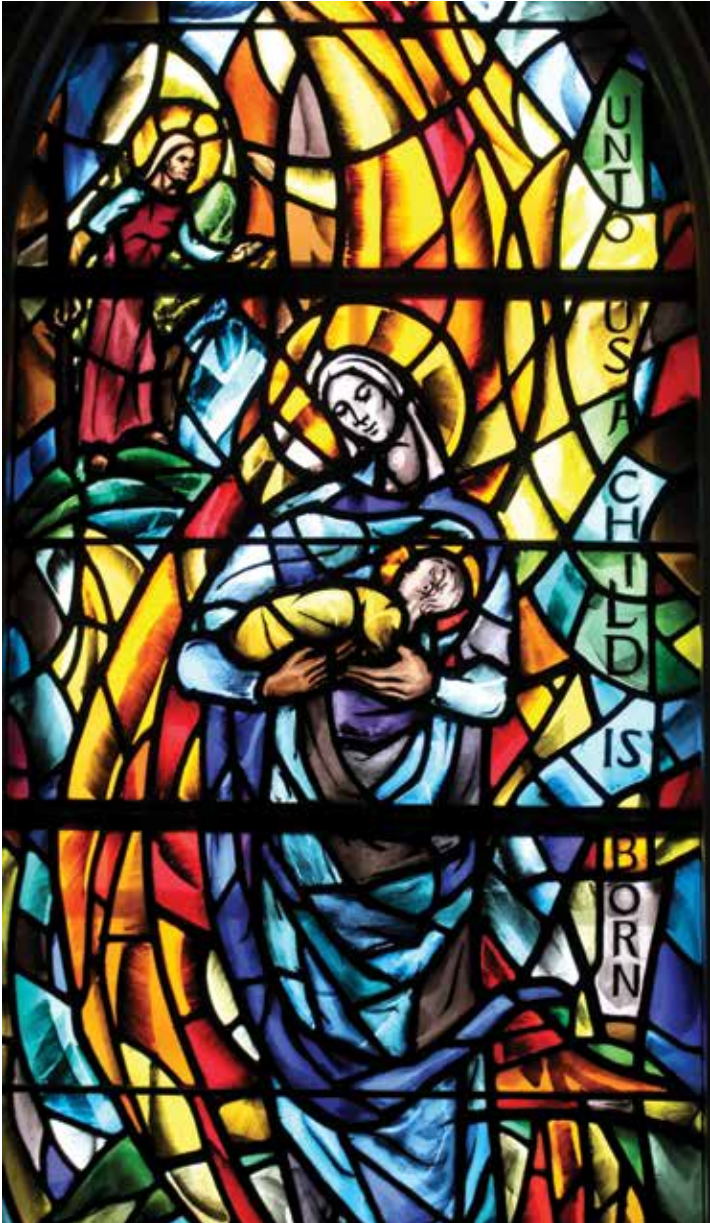


OUR VISION STATEMENT

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

NORTH^{LAND}

THE NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE • www.moosoneeanglican.ca • A SECTION OF THE ANGLICAN JOURNAL • MARCH 2022



This stained glass window of the Virgin Mary and the infant Jesus beautifies St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins. It was created by the Canadian artist, Yvonne Williams.



This stained glass window of the Virgin Mary and the three Wise Men also enhances St. Matthew's Cathedral. It was created by the Canadian artist, Yvonne Williams.



The Reverend Anne-Marie Carrière is a graduate of the Moosonee School of Ministry.

Tom's School

Article by The Reverend Ann-Marie Carrière, St. Mark's Kapuskasing.

THE MOOSONEE SCHOOL OF MINISTRY, a vision of our be-

loved Bishop Tom Corston, was founded in 2017. The school, which trained and equipped locally raised clergy, saw over 20 graduates in its first year of life. The school has been providing ongoing support and guidance to its graduates throughout the years and continues to grow and thrive today!

Students enrolled in the first year of the school of ministry gathered quarterly for in-person classes offered by professors and clergy from various theo-

See "School Renamed" on p. 2.

Covid Christmas, Again

Article by Dean Valerie Isaac, St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins.

IT WAS CHRISTMAS-TIME BUT IT WAS DIFFERENT AGAIN. The COVID-19 pandemic closed many of our churches for the second year in a row. People were afraid to gather with friends and family despite being fully vaccinated.

Variants had cropped up over the summer and as we headed into the fall a new threat reared its ugly head. It is called Omnicom. This new variant has wreaked a new havoc in our lives spreading faster than ever



Dean Valerie Isaac, and Warden Cheryl Shaw, St. Matthew's Cathedral.

before. This has left us with another heart wrenching choice of having to go back online to celebrate Christmas.

Last year at Christmastime, we expected to be back in church worshipping together but it didn't happen until later in the year. As we gathered in a hybrid variation of online and in church worship, we had begun to feel comfortable about getting back into a somewhat 'normal' lifestyle. Then along came Omnicom.

See "Zooming for Jesus" on p. 2.





Catharine Cribbs and Dean Valerie took part in a Christmas Breakfast which sought to bring some cheerful companionship to parishioners and community members in Timmins.



Ron Isaac & George Cribbs, St. Matthew's, also took part in the breakfast. Organizers suggested that we each bring photos of ourselves as young children to share them with another.

Zooming for Jesus *continued from page one.*

Word spread from South Africa and then almost immediately, around the world that this new variant was more transmissible than the others and it became more important to make sure that we had our shots and boosters. That gave us a little bit of hope that we would be able to continue as the hybrid worship, but that too, was not to be.

Late in December, we were advised that the variant was reaching epidemic proportions and we needed to take care of one another yet again. The best laid plans of clergy and laity were soon defeated as new plans had to be hastily made. That meant that the services for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year were all to be discussed as to whether they would be in church or online. After discussion, via e-mail, with Select Vestry of St. Matthew's Cathedral, it was decided that we

would err on the side of safety and hold no more church services until it was deemed safe to do so.

Christmas 2021 was similar to Christmas 2020. We were zooming in to celebrate this special season. In Christmas 2021 there were no additions to the nativity creche, and no children present eagerly waiting to see if they would be the one chosen to put the infant Jesus in the manger. There was no singing. Since our plans had changed dramatically, only three people were physically in the Cathedral for the service. Everyone else joined in via zoom. We were getting pretty good at zooming in and out of services and meetings since the pandemic struck.

COVID-19 even put a damper on plans for a baptism as members of the family themselves came down with the illness. So, that too was postponed.

Such things as a Christmas carol singing and filling the nativity

creche have been sidelined by this pandemic but we are not alone in this. Others in our communities have had to do the same and we support one another via e-mail and phone calls as well as a time to chat after church, even if it is via zoom.

While we have had to curtail our in-church worship, our worship continues to thrive online. There are Facebook services of Evening Prayer and zoom worship services around the diocese to join into. There are people that we meet for the first time and those who are long time friends sharing together the joys and heartbreaks of Christmas apart.

Those of us at St. Matthew's Cathedral, like so many others, are looking forward to the day that the doors can be thrown open and we can all walk in but for now we'll keep worshipping on-line. Christmas will come again, and we will look forward to the day that we can sing and celebrate together.

School Renamed *continued from page one.*

logical programs in the province; all gathered to share their gifts and talents and engage in lively discussions. Students were gifted access to a wealth of knowledge and embraced the opportunity to learn and grow together. Students engaged in various aspects of theological studies from scripture and prayer to church history and sacraments - an all-encompassing education and experience - all the while discerning their call to further ministry. Between in-person sessions, students returned to their respective parishes for hands-on training and to complete assignments. Students had the opportunity to find mentors for practical and spiritual guidance and were assigned to vari-



Canon Diane Hilpert-McIlroy

ous practicum projects, assessing and filling the needs of their parishes and communities. Although the school has since seen a shift in format to virtual learning, online classes and Zoom gatherings, the school is still very much alive and its vision continues to thrive.

The Moosonee School of Ministry, recently renamed The Tom

Corston School of Ministry in Moosonee, in honour of its founding bishop, now welcomes a new principal, The Reverend Canon Diane Hilpert-McIlroy into her new role. Clergy Mentor and newly appointed Canon Pastor, Reverend Diane Hilpert-McIlroy joined the Diocese of Moosonee in June, 2020 and has been providing ongoing mentorship and guidance to all clergy in the Diocese of Moosonee. We give thanks and we offer blessings in her new ministry.

And the Spirit Breathed Anew! The Tom Corston School of Ministry saw a new wave of students registering for courses with 30 students currently enrolled in winter classes, new and returning students, laity



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and clergy alike, joining hearts and minds, deepening their faith, knowledge, and love of God.

A dream, a vision, a new hope! In the words of Bishop Tom Corston, "All for Jesus!"



Moosonee School of Ministry

Article by Canon Diane Hilpert-McIlroy, Diocese of Moosonee.

NELSON MANDELA WROTE THAT, "Education is the most powerful tool which humans can use to change the world. Education is the first step for people to gain knowledge, critical thinking, self-confidence, and skills needed to make the world a better place." Like Nelson Mandela, Bishop Tom Corston had a vision for this beautiful and geographically large and diverse Diocese of Moosonee. Bishop Tom loved this diocese and held each of the parishes in a special place in his heart. He loved his people here and he wanted the best for them. Bishop Tom knew that his clergy and lay readers would gain knowledge and wisdom through education and be able to experience all the benefits Nelson Mandela wrote about. Thanks to a small grant to the Diocese of Moosonee through the Council of the North and with the encouragement of Archbishops Anne and Fred, Moosonee is able to call all our clergy and anyone interested in lay leadership to register for the Moosonee School of Ministry Phase II. Unlike the first School of Ministry, this is not necessarily a path to ordination but rather it is a requirement for our clergy and lay people for broadening our existing understanding and expanding our knowledge.

The Moosonee School of Ministry is the process that Bishop Tom believed could further learning and celebrate growth but even more importantly another step toward truth and reconciliation. Ministry and life are not a competition but rather opportunities waiting to be discovered. Bishop Tom knew that education would help people to grow in self-confidence and make clergy and lay readers better able to serve God with humility. Education is more than just essential for ordained ministry; it is a vow clergy make before a bishop and God at our ordination: "to be diligent in reading and studying the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking knowledge of such things to make us stronger and more able ministers of Christ." (BAS p, 647)

Education is a benefit for all



Bishop Tom Corston was the first Principal of the Moosonee School of Ministry and Ruth Corston was the first Registrar of that school.

people but it is especially important for church leaders and clergy to meet the challenges we face in day to day situations. Education helps us in our family issues, in personal problems, and even when we struggle with issues of faith. Having greater knowledge of ourselves, our strengths and especially our weaknesses helps us to be more compassionate leaders. Gaining a better perspective and understanding of our own strengths and shortcomings enables clergy and indeed all people to be able to live humbly and experience even deeper joy.

For generations, education has played an important role in the world and most especially in the church. Certainly, this time of pandemic has taught us that we need to be adaptable, having the skills and wisdom to shift into new ways of being church as we preach and teach. Education is extremely valuable for clergy and for laity as we seek to reconcile past mistakes, sins, and burdens that were and continue to be placed upon our indigenous brothers and sisters. We have much to learn from indigenous peoples.

I was amazed when I finished my Master's degree that the one thing I knew with greatest of certainty was that I didn't know enough. Discovering that we need more education is central to good mental health too. According to psychologists David Dunning and Justin Kruger, to be able to recognize deficiencies in our own knowledge or competence requires that we need to have some notion of what we don't know. To put it another way, if we believe we have all the

knowledge we need, we don't have enough knowledge or wisdom!

Learning and possessing skills and more knowledge enriches our lives. We make sounder judgments and decisions and we have greater assurance in our abilities to help others.

The courses began on January 14th. This course focused on the story of Abraham and Matthew's gospel and was taught by the Reverend Dr. Justin Comber. He talked about building an image of God through story and worship.

In February, we join with the Niagara School of Missional Leadership. One of the courses is 'Our Response to God through Stewardship.' Can you imagine Moosonee as no longer being a mission diocese but rather a fully functioning diocese that is moving away from the colonialism model?

We will also be studying 'Adaptive Leadership' under the Most Reverend Colin Johnson. This is an important course to take in a time of pandemic. This course will teach us how to rely on God as we journey into uncertain and unprecedented times. We will learn to connect to the core of our tradition. It will facilitate us to diagnose issues accurately. We will learn to mobilize the resources that already exist in the community and we will be able to respond creatively to the challenges we face in today's world.

The course on 'Missional Preaching', taught by Bishop Susan Bell will help us to take the scripture and preach the gospel in a secular context that leads to transformation. This course teaches us how to connect with our peo-

ple in ways that deepen discipleship. And we will learn the way to share our authentic selves and the ways to talk about our own faith journey. And finally, we will be taught the critical significance of connecting head and heart.

The course on 'Stewardship: a Faithful Response to God's Mission' is taught by Gillian Doucet Campbell. It will introduce us to practices that invite us to connect to the core of our own stewardship practices. This course will enable us to activate the resources already existing and share ways to talk about stewardship, gratitude, and even learn best fund raising practices.

The course, 'Connecting with Indigenous Knowledge' will explore the history of First Nations People, their diversity, strength, and resilience. We will participate in learning the Mapping and the Blanket exercises. We will study the history of the Doctrine of Discovery, colonization, and its continuing effects as we explore a missional way forward with the goal of empowering reconciliation.

'Christian Foundations from Abraham to Jesus' presents the history in a flowing, coherent narrative and examines the foundational aspects of our faith. We will look at Jesus from the perspective of his First Century context. There will be discussion about the origin and ongoing story of the church and learning how we got our Creeds and the Canons of the Scriptures we follow. We will look at how we can be part of this community which is Christ's body.

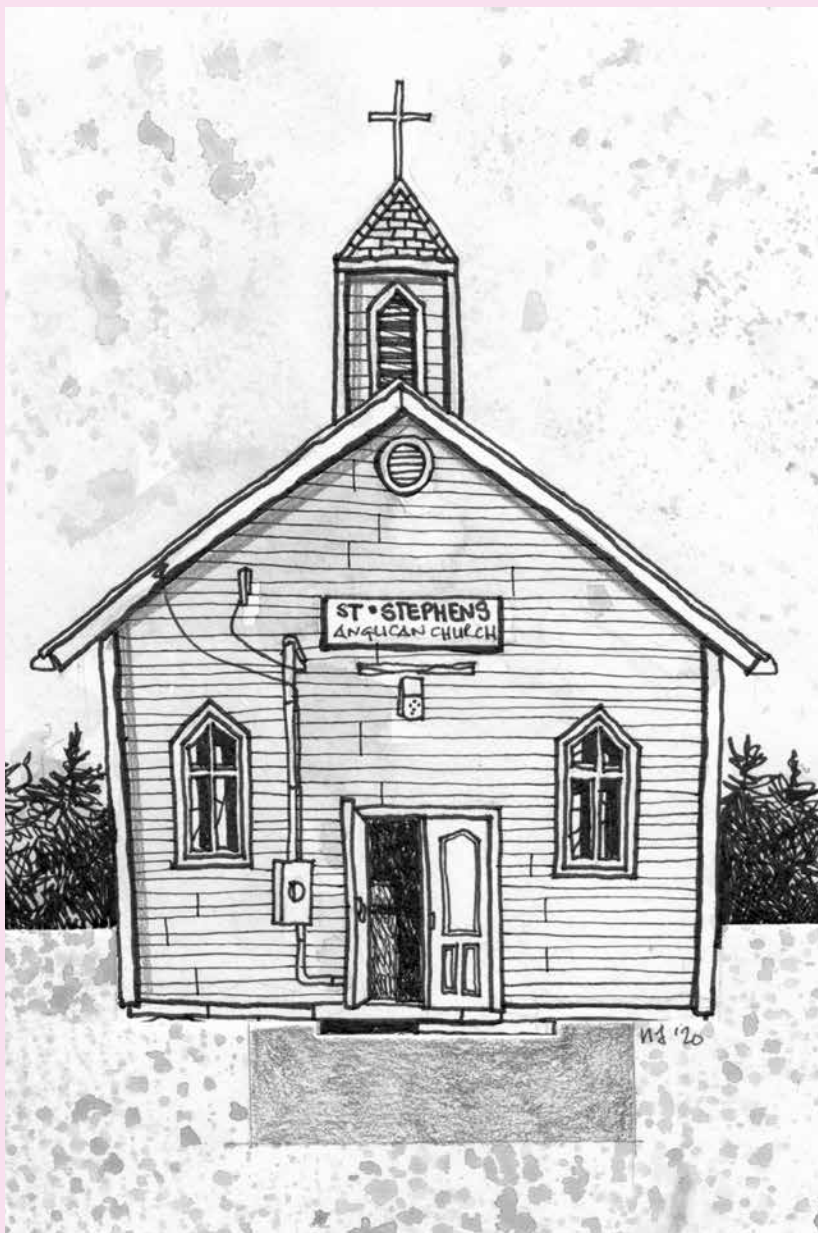
Education broadens our horizons, helping us to have a deeper relationship with God and makes us more fully able to guide people in the way of God that leads toward healing and wholeness with God. And finally, education empowers us to value the unique preciousness of every person, in Bishop Tom's words, "all for Jesus."

Anyone in the Diocese of Moosonee interested in becoming a Lay Reader or furthering their learning is invited to contact me at: drmcilroy@wightman.ca or by phone at 807-889-0075 for further information.





Nicola Alexander is a built heritage specialist, artist, and educator. Her creative practice is built on a professional background in architecture and she is the chairperson of the Timmins Municipal Heritage Committee. Her artwork has been exhibited across North Eastern Ontario and she encourages others to engage with their creativity and built environment through lectures, writing and workshops. You can follow her on instagram @na.drawingstudio



This drawing of St. Stephen's, Constance Lake First Nation and it was featured in the June, 2020 issue of the Northland.



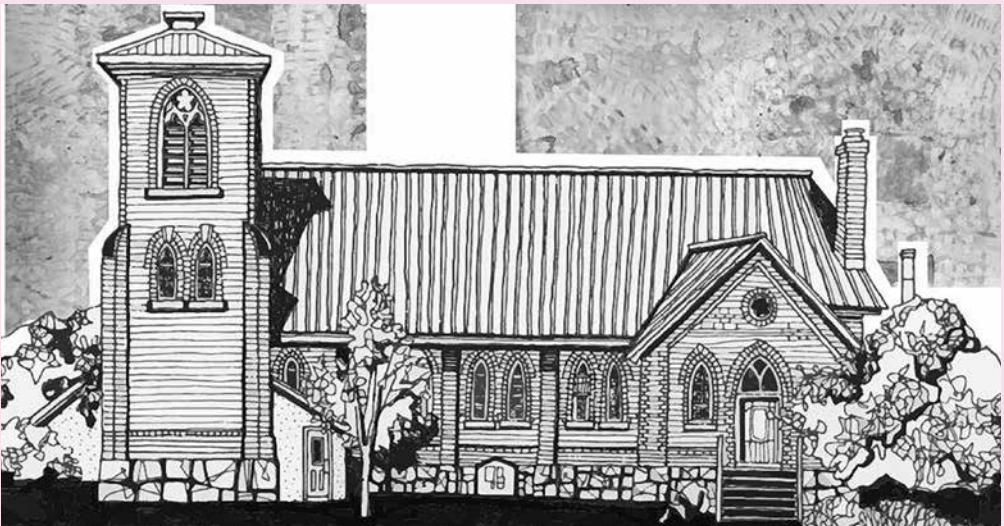
This sketch of St. Matthew's Cathedral in Timmins, ON was the first pen and ink drawing to appear in the Northland. It was in the June, 2018 issue. Nicky Alexander has contributed 14 church sketches of churches in the Diocese of Moosonee and 3 such sketches of churches in the Diocese of Algoma.



This drawing of St. Luke's Hornepayne, ON and it was featured in the September, 2020 issue of the Northland.

These beautiful pen and ink sketches of our diocesan churches were created by the artist and architect, Nicky Alexander. The first of these drawings appeared in the June, 2018 issue of the Northland and from that point to this one such drawing has enhanced each and every issue of the Northland. For a time, the Northland and the Algoma were published together and Nicky graciously consented to

make sketches of churches in the Diocese of Algoma as well. The Algoma and the Northland are the only Anglican papers in Canada to have such lovely pen and ink sketches published in their pages. In some instances, Nicky provided sketches of the interior of some of our churches. Nicky has also done a great deal of research into the stained glass windows at the cathedral.



The drawing above is St. John the Evangelist, Mistissini, QC. It was featured in the March, 2019 issue.



The drawing above is of the Church of the Apostles, Moosonee, ON. and it was featured in the September, 2018 issue.

The drawing to the left is St. John's Chapleau and it was featured in the March 2021 issue. This building is a licenced restaurant, community hub, and church.

Notes from Retirement Land

Article by Canon Phelan Scanlon, Retired.

I WRITE TO YOU FROM RETIREMENT LAND, a strange mix of relaxation, restlessness, boredom (especially in the midst of pandemic precautions), an occasional spark of activity, and personal discernment. So far, I have learned that there is no limit to how much football you can watch if you are lazy enough. On the other hand, I have had a lot of time to follow the American political scene. In the space of two and a half months, I have read thirty books, many of them about American politics and Canadian political culture. Further to this, I am doing Sunday coverage for St. Thomas' Bracebridge (via Zoom) and have just penned a homily about Jesus' miracle at Cana in which he turned six pots of water into a thousand bottles of wine.

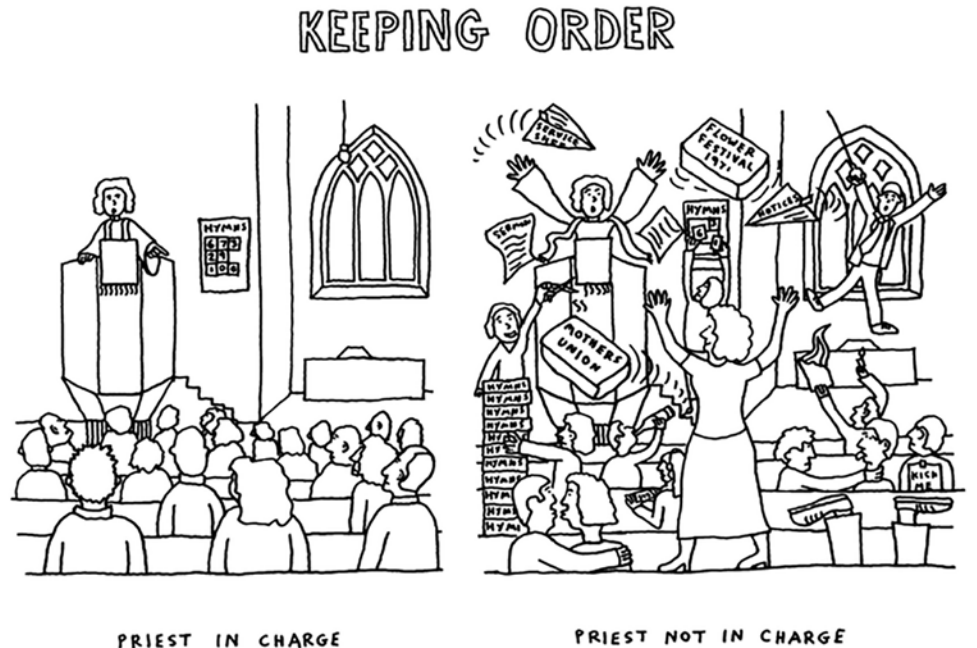
Retirement. American politics. The miracle at Cana. Can cogent thoughts come from such a mixture? I will try.

First, we need to be aware that American democracy is on the brink of joining me in retirement. Political scientists such as Thomas Homer-Dixon, Stephen Marche, and David Frum have warned (from a Canadian perspective) that increased polarisation, extremism, mistrust of elections, a lack of agreement on basic facts, and a general unwillingness to share civilised dialogue have created a culture in which a dictator could arise south of the border. Homer-Dixon states that democracy is underpinned by shared beliefs and values. If those beliefs and values are no longer held (beliefs such as the rule of law, the preeminence of the Constitution, the value of free and open elections) by a large portion of a society, democracy cannot survive. Leaders who put wealth and power above democratic values will become fascists; citizens who value entertainment and wealth (the Roman 'Bread and Circuses') over liberty will become slaves to dictators; public servants and journalists who value



Canon Phelan Scanlon

their careers above truth and the law will become suborners of totalitarianism. In short, the United States could find itself in the grip of an authoritarian regime within ten years. Such regimes always present themselves as benevolent. Consider the Julio-Claudian emperors of Rome. They, like Caesar, came to power to 'fix and save' the Republic. There was just one problem, they never got around to it. As emperors, they had an interest in consolidating power rather than in restoring Republican rule. You cannot repair something while being anathema to that which you are trying to repair! You cannot respect the will of the people while subverting it to your purposes. It would be like calling an election while hiding the ballot box. There is a great danger that a politician will come along and say, "I alone can fix things. I alone can be our democracy." Hitler used to say that elections were not necessary because the German people have already elected him to solve everything. "Election Shmlection We've done that and I am Germany's choice." Unfortunately, there was no legal way to remove the self proclaimed saviour of Europe! The lesson? Democracy is only as good as the manner in which it is practiced. It only works when people support it. Once people lose interest (check out the decline in voter turnout in both Canada and the United States), democ-



racy is sunk.

What does this have to do with the Church?

Because of declining attendance and dwindling resources, the Church may find itself being courted by prospective leaders who believe they alone can fix the Church. There may well be a desire for more authoritarianism within our Communion as we seek to stop the hemorrhaging of resources and adherents. We must not fall for it. It is to the eternal credit of our leadership that they always seek to consult the membership of the Anglican Church before making decisions. I know that this process can be wearying, cumbersome, slow, and messy ... but it beats the alternative, the brink upon which America is teetering. The next time I want to pull my hair out at a vestry meeting, I will remind myself of this truth. While the Church is not a natural democracy, and has always had a hierarchical streak, we operate in a manner which respects the views of its members. We know that the Holy Spirit speaks to the Church through its people. Yes, decisions will have to be made and some members of the episcopacy will have to 'make a call' from time to time, but we can be assured that our current leadership will always have respect for the views of all members. I cannot help but recall how Bishop Tom used to say, "the bishops are the servant of all."

Respect is the key. It is lacking in the polemical American shouting match that is their political landscape at present. Respect is a component of love. That's where the wine comes in. Jesus did more than go into the wine business in Cana during that distant wedding reception. What he really did was reveal himself to be the only effective agent of change. Consider the servants did a lot of sloughing when they filled those six stone jars to the brim. After their lugging of water, what did they have to show for it? Six jars of dirty water. Only Christ could transform it into wine. Only Christ can purify. If hearts can be changed from extreme hatred into love, if people can be moved from angry polemics to respectful listening, if leaders can engage in civil dialogue instead of deafening rage to solve national problems, you have wine from water. Only a reliance on Christ can make such a transformation possible.

Who turns death into life? Who turns sin into saintliness? Who turns war into peace? Who turns enemies into friends? Who changes brackish water of contempt into the wine of compassion? Christ alone.

Democracy only flourishes when there is respect. The Church can only grow if respect (a component of love) is part of our governance. May God keep pointing us to Cana, to the one who is the agent of every benevolent change.

OBITUARY

Bishop Tom Corston

Article by Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop of Moosonee.

“ALL FOR JESUS,
ALL FOR JE-
SUS, THIS MY
SONG SHALL EVER BE.”

On January 7th, 2022, the Eve of the Baptism of the Lord, Bishop Tom Corston died peacefully at the Sudbury Hospice following a short but difficult struggle with cancer. Left to mourn Bishop Tom are his beloved wife of 35 years, Ruth Sheppard, his sons Andrew (Michelle), Stephen (Emilie), his mother Frances Jardine, sisters Deborah (Bruce), Margaret (Allan), Erin (Paul), brother-in-law James, numerous nieces and nephews and countless friends.

As we prayed for Bishop Tom and his family during this time of trial, illness, and death, we now continue to pray for those who miss him most. May they know the comfort and peace of God's Holy Spirit and may Christ come to them in the very human hands of friends and carers.

Called by God at his own baptism into a friendship with Christ to be his beloved child forever; Tom's life and ministry was a gift to the many people who are now remembering him with fondness and affection.

In his invaluable book containing letters to a godson, *The Character of Virtue*, theologian Stanley Hauerwas writes about the baptism of Jesus and of every Christian as being a song in three parts. If we think about the account of Jesus' baptism we can hear each part being sung. The heavens are opened, the Spirit of God is in us, and we mean everything to God.

Each part of this song was evident in Bishop Tom's life. In his baptism, the heavens opened and the veil between himself and God was torn apart. In his life there was no end to his friendship and relationship with God. God's Spirit came to dwell in Bishop Tom. He became the place where people encountered God and this meant that he was never alone - not even in the moment of his death. He always had that Spirit within him. In baptism, Bishop Tom was named as



Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop Tom Corston, and Archbishop Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Archbishop all worked to support the people of the Diocese of Moosonee.

God's beloved child - marked with the cross as Christ's own forever. He meant everything to God. Can you hear the echoes of this song in three parts in your own life?

With that knowledge and that relationship between himself and God, and the working of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Tom accepted the calling to be a deacon, priest, and bishop in the church and lived into it until his retirement and beyond. As someone said to me the other day - 'priests never retire, they just change ministries.'

This edition of the *Northland* is dedicated to Tom's memory, one we give thanks for in the Diocese of Moosonee where he served faithfully for decades first as a deacon, then a priest, as its ninth bishop, and following his retirement, as assistant bishop.

You will find within this paper many moving tributes to Bishop Tom - words written by colleagues and friends. As news of his death was posted on social media, parishioners from around Moosonee added their own words and memories. Many of them remembered Bishop Tom as being a wonderful storyteller, while others shared an amusing anecdote about an encounter with him.

I have my own memories of and a special word for Bishop Tom. It's an African word, UBUNTU,

coined by the iconic Archbishop of South Africa, Desmond Tutu. Bishop Tom emulated UBUNTU in his life.

Ubuntu says that God created people to be in relationship with other people; that it is not good for people to be alone, and that a person is a person through other people. There is no such thing as self made man or woman in *ubuntu* - we are because we belong to others in our families, our places of work and play, and in our places of worship and prayer.

People with *ubuntu* are warm, generous, and willing to share their gifts and talents with others. They are kind and compassionate, open, and available to others and are always aware that they belong to something much bigger than themselves. The Bishop Tom I had the pleasure of sharing in ministry with, first as the chair of the concurrence committee at the Church of the Epiphany, then as his parishioner, warden, and colleague in ministry, had *ubuntu* in spades - he had circles and circles of friends both in his personal life, and his ministry in Moosonee, Algoma, and beyond.

In reflecting on Bishop Tom's life there is one Christian value that stands out for me ... that of constancy. In the years that served, he witnessed tremendous change



Ruth Corston, Registrar, and Bishop Tom Corston, Principal, of the Moosonee School of Ministry.

in the church - including the emergence of lay readers in the church with many of them being ordained in the church. He witnessed the ordination of the first women in the Anglican Church of Canada and the introduction of the *Book of Alternative Services*, which as you know was not altogether popular when it was first introduced.

As Bishop of Moosonee, Bishop Tom had to make difficult decisions which changed the diocese to being a mission area in the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario. Yet through all the changes he witnessed, Bishop Tom remained faithful to his calling.

In the same book, I referred to earlier, Stanley Hauerwas writes a chapter on the importance of constancy in our lives. He describes it as that, "virtue that makes possible you being you," (pg. 138) through all the changes, good and bad that will constitute your life.

To be a person of constancy requires knowing yourself and being confident enough in oneself to escape being determined by the opinions of others.

A person of constancy is always true to oneself ... that was Bishop Tom. May he rest in peace and rise with Christ in glory.





DIOCESAN CHURCHES: St. Mark's, Iroquis Falls. Illustration: Nicola Alexander @na.drawingstudio

ART AND CULTURE

Drawing the Churches of the Diocese Article by Nicola Alexander, St. Matthew's Cathedral, Timmins.

The suggestion that I draw the churches in the diocese was raised over a cup of tea with George and Catharine Cribbs. At that time, I had recently relocated to Canada and was looking to establish myself as an artist. I had identified drawing as an extension of the architectural practice I had left behind, and I was buoyed by a masters degree in conservation of built buildings.

I grew up in the Anglican Church of South Africa and have always felt a deep affinity for church buildings. My husband and I have moved several times in our married life and in each place I have a point of locating church, library and post office. Three buildings that offer community and connection. All fundamental in easing transition and settling



Nicola Alexander, artist, architect, and musician.

into a new home.

As a newcomer to Canada, I undertook the project with little understanding of the vast geography of the Diocese of Moosonee which

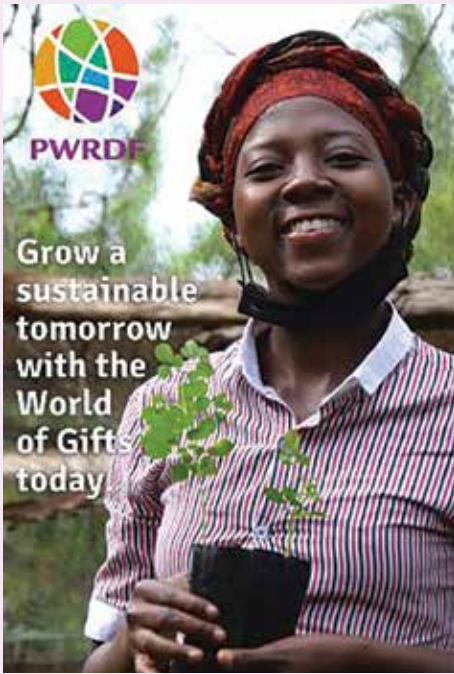
spans 560,000 km² and straddles the border between North East Ontario and North West Quebec. It is further divided into Watershed Deanery to the south and the James Bay Deanery along the coast, drawing together a loose collection of far flung and largely isolated communities.

Drawing these churches over the last five years has allowed me to take my own journey across the north. Each reference photo offered a tangible connection to what was otherwise just a dot on the map. Drawing allowed me space to contemplate the church builders, the congregations, and their ministry.

Despite the vast space between churches, I came to recognize some common themes. First was the vertical element, set against a large

open sky. The pitched roof and gable end with an entrance, almost always centrally placed. A notice board announces services times and steps lead up to the double-leaf doors. Signs of a garden, flowers, pathway and/or ramp serve as quiet gestures of welcome. The trees and snow, on the distant horizon speak at once to the vastness and natural beauty of the North.

In summary, the churches of the Diocese of Moosonee are not characterized by imposing stone facades or lofty stained glass windows. They are humble structures, more often built with local materials and according to the skills that are readily available. They speak to the missionary foundation of the diocese. Their strength is not in grand architectural gestures but in the meaning we attach to place and the people who continue to worship inside their walls. The drawings serve as a record of our church buildings and are a recognition of their value to our northern communities.



OUTREACH



Catharine Cribbs, St. Matthew's Cathedral.

Taxes Can Be Taxing Article by George Cribbs, Editor of the Northland.

REVENUE CANADA established the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) to help people become trained volunteers to aid individuals and families by preparing their income tax returns and thus to get their entitled benefits and credits. This program is still quite active throughout the country and there remains a constant need for more volunteers. Interested persons can receive the necessary training through virtual tax clinics offered by Revenue Canada.

Catharine Cribbs, a former elementary and community college teacher of mathematics and art, joined the CVITP in 2003 and started to assist individuals at her parish church of St. Paul's in South Porcupine and residents at local seniors' residences. She is currently a parishioner at St. Matthew's Cathedral in Timmins and an active CVITP volunteer.

Filling in income tax forms can be a daunting task to many people - particularly if their first language is neither English nor French.

Helping people by doing their income tax returns can be a valuable form of outreach and a way that both clergy and parishioners can work together to assist the more vulnerable people in their parishes and communities. Those wishing to help others in this way need only a computer, a little training, and some compassion.

Volunteers at CVITP are directed to assist seniors and persons with low incomes. Catharine Cribbs may be contacted at her home by calling 705-235-5737.